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A Professional Development Scheme for Non-Native Speaking Teachers of English
from the Arab World
An Action Research Study

by
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List of Abbreviations

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults
CEPA	Common Educational Proficiency Assessment
DELTA	Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
EU	European Union
HCT	Higher Colleges of Technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
MOE	Ministry of Education
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UAE	United Arab Emirates

Summary

Following an action research framework, my research investigates professional development for English Language teachers in the Arab World, who are non-native speakers of English themselves.

The thesis has five chapters: Literature Review, Critical Contexts, Methodology of the Study, Data Analysis and Presentation, and finally the Discussion and Findings of the research. The Literature Review covers works relevant to the area of the study in relation to existing teacher practices, teacher effectiveness and current professional development opportunities. The second chapter presents some critical contexts of the study; the researcher's personal and professional contexts, and the research sites. These provide accounts of the researcher's background as an English language teacher, trainer and researcher. This section clarifies the need for focused research in the area of professional development of English language teachers. The next section provides an overview of the United Arab Emirates, teaching population and study sample.

After reviewing a range of educational research methodologies, the Methodology of the Study explains why Action Research was found to be the most appropriate framework for the project, and most particularly the Deakin participatory action research approach. Characteristics of the research population and study sample are then discussed. Thereafter, the data collection instruments (needs assessment questionnaires, interviews, observation checklists, discussions, feedback forms and documents) are discussed in relation to their role and purposes in the study. The chapter concludes by outlining the research phases, intervention strategy and the ethical dimensions of the study, particularly in relation to researcher identity and power relations.

The Data Analysis and Presentation chapter focuses on summarising the data and identifying the general themes and clusters to be addressed by the interventions. The thesis concludes with the Discussion and Findings of the research. This final chapter covers the design and operation of the first and second interventions. It also aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the action research framework. This is followed by the research statement and discussion of the main findings, particularly how the findings of

the research have affected the decision making policy in the professional development of teachers working for the UAE Ministry of Education. The findings of the research section also provides recommendations for policy and practice.

Introduction

As a middle-aged Muslim Jordanian woman, one who has been exposed to a set of different educational and social contexts due to professional and social circumstances, I have developed a key interest in teacher training and professional development opportunities for non-native speaking teachers of English in the Arab world.

Generally, the teaching profession in the Arab world is a better opportunity for employment. The majority of teachers choose to become teachers because it is the best job option available. As with many teachers of English in the Arab world, I came into the teaching profession by coincidence. I had never planned on being a teacher when I was younger, or during my course of graduate studies. When I started work, it was assumed that I would be able to teach even though I had not been involved in any teacher pre-service programmes, neither was I qualified to teach. My experience as a novice teacher was not a positive one, as it led to a lot of frustration and discomfort. There were no professional learning communities that allowed teachers to share experiences and discuss issues with one another. My main source of professional input was my supervisors, who were professors from the Department of Education. Supervisors would attend and assess my lessons without providing any guidance or support on what, in their view, it meant to be an efficient and effective teacher.

Upon completing a post-graduate degree in curriculum development and English language teaching practices, I decided to take my career to a further level where I would be able to assist teachers, who like me, were non-native speakers of English who taught English with no official training or qualifications. I started working closely with teachers as a teacher trainer providing workshops on up-to-date teaching practices. My role as a teacher trainer enabled me to travel throughout the Arab world and Europe. This opportunity allowed me to work closely with a variety of non-native speaking English teachers from different educational contexts and observe the different attitudes towards educational change and development.

During my role as a trainer, I was appointed to deliver several teacher training programmes; these mainly consisted of workshops, most of which were of a

promotional nature. I came to realise that the most common source of professional input language teachers in the Arab world received was restricted to workshops, which were not normally constructed based on the needs of teachers, and were rarely followed up on. There was no apparent consideration towards the actual background, needs and interests of teachers. Consequently, workshops failed to meet the general objective of improving teacher practice.

In the educational culture of the Arab world, teacher education and professional development as part of the official teaching career path is non-existent. Recently, due to rapid educational reform, the Arab world has drawn on educational expertise from the West to support teachers' professional development and improvement in the educational culture. So far, these pre-packaged and formulated training programmes have failed to serve their purpose as they were built around previous assumptions that often assumed that teachers in the Arab world have similar needs to teachers in the West.

In response to the existing situation and the urgent need for a more effective approach in training teachers, I decided to develop a professional development scheme that was based on previously identified and assessed needs. I decided to adopt an action plan that enabled me to immediately reflect on and respond to field findings to assess the effectiveness of some approaches and the failure of others. This project was based on my career aspirations to actually establish a paradigm or framework to develop possible interventions that could help improve professional development for teachers in the Arab world, and consequently improve student learning opportunities.

With the aim of changing the approach and method followed in training teachers in the Arab world, and particularly in the UAE, the source of my participants, an Action Research framework was found to be the most appropriate methodology to follow. Action Research allowed me to implement and assess interventions, and thereafter respond to feedback and findings by refining developed schemes to better address the needs of teachers. More specifically, participatory Action Research allowed me to work closely with a group of participants who would share the general experience of being reflective towards established interventions, alongside me as a researcher. I followed the Deakin cyclic approach (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988) to better refine my

interventions based on assessed feedback while working closely with a group of teachers from the UAE.

To identify existing needs and interests of teachers, I used five sources of data collection to ensure the validity of collected data, having each data collection tool designed to confirm or validate previously identified data. I began my needs assessment through the distribution of a needs' assessment questionnaire, followed by semi-structured interviews with teachers and thereafter observation checklists to take note of my observations during classroom visits set to study teacher performance. Teachers also had the opportunity to share pieces of their work, such as lesson plans and prepared worksheets, which allowed for the comparison of what was prepared for the lesson with what was delivered. Classroom observations were followed by casual discussions (Dick, 1993) that allowed teachers to talk about their concerns and the rationale behind their approach.

The five data collection methods allowed for the development of initial interventions based on defined needs of teachers. These interventions were followed by feedback forms to collect immediate responses from participants in addition to more classroom observations and interviews. This laid the foundation for more refined and presumably effective interventions in the second phase of the research by addressing the gaps and weaknesses identified in the first intervention.

My experience throughout the different phases of the research was an interesting and rewarding one. It was also a rewarding opportunity for the participants to be considerably heard and appreciated. The Ministry of Education in the UAE, which has now adopted the devised framework in professional development schemes for English language teachers, is looking at professional development from a more customised view, acknowledging that pre-packaged training schemes are not as appropriate in addressing their local educational needs and interests.

The following chapters will provide a rich narration of my experience, which will hopefully be useful for future research in the same field. Chapter 1 provides relevant literature on teacher education and their professional development. Chapter 2 gives an insight into the context in which the study was performed, giving background

information on the UAE and its educational aspirations and ambitions, the professional and collegial culture of teachers in addition to the existing nature of professional development schemes in the UAE. The methodology and followed approach is discussed in Chapter 3, which also provides information on the data collection instruments used and the rationale behind their choice. The role and recruitment of trainers in addition to the ethical considerations in relation to researchers' identity and the power relations in the research are also addressed. Chapter 4 provides a walk through the data collected and presents the general themes identified in the research. The chapter ends with the criteria used to analyse collected data and how the data was used to create interventions. The final chapter ends with a discussion about the conclusions and findings of the research in relation to professional development and teacher education. It also provides a list of recommendations for future research with the possible adoption of a similar research approach.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of the literature in the area of English language teacher training and professional development addressed towards non-native speaking teachers of English who teach English as a foreign language mainly within the Arab world. This chapter will look into relevant research conducted on teacher development and practices. It will also look into any existing research on teachers in the Arab world.

Further discussion of the literature relevant to the research will follow in the Methodology of the Study in Chapter 2.

The relevant areas of research covered in the literature review are on:

- improving teacher practice
- being an effective teacher in today's world
- common professional development opportunities and experiences
- alternative training schemes
- teacher effectiveness
- types of teacher learning opportunities
- becoming a teacher in the Arab world.

1.1 Improving Teacher Practices

As indicated by Rodgers (2001) and Ehri *et al.* (2007) educational research has been constantly looking for ways to improve English language teaching standards. It has also looked for ways to refine learning opportunities, for both teachers and students. Nevertheless, it is questionable how much effort has been put into delivering current methods to non-native speaking teachers of English who teach non-native speaking students, specifically those in the Arab world with Arabic as their mother tongue. Limited studies have been addressed towards teachers of English functioning within the Arab world, particularly teachers with little or no background in educational and methodological practices. Mainly, research has focused on native speaking teachers teaching English as a Foreign and Second language in addition to non-native teachers of

European origin (Wilson, 2000; Hager, 2004; Liu and Fisher, 2006; Joshua *et al.*, 2006; Hallinan and Khmelkov, 2001).

In light of the above, there has still not been a suitable customised professional development module offered for English language teachers in the Arab world, who are non-native speakers themselves. Therefore, it can be noted that the area of professional development for English language teachers in the Arab world has been considerably neglected. On the other hand, it may be useful to note that very little research that focuses on the area of professional development of subject teachers in the Middle East has been found (El-Dib, 2006).

1.2 Being an Effective Teacher in Today's World

As indicated in earlier education research (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005), to be an effective teacher today, a broad range of content and pedagogical knowledge and skills are required. Teachers:

should be aware of how students learn in different settings, use multiple forms of assessment and should develop the ability to reflect on their own practices.

In the article 'Training Teachers for Quality Education in Europe', Romano (pp11-17, 2002) further notes that among other tasks teachers need to focus on, they will also have to:

*focus on the basic skills their pupils need
diversify their teaching methods to meet different learning needs
see their professional development as a lifelong learning experience*

It can be said that being an effective teacher requires the ability to deliver subject knowledge efficiently and effectively to learners. However, in the case of language teachers, they are required to have the ability to deliver a foreign or alternative form of communication to learners. Teachers are also expected to help learners transform formal knowledge into active knowledge, allowing effective communication with others. This also requires teachers to be proficient and competent in the language itself, in addition to having a higher set of educational skills and knowledge, as noted by Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) and Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005). Teachers, therefore,

require one additional strand to help support them in becoming effective teachers, which is their own ability to communicate and use English as a means of communication within their daily lives.

1.3 Common Professional Development Opportunities and Experiences

Teachers in the United States often perceive professional development as being fragmented, disconnected and irrelevant to real problems of classroom practice, (Lieberman, 2008). Lieberman and Mace (2008) have noted that workshops are the most common form of training delivery. Teachers are regularly given general workshops addressing particular areas in practice that do not necessarily comply with their needs and experiences. Due to the necessity to cover a lot within short periods of time, emphasis in workshops is usually placed on subject and theoretical knowledge rather than practical applications in the classroom, making training rather hypothetical and less applicable (Hiebert *et al.*, 2002). Barrett *et al.* (2002) and Franke *et al.* (1998) further note that, in addition to not having a sufficient impact on teacher practices, workshops were found to be insufficient in addressing the needs and interests of teachers.

On the other hand, in the area of subject knowledge, Lucas *et al.* (2005) note that trainee teachers are assumed to have the necessary subject knowledge, and in this case English language, prior to commencing training and professional development programmes. This is a common assumption not only in the US but also globally, since it is assumed that English language teachers have sufficient background in English language. For example, teachers in the UK and Wales are required to have both a degree in a subject area in addition to Qualified Teaching Status, which is usually achieved by taking an initial teacher training course or a post-graduate degree in education (<http://www.tda.gov.uk/>). In the EU, teachers are required to take accredited post-graduate teacher training before officially becoming teachers. Finland, for example, regulates teaching qualifications and mainly requires applicants to complete supplementary studies that include both subject knowledge and pedagogical studies (http://www.oph.fi/mobility/teaching_qualifications). Other less common structured and non-structured professional development strategies available include mentoring, collaborative learning,

peer observations, in addition to content and pedagogical inductions (Wang *et al.*, 2008).

1.4 Alternative Training Schemes

To study and understand the possible requirements of developing a professional development scheme for non-native speaking teachers of English in the Arab world, further investigation was dedicated towards other programmes developed to support the needs of other non-native speaking teachers of English. This was done to observe the similarities between such training schemes, the conditions in which they were developed and provided, as well as their frequency.

Based on my experience as both a teacher and a teacher trainer, I became aware of several organisations in Europe that work on training or professionally supporting newly qualified teachers and updating experienced ones. For example, “Leonardo Davinci” (http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/leonardo_en.html) and “Erasmus” (http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc898_en.htm) programmes which offer funding for teachers enrolling in training courses or work placements abroad, while supporting them financially and academically.

Language teachers in the Arab world work on their own professional development as part of their role as educators. Similar to findings by Eraut and Steadman (2005), teachers in the Arab world professionally develop their teaching and educational skills mostly through experience. Through the notion of reflection, whether deliberate or unintentional, the majority of teachers in the Arab world who are looking for career advancement manage to progress within their career path. Over the past decades, the majority of teachers have managed to develop and grow within their career with no professional input or training: it is through experience that teachers learn and improve teaching skills. Trial and error is a common mode of reflection on the teaching process, with structured input from seniors (see Chapter 2). Other types of professional development noted by Wang *et al.* (2008), such as peer observations, reflections, workshops, discussion groups and exposure to the native language, are limited. Evidence from transcripts and teacher success stories towards their teaching practices

together with feedback advised by supervisors and students are the two main points of evidence for this (see Chapter 2 for further details).

Figure 1.1 summarises the type of skills teachers develop by learning through experience. It is taken from a study conducted by Rodgers (2001) and can be used as a reference for the overall process of teaching and reflecting on teaching through experience.

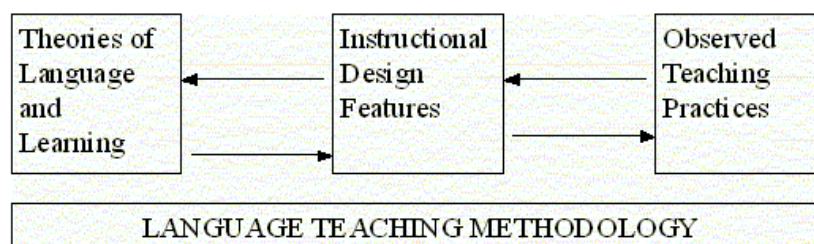


Figure 1.1: Language Teaching Methodology and Reflection

Source: Rodgers (2001, p.3)

One question to be asked is what period of time is need in order to have a positive reflection towards teaching techniques and styles implemented in a classroom; this usually takes years to realise, analyse and consider if done without the proper academic support and training. Table 1.1, taken from Eraut and Steadman (2005), lists what individuals learn through experience. It focuses on a combination of urgent profession-specific tasks required for meeting immediate demands, such as developing lesson plans, and longer term progress where learning is explicitly available or embedded in work activities and contexts as in classroom management skills.

Table 1.1: What is Learned?

Task Performance	Role Performance
Speed and fluency	Prioritisation
Complexity of tasks and problems	Range of responsibility
Range of skills required	Supporting other people's learning
Communication with a wide range of people	Leadership
Collaborative work	Accountability
Awareness and Understanding	Supervisory role
Other people: colleagues, customers, managers, etc.	Delegation
Contexts and situations	Handling ethical issues
One's own organisation	Coping with unexpected problems
Problems and risks	Crisis management
Priorities and strategic issues	Keeping up-to-date
Value issues	Academic Knowledge and Skills
Personal Development	Use of evidence and argument
Self-evaluation	Accessing formal knowledge
Self-management	Research-based practice
Handling emotions	Theoretical thinking
Building and sustaining relationships	Knowing what you might need to know
Disposition to attend to other perspectives	Using knowledge resources (human, paper-based, electronic)
Disposition to consult and work with others	Learning how to use relevant theory (in a range of practical situations)
Disposition to learn and improve one's practice	Decision Making and Problem Solving
Accessing relevant knowledge and expertise	When to seek expert help
Ability to learn from experience	Dealing with complexity
Teamwork	Group decision making
Collaborative work	Problem analysis
Facilitating social relations	Generating, formulating and evaluating options
Joint planning and problem solving	Managing the process within an appropriate timescale
Ability to engage in and promote mutual learning	Decision making under pressurised conditions
	Judgement
	Quality of performance, output and outcomes
	Priorities
	Value issues
	Levels of risk

Source: Eraut and Steadman (2007, p.3)

As shown in Table 1.1, Eraut and Steadman (2005) suggest that learning to become an effective teacher is rather a long multifarious process itself. Learning to become an English language teacher, however, can be even more challenging and demanding. Day and Flores (2006) have suggested that teaching has its own multi-dimensional, distinctive and content specific nature, requiring an interplay between inconsistent

perspectives, beliefs and practices, which are all accompanied by the development of the teachers' self. Non-native speaking language teachers require further development in their own language competence skills and their ability to convey to their learners the taught language as a form of communication differing from other subject areas, which makes their experience even more challenging.

1.5 Teacher Effectiveness

As teacher educators, we are committed to preparing teachers who recognise the complexity of teaching, are thoughtful about their teaching practice, question their own assumptions and consider multiple perspectives in order to make informed decisions about the learning needs of their students (Schultz and Mandzuk, 2005). As Schulz and Mandzuk further suggest, novice teachers need to be aware of many issues beyond the craft skills of teaching. They need to know about themselves as learners, students' learning styles, and the context in which they are teaching, subject content as well as how to teach the subject matter.

Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) additionally point out that beyond verbal skills, subject matter knowledge and academic ability, a combination of elements such as concern for children, flexibility, professional knowledge and experience and specific teaching practices help build teacher effectiveness.

In the teaching effectiveness literature there appears to be an implicit assumption that there is a relationship between teaching effectiveness and student learning as represented in the idea that the better organised an instructor is, the more students are likely to learn (Westwood., 2004). Kemp and Hall (1992) point out that student achievement is often related to the teachers' competence in teaching. Seldin (1999) suggested several qualities for teachers who play an effective role in the classroom, which include using a variety of modes of instruction, creating a classroom environment which is comfortable for learners, communicating in a way that is understandable to learners, using feedback from students and others in addition to reflecting on their own classroom performance in order to improve. It has also been found that students achieve more when teachers employ carefully planned teaching procedures (Kemp and Hall, 1992).

Westwood (2004) noted many factors in order to test teacher effectiveness. These can be summarised as follows:

- Organisation of course knowledge and content
- Communication skills and clear communication with students
- Respectful, fair and content driven interactions with students
- Learning environment for students, stimulating classroom interactions
- Fair assignments, assessments and evaluation strategies offering timely feedback.
- Overall effectiveness

These factors were seen to play an integral role in teacher effectiveness in a classroom with a set number of students. To begin with, the notion of approach and style in teaching is one of the issues most emphasised. There is a clear recommendation to optimise practice in classes through the adoption of a learner-centred approach (Wenglinsky, 2002). Wenglinsky further recommends building a relationship with students based on trust and respect, and using the evaluation results to direct their own teaching. This is opposite to the strategies and techniques implemented in the past, where a strong focus was on teachers as conveyors of expert knowledge.

In the Arab world, English Language teachers appear to have a mostly directive teaching style. Teachers work within a teacher centred approach to ensure efficient control over the class. Teachers have played the role of lecturer, classroom leader, commander and organiser, leaving limited opportunity for students to interact with one another or with the subject matter. Development in educational practice in language classes in the Arab world remain hindered due to issues related to discipline, teacher confidence and classroom management strategies. These are further clarified in the Context of the Study in Chapter 2.

With the shift towards learner-centred approaches, *students* actually realise a transformation in style and tend to react accordingly, by initially rejecting change or not tolerating such a different approach. This can be seen through actions such as unwillingness to take an active part in lessons, being passive recipients or inactive students, which can also be accompanied by a set of disruptive behaviours. Nevertheless, as students' experiences become richer, they become more aware of the learning opportunities that are given to them (Wohlfarth *et al.*, 2008). Some teachers

tend to consider their students' reaction as a failure in applying such a style into their teaching, and therefore return to a more teacher-centred approach, although they themselves believe that a learner centred approach would be far more effective (Guskey, 1986).

On the other hand, there is some evidence that the stimulation of a learner-centred teaching style has the potential to enhance job satisfaction for teachers, which seems to be important for creating optimal classroom practice conditions (Opdenakker and Van Damme, 2005). Consequently, it is also essential that teacher education and in-service training programmes work on enhancing teachers' pedagogical practices, and provide them with theoretical and practical knowledge about using alternative teaching strategies.

Another factor in teacher development and effectiveness is the willingness and capacity to inquire and to learn how to inquire from others, in order to develop and learn from peers throughout ones teaching career. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), point us towards the notion of inquiry-based approaches to teacher education as a way of preparing teachers who are able to think systematically about their own practices, seeking advice from others, drawing on Action Research frameworks to deepen their knowledge, and consequently adapting their teaching styles in ways that support effective learning in students. Schultz and Mandzuk (2005) further list the benefits of inquiry as being an integral part of developing good classroom practice, allowing teachers to focus on a single aspect of their practice in order to improve upon it. Relinquishing the role of teachers in the classroom would change the professional culture of schools, moving teachers from complaining into positive action.

Conway (2001) also states that part of reforming an educational environment must be inquiry together with reflection leading to redefining teacher professionalism. Inquiry, or further exploring better learning opportunities one can offer learners, does not necessarily have to take place within the first couple of years in teaching; it can also take place mid-career or even with highly experienced teachers, especially in relation to new teaching methodology enhanced by technology in its various forms in addition to the integration of multimedia in teaching.

1.6 Types of Teacher Learning Opportunities

Elbaz in 1981, and later Richardson in 1994, defines the two main types of knowledge teachers gain within their career; craft or practical knowledge, which refers to those understandings gained from ongoing reflective engagement in the practice setting. This is the type of knowledge that teachers develop as a result of their prior teaching experience (Erickson *et al.*, 2005). Eraut (2004) also identifies the first type of learning as ‘informal learning’ as in learning through experience, using the term informal in order to reflect the flexibility in this type of learning.

The second type of knowledge would be formal knowledge, consisting of the types of public claims about the nature of the process of teaching, as in findings of an article or an action plan (Richardson, 1994). It would be good to point out here that newly qualified teachers have probably obtained some formal knowledge through their education, but this is unlikely to help them towards obtaining the craft knowledge through reflection and inquiry. In my experience, and as noted by Huberman (1993), newly qualified teachers at the beginning of their careers generally try to establish their basic confidence and competence as professionals. Novice teachers mainly focus on their ability to manage the classroom, gain respect from colleagues and students in addition to their ability to create a bond with their students; it is at this stage that teachers tend to be more vulnerable than other experienced teachers.

Huberman (1993) further notes that teachers begin their careers either easily or painfully. Becker (1952) clarified that those with painful beginnings tend to be involved in unexpected situations that they are not prepared to manage or handle, and do not seem to find support from other experienced teachers. Teachers who experience such contexts tend to leave the profession within the first three years (Hargreaves, 1998). On the other hand, Hargreaves (1998) explains that teachers who experience easier beginnings tend to be exposed to a more dynamic culture, where mentoring and inquiry are part of their role as a teacher.

Effective teaching involves reflection on oneself, on classroom practice, and on students’ learning opportunities. The teaching process as a whole involves communication and building relationships with students, classes, parents, colleagues,

and school leaders. Similarly, the students learning experience involves a lot more than the achievement of scores (Opdenakker and Van Damme, 2005).

Teachers may value class control over class learning (Cothran and Ennis, 1997). Kulinna and Cothran (2003) state that teacher and content-centred teaching styles initially appear to offer more control; therefore teachers tend to prefer such a strategy, rather than learner-centred approaches (Opdenakker and Van Damme, 2005).

Teacher identity, and how peers, superiors and learners perceive the teacher, is another important factor that affects the process of becoming an effective teacher. Gender, age, subject taught and personal experience in educational practice all play a part in creating the teachers' role in relation to students, fellow teachers and school management. According to Day and Flores (2006), teacher identity is influenced by personal, social and cognitive response. There are many factors that affect a teachers' performance and are considered to be external factors in relation to their working environment. Sutton *et al.* (2000) mention that the feeling of love and care, job satisfaction, joy, pride, excitement and pleasure in students' progress are among the most positive emotions that are reflected in a teachers' identity.

Sachs (2001) suggests that becoming a teacher involves the transformation of the identity, through an open negotiated process. Teachers continuously grow and develop as they progress in their career. Professional formation is affected by the view of teachers' peers, superiors and learners. In my view, teachers' improved practices are often the result of earlier trial and error conducted with their learners. Teachers may be unable to respond flexibly to learner requirements and interests: those capable of doing so are usually more effective than those who cannot. In the case of language teaching, this is a particularly complex matter, since teachers are involved in the delivery of the knowledge of how to communicate in a foreign or other language.

1.7 Becoming a Language Teacher in the Arab World

There appears to be an assumption that English language teachers in the Arab world would probably share the same needs that native speaking teachers have. I have not found any particular research addressed towards the training and professional

development needs of non-native speaking teachers of English who teach in the Arab world. I therefore found that this Action Research will address one of the neglected areas of research in the area of professional development of English language teachers in the Arab world. Based on my current findings, this will be the first research conducted within the area of professional development for language school teachers in the Arab world, and may help to identify areas and methodologies for further research in the same area.

The following chapter will give more specific details on the professional and work environment teachers in the Arab world work within. It will give the reader more details in relation to how the profession of teaching is handled in the Arab world, and more specifically in the UAE. My experience before and during the implementation of the project will also be further clarified giving more reason behind the need for such research.

Chapter 2: Critical Contexts

I begin this chapter with a quote taken from Dunne *et al.* (2005),

Research is a social activity and for it to be recognised it needs to be held in place by a host of referents to sets of ideas and to people and purposes. It is the social embedding of the research that makes it a meaningful activity; and while not wishing to reduce the researcher to a mere cipher, it seems that research is identifiable primarily as a social activity. The research enters, and is borne along by, a pre-existing community of discursive practice (p. 22).

This chapter will reflect on the various experiences I had as a teacher, trainer and educational consultant before and during the different phases of my field work. It will provide an insight into the reasons behind the need for reflexive and responsive research within this field, offering an introduction to the reasons behind the adopted methodology.

The chapter has been divided into two main sections. The first will focus on the personal and professional context that had an active contribution to my research ideas, interests and need for intervention. The second section is the actual contextual setting of the research, the United Arab Emirates.

2.1 Personal and Professional Context: An Introduction

As indicated by Rodgers (2001) and Ehri *et al.* (2007), educational research has been constantly looking for ways to improve English language teaching standards. It has also looked for ways to refine learning opportunities, for both teachers and students. Nevertheless, it is questionable how much effort has been put in delivering current methods to non-native speaking teachers of English who teach non-native speaking students, specifically those in the Arab world with Arabic as their mother tongue.

Limited studies have been addressed towards teachers of English functioning within the Arab world, particularly teachers with little or no background in educational and methodological practices. Mainly, research has focussed on native speaking teachers teaching English as a Foreign and Second language in addition to non-native teachers of

European origin (Wilson, 2000; Hager, 2004; Liu and Fisher, 2006; Joshua *et al.*, 2006; Hallinan and Khmelkov, 2001).

As a language teacher who had the opportunity to grow further in her career, I have had many experiences that have reflected the need for a more focussed view on the professional development of English language teachers in many countries in the Arab world. The following sections will clarify how the need to create a professional development scheme that specifically addresses the needs and interests of non-native Arabic speaking teachers of English functioning within the Arab world emerged. I will begin by giving an introduction about myself and how my career has evolved as a teacher. Following this, I will share my experiences of becoming a teacher trainer and how my work inspired me to further investigate and carry out research that allows for reflexiveness and considerable reflection within the domain of teacher education and professional development of non-native speaking English teachers in the Arab world.

2.2 Researcher Background and Experience

Due to the nature of my research, I believe it is of value to understand where the researcher is coming from in terms of background experience and professional environment. The need to conduct research in the area of professional development arose from my experience as an Arabic non-native speaking English teacher and teacher trainer mainly working in countries in the Arab world such as the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Sudan. This section will discuss my background experience in becoming a teacher and teacher trainer. It will also discuss the nature of my work with non-native speaking teachers of English from a number of countries in Europe and the Arab world.

2.2.1 Becoming an English Teacher

I have been working in the field of teacher training and professional development for the past nine years. I started my career as an English language teacher working in leading schools in Jordan. My quick employment was due to my strong command of the English language, supported by my also having a bachelor's degree in English for Special and Applied Purposes.

My decision to become a teacher was much more of a coincidence than something planned; the same as the majority of people who become teachers in Jordan. I was a recent graduate, with a good command of English, learned by studying my first years of schooling in an English speaking country. This meant that I was juggling between two very different languages; Arabic and English: I grew to become bilingual. Consequently, my strong background in English helped me in deciding on a major with which I felt comfortable; English for Special and Applied Purposes. Being a recent graduate with a high GPA, the first job offered was at one of the leading universities in Jordan. I was offered the position of English language teacher to teach at their semi-private school.

The school ran a co-educational system from Kindergarten (age four) to High School (age seventeen) with approximately 4,000 students. It functioned under the umbrella of the university, which was public, but was only open for faculty family members. Those who worked or taught in the university could enrol their children in the school. Therefore the school was more of a private than a public school. It was open to a limited number of students and had more facilities than other regular public schools would have, such as multiple labs, longer school hours and, supposedly, more qualified teachers who were monitored by senior instructors (supervisors) from the School of Education working at the university.

Developing My Teaching Skills

Having planned to start teaching, I realised that knowing the language was not enough to be able to teach and help students to learn it. Teaching English involved a lot more than being able to communicate fluently in English; it required the delivery of content as well as the assessment and development of various concepts students needed to learn. I realised that in order to be a more effective teacher, teaching was a skill that needed to be developed through continuous practice and professional support, which at that time was not present. Accordingly, I worked on obtaining a Masters' of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Curriculum Design. I hoped for a degree that would support me with the required knowledge to become an efficient and competent educator. I continued to teach while studying at the school of education. I had the opportunity to be a student learning how to become a teacher with the option of

implementing what I studied with my own students; a rare opportunity that most teachers did not have.

The multiple role that I played gave me the opportunity to reflect on how the stages of becoming a teacher gradually appear and how well students react to competent teachers, being comforted by the fact that teachers are there to educate students and not to learn from experimenting with or on them. I found that somehow there was strong link between confident experienced teachers and the respect and attention they received from their students without the need to use forms of educational discipline. Teachers with years of experience had a different approach in dealing with students and managing the class.

It was apparent that being a newly appointed teacher meant that it was expected that I would face the most resistance from students, which led to a lot of frustration and disappointment in my early years of teaching. It was commonly expected that new teachers, especially English language teachers, to have to struggle to gain the attention and respect of their students. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) confirm this by stating that the first year of teaching for teachers is both a crucial and problematic period, although it does help in shaping teaching patterns and influences teacher retention. As a language teacher, I most probably had a more challenging experience at the beginning of my career due to the nature of the subject I taught, which is developing students' communication skills in a different language.

When studying English, our students are required to effectively interact with others using a different set of language codes they are sometimes unfamiliar with. In addition to having the ability to follow different forms of interpretation, Studying English requires the knowledge of the language structures and vocabulary. These are very different from those students use in their native tongue (Arabic) together with terminologies they also have to decode differently in their own language. Students' confusion and lack of comprehension is expected due to the clash that might occur between the students' mother tongue and the target language. Therefore, I concluded that teaching English or any other foreign language requires much more than knowing how to use the language effectively, but also requires the capability to help students

realise the difference between their mother tongue and the target language, and how to communicate effectively using English in real life situations. All of this was considered to be an additional challenge for me and other English language teachers.

On the other hand, teachers of other core subjects such as Mathematics and History only needed to convey content in the students' native language. This was apparently less challenging since students were only expected to understand and apply the concepts they were being presented in their own language, leaving limited room for any confusion associated with the medium of instruction. Having all core subjects in the Arab world taught in the native language during school, students do not go through the process of dissecting the language in order to understand the delivered content. Students only need to understand the content, rules or structures to meet certain educational objectives. This is a major difference between teaching languages in general and other subject areas.

Generally, my goal as a teacher was to support student learning, which required not only strong competence in the subject matter but also the ability to analyse the process of teaching as a set of dispositions, knowledge and reasoning skills that enable developing and testing previously set ideas about cause-effect relationships between teaching and learning (Hiebert *et al.*, 2007). Personally, subject knowledge was not much of an issue, since I was competent in using English as a bilingual speaker. However, the ability to reflect on and analyse different aspects that involve assessing previously set hypothesis about cause-effect relationships between my teaching and my students' ability to learn was very unclear. I assumed that while doing my masters in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, I would gradually acquire this skill.

Developing My Identity as a Teacher

I came to realise that newly appointed teachers, including me at that point, faced several obstacles at the beginning of their career. Teachers were assigned to classes that were least preferred by other, more experienced teachers. In addition, the majority of new teachers, including me, were left to teach such classes with little or no support by other experienced teachers, department heads or supervisors.

It became obvious that advising and mentoring teachers was not part of the professional environment in the school structure although, as suggested by Odell and Huling (2000), teacher mentoring relationships are considered a major support structure for inexperienced teachers. This added to the complexity of being a novice teacher. Internal training of new and experienced teachers was not a common habit either. The only apparent form of professional development received was through the feedback given by supervisors and department heads, which was not necessarily geared towards constructive and positive reinforcement. Supervisory feedback rarely gave the teachers the opportunity to personally reflect on their own teaching. The concept of reflection was non-existent at that point.

As a novice teacher, I felt that I had to deliver material throughout the semester to a number of students that were not familiar with me as a teacher or as a person. This placed my concern on classroom management techniques that would help me maintain control over the class rather than effective teaching strategies. Similar findings were noted by Odell and Huling (2000). My only strength was that I was a competent user of the language and that I was relatively close to the age group (12-17 years) of students I had been teaching.

Being a younger teacher meant that I found it easier to relate to my students than other experienced teachers. I also felt more comfortable and familiar with the use of modern communication and technological delivery tools that both my students and I found interesting in our daily lives. It was much easier for me to use computers, the Internet, videos and realia in my classroom than to simply stick to the textbook as the majority of other teachers did. Nonetheless, gaining the comfort and trust in teaching my students, and being aware of what interested them, did not come easily. There were a lot of frustrating experiences that sometimes made my students less interested in what I had wanted them to learn, as also demonstrated by Odell and Huling (2000). Such trials meant that my students were more liable to rebel against what I planned to teach them by expressing their lack of attention and willingness to take part in the lesson. This could also have suggested that I was less capable of teaching English regardless of being a competent user of English.

It was very confusing at the beginning, since most of my teaching had been based on how I had been taught when I was a student, and previous assumptions I had in mind which I thought were the best way to teach, confirming findings made by Odell and Huling (2000). The most common advice I was given, was not to approach my students in a friendly way. I was told that if I did begin my first lesson with a smile, my students would take this as an invitation to feel at ease with me as a teacher and not fear me being present. This would cause a loss of authority as a teacher and consequently my control over the class.

I came to the conclusion that the role of the teacher was a person who controlled, led and managed the class in a strict 'teacher-student' relationship. It was preferable to keep the 'student-teacher' and 'student-student' relationship at a minimal level due to the fear of losing control over the class. This was also observed in other subject classes and was a common teaching approach followed by the majority of teachers.

Through experience, I realised that it was not wrong to let my students feel at ease around me. At a later point I realised how strong the impact of a teacher can be in terms of students' perception of a lesson. If students are comfortable with the teacher, they are more involved in the lesson and find it easier to deal with new concepts, hold discussions in the classroom and express any frustrations. At that early stage in my teaching career, the only privilege I had was that my students liked and trusted me as an individual, and therefore were on their best behaviour to avoid upsetting me. This was very helpful in building a strong bond between myself as a teacher and my students. It gradually gave me more courage to use methods of teaching and delivery that were not traditional but were enjoyable at the same time, without having to put extra effort in maintaining control over the class. I had the strength of being comfortable and competent in the language I was teaching, relating well to my students interests and needs, and was welcomed to teach because my students liked me and did not want to give me a hard time.

On the other hand, as Abbot *et al.* (1999) found through their research on inexperienced teachers, most novice teachers, including me, felt frustrated with classroom discipline problems although they could see their students learn. English teachers had to

concentrate on proper use of English when teaching and avoid any potential mistakes that their students might point out, which would be linked to them being weak teachers. They had to put extra effort into maintaining control over the class in addition to using traditional forms of teaching that would not require them to divert their attention towards how the lesson is delivered. At the early phases of our career, our main focus was on classroom management instead of teaching or student learning (Fisher *et al.*, 1999).

Newly recruited teachers would usually teach the same way they were taught, maintaining the same teaching style unless advised otherwise. Making judgements about teaching experiences would usually come after becoming comfortable in teaching a group of students, and thus having more confidence in experimenting with new teaching strategies students may be more receptive towards. The main concern of novice teachers would be to impress any observers and maintain control over the lesson (Abbot *et al.*, 1999).

2.2.2 Learning to Become a Teacher

With the above mentioned personal observations, I was lucky enough to have realised at a very early stage in my career that I should consider structured ways for improvement. Another key observation noted was that the majority of people teaching English in Jordan, and throughout the majority of the Arab countries, did not hold any degrees in education that qualified them to become teachers. The majority of teachers held subject majors in English Language, Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Translation, Literature and Art, and other degrees linked to English language. In other words, teachers were mostly subject specialists who had not been exposed to any formal teacher education or preparation programmes. Teachers learned how to become educators and develop their own teaching techniques during their experience as teachers, through the challenges they face, the value they put into their work, their confidence and commitment, and finally the feedback and support they offered (Eraut and Maillardet, 2005). Due to the lack of any existing official professional support, it can be concluded that teachers' primary professional support is through learning from the workplace.

Formal teacher education and training does not appear to be a common pre-requisite to become a teacher in the majority of public and private schools. I was of the very few who held a degree in English and was working towards a postgraduate degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language without the intention to become an academic who would lecture in a university and discontinue teaching at schools, which was common. Teachers who pursued a post-graduate degree would do so in order to obtain better working and employment conditions in the hope of teaching at tertiary institutes rather than schools; this was thought to be more reputable and prestigious.

Based on my personal observations, the majority of teachers do not have the healthiest environment in which to teach and learn to become teachers, neither are they involved in pre-service teacher training programmes. Accordingly, as indicated in Eraut and Steadman (2005) in their research on learning from the workplace, the majority of knowledge that teachers acquire is from informal learning within the school itself. In accordance with my experience and the findings of Eraut and Steadman (2005), this informal learning is most significant for newly recruited teachers. Eraut and Steadman's (2005) have divided informal learning as follows:

Consultation and Collaboration within the working group itself: How teachers of the same subject work with one another, share experiences, offer support in teaching ideas and resources. It is the professional learning environment among teachers of the same school.

The Challenge of the Work itself: How newly employed teachers face the challenge of teaching a number of students, who are not familiar with the teachers' teaching practices, ideas and teaching methodology. The challenge was to control and manage the class, in addition to working towards a set of guidelines and expectations provided by the school management.

Consultation Outside the Work Group: How teachers consult with other individuals that do not belong to the school or department in order to face obstacles, make decisions and discuss possible solutions.

On the other hand, most of the informal learning that takes place in the mid-career of teachers occurs as a by-product of normal working processes such as discussions, shared experiences and decision making.

The following table is adapted from the study by Eraut and Steadman (2005) on how nurses learn in a workplace; it summarises the typology of early career learning. I found that it is also applicable to my, and others, experience as a teacher since both nurses and teachers have a lot in common. This includes working in large institutions, with a number of people who require our assistance and with a set of guidelines and rules provided by the institutions' management that need to be followed.

Apparently, within the Arab educational culture, being a teacher means that you are expected to know the majority, if not all, of the issues related to your subject major. This expectation is something that affects both novice and experienced teachers alike, and which results in limiting the teachers' ability to learn from the surrounding environment through constant inquiry and research. It also makes teachers less comfortable towards being open with values, theories and problems they may need support or help with.

Table 2.1: A Typology of Early Career Learning

Working process with learning as a by-product	Learning activities located within work or learning processes	Learning processes at or near the workplace
Participation in group processes	Asking questions	Being supervised, coached or mentored
Working alongside others	Listening	Shadowing
Consultation	Observing	Visiting other classes
Tackling challenges tasks and roles	Getting information	Independent study
Problem Solving	Learning from mistakes	Conferences
Trying things out	Reflecting	Short Courses
Consolidating, extending and refining skills	Locating resource people	Working for a qualification
Working with students	Giving and receiving feedback	

Source: Eraut and Steadman (2007, p. 2)

From the areas listed in Table 2.1, and based on my experience and educational observations through my current research, the identified learning processes in bold seem to be the most problematic for teachers when it comes to teaching, professional development and learning opportunities. This will be expanded upon below.

Learning as a By-Product of Work

Newly appointed teachers usually start off the academic year with an enthusiasm to participate in group processes, which could help them get to know other teachers working at the same school and give them an opportunity to discuss new experiences with one another. Later in their careers, teachers move away from such inter-activities as they see them as making them look weaker to their peers. Only a limited number of teachers would publicly admit that they are not familiar with a certain strategy or that they do not know about a certain topic or methodology, such as using interactive whiteboards, implementing continuous assessment measures and designing rubrics. Admitting to not knowing enough details about the content of the lesson may mean that, as a teacher, you are viewed as an incompetent educator. On the other hand, at the beginning of ones' career, it will appear as if the teacher is curious, attentive and ambitious to learn how to become a 'good' teacher.

Educational politics in the Arab world, and how teachers are perceived by senior management and school supervisors, makes it difficult for teachers to express their willingness or need to learn from the surrounding environment after a couple years of experience. This surrounding environment includes other teachers of the same subject, teachers of other subjects, educational resources, classroom observations and reflective thinking towards ones' own teaching. Participation in group processes tends to fade away through time labelling 'good' teachers as 'always good' teachers and 'traditional' teachers as 'so traditional' teachers. Teachers gradually compete with one another to prove their independence and ability to control the class, in addition to delivering and maintaining an excellent representation in class. Apparently, the sense of unity between teachers of the same subject is very low. Teachers of the same subject have a constant need to compete with one another instead of cooperating with one another in order to demonstrate their mastery of a set of skills and tools used within the classroom. The

sections below will further expand and exemplify how the rather reserved attitudes of teachers affects their professional learning environment.

Working Alongside Other Teachers

At the beginning of each academic year, teachers are commonly grouped into two main groups: on the one side, newly recruited experienced teachers that have joined the school and novice teachers who have just started to teach at that school, on the other side, teachers who have been working at the school for one year or more. Newly appointed teachers joining the school, with or without previous experience, would feel less able to communicate with one another and with the group of old teachers teaching at the school already, since at such an early stage they are still out of their comfort zone. This may be due to their feelings of alienation and not belonging to the group of teachers who had been working in the same school. It also may be due to them needing more time to feel comfortable in their surroundings.

On the other hand, due to limited teacher mobility, experienced teachers who have been teaching at the same school tend to have a stronger bonding relationship, which makes them more involved and comfortable with working alongside others. Apparently, teachers seem to form a community, which they belong to and feel at ease with, which keeps them more stable working within their comfort zone. This is another activity that gradually develops and improves over time. Teachers gradually feel more comfortable while working alongside other teachers who have been working with them for a few years, but tend to have reservations towards teachers they are not familiar with.

Consultation

Novice teachers apparently find a reasonable justification to consult with experienced teachers. Part of this consultation would be to establish new relationships with teachers who teach the same subject and can share their experiences. It is also part of creating a comfort zone, and understanding the important role of mentoring and working in a collaborative environment that would help in their fledgling career (Wang *et al.*, 2008). In the eyes of the school administration, they are hard workers who are seeking to improve and are regarded as excellent teachers.

With years of experience, teachers tend to become more reserved towards variable educational consultations such as managing cross-curricular topics, new terms, pronunciation and using an interactive whiteboard. Teachers concerned with their image fear being perceived as incompetent – despite the fact that some of the areas were new innovations, such as the interactive whiteboard. Teachers have an apparent obligation to appear as professional as possible. This may explain the attitude of the majority of experienced teachers who do not seem to be willing to be open to change. *‘We have been teaching this way for the past ten years, and never felt that we needed to change, why would we need to change now?’* is a question asked by one of the experienced teachers who were being trained on the implementation of student centred approaches when teaching English. It seems that the introduction of new teaching strategies threaten the teachers’ comfort zone. As with new concepts, introduction of any educational change is usually not welcomed since teachers may need time to become familiar with introduced change.

Tackling Challenging Tasks and Roles

Novice and less experienced teachers apparently have more concerns than teaching students and helping them learn. How teachers are viewed within the community they teach is a main concern. Would they appear to be sophisticated, hardworking, attractive, smart and well-organised, or would they appear to have low self-esteem and self-confidence, which, in turn, would affect how they teach and interact with other teachers? Teaching English language emphasises the need to have near native language competence in front of their students. As Wildman *et al.* (1989) further clarify, first year teachers take on responsibilities similar to that of experienced teachers while learning their job with limited experience and preparation. This in turn results in having novice teachers more focused on classroom management procedures rather than learning how to teach and improve student learning. In conclusion, tackling challenging tasks and roles would not be of concern for new and less experienced teachers, but only contributes to teachers’ learning opportunities towards the middle of their careers.

Teachers with years of experience may be more capable of focusing on aspects other than teaching English since they have already established consistent teaching patterns,

become comfortable in presenting themselves to new students, and feel secure in their surrounding working environment.

The presence of subject supervisors who visit schools for classroom observations puts teachers under pressure to perform at their best for a supervisor to praise and appreciate. This may be due to the approach supervisors follow in mentoring, which commonly involves criticism rather than constructive feedback on how teachers can improve students' learning opportunities. As noted earlier in the chapter, supervisors have a tendency to point out things that were wrong in a lesson instead of discussing the positive features and helping the teacher reflect on how they could improve the lesson if they were to teach it again.

Intentional learning from the workplace does not contribute strongly to becoming a teacher due to the micro-politics of the educational structure of schools; the relationship between teachers of the same subject, teachers and supervisors, teachers and the school management, together with the continuously developing relationship between the teachers and their own students. However, it is essential to note that mentoring is affected by educational culture. Mentors and supervisors in the Arab world are very similar to those in China, where they dominate conversations with teachers and are more likely to critique and make direct suggestions. This is different from mentors in the US, who have an equal opportunity to initiate conversational topics and reflect on teaching performance (Wang *et al.*, 2008).

Problem Solving

Problem solving is very much an inter-changing factor that depends on the teachers' willingness and social ability to communicate with other individuals within the workplace. Problem solving can be the role of teachers or administrators, in order to solve a problem that may have to do with one of the students, teachers or supervisors. It can also be related to the arrangements set for school improvement or having to organise an excellent open English Day at the end of the academic year. Problem solving would depend on the teacher as an individual and how they blend in their comfort zone in order to help in solving various problems they may face.

Teachers in the Arab world appear to be more reserved than outspoken, which makes them less open towards discussing particular problems. Those who are outspoken, tend to be louder and more aggressive than others, and gradually dominate the school scene before becoming a supervisor.

Trying Things Out

Trying things out and experimenting would relate mostly to new teachers who, again, are trying to impress the school administration with their eagerness to learn and gain a reputation of being a hard worker. Teachers who have experience usually do not have any concerns as to how others would perceive them. It seems that teachers begin their career while experimenting with strategies that have been recommended to them by fellow teachers, supervisors or through other sources. Once they are in their comfort zone, they gradually maintain a pattern for teaching that has proven to be successful and is the most comfortable and convenient for them to use (Ingersoll and Smith, 2004). Therefore, the majority of teachers usually maintain the same style of teaching for several years, and adopt newer strategies or practices only reluctantly.

This may also be due to the amount of regular exposure teachers have to professional development and training schemes that introduce them to new teaching resources, tools and aids. As noted earlier in this chapter, a very limited number of teachers in the Arab world have such opportunities. The number of teachers who have attended teacher education programmes, extensive training sessions and regular professional updating regarding educational practice, is very limited. Current trends in teaching such as, Computer Assisted Language Learning through the use of Interactive Whiteboards are still very new, although originally introduced in 1991, and the majority of teachers are not familiar with them (BECTA, 2003). Based on my classroom observations, the most common form of integration of technology in language classes is the use of PowerPoint presentations, which is very limiting and may not be as effective as using other means such as the Internet and other audio visual resources.

Given the limited exposure teachers have towards new techniques, the majority seem to believe that experimenting with new teaching styles, techniques or ideas would threaten their authority with their students, and put them outside their own comfort zone. As one

of the teachers asked during one of the workshops stated: *“I have been teaching this way for years and think I am doing more than a good job, so why do I have to change?”*. It seems that experienced teachers do not appreciate the need to change to address the continuously evolving needs of students.

It appears that teachers do not seem to appreciate the changes happening with English language as a means of communication, and with learners’ growing exposure to the language. For example, emails and mobile messaging were two things that did not exist 15-20 years ago. This lack of appreciation has caused a gap to develop between how teachers convey lessons and how students relate to the learning objectives of conveyed lessons. Younger students today tend to be more efficient at using technology than adults since they were born within an environment that encompassed this.

Given that the main language in most common communication resources is English, a recent shift has happened to students’ learning requirements and exposure to the language. This technology is very new to the majority of teachers. This gap does not seem to be obvious to experienced teachers and is not recognised as an active part in exposing students to English in order to support the development of their communication skills. It is difficult for most teachers to accept changes that have occurred globally and adapt these changes for use in their classes locally.

The lack of existing training opportunities has prevented teachers from becoming familiar with such technologies and consequently their ability to try them out. The majority of recent graduates use a more appealing style of delivery and establish a more understanding relationship with their students. Younger teachers are better able to understand and relate to their students’ needs and interests. The need for professional development schemes to support and guide novice teachers towards effective teaching techniques has become crucial. Odell and Huling (2000) also confirm this in their research on novice teachers, clarifying that mentoring and induction programmes are a major support structure for teachers early in their career that help in establishing their teaching patterns.

Consolidating, Extending and Refining Skills

Teaching skills and practices are mainly related to the teachers' personality and the nature of their surrounding educational culture. They also are highly related to the teachers' willingness to experiment and try out new techniques until proven to be effective, in other words, the teachers' willingness to take the initiative. Novice teachers who have the curiosity to explore ideas they had previously constructed about teaching, go through the usual exploration, trial, assessment and re-trial of strategies. Experienced teachers are more hesitant towards experimenting with new approaches. They also seem less willing to refine their teaching skills in relation to current educational developments, making them more resistant to change.

Working With Students

Although training and professional development programmes vary in their modes of introduction, foci and content, all their objectives encourage learner-centred instruction, where the knowledge students gain is constructed on both an individual and collaborative level (Brown *et al.*, 1989). Encouraging students to be active participants in classes is a key activity that views learning as a collaborative inquiry (Cohen, 1994) where the teacher is regarded as an organiser, facilitator, mentor and challenger of student learning (Bigelow, 1990). The primary goal in doing this is to fully connect students' experiences (Resnick, 1987), challenge their misconceptions and nurture their understanding of concepts across different subjects (Cohen *et al.*, 1993). The more teachers actively involve students in the lesson, the more effective they become at facilitating their students' ability to learn.

Learner-centred teaching that requires students' active participation in the lesson is a very recent concept for teachers in the Arab world. Based on my observations, discussions with teachers, and personal journal of experiences, everyone seems to be aware of what learner-centred teaching means, however its implementation is very far away at present.

Hiebert *et al.* (2003) and Santagata *et al.* (2002) both stress on the set of skills required to have teachers learn from how they teach their students and their teaching practices; specifying learning goals that students are supposed to learn, defining what students

have learnt, and analysing the teaching-learning process to propose teaching improvements. Teachers are encouraged to work as researchers to improve their teaching while valuing reflection, possibly by following an Action Research framework. Although this sounds very appealing and may be performed unintentionally by teachers, teachers do not have any regular induction on how to perform these skills effectively.

Many teachers in the Arab world do not intentionally learn from their work experience. Neither are they effectively exposed to or trained on such activities and tasks that help promote active learners. Feiman-Nemser (1983) notes the multiple stages of a teachers' career, having the first years the most crucial and problematic period for teachers. These few years have been found to shape teaching patterns and influence teacher retention (Ingersoll and Smith, 2004). Generally, the majority of teacher education and learning occurs as a by-product of teaching and not through structured methods that involve induction, training, mentoring and consulting. Teachers manage to learn themselves from their personal experiences of actually teaching students in the classroom. This makes it difficult to assess teachers' educational beliefs and practices given the varied interests that may exist mainly due to personal attributes rather than training experience.

Learning Through Teaching

Generally, experienced and novice teachers continuously learn from their experience in the workplace. Learning may involve collecting background information, knowing how to explain a new lesson, using a new teaching resource or technique, or learning in order to secure a promotion or raise in salary. This itself would involve several other learning activities.

The educational culture in the Arab world limits the ability of teachers to learn consciously as a by-product of their teaching experiences. Several tasks are already performed naturally as part of the job and are part of how teachers react to different or challenging situations. Learning through teaching comes subconsciously with teachers in the Arab world. Teachers are not commonly trained to reflect on their teaching experience, neither are they encouraged to do so by mentors.

Asking Questions

It is assumed that both experienced and novice teachers continuously inquire about things they are unfamiliar with. Inquiring reflects teachers' willingness to seek the support and help of other teachers. Due to the reserved and competitive nature of teachers, this learning opportunity depends on the teachers' self: if the teacher is likely to inquire about certain areas or to conduct research independently. Given that inquiring should be encouraged during professional learning environments through group activities, working alongside other teachers and consulting, it is rarely appreciated by teachers. During my early years of teaching, I did not experience any involvement in collegial communities that allowed me to discuss and share concerns.

Attitudes of teachers towards inquiring indicates that the habit of inquiry commonly deteriorates as the teacher gains teaching experience over time. This is due to developing a sense of comfort in independent learning and having a better understanding for teaching requirements.

Listening, Observing and Reflecting

Listening and observing are two essential activities that support learning within the work field and are highly related to reflection. Having teachers more open towards the idea of listening and observing would facilitate teachers' learning opportunities and better help them accommodate themselves to strategies that are associated with educational change. The ability to reflect smoothly and constructively on individual experiences in comparison to other teacher experiences, requires teachers to appreciate the importance of reflection and how it can guide them towards improving their own practices. Teachers do not commonly engage in reflection and observation, and do not necessarily appreciate the experiences of other teachers. Peer observation and reflection is commonly linked to being criticised by others instead of being offered constructive feedback. This is commonly due to the micro-politics of the educational structure in relation to how monitoring and working with teachers is arranged with supervisors and department heads. Professional development schemes are necessary to raise teacher awareness towards the value of such activities.

Learning From Mistakes

The ability to learn from ones' mistakes comes naturally. The ability to identify mistakes in practice is an issue that needs to be considered, especially in teaching. Many teachers I have worked with in the past couple of years do not seem to realise what went wrong in a lesson, or what could have been improved to ensure the delivery of learning objectives. Teachers seem to have a constant willingness to blame students for their lack of motivation and unwillingness to involve themselves actively in the lesson. Teachers do not appear to appreciate that it is their role to facilitate learning and make the lesson more appealing to students by understanding students' needs and interests.

Although teachers may be encouraged to make the lesson more engaging for their students, the majority of teachers tend to accommodate this over time through their subconscious reflection. Teachers are not trained in conscious reflection for the purpose of improving students' learning environment and therefore it is not a conscious activity that teachers practice.

Learning from mistakes cannot be considered as one of the commonly effective strategies conducted by teachers in the Arab world. Learning from mistakes relies highly on the ability to observe, listen and reflect on ones' teaching practices based on previously defined objectives, and whether these objectives have been met or not. So far teachers have not had the opportunity to understand the value of learning from ones' mistakes on becoming a better teacher. Reflection is not a conscious activity that teachers are involved in for the purpose of improving learning conditions for students. Teachers are not aware of the value of reflection and have not had the opportunity to understand it: therefore it is inefficiently practiced.

Locating and Using Resource People

Being able to work with teachers who teach at the same school and have different interests, goals or experiences is highly encouraged by seniors and supervisors. Unfortunately, however, this is not easily accepted within the underlying school politics within the public sector. Teachers still do not appear comfortable with the idea of contacting other teachers for advice, help or further support. There is an obvious competition among the majority of teachers who are eager to establish a reputation in

the school community in which they work. Teachers apparently have a preference towards working independently rather than in groups or with colleagues. This has to do with the local educational culture and can only be observed while working as a trainer if not a teacher.

Learning Processes at or Near School

Belonging to a larger educational organisation or entity usually means being exposed to a variety of professional development opportunities through seminars, workshops and training sessions. Professional development programmes are already becoming a growing priority in the Arab world. The majority of the Ministries of Education have started making major changes to the curriculum being implemented, accompanied by full professional development programmes that involve training teachers, supervisors and senior supervisors. For example, countries like Libya and Iraq are now undergoing a full educational reform and providing training that involves a materials' induction for teachers to help support recently adopted curricula nationwide.

In countries in the Gulf, for example Qatar, UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait, as will be clarified in the following sections, the majority of the teaching staff are expatriates. This limits the control of pre-service training teachers receive. Therefore, learning that takes place after employment is considered to provide the most substantial amount of professional learning for expatriate teachers. For effective learning to take place while teaching, teachers are encouraged to be involved in a variety of activities as will be clarified in the following sections.

Being Supervised, Coached and Mentored

A lot of emphasis is placed on these three major activities in schools in the UAE and other places in the Arab world. They are usually conducted as part of the school educational culture and not voluntarily. This is done mainly to evaluate teacher performance to estimate and evaluate the teachers' ability to deliver, manage and lead the class. Supervision is perceived differently from that in international educational institutes, where supervision, coaching and mentoring is part of the post-training support teachers are given (Wang *et al.*, 2008). In the existing contexts, supervision

involved the investigation of the teachers' ability to deliver the lesson as per the expectations of the designated supervisor.

Among the countries I have worked in as a teacher trainer in the Arab world, and specifically the UAE, it seems that mentoring and supervising are mainly aimed at criticising lesson processes and how teachers perform. Teachers do not appear to be comfortable with being observed. This is most probably due to them understanding that the observer is there to form critical judgements on their performance instead of constructive feedback. Being supervised and coached is considered a threat to language teachers, as it can affect their job stability, promotion and their reputation as a teacher. Mentoring is not very common as teachers do not appear to appreciate advice from fellow teachers; therefore, teachers commonly work independently rather than in groups and tend to be more reserved towards sharing their practices.

Visiting Other Sites

During my career as a teacher, I never had an opportunity to visit other teaching sites other than the ones I worked in. Visiting other schools was not a regular activity given the complications and formalities associated in such arrangements. Visiting other sites requires official permission from both the Ministry of Education and the school management. Site visits may perhaps be scheduled informally, but this rarely happens.

Observing other classes was rarely conducted or observed as a teaching practice. Learning from others was not a common practice that I experienced as a teacher or observed as a trainer. Interestingly, observing demonstration lessons was a very common request from teachers undergoing training. It was preferable to watch teachers give a lesson rather than be involved in a workshop or session that reflected on various approaches that could be implemented in a lesson. This further demonstrates the need to have such opportunities encouraged through systematic professional development schemes.

Conferences and Short Courses

English teachers in the Arab world rarely have the luxury of being funded to attend external training programmes. Generally, they have the opportunity to attend commercial conferences that are sponsored by publishers, which are more commercial

rather than educational. Although these conferences are the main source of external input for teachers, they do not serve a well-structured educational purpose and commonly aim to promote publications. In the case of existing educational sessions, no follow up is available to ensure that teachers have mastered the set of skills highlighted in sessions.

Being a teacher allowed me to experience and observe the general environment teachers worked within. Neither the collegial educational culture nor educational politics of common and public education institutes encouraged intentional learning or professional development disciplines. Preparing to be a teacher was not commonly seen as a prerequisite to being an effective teacher. Opportunity of employment was the most common reason teachers became who they were. Frustration and lack of involvement was a common observation noted with experienced teachers. Although novice and less experienced teachers were eager to perform in schools, I concluded that this was commonly due to the actual excitement that comes with a new job. My teacher training experience and observations with non-native speaking teachers of different origins further supported the above noted views.

2.3 Teacher Training Experience

Upon completing my masters' degree, I considered other opportunities that allowed me to work alongside teachers and help them in developing their careers. I became interested in teacher training and professional support in the hope of giving other teachers a better opportunity to learn from their teaching experience. Seen as a better professional option than teaching at that time, I began working as an educational consultant, mainly targeting non-native speaking teachers in a number of countries in Europe and in the Arab world. Although I appreciated working with students and enjoyed encouraging them towards learning opportunities, teacher training provided me with the flexibility of working in the field of education in aim of supporting teachers who had similar experiences to me.

After several years of being involved in teacher training projects, it occurred to me that there was scope for further research within this area. I hoped to make my research interest more official through another post-graduate degree, which would also facilitate

in publishing my research findings and make them accessible to other educators working within the same domain.

During my period of research, I had three key experiences that effectively contributed to my research. At the earliest phases of my research, I had the opportunity to work with a number of teachers from the EU for a couple of months. Shortly afterwards, while trying to identify an appropriate sample for my study, I had an interesting experience while working with a group of teachers from Jordan, who I had initially assumed I would continue to work with until the end of my research. Based on my experience in Jordan, I decided to work towards identifying another, more appropriate, sample for my study from the United Arab Emirates. I hoped that this sample would be more interactive and willing to contribute to my research.

The following sections will narrate my experience in the three contexts and elaborate on their contributions to my research.

2.3.1 The European Union

The majority of the tasks I performed in a number of countries in the Arab world such as Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait were related to materials' training sponsored by publishers. I was commonly asked to provide training for new publication users as part of the post-adoption services publishers provided to clients. Through my experience as a teacher trainer, which coincided with the earliest phases of developing my research objectives, I also had an opportunity to work on a European project that required the development of teacher training content strictly for teacher education purposes. This was less promotional and more academic, unlike assignments I had in the Arab world. This provided the opportunity to be more aware of the possible differences that existed between Europe and the Arab world in available professional development schemes for teachers.

'Teachers from the EU are eligible for sponsorship for professional development and training programmes every three years' noted Helena, an English teacher from Greece (14-01-07). EU teachers apparently had the opportunity of being funded for the enrolment and participation in teacher training and professional development

programmes being offered abroad. The funding provided a better opportunity for teachers to be trained on current educational practices. It also gave teachers opportunity to network and socialise in English with other teachers from the EU. *‘EU novice and experienced teachers are given the opportunity to further enrich and strengthen their language skills as individuals through various social programmes embedded within these professional development schemes’* (Interview, 12-01-07). Accordingly, all developed sessions had to be in the form of a hands-on approach that *‘would give the teachers an opportunity to implement suggested strategies instantly and among other EFL teachers while brainstorming new practical ideas for teachers to take back home’* (Interview, 12-01-07).

The project I was assigned to work on was part of a scheme a European entity provided, which provided courses for English language teachers working in secondary and adult education contexts. Requirements for enrolment noted that teachers must come from and work in Europe. Such an opportunity allows for the enhancement of teacher communication skills in addition to the development of ideas on educational practices. Teachers are also given the chance to become exposed to the different cultures of participants through various interactive social tasks. In addition, teachers are encouraged to share favourable practices and exchange ideas and materials between other participating teachers and trainers (<http://www.ectarc.com/144/page/effective-english-language-teaching-in-europe.aspx>, on 23-12-2006).

Travel arrangements and facilitations motivate teachers to participate. Attendees are accommodated in affordable bed and breakfast accommodation near the training centre, and have dinner together each evening in a local restaurant. The course cost is affordable and includes all costs except flights, transfers from the airport and lunches. Teachers can also apply to the Lifelong Learning programme (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm) for further funding.

Due to the broad similarities between teachers I had worked with from a number of countries in the EU and the Arab world, being non-native speakers, I considered this as an opportunity to collect data from participating teachers who were non-native speakers

themselves and functioned within similar working conditions as teachers who came from the Arab world.

With the approval of the centre management, I arranged to collect the data through the needs assessment questionnaire I had prepared for use for the purposes of my research. I also arranged for informal interviews with other teachers who were interested in my research and wanted to share their own experiences: in total, I worked with four groups of teachers. Groups had an average of 20 teachers per group. The two week period of training for each group of teachers gave the opportunity to assess teachers who also teach in non-native speaking countries. I believed that this opportunity was one that could be used as an initial step towards defining the differences between the needs of these teachers and non-native teachers of English from the Arab world.

I worked with another native speaking British trainer during the project. The strategy I devised was to begin the training with an introduction to the purpose of the training, expected outcomes and opportunities to be experienced during their two week stay. I introduced myself and gave details on my educational and professional background and research interests. This included an introduction to the questionnaire I was planning to distribute among them for an initial needs assessment and analysis in order to best define their training interests and needs and develop the training content accordingly. I also noted that any information to be provided on these questionnaires would remain confidential and, upon their approval, used for my research. Interestingly, a few teachers expressed interest and asked me to provide more details about my research interests. They discussed their research interests and appeared to be genuinely interested in taking part in my project.

Teachers here seem to appreciate me and respect me as a researcher and educator. I feel that they have a sincere interest in my research intentions and are willing to go out of their way to provide me with the information I need. I felt that they appreciate me as an external expert and mentor and hold a lot of respect for me, I find that interesting and confusing when the teachers I had known and worked with had reacted in the opposite sense, expressing their unwillingness to cooperate with me and their seemingly sarcastic reaction towards my research (Journal, January 2007).

Teachers were also familiar with practitioner research and the Action Research framework being devised for my research. The majority of teachers expressed their sincere interest in the nature of my research and maintained contact with me even after the training programme had come to an end.

Having gathered the teachers' initial needs and training requirements through the distributed questionnaire and informal interviews, broadly the analysis revealed the following:

Attitudes of Teachers

- The attitude of teachers seemed to be very positive in terms of being involved in training and professional development programmes.
- Teachers had a keen interest and willingness to share and discuss their experiences with fellow teachers who were involved in the training programme. Both experienced and novice teachers had a strong cooperative attitude towards one another. There was no apparent discrimination between experienced and novice teachers. Ideas sourced out by less experienced teachers were well appreciated by experienced, teachers particularly when it came to modern teaching practices.
- Teachers were open towards expressing their weaknesses and preferences towards improvement. They also offered to discuss their concerns, hoping that they would be able to have their voice heard through my research and the workshops conducted during the training sessions.
- All teachers, experienced and novice, had a similar positive attitude towards the sessions conducted and actively participated in them, as trainees, teachers and educated individuals. It seemed that, on the whole, they took the training programme as an opportunity to talk, discuss and expose themselves as teachers among others. Teachers did not classify themselves according to experience. Instead, the majority of the teachers shared experiences and ideas they could actively bring to the class.
- The overall attitude of teachers towards the initial needs assessment was very positive. Teachers were eager to complete the questionnaires and share their

ideas, points of view and experiences through both formal and informal interviews.

Training and Professional Development Opportunities

- Teachers from the EU had a better opportunity to be involved in regular professional development training programmes conducted abroad, and within English speaking countries, specifically the United Kingdom possibly due to its proximity. This was further facilitated with the existence of sponsorships and training programmes at an affordable cost.
- Teachers were familiar with practitioner research that utilised an Action Research framework. They also appeared to have experience in using such a framework within their own classes. Researching ones educational practice to improve teaching practices was very common and welcomed.
- All the teachers had attended teacher education colleges with the intention of becoming teachers.
- Teachers were generally aware of their own language weaknesses and took every opportunity that would help enrich their own vocabulary and language use. They enjoyed the concept of developing their own language knowing that it was an essential aspect towards being a successful teacher. Consequently, they took any opportunity available to use English as a medium of communication among themselves as well as speaking with other native speakers of the language.

Trainer and Researcher Identity

- Social background and ethnic origin also played a strong role in how the teachers felt towards me as a trainer. Teachers had a constant assumption that I was Jewish American, and were interested in knowing further about my background and how I became involved in such projects. They were very keen to know more about my work with Ministries of Education in the Arab world and Europe.
- There was a strong tendency for teachers to express their appreciation towards American based culture. Teachers assumed that the American approach in training was more favourable than the British. This assumption was based on the training strategies I used compared with the other trainer. Adopting a more hands

on approach had participating teachers involved in all sessions. I also devised strategies I assumed would better address the needs of participants. I did this because I believed I had a better understanding of what non-native speaking teachers experienced being a non-native speaking teacher myself.

- As a researcher and trainer, I felt more comfortable leaving them to their assumption in regards to my origin. As observed with teachers in the Arab world and internationally, a native speaking trainer is initially much more appreciated and valued than a non-native one (Kamhi-Stein, 2000). However, some research has reflected that some non-native speaking trainers are more capable of delivering, training and relating to EFL teachers of English who teach non-native speaking students within foreign speaking environments (Sheorey, 1986). Sheorey (1986) elaborates that non-native speaking trainers are more aware of the obstacles non-native speaking teachers face being non-native speakers themselves. They are also more understanding towards the process that students are involved in while learning a foreign language. However, this was not a concept that was appreciated by the majority of teachers, unless proven otherwise.
- I felt that if my true origins were revealed, it would threaten how the trainee teachers saw me, as findings made by other language teachers or trainers has shown (Amin, 1997). Nevertheless, at some point towards the middle of the training programme, and in situations where I felt at ease in revealing my identity, I did inform a few of the trainee teachers (those with whom I built a strong relationship on a social and professional level), about personal details that I would not have shared with them at an initial stage. From approximately 80 teachers, I only faced one negative reaction towards revealing my identity, from a teacher from Denmark. She assumed that people from the Arab world had a number of conservative and religious restraints that prevented us from developing as a society.
- I came to reflect on this as a researcher and found that, initially, I was working towards building a strong trusting relationship between myself as a researcher and trainer and the trainee teachers. It was only when I felt that this relationship would not be under threat that I revealed further personal details about myself. It

was more of a precautionary action I took towards dealing with teachers to avoid any complications associated with revealing such information. It is not necessary to mention the role of politics and how it has an impact on how individuals perceive one another. My experience with other teachers in the Arab world also had an influence on how I felt towards other teachers I trained. I assumed that if they were aware of my background, nationality and origin, it would have a negative impact on how they responded to my presence and their willingness to further cooperate with me throughout the stages of my research.

- Teachers were more open and comfortable with me than with the other native speaking male trainer. They were more eager to interact with me on a social and professional level as well. This may be due to my personal nature of being social as an individual. However, I also felt that it was because I related to the teachers' needs and interests better than the other trainer did. This was due to my experience in working with other teachers who were non-native speakers as well as being a non-native speaking teacher myself. I always assumed that I was one of the teachers taking part in my session, reflecting on tasks I asked teachers to do. I was after sessions that involved personal and professional reflection that would have a positive impact on teachers' attitude towards their own teaching practices.
- Gender may also have had an active role in how teachers perceived me, as the majority of trainee teachers were also female. However, this was not an area that I considered significant with my experience with teachers from the EU.
- Researcher identity played a very strong part in how the teachers responded to my presence, inquiries and requests. They appeared to hold more appreciation towards me knowing that I was sincerely interested in the most appropriate way of addressing their identified needs. All teachers were aware that I was planning to use some of the data collected for the purpose of my research and appreciated that their input was of value to another professional at some point.

My experience in working with a number of teachers coming from the EU, within an environment outside the Arab world was a very rewarding one. It increased my

awareness of the opportunities that the majority of teachers from the Arab world commonly miss and do not have.

2.3.2 Jordan

As part of my fieldwork, I had originally planned to conduct my research at the first school I was employed to teach in. Although well received by the school management as a previous employee and student, I was not welcomed as a researcher. After discussing the logistics of my research and, the nature of how participants would need to contribute, I received a lukewarm response from both the head of the English language department and the language teachers.

Action Research was not locally understood or regarded as a legitimate form of educational research. There was a continuous need to classify my research as either quantitative or qualitative. Teachers appeared not to value the research process or to see it as a professional development opportunity that might help develop their own teaching practices and pedagogies. Teachers were reluctant to cooperate through the needs assessment questionnaires and, this became evident in the delayed response and late submission of their completed questionnaires.

I had assumed that if I had been granted permission to conduct my research by the school management, teachers might feel obliged to accept me as a researcher and offer their cooperation. However, this was not the case.

Jordan was my initial experience as a researcher. It was rather a frustrating experience. I did not expect this reaction from the group of teachers I had previously worked with. I felt rejected as a researcher though not as an individual. It was apparent that teachers did not want to be involved in my research, possibly because they felt it was not a job obligation. The Action research frame was not familiar to them, nor were they interested, or curious enough, to explore it further as a potential vehicle of professional development. Given these circumstances it became impossible for me to proceed with the planned fieldwork.

I needed a new sample of teachers that worked in a similar educational context and who were subject to similar circumstances. Teachers would need to be non-native speakers of English, having Arabic as a mother tongue and without any official teaching qualifications. This meant that my sample would need to be selected from an educational culture similar to that of Jordan.

2.3.3 Concluding Experiences in the Arab World

Apart from my experience with teachers from a number of countries in the European Union and the first sample selected for my study in Jordan, I have had the opportunity to work with other teachers from a number of countries in the Arab world. My work mainly was as a teacher trainer for Arabic mother tongue teachers in countries including Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait. My experience generated many observations, which can be summarised as follows:

Attitudes of Teachers

- The attitude of the majority of EU teachers seemed to be very positive in terms of being involved in training and professional development programmes. Teachers from different countries in the Arab world appeared to have limited interest in the training schemes, although offered to them at no cost and within their school premises.
- The majority of EU teachers had a keen interest and willingness to share and discuss their experiences with fellow teachers who were involved in training programmes. Both experienced and novice teachers had a strong cooperative attitude towards one another. There was no apparent discrimination between experienced and novice teachers. Ideas voiced by less experienced teachers were well appreciated by experienced teachers when it came to modern teaching practices.
- The majority of teachers from the EU, experienced and novice, had a similar positive attitude towards the sessions conducted, and actively participated in them, as trainees, teachers and educated individuals. It seemed that they took the training programme as a whole as an opportunity to talk, discuss and expose themselves as teachers among others. Teachers did not classify themselves

according to experience. Instead, the majority of the teachers shared experiences and ideas they could actively bring to the class. However, it was common for experienced teachers coming from the Arab world to resist or refuse to follow recommended practices they were not familiar with.

- Although the attitude of teachers from the EU towards the initial needs assessment was very positive, the teachers I worked with from the Arab world were more hesitant to provide useful data that would help in identifying their needs and contribute to the research.
- Teachers from countries I worked with in the Arab world appeared to be more reserved in expressing their interests and weaknesses. On the other hand, the majority of EU teachers were not ashamed of expressing their weaknesses and preferences towards improvement. They also offered to discuss their concerns, hoping that they would be able to have their voice heard through my research and the workshops conducted during the training sessions.

Training and Professional Development Opportunities

- Teachers from the EU had a better opportunity to be involved in regular professional development training programmes conducted abroad, and within English speaking countries, specifically the United Kingdom possibly due to its proximity. This was further facilitated with the existence of sponsorships and training programmes at an affordable cost.
- Teachers from the EU were more familiar with practitioner research that devised an Action Research framework. They also appeared to have experience in using such a framework within their own classes. Researching educational practice as a teacher wanting to improve teaching practices was very common and welcomed.
- All the teachers from the EU had attended teacher education colleges with the intention of becoming teachers. This is different from the majority of teachers from the Arab world, where people approached the profession of teaching with no official qualifications to become teachers, but rather as subject specialists.
- The majority of EU teachers were generally aware of their own language weaknesses and took every opportunity to help enrich their own vocabulary and

language use. Traveling to the UK allowed them to use English as a medium of communication among themselves as well as speaking with other native speakers of the language. This was an opportunity that did not exist for teachers from the Arab world.

Trainer and Researcher Identity

- Social background and ethnic origin also played a strong role in how teachers from the EU and Arab world perceived me as a trainer and a researcher. Teachers from the EU, although assuming I was Jewish American, welcomed my contributions and were interested in knowing further about my background and how I became involved in such projects. They were very keen in knowing further about my work with Ministries of Education in the countries I had worked in the Arab world and Europe. However, the teachers I worked with from the Arab world appeared to be cooperative only when not knowing my background.
- Researcher identity played a very strong part in how the teachers responded to my presence, inquiries and requests. They held more appreciation to me given that I was interested in conveying their views to others through my research. On the other hand, teachers I had worked with from the Arab world were not familiar with the nature of my research and held less appreciation towards what I was trying to do as a practitioner researcher.

My experience gave me a better perspective on the attitudes of non-native speaking teachers involved in training schemes. It also made me more aware of the general needs of teachers I worked with in countries in the Arab world. This fed into my approach in other assignments I took, one of which was the UAE, where my Action Research project was implemented.

2.4 The United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Based on my personal observation while working in a number of countries in the Arab world, there has only recently been a growing awareness towards the importance of pre-service training schemes, induction programmes and professional learning environments for teachers. Arab countries with a better economy and ability to fund teacher training

schemes, such as countries in the Arabian Gulf, became more aware of these schemes after being approached by international organisations that offer educational services, such as the Centre for British Teachers (<http://www.cfbt.com/>) and Mosaica Education (<http://mosaicaeducation.com/about-mosaica/>). Although serving an educational purpose, these entities approached ministries of education mainly in the hope of expanding their international business opportunities.

With this awareness came a strong desire towards initiating these programmes immediately, particularly in the UAE and Qatar, countries that owned a strong growing economy that attracted organisations and individuals from all over the world. Expatriates from the UK, USA, Canada and Australia were recruited to be involved in the development of these programmes, not realising that teacher induction and mentoring are highly related to social and educational culture. The effect of such schemes was limited in comparison to those offered in the West. With the continuous feedback received on the limitations of training schemes offered by external parties, this further confirmed the importance of developing a professional development scheme that best addresses the needs of teachers in the Arab world, teachers who have not been previously trained on educational practices, or been involved in regular post-educational teacher induction programmes.

I was offered the position of Academic Consultant for a leading English publisher that held major projects in the Arab world, one of which was the UAE. My main duty was to support the Ministry of Education in implementing a new curriculum in its middle and secondary schools. Initially, the main objective was to support teachers in becoming familiar with the new curriculum adopted. This gradually evolved into developing a teacher training scheme that effectively addresses the needs of public school teachers. My assignment allowed me to work closely with a group of participants; these were eventually taken as the sample of my study. The following section will provide an overview of my experience in the UAE. The UAE in itself provided a challenging environment to work within and was found to be an ideal example reflecting the existing needs of teachers in the Arab world.

2.4.1 Introduction to the UAE

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a Middle Eastern desert-and-coastal nation, rich in oil. It is formed of seven states and situated in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula in Southwest Asia on the Persian Gulf, bordering Oman and Saudi Arabia. Abu Dhabi is the largest emirate and is the nations' capital. Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah, and Umm al-Quwain are the other emirates that form the United Arab Emirates (Abdullah, 1978).

Founded in 1971, the UAE is one of the world's youngest nations; it has developed rapidly since the discovery of oil in the early 1960s (Al Saifi, 2007). It has a population of approximately 2.5 million, with approximately 20% being Emirati nationals and 80% being expatriates mainly from other Arab countries (23%), South Asian (50%) and other expatriates from foreign societies (8%). Its enormous revenues generated from its oil and gas industry are distributed to the national population in the form of free public education, housing, medical services and secured government jobs (Richardson, 2004).

The UAE is considered to be a magnet for economic immigration. People from all over the world (Europe, Asia, America as well as the Middle East) fly to the UAE seeking a better living or a change in lifestyle. Since the discovery of oil, together with the economic boom that followed it, the UAE's population structure has changed dramatically. With constant migration, Majaydeh (2003) has estimated that the UAE national population does not exceed 5% of the country's total population; in addition their percentage within the workforce does not exceed 10%.

One of the key reasons encouraging expatriates to migrate to the UAE is availability of work opportunities with high incomes in comparison to their home countries; in addition there is a shortage of manpower in the UAE. The majority of expatriates working for the public sector, including the Ministry of Education (MOE), are Arabs coming from countries including Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and Tunisia. However, the majority of expatriates working within the labour force (private sector?) come from Pakistan and India leaving the senior private sector to expatriates from the UK, USA and Canada as well as Arab countries.

2.4.2 The UAE's Lingua Franca

English is the most dominantly practised language in the Middle East when it comes to communicating and interacting in social, academic and professional contexts with others. During the past decade, the need to be fluent in a second language has become more of a labour market demand as well as a social class requirement. English is the most common language spoken in the Middle East and the Gulf after Arabic. It is considered to be an essential tool of communication in different contexts; this may be due to the British Colonial influence.

As clarified in the introduction on the UAE, my research has selected a gulf country in isolation, which is inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups resulting in what may be termed a multinational society (Al Saifi, 2007). This is also considered to be one of the key reasons to have given the research a rich context.

Although Ghubash (1990) has stated that female UAE nationals accounted for 4% of the total workforce, this percentage has dramatically increased within the past few years. More female UAE nationals have started going out to work, leaving house chores and the daily care of their children to housemaids who originally came from countries such as Pakistan, India, the Philippines and Indonesia. As a result, children would need to learn a new language other than Arabic, since these housemaids rarely have efficient competence in Arabic. As stated by Sharhan (1990), 65% of children whose families had hired housemaids learnt a new language, which were primarily Urdu and English.

Having grown into such a cosmopolitan area, a need to communicate with one another created a challenge in terms of identifying the most commonly spoken language within the area. Although Arabic is the official language of the UAE, the diversity of immigrant origins has created the need to use a common language that could be used in official and non-official settings, including a form of pidginised Arabic (Al Saifi, 2007). Pidginised Arabic is a combination of Arabic and several native languages used by immigrants coming from Pakistan, India and Iran. Nevertheless, the most popular and common language used between individuals tends to be English.

With the economic growth occurring in the UAE, the number of the languages spoken is continuously increasing. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, large numbers of Eastern Europeans have also migrated to the UAE, and within the past four years thousands of Chinese people have been working in trade particularly in Dubai. Within the major cities of the UAE (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Al Ain), most sales assistants speak another language in addition to Arabic and English.

The British colonisation of the Middle East in the early 19th century had a major role in imposing the use of English language as the official language of the local government and commercial activities in cities. This could also justify the existence of so many English words used in UAE colloquial Arabic. Table 2.2 lists a few English words that are commonly used in the UAE Arabic dialect:

On the other hand, the UAE Arabic dialect has several words borrowed from other languages such as Urdu, Turkish and Persian. This makes the UAE Arabic dialect more complicated than other Arabic dialects in Arabic speaking countries such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine.

Due to constant contact with expatriates, many UAE nationals have become multilingual, with the ability to speak three or more languages efficiently; these include Arabic, English and Urdu. The use of the different languages in this case would not be restricted to listening and speaking only, it may also involve the ability to read and write confidently (Al Saifi, 2007). This state of multi-lingualism has affected the position of Arabic being used as the first choice of language for purposes of communication as in other Arab countries. This may be due to the freedom expatriates have in communicating with one another using the language of their choice without needing to learn Arabic in order to communicate efficiently with others.

Table 2.2: Common Words Used in Arabic Originally From English

Word in English	Pronunciation in Arabic
Light	Leit
Motor	Motar
Rubber	Rubbal
Tyre	Taayer
Visa	Wiza
Air conditioning	Kandeisen
Taxi	Takse
Driver	Dreiwel
Wire	Waayer
Cinema	Senema
Body	Bode
Bicycle	Seikel
Pump	Bamp
Glass	Glaas
Gallon	Kalan
Wrong Side	Ranseid
Hose	Hoz
Leak	Lik
Lorry	Lore
Truck	Trak
Bottle	Batel
Spring	Spreng

Source: Al Saifi (2007, p. 45)

Within the UAE Ministry of Education it has generally been understood that, although English is one of the dominant languages used commonly on a social basis, students graduating from schools, having studied twelve years of English still seem to have difficulty in using English within an academic context. Therefore, the majority of students graduating and proceeding to tertiary education are required to take further intensive English language courses to raise their English language performance. Nevertheless, they still seem to fail in communicating effectively within academic or formal contexts. Interestingly, the majority of secondary school graduates can use English in their day-to-day lives. However, the language competence they have does not seem to be recognised within academic contexts.

The UAE Ministry of Education and Higher Education have realised this and taken it as a challenge. The Ministry of Education decided to improve the materials adopted in schools and train teachers on new curricula that could better prepare students for studying in English at tertiary level. It seemed that students' inability to study in English, as in the majority of colleges and universities in the UAE, was blamed on the English language curriculum being implemented even though there was a lack of professional training for teachers. The sudden change in teaching materials and expectations towards teachers has put them under extreme pressure to accommodate unrealistic expectations from the Ministry of Education within such a short period.

2.4.3 Educational Policy in the UAE

In light of its growing economy and existing presence regionally and internationally, the UAE aims to build a competitive and resilient economy that places it within the leading countries of the world by year 2021. As part of the Vision 2021, the UAE is working towards establishing a cohesive society that is loyal to its identity and enjoys the highest standards of living within a nurturing and sustainable environment (<http://www.vision2021.ae/home-page.html>).

Of the main policy strands, responsibility, destiny, prosperity and knowledge, which define this desire is the United in Knowledge vision that expresses the ambition to establish a competitive economy driven by knowledgeable and innovative Emiratis. This vision requires that all Emiratis make a valuable contribution to their nation's growth by increasing their knowledge and using their talents in innovative driven ways. In order to achieve this, a lot of emphasis is placed on the education of the youth. Accordingly, the UAE has recently been undergoing many changes towards improving its educational system. This includes the revision of areas related to the delivery and provision of education to the youth: the curricula used in schools, availability of technical and modern resources, school management and most importantly teacher qualifications and support.

Due to the desire for rapid change and improvement, the UAE has been continuously struggling to define the best and fastest ways to have these improvements take place. This has been perceived by some decision makers in the Ministry of Education to be

rather unrealistic, specifically in relation to educational change. Consequently, teacher preparedness programmes that aim towards updating educational practices have been of recent interest to the UAE Ministry of Education. These programmes would help teachers handle these changes, which have been a big challenge given the diverse community teachers come from. This goes in line with their policy to develop their native force to become more independent and less reliant on expatriate expertise.

2.4.4 Nationalisation

The large expatriate community has recently caused concern regarding national values (generated from the Arab Islamic culture), being diluted by foreign values. In response to this, the UAE government has recently initiated a programme that serves towards nationalisation in all sectors. Nationalisation mainly involves employing and replacing current expatriates with qualified nationals who can meet job requirements. However, this also contradicts their interest in economic globalisation and the demand for international business practices (Richardson, 2004). The nationalisation is being processed throughout both private and public sectors, including trade, industry, health and education.

With this change being encouraged, a group of colleges throughout the UAE, under the name of 'The Higher Colleges of Technology', have taken charge of the educational sector. They will develop teacher education programmes that offer degrees to increase teachers' qualifications, specifically in the field of English language teaching and computer science. As Richardson (2004) notes, educators developing these degrees mainly come from western societies such as Australia, North America, Canada and the United Kingdom, bringing with them 'western' notions of knowledge and educational practices, although such practices may not be applicable within the UAE's educational context. Minnis (1999) further concludes that educational practices must be filtered through the local culture, in this case the Arab Islamic culture of the UAE, if they are to be successfully adapted to meet the needs of teachers and teacher educators. Therefore existing professional development schemes do not appear to address the growing needs of teacher preparedness programmes in the UAE. This is considered to be a major challenge, since the professional development of teachers would need to be thoroughly

analysed in terms of the variety of demographic origin and educational backgrounds teachers bring.

2.5 The Provision of Education in the UAE

To offer a more thorough perspective on the UAE's educational system, the following sections will outline the actual learning structure and educational provision, the teaching force, the existing collegial relationships and culture. Finally the UAE's approach to change to support its ambition for empowering its nation will be discussed.

2.5.1 The UAE's Educational Structure

The UAE offers free compulsory education for males and females from primary level (6-12 years old) to secondary level (15-18 years old). The current four-level educational structure was established in the early 1970s, after the UAE announced its independence, and is structured as follows:

Kindergarten (4 to 5 years)

Six year **primary** programme (6 to 12 years)

Three year **preparatory** programme (12 to 15 years)

Three year **secondary** programme (15 to 18 years)

Six year **technical** secondary programme (12 to 18 years)

(<http://www.uaeinteract.com/education/>)

Primarily, in addition to Maths, Science, Religion (Islam) and Social Studies, Arabic and English language are both taught from age six. At a late secondary level (16 to 18 years), students attend further specialised courses depending on their streaming, Arts or Sciences, where they are divided according to their Grade Point Average (GPA) and overall academic performance.

Usually students with high GPAs study further scientific subjects (Chemistry, Biology, Physics), and those with lower GPAs study further subjects in Arts (Arabic grammar, literature, history, geography). All subjects are taught in Arabic, except for English language courses.

As part of the plan for educational reform, the UAE Ministry of Education has decided to gradually introduce both Maths and Science in English starting at a primary level as part of the educational sector reform (<http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/10/19/10161324.html>). This is planned in the hope of improving students' ability to study their majors in English efficiently upon proceeding to tertiary educational levels.

To further increase students' English language competence, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has also introduced an official language proficiency test that students have to sit upon graduating from secondary school, the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA). This examination is taken after the twelve years of official schooling, preceding their admission to tertiary education. The key objective of CEPA is to enable higher education institutes to place students at the appropriate language proficiency level in their preparatory courses before entering university. This assessment is similar to the academic IELTS or TOEFL tests that students sit to start their journey in international education.

With such a variety of educational projects running at the same time, language teachers and students are both liable for trials that test the success of newly implemented programmes such as the CEPA and newly adopted English language curriculum.

2.5.2 Teacher Backgrounds

Considered to be a valuable asset to the delivery of new programmes to students, teachers form a major concern for the Ministry of Education in their ability to effectively convey changes to students. The academics and educators employed to teach in universities and schools, as well as other types of academic institutes educating the countries' young population, are part of the labour force that play an effective role in developing the cosmopolitan arena of the UAE. Teaching in schools, universities and other academic institutes offers an attractive package to expatriates coming from abroad. Consequently, the majority of teachers working for the public sector come from surrounding Arabic speaking countries due to the lack of available local teachers. Table 2.3 provides an example of the diverse population that formulated teachers of grade seven (12-13 years old) in 2005.

As noted in Table 2.3, only 16.49% of English teachers are UAE Nationals, with the majority of teachers coming from Jordan, Egypt and Syria. These teachers have brought with them a very rich mix of educational cultures, which has a different impact on separate groups of students but a serious impact on the generation as a whole.

Table 2.3: Percentage of Grade Seven English Language Teachers Teaching in UAE Public Schools

Nationality	Number of Teachers	Percentage
UAE	61	16.49
Bahrain	1	0.3
Jordan	97	26.2
Egypt	87	23.5
Syria	59	15.95
Tunisia	34	9.19
Palestine	20	5.41
Algeria	3	0.81
Iraq	2	0.54
Lebanon	1	0.27
Sudan	4	1.08
Iran	1	0.27
Total	370	100

Source: UAE MOE Archives, 2007

The difference in the educational and academic contexts teachers came from, created a conflict between the UAE's policy of unifying the approach and style of teaching English in the hope of providing an equal learning opportunity to all of its students, and what teachers practiced while teaching. Providing an equal learning opportunity to all students was, and remains, a key objective for the Ministry of Education. This was a challenge that would be difficult to overcome in the short term. Teachers coming from a variety of backgrounds and educational settings meant that they would have different experiences and points of view regarding teaching and educational practices. This would have a strong impact on how teaching is carried out within schools, limiting the ability to monitor, assess and control how teaching is taking place within the classroom.

One major issue that was found to be common between the expatriate teachers employed in the UAE, based on a questionnaire distributed to all English language

secondary teachers aimed towards assessing their professional development needs, was the fact that a small minority of them had received official post-graduate teacher training in educational practices of a non promotional nature. The majority of teachers had attended sessions that promoted a particular publication. Most post-graduate training that teachers experienced had been conducted by educational suppliers such as publishing houses who conducted training to serve the successful implementation of a newly adopted course by an educational institute. This would mean that training was commonly dedicated to a specific product or criteria, and not towards improving the general pedagogical standards of teachers while using the books.

As a step towards unifying learning experiences for students, the UAE Ministry of Education has been trying to address the need for qualified and well trained teachers in its educational system, initially through the provision of educational programmes offered to Emirati citizens by the Higher Colleges of Technology. However, as indicated in Table 2.3, Emirati teachers are only a small proportion of the total number of English language teachers employed within the public sector. The UAE's intention towards implementing official teacher education degrees is to develop a group of well-trained teachers that are capable of addressing the current needs and interests of students today. This has most probably also been set with an objective to overcome the general educational teaching diversity existing because of the variety of teaching cultures brought forward by expatriate teachers, aimed at making language teaching a more standardised procedure.

Following the development of all the educational policies, the evaluation and assessment of the effectiveness of such teacher preparedness programmes still has to be undertaken. Although a lot of investment is being made to implement new educational policies, no official evaluation has taken place to assess the effectiveness of such policies. Little work is being done to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the outcomes of these policies.

The varied cultural and educational mixture that teachers bring into the Ministry creates a need to understand the cultural and educational background of teachers, to further

comprehend the social and environmental circumstances that helped build the context of this research.

Teacher Preparedness

From another perspective, having the minority of language teachers being UAE nationals, local students apparently interact with them in a more welcoming manner during their classroom participation (Personal Journal, 2007). This may not only be due to sharing the same background, but it may have to do with the fact that the majority of local teachers have been involved in a structured teacher education programme that specifically works on developing the skills necessary to become an efficient English language teacher.

Prepared with the most recent knowledge of educational theory and practice, local student teachers practice the skills they have learned at their college in actual classroom situations throughout the teacher education programmes offered at the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCTs). The majority of local language teachers attend free teacher preparation programmes at the HCTs. Unlike expatriate teachers, this practical approach to learning gives UAE student teachers the teaching skills they need to excel in their careers as educators and teachers. This perhaps explains why students are better accommodated in lessons being taught by local teachers.

On the other hand, local students tend to respond and interact differently to expatriate teachers. A contributing factor could be that local teachers have recently graduated from teacher education colleges, which prepare them with the teaching practices and techniques necessary to become an effective language teacher. Expatriate teachers, however, are employed with little or no proper teacher training or experience in educational practices.

It seems that students do sense the difference in quality and style between local and expatriate teachers, and how they are addressed, and tend to react accordingly. A well-qualified local teacher is evidently more popular than an unqualified expatriate teacher. Although expatriate teachers outnumber local teachers, investments are only being made towards local teachers. This reflects unrealistic expectations since the Ministry of Education in the UAE, with its educational policy to provide equal learning

opportunities, only emphasises local teachers rather than preparing all teachers that teach their students.

Social Class

The majority of expatriate teachers coming from surrounding Arabic countries usually belong to a poorer social class than the class they would relate to upon moving to the UAE. The average income expatriate teachers would make in their home countries would be almost 25% of the average income they make in the UAE. Having such a difference in social environment between their home country and the UAE, teachers seemed to have developed a sense of envy towards the UAE students. A few teachers I met and interviewed had similar concerns about the students they were teaching. Comments like “*lazy*”, “*rich*” and “*always get what they want because they think they can buy their way through everything*” were used to describe the UAE students. A few teachers seemed to explain that their students’ lack of interest and motive to learn was due to them being too rich to worry about needing an education to secure a job in the future.

Many teachers do not seem to be aware of how to motivate their students and involve them in the learning process while considering their psychological and environmental surroundings. Instead of working on means to encourage their students and get them engaged in the learning process while considering their surrounding environment, teachers appear to lay the blame on students and do not work on developing their own strategies to improve their students’ interest. Of course, this is not the case with all expatriate teachers in the UAE nor all UAE students. However it is one of the issues that I found played an effective role in how the student-teacher relationship is built.

All students enrolled in public schools are UAE nationals: free public school education is only offered to Emarati citizens. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the majority of language teachers are expatriates. This is one of the social economic barriers that come between the students and the teachers. From the students’ point of view, it is more difficult for them to socially accept and relate to their “expatriate” teachers. Keeping in mind that such an issue is rather sensitive and would not be publicly announced, it can be seen through classroom observations studying the student-teacher relationship and

how students engage with teachers in the classroom. This also plays a significant role with regards to how students respect and value their teachers.

Shared Mother Tongue

Having the shared mother tongue of Arabic in the majority of cases makes it easier for teachers and students to exchange information when facing difficulty in communicating with one another in English. This always allows students and teachers the comfort of referring back to their mother tongue to offer an explanation if something in the lesson is not clear. This usually applies when addressing comprehension questions on particular reading or listening texts, as well as vocabulary prompts. It also has an impact on the development and use of students' sentence structures.

Using Arabic in the classroom has had a delayed impact on student language learning opportunities. It further encourages students to translate from Arabic into English and vice versa. It perhaps makes it easier for students to understand the notion or structure being taught, but it definitely does not improve their language skills, since there rarely is a need to actually use English efficiently in the classroom. As a result, due to mother tongue interference, it seems that the language learning process as a whole focuses on the structural knowledge of English language rather than developing the ability to use the language as a means of communication within an academic setting.

2.5.3 Professional Educational Environment and Collegial Relationships

Due to the complex structure that formulates the teacher population in the UAE public school sector, it is of value to understand how this contributes to the context in which this research is performed. This section will provide a more extensive background on the existing working relationships among teachers, the mentoring scheme, teacher preparedness, teachers' background and social class, and finally the impact this has on the relationships between students and their teachers.

Mentoring

Of the many strategies the UAE Ministry of Education has been encouraging to ensure equal learning opportunities among their students is the appointment of supervisors. The supervisors' main role is to monitor teaching practices as much as possible, and ensure

that proper teaching procedures are being implemented throughout schools. A supervisor is an individual with several years of teaching experience in a particular subject, most probably holding a post-graduate degree such as a diploma, Masters or even a PhD degree. In the case of English language teachers, post-graduate qualifications within this context are usually related to language, literature, translation or linguistics, and rarely education.

Supervisors' Selection

The selection of a supervisor is based on his or her teaching ability. In order to be a supervisor, one must be *known* to be an excellent teacher. A supervisor is held responsible for a number of teachers teaching at a set of schools, which usually ranges from 10-20 teachers. The duties of a supervisor include observing and monitoring classroom and teaching practices conducted by teachers in addition to assessing teacher performance. Supervisors also are expected to work with teachers by giving reflective feedback on teaching practices in order to help improve the quality of teaching. Supervisors are not selected based on their mentoring skills and do not receive any training on mentoring and working with teachers.

Supervisors Involvement in the Classroom

Although supervisors are normally chosen based on their effective teaching practices, they are no longer required to teach. They are taken out of the classroom in order to monitor and mentor other teachers in addition to undertaking a variety of administrative tasks. Given the distance that supervisors have from the actual classroom and students, the majority of supervisors tend to have certain old-fashioned educational concepts. These concepts may have been found to be effective when used several years ago, and therefore, to them, are still found to be efficient. Consequently, many supervisors still advise teachers to apply such outdated strategies in the classroom, even if they go against current teaching practices. For example, page teaching and delivering content to students based on what is set within a page of a course is still being practised, which limits students' opportunity to work from a variety of resources in the classroom. This has created a clash between new and old experiences, in addition to confusing new teachers with what they are expected to do using the latest teaching strategies and being held back by the expectations of supervisors.

Supervisors' Background

With 80% of the labour force being expatriates (Al Saifi, 2007), the same applies to the supervisors, who are mostly expatriates and have not received any official teaching qualification or undergone post-graduate professional development teacher or mentor training programmes. Table 2.4 gives details of the number of expatriate supervisors employed in comparison to the local UAE supervisors for the year 2004/2005 for all school subjects.

Table 2.4: Number of UAE National Subject Supervisors versus Expatriate Supervisors Working at the UAE Ministry of Education

Educational Zone	Nationality	Males	Females	Total
Abu Dhabi	UAE	7	35	42
	Expatriate	47	20	67
	Total	54	55	109
Al Ain	UAE	14	30	44
	Expatriate	43	18	61
	Total	57	48	105
Western Region	UAE	1	0	1
	Expatriate	28	7	35
	Total	29	7	36
Dubai	UAE	3	34	37
	Expatriate	29	7	36
	Total	32	41	73
Sharjah	UAE	8	30	38
	Expatriate	29	7	36
	Total	37	37	74
Sharjah Office	UAE	8	12	20
	Expatriate	14	3	17
	Total	22	15	37
Ajman	UAE	0	20	20
	Expatriate	14	3	17
	Total	14	23	37
Um al Qiwain	UAE	0	4	4
	Expatriate	16	2	18
	Total	16	6	22
Fujeirah	UAE	8	20	28
	Expatriate	16	4	20
	Total	24	24	48
Ras Al Khaimah	UAE	17	38	55
	Expatriate	20	8	28
	Total	37	46	83
Grand Total	UAE	66	191	289
	Expatriate	256	79	335
	Total	322	302	624

Source: http://www.moe.gov.ae/pdf_statistics/pdf_stc.htm

In the case of English language supervisors, the following table gives the same data on the number of local English language supervisors in relation to the expatriates employed.

Table 2.5: The Number of Emarati English Language Supervisors in Relation to Expatriate Supervisors

Educational Zone	Local	Expatriate
Abu Dhabi	4	5
Al Ain	5	3
Western Region	0	4
Dubai	4	4
Sharjah	3	4
Sharjah Office	2	4
Ajman	2	2
Um Al Qiwain	1	7
Fujeirah	2	6
Ras Al Khaimah	3	5
Grand Total	26	64
Percentage	37.1%	91.4%

Source: UAE MOE archives, 2007

It can be seen from earlier tables that the majority of senior teachers, who are known to be supervisors, are expatriates, and have rarely received any official teaching degree or been provided with professional educational training on teaching methodologies. Therefore, mentoring, monitoring and advising teachers is generally based on the supervisors' experience and informal input regarding teaching and educational approaches to language learning. In addition, there is no clear reference to how the skills of the supervisors themselves are assessed and monitored.

Supervisors' Attitude Towards Change

Supervisors have apparently hindered novice teachers who were interested in experimenting with new teaching strategies they believe may be more effective. Based on my observations, I found it difficult to have any impact on teachers in the presence of supervisors. A similar experience was shared with other trainers and consultants working with the Ministry aside from myself. Apparently, several teachers were keen to learn and apply newly addressed techniques they have become familiar with, however, this was opposed by their supervisors, who had always been strict about the mode of delivery and teaching strategies used in the class. Teachers sometimes found what trainers, including myself, were training them on during workshops contradictory to what supervisors asked or expected them to do.

While training teachers during the course of this research, supervisors had been asked to take part and attend workshops. However, the majority of supervisors refused to attend and participate in the training sessions given to the teachers. Instead many supervisors would come in to check attendance at the beginning or end of the sessions and ask teachers several questions assuming they would be assessing teachers' understanding. They would also interrupt the trainers during the workshops to go over points that usually would have been covered prior to the supervisors' entry. A few supervisors would also restate and paraphrase what the trainer was trying to deliver.

On the other hand, supervisors who did attend sat away from the teachers, and refused to take part in any group or pair work. When handouts were being distributed, a few supervisors would tell the trainer "*No, no, I am a supervisor*", indicating that the trainer has mistaken him or her for an actual teacher, which seemed to be offensive in a way.

As a researcher, I was concerned with the consistency of supervisors' attitudes towards general training conducted for public school teachers. I wanted to investigate further to see if this was an attitude that was reflected in other professional development programmes, separate from the training programme being developed by me as a researcher and educational consultant.

I approached the organisation responsible for CEPA, inquiring about the attitude supervisors had towards their training programme, which was geared to supporting

teachers in preparing students for formal examinations, together with general workshops on English language skill development and modes of continuous assessment. The Head of CEPA, a PhD holder in Education and Language Learning working at one of the Higher Colleges of Technology, explained that supervisors would rarely get involved in the training, and described them as being disruptive at times having a few being less co-operative than expected. She also recommended I speak with the senior CEPA supervisor, who had an MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), and was responsible for the preparation and implementation of training material. After discussing this issue with the senior supervisors at CEPA, it was more understood that this mostly was an issue of power.

Supervisors Authority

Based on the feedback discussed and the image conveyed through my observations, it was apparent that supervisors felt threatened by the presence of the trainers. They did not want to be categorised as trainee teachers with their fellow teachers. However, this lack of involvement meant that supervisors would not be aware of what teachers had been exposed to or encouraged to practice within their classrooms during the training. This created a bigger gap between teachers' common practice and supervisors' expectations.

Supervisors seemed to lack motivation and interest in professional development and training opportunities. It was apparent that some supervisors found that their existing role was the most senior they would want or have the opportunity to achieve; therefore there would be no sense in seeking further professional development. This could possibly explain the resistant attitude from the supervisors.

This is not to say that all supervisors followed the same practice or conveyed the same attitude. There were a few supervisors with a strong academic background supported by extensive experience in the field of language teaching, who were interested in learning further and being involved in any professional development programmes. These supervisors are also expatriates, and although very outstanding in the roles they play, they lack the security and confidence in the position they hold, and therefore have always been looking for better opportunities available in the private sector. This in turn

would provide them with a better salary, clear contract period in addition to receiving more appreciation for their work.

During the first phase of my research project, of the 70 English language supervisors, five expatriates accepted offers in other private institutes within a year, all of whom were exceptionally dedicated and concerned for students and the wellbeing of their fellow teachers.

Collegial Relationships Among Teachers

The relationship among teachers is an important factor that effectively contextualises this research. The UAE ministry's decision to develop its educational system and make improvements to the existing curriculum adopted at schools, has had a very strong impact on the identity of teachers and their willingness to make these changes effective. This has had a stronger impact on English language teachers given that a lot of emphasis had been placed on the development of the English language programmes adopted by the public school sector in hope of improving the language proficiency of students. As O'Sullivan (2002) clarifies, change involves loss, anxiety and struggle having it affect the core of learned skills, philosophies, beliefs and conceptions of education, consequently creating doubts about teachers' sense of competence. On the other hand Ridlon (2009) clarifies that teachers are more willing to engage with change if it is perceived to impose little threat to their identity, and if the proposed change is considered to be relevant and desirable having an advantage over the existing practise.

As an observer, I found that a lot of tension was being built among the UAE Ministry of Education, supervisors and teachers. Since the Ministry had not involved the supervisors in decisions related to the development of their language schemes, perhaps, as Ridlon (2009) explains; supervisors' reaction was in hope of confirming their identity and position through strong and strict impositions on their teachers.

Response to Change

Generally, the public school environment is not one that encourages peer co-operation and support. Teachers work independently as individuals holding responsibility for classes they teach. The school environment as a whole divides teachers according to subjects taught, meaning there are several teacher rooms, where teachers of the same

subject go when they do not have any scheduled classes. Although having teacher rooms that group teachers according to the subject taught may be beneficial in having all those with common interests sit with one another, it still makes it difficult for teachers to work with one another when it comes to addressing cross-curricular topics: it also draws a line between teachers of different subjects.

Communicating with teachers of other subjects is not very common, unless based on personal interest. With this in mind, I assumed it was one of the reasons why teachers are very hesitant to teach English through other subjects that may require them to refer to other teachers for help and reference. Cross curricular exposure is not a common practice when teaching English. Teachers do not find the idea of co-teaching or asking other teachers for support appealing, and therefore continue to use traditional common topics that students and teachers are familiar with, as in placing an order from a menu, talking about the weather and reading poetry. This also directly explains teachers' strong reaction towards the new strategy and programme implemented by the Ministry of Education, since it involved a lot of topics on other uncommon subject matters that required reference to other teachers as well as doing further research themselves on topics that relate to science, history and mathematics.

Inquiring From Others

It seems that teachers are not comfortable about asking for further information on topics they would have to teach in English. From one perspective, teachers found it a challenge to teach on subject matter they were not familiar with in a foreign language. Inquiring about subject matter and content may appear to affect the teachers' image of being a knowledgeable individual who is capable of teaching students. Asking other teachers for help was not seen as straight forward. A few teachers explained this by saying they were too embarrassed to ask about something they do not know. Teachers assumed that it was too much of a hassle to get in touch with other subject teachers for content clarification. The majority of English teachers believed that teaching English meant that students needed to study about the grammar, structure and the day-to-day use of the language that the teachers themselves studied. Cross-curricular and cultural exposure through language teaching was not of value.

Cooperation with Peers

Teachers usually work independently within their classes with little or no reference to their colleagues, which seems to lead to poor peer evaluation and support. Peer teaching and observation is not a common practice. Although this is a practice encouraged by supervisors, the assumption is that peers attending and observing are present to criticise and not to reflect. Positive reflection and enforcement is rarely practiced. The supervisor takes the main role for conducting observations and commonly criticises and specifies what the teacher should have done without giving credit to what was done.

The diversity of teachers' demographic origins tends to create a bonding atmosphere; teachers belonging to the same homeland bond and work well together. In some cases, supervisors coming from a specific country in the Middle East will be more sympathetic with teachers coming from the same country. They may also have been the reason behind having the teacher employed in that particular school.

The overall school environment encourages competition and the need to always prove oneself, which is very stressful for teachers. This is further encouraged through how supervisors support teachers. Teachers interviewed seem to imply that most of the supervisors' role involved monitoring teachers and checking to see if they have come well prepared and ready to teach: very rarely does it involve them offering encouragement, support and guidance.

2.6 Approach to Change and Educational Reform

The UAE's ambitions of becoming one of the leading countries in the world has imposed several requirements on the government to support this transition. Part of the support offered to the educational community is the provision of professional development opportunities and the revision of materials and curriculum adopted in schools. The sections below will investigate these in further detail to provide a better perspective on part of the UAE's existing approach toward educational reform.

2.6.1 Redirecting English Language Teaching

The Ministry of Education, with its realisation that the current teaching approach of English was not as successful as expected, decided to make an ultimate change in relation to the English language curriculum being implemented. Currently, the majority of students graduate after studying twelve years of English in school with little or no competence of English and lacking the ability to communicate in English within academic contexts. In other words, they graduate being *false beginners* in English. They have studied and been exposed to English for several years, but are not, however, capable of acquiring the target language or using it in an appropriate context.

After graduation, students undergo a language placement test to assess if their level of English could be used within an academic setting where English is the medium of instruction. Students who fail this test are required to take a foundation year of English, which may also include Maths and Computer Science.

Replacing the Existing Programme

In response to the high number of students who need to enrol in foundation courses at the beginning of their tertiary education, the UAE has decided to change the materials adopted in schools, beginning from secondary level. The Ministry of Education concluded that one of the factors that hindered students' language learning progress was the material used at schools.

The main focus of the previously existing language programme emphasised the importance of language as a structure, mainly working on reading passages and the analysis of structures. Materials were published in-house by the Ministry of Education, through a team of language teachers assigned to work within its headquarters. However, after years of implementation, the Ministry of Education realised that the failure of their students may be due to the approach they were using to teach them, which abided by a traditional curriculum. Consequently, it was decided that changing the adopted programme being used may be one solution to work on improving students' communicative language competence. However, being such a major decision in relation to the development of language teaching within the public school sector, it was necessary to have it accompanied by a teacher induction and training programme that

would familiarise English teachers with the new programme set for implementation. This would include a radical change towards the teaching approaches used in class.

Implementing the New Programme

The new curriculum developed to replace the course used for secondary and high school students was considered revolutionary by teachers who had been using traditional courses that focused on general English rather than academic English. The course was designed to improve the English skills necessary to communicate within the academic environment to which most students would proceed. The new Skills in English series was theme-based, including topics that emphasised cross-cultural and curricular exposure. It was also skill-based, where the development of language sub-skills were emphasised. It emphasised all the main skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, while teaching grammar and vocabulary within context in a manner that students would relate to in their daily life. On the other hand, the previously implemented course put a lot of weight on reading, grammar and writing, with a limited amount of exercises or tasks that concentrated on oral communication skills.

Neither teachers nor students were familiar with the equal share oral skills had in relation to reading and writing. Shortly after the implementation of the new course, teachers were demanding the inclusion of a few pages on structured grammar that they could actually teach and thereafter assess their students on. Teachers seemed to have problems in the recommended strategies used to approach vocabulary and grammar within the sub-skills of language rather than in isolation.

In response, slight changes were made to the new programme to better accommodate teacher expectations. Material was restructured and adapted to include grammatical structural references for students and teachers to refer to after studying grammar within context. This adaptation was in the hope of accommodating the need for a more traditional approach to be followed while using a new course that required a student-centred approach.

Generally, English teachers were used to handling the subject in a content-based manner. There was no gradual development of knowledge or acquired skills; whatever the students covered within a specific unit was not addressed further in other units. On

the other hand, 'Skills in English' focused on the importance of language development while recycling taught structures. Unfortunately this was perceived by teachers as being repetitive and too boring for teachers to teach and students to learn. However, the repetition and recycling prompts were to allow students the opportunity to practice and reuse previously addressed areas in multiple contexts.

Impact of Model of Languages Taught in School

Teacher response towards the new suggested approach to teach students English may have had to do with how other languages are taught in school. English language is not the only language taught at schools. All of the schools are obliged to teach Arabic: some private schools tend to teach French as well. English takes up to 20% of the timetable, Arabic language has an equal share, with the rest of the time devoted to other subjects that include Maths, Sciences, History, Social Studies and Religion.

Arabic is taught as a mother tongue, where students have the capability of efficiently communicating in colloquial Arabic, but are involved in learning the 'formal' style of Arabic that would help them in their future official reading and writing assignments and perhaps speeches. Although all of the students are native Arabic speakers, they also appear to have trouble while studying Arabic, being a grammar-based taught subject, where grammar and structure are the main core on which to concentrate.

Arabic is taught mostly in its written form, with little emphasis on oral communication skills. Students basically read a text then work on answering comprehension questions and may be involved in memorising poems and verses. In addition to this, a lot of teaching and learning is set on in-depth grammar, where sentences are dissected and analysed according to their parts of speech and their function within the sentence. Consequently, to students, grammar is considered to be an essential part of learning 'formal' Arabic. In other words, since students are already competent enough in day-to-day Arabic, they would need further competence in the formal Arabic structure, which they would use in formal situations when required.

Perhaps when considering how the native language of Arabic is taught, an impact of some form will definitely be set on the way any form of foreign language is taught – which in this case would focus on structure and written texts. Additionally, private

schools teaching French tend to focus on teaching reading texts through comprehension exercises, vocabulary, grammar and translation. Few resources and teaching aids are used while teaching both Arabic and French. However, when it comes to English, teachers are required to further prepare additional and supporting resources in the hope of helping the teaching process.

Generally, English teachers are those that are mostly required to prepare for their lessons as well as develop useful teaching aids and resources. English teachers almost always put the most effort among language teachers when teaching their classes: this may explain why English teachers have the highest wages in relation to other subject teachers. Nevertheless, it is questionable how useful and interesting these additional resources being put into place are, when teaching students as well as how creative the teachers are in making use of these resources in relation to the set learning objectives.

After reflecting on how both Arabic and French are taught, a useful link can be generated between teaching all three languages according to how teachers perceive the issue of language learning as a whole:

- language is found to be more a set of rules that need to be taught by the teacher and learnt by the students;
- the better the student is at grammar the better the student is in the language being taught, whether Arabic or another foreign language;
- the best way to encourage students to take part in a lesson would be by having him/her gain interest through the learning resources being used and developed by teachers;
- the learning process is found to be one that is isolated from any real world application, where the focus is on the grammar of the language.

The above noted remarks are based on general observations on how languages are taught in public schools. Some private schools tend to follow an engaging approach when teaching English or other languages. Nevertheless, the impact of how common language teaching practices are can be seen, and may even justify the existing approach to teaching English language in the majority of public schools.

2.7 Responding to the Context

Several factors contributed to the need to conduct further research in the area of professional development of non-native Arabic speaking teachers of English. The UAE's increasing need for professionally and effectively trained teachers that could respond to the rapid educational reform the UAE was undergoing, expressed an immediate need for more accommodating training schemes that could better address their needs and expectations. The rich educational and social context the UAE provided, together with my ability to perform as a practitioner researcher through the official role I had as an educational consultant, provided a good opportunity to conduct research in this area. The rich educational context that involved continuous change in the UAE provided the need for research that is more responsive to what is actually taking place within the educational setting of the UAE, and provided a strong justification for the appropriateness to use practitioner Action Research that would allow responsive reflection and change.

As a practitioner, I became interested in learning more about effectively addressing the needs of English teachers in the UAE through a proper and systematic needs assessment to which I could respond. I wanted to further understand why existing pre-packaged training schemes were not effective, and in response develop a programme that conveyed what it was supposed to convey. I sympathised with teachers who did not have any professional training opportunities during their careers, and were commonly involved in training that was neither based on a proper needs assessment nor followed up on.

It appears that the majority of English language teachers in the public sector are being held back from current developments taking place in education because they rarely have opportunities to explore new practices and concepts. Any training schemes to be implemented should consider existing opportunities teachers may or may not have, their backgrounds, interests and the educational requirements the context imposes upon them.

I wanted to work closely with a group of teachers to better understand their needs, interests and expectations, and reflect on methods that could improve their professional and working circumstances. Action Research provided a systematic and logical way to

pursue my research interests further. The contexts played a major role in developing the methodological practices used within the research when constructing the methodology of this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology of the Study

The main aim of this research is to identify and assess the professional development practices that would help enhance pupil learning through improving the quality and standards of teaching practices of non-native, Arabic speaking English language teachers in the UAE. The research will also assess the effectiveness of devising practitioner Action research to help improve professional development opportunities for non native speaking English language teachers. This chapter will introduce and explain the rationale behind the research strategy and approach used. It will also provide information about the selected sample of the study, the rationale and purpose behind the data collection tools in addition to the constituents of the different phases of the research.

3.1 Research Methodology

Recent educational improvement and reform in the Arab world has focused on a reconsideration of schooling, management, curricula, teaching strategies and, critically, professional development. The issue for the UAE in the matter of English language learning was that UAE students, after twelve years of studying English at school, needed to take additional English language foundation courses before pursuing their tertiary education, which was given in English.

This raised the need to improve teachers' attitudes, practices and performance in the classroom through structured professional development schemes that were specifically targeted at teachers within the UAE. With this project, the key aim is to help non-native speaking English language teachers identify weaknesses in their own practice and work on improving their teaching through participating in effective and well-structured training schemes.

I decided to follow a methodology that allowed me to consider multiple variables and provide an opportunity to respond flexibly to immediate findings and observations preceding and following professional development interventions made. Any approach selected would need to help English language teachers and supervisors better

understand their work as educators in order to develop their teaching practices effectively (Glanz, 1999). Action Research was found to be the most appropriate framework, in particular its emphasis on beginning ‘*where people are at*’ (Robinson and McMillan, 2006), through identifying key concerns and what are considered to be problems in teaching practice. As Robinson and McMillan (2006) further suggest, this would encourage change from within the teachers themselves, creating a reflective impact on teaching practices, rather than imposing a particular change from an external authority like the Ministry of Education or other foreign educational entities contracted from the West.

Table 3.1: Types of Educational Research

Type	Purpose	Examples
Qualitative	To provide a rich narrative description about existing phenomena that enhance understanding	Describe teachers attitudes towards educational change
Quantitative	To describe phenomena numerically to answer specific questions or hypotheses	The relationship between teacher qualifications and student understanding
Basic	To increase knowledge and understanding of phenomena	Understand how teacher training affects teachers’ practices in the classroom
Applied	To solve practical educational problems	Determine the best approach to train teachers to use portfolios for assessment
Evaluation	To make a decision about a programme or activity	Decide whether to keep or refrain from training teachers in a certain way.
Action	To improve educational practice within an school or classroom	Determine which training methodology addresses the needs and interests of teachers
Non-experimental	To describe and predict phenomena without manipulating factors that influence the phenomena	Determine the relationship between teacher backgrounds and their attitudes towards students
Experimental	To determine the causal relationship between two or more phenomena by direct manipulation of factors that influence students’ performance or behaviour.	Determine which of two approaches in training teachers results in better teacher performance and higher students’ achievement.

Source: Adapted from McMillan, 1996

A variety of research frameworks were considered to formulate the methodology of the study. Of the eight types of educational research listed by McMillan (1996), as clarified in Table 3.1 above, Action Research was found to be the most appropriate being aimed towards improving the educational practice of teachers functioning within the public sector in the UAE. As Action Research begins by identifying problems in educational practice, a decision to use this framework came from the dissatisfaction of the current situation in teaching English in the UAE, and the existing professional development schemes offered to support teachers (Zuber-Skerritt, 2002).

My objective was to create a professional development scheme based on a set of interventions. Within the Action Research framework of linked phases, these would need to be implemented, assessed for effectiveness, refined and re-implemented in a recursive manner in order to discover appropriate professional development frameworks that could support teachers.

Action Research would provide a research strategy that enabled me to work with a group of participants for a period of time, over a set period of phases of interventions and reflection within a form of disciplined inquiry (Glanz, 1999). It allowed me to establish interventions based on the identification of teachers' interests, needs and weaknesses, and thereafter evaluating the success of these interventions as identified by the New Zealand Institute of Management (2003).

This project functioned as a form of collaborative inquiry between myself as a researcher, and the participants (Putnam and Borko, 2000). We both were interested in knowing about more effective professional development schemes that could be adopted instead of existing ones. Following such a framework enabled changes in teaching practice to take place as well as other positive outcomes in relation to teachers' attitudes, personal reflection, willingness and motivation. It also enabled changes to take place in relation to constructed professional development schemes and how well they addressed the needs of teachers. As Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) note, Action Research usually results in a dynamic co-construction of knowledge for both the researcher and the participants.

Action Research allows for reflection, inquiry and discussion to take place as part of the elements of the research. Given my professional position as teacher educator, it was the most appropriate research methodology to adopt having an active role in the decision making process of professional development schemes established and offered within the public school sector in the UAE. As Ferrance (2000) notes, although there are several research approaches that may be adopted, Action research allows for disciplined inquiry done by an educational practitioner with the intention of having the findings of the research used to make informed decisions in one's practice in the future. Participating in Action Research helps to facilitate the process of evaluation and reflection in order to implement effective change through creating new knowledge based on enquiries conducted within specific and often practical contexts (Koshy, 2005).

It was intended that the research would inform the Ministry of Education and me about the existing needs and interests of teachers in terms of their professional development in order to support the establishment of grounded strategies as opposed to those pre-packaged by western providers (as noted in the Context of the Study).

In line with Brydon-Miller *et al.* (2003), teachers in the UAE are, naturally, most familiar with their current cultural and social surroundings, and are thus well placed to identify the conditions that shape their current practice. My role as a researcher was to identify and collect useful sources of data that would help participants actively contribute to the construction of professional development interventions. Both language teachers and supervisors were involved throughout the various stages of the research. This created a positive sense of connectivity and a source of constructive feedback on interventions.

The reflexivity at the core of Action Research may help to improve both ones' own educational practices and, more generally, those of the institutions one works with (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Bassey, 1998). The dynamic educational environment that teachers in the UAE inhabit contains a rich mixture of teaching and learning environments. Thus, a flexible research approach would be useful in order to comprehend all of the relevant factors involved. As further noted by Greenwood (1998) having the process of recurrent feedback always available can provide a research project with a strong reflective and

flexible breadth, which can develop a self-designing dimension based on the transformation of having a plan in mind to meet a set of objectives. This would help in managing and understanding the continuous developments taking place within the UAE's educational system.

3.1.1 Critiques of Action Research

Farr-Darling (2001) and other researchers (Huberman, 1995; Bereiter, 2002) have expressed their reservations regarding the effectiveness of collaborative learning through Action Research. Farr-Darling (2001) argues that although a lot of positive outcomes may result from teachers' participation in communities of enquiry, there is a lot of disagreement that may result in relation to the nature of the findings and outcomes of teacher learning. Huberman (1995) further describes the process of teachers' learning experience through Action Research as being a 'lone-wolf scenario', where the teacher performs independently rather than among other teachers and administrators she or he works with, limiting the generalisability of the findings of the research and disregarding the importance of collaborative enquiry (Bereiter, 2002).

Arguably, it is as yet unclear whether or not teachers actually pay much attention to the production of knowledge through Action Research, and if the resulting knowledge is generalisable or can be diffused to enhance teacher practice. However, Huberman (1995) suggests that the knowledge resulting from such inquiries may help reveal the nature and importance of ideas and practices that would help individual teachers develop their work. Bereiter (2002) further concludes that concepts developed within action frames can feed into the processes of developing professional thought and practice, or, as in the current research, schemes to help professionals perform better.

In response to researchers who may criticise the use of such a framework in hope of improving educational practice. Results of this research may not be generalisable in addressing the needs of all non-native speaking English teachers, but it would definitely provide further information and details on the circumstances, experiences and backgrounds of teachers employed to work in public schools in the UAE in particular and the Arab world in general. The research framework would allow a better understanding of the educational system teachers function within and define the most

appropriate professional development opportunities that could enhance change. Unfortunately, very rarely has any educational research been set to identify and address the needs of educational language practitioners in the Arab world. On the contrary, much research which has looked to address the needs of teachers in other developing countries focused on Africa and Europe. These included South Africa (Robinson and McMillan, 2006), Helsinki (Postareff *et al.*, 2007) and Greece (Poulou, 2005).

In the editorial review provided by Avalos (2011) on research on the professional development of teachers, a table demonstrating the number of research conducted between 2000 and 2010 is provided. None of the countries listed include a country of Arab origin, as can be seen below (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Published Research on Professional Development of Teachers

Thematic Areas	No of Articles	Geographical Location
Professional Learning	9	Canada (1), England (2), The Netherlands (2), South Africa (1), USA (3)
Reflection Processes	11	Australia (1), Canada(1), England (1), Portugal (1), The Netherlands (1), USA (6)
Tools as Learning Instruments	10	Australia (1), Spain (1), Taiwan (1), USA (7)
Beginning Teachers Learning	13	Australia (1), Belgium (1), Canada (1), England (2), Hong Kong (1), Ireland (1), Norway (1) Scotland (1), The Netherlands (1), USA (3)
Mediations		
School-University Partnership	11	Canada (2), Greece (1), USA (8)
Teacher Co-learning	13	Canada (2), Hong Kong (1), Singapore (1), The Netherlands (2), USA (7)
Workplace Learning	3	Japan (1), The Netherlands (1), USA (1)
Conditions and Factors		
Macro Conditions	10	South Africa (1), USA (9)
School Cultures	6	Canada (1), England (2), USA (3)
Effectiveness of Professional Development		
Cognitions, Beliefs and Practices	10	Italy (1), New Zealand (1), Portugal (1), The Netherlands (2), USA (5)
Student Learning and Teacher Satisfaction	7	Belgium (1), Canada (1), Israel (1), Switzerland (1), USA (3)
Specific Areas and Issues	8	Australia (1), Canada (1), Ireland (1), The Netherlands (1), USA (4)
Total	111	

Source: Avalos (2011, p.11)

Throughout my literature review, I did not find any research geared towards understanding the professional needs of Arabic speaking English language teachers within the cultural context of the Arab world, and realised the importance of taking this step forward myself in the hope of contributing to an improvement in the development of Arabic speaking EFL teachers. My research was a quest to improve the local professional development conditions of teachers in the UAE.

3.1.2 Research Approach

The approach I followed was based on the Deakin participatory approach as explained by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) and Zuber-Skerritt (1992). I used a cycle that consisted of four main steps: plan, act, observe and reflect. An important aspect of the approach was that it allowed participants to actively contribute to all phases of the research and work closely with me as researcher. This allowed some flexibility and freedom for participants in their contributions, which increased the effectiveness of the research (Howden, 1998).

This approach was selected to help ensure the development of effective interventions that could address the needs and interests of teachers well. Having a spiral structure to follow, and based on my official role at the Ministry of Education, I had the opportunity of completing two full cycles, the first serving as a reconnaissance phase for the latter, developing a more refined set of interventions as noted by Wadsworth (1998).

As can be seen in Figure 3.1, the reconnaissance phase began by identifying the existing need for a more accommodating professional development scheme. This initial phase provided sufficient time to collect data from the group of participants I was working with and plan a course of proposed interventions, their implementations and evaluation accordingly.

Action was taken based on the interpretation of collected data, where more specific needs to accommodate within the proposed professional development scheme were identified. Methods of delivering these interventions were also identified, whether through workshops, discussion panels, individual meetings and peer observations. In the second cycle of the project, developed interventions were more refined due to the

reflection and evaluation of implemented interventions in the following phase, allowing the development of a more effective training scheme which teachers were more responsive towards.

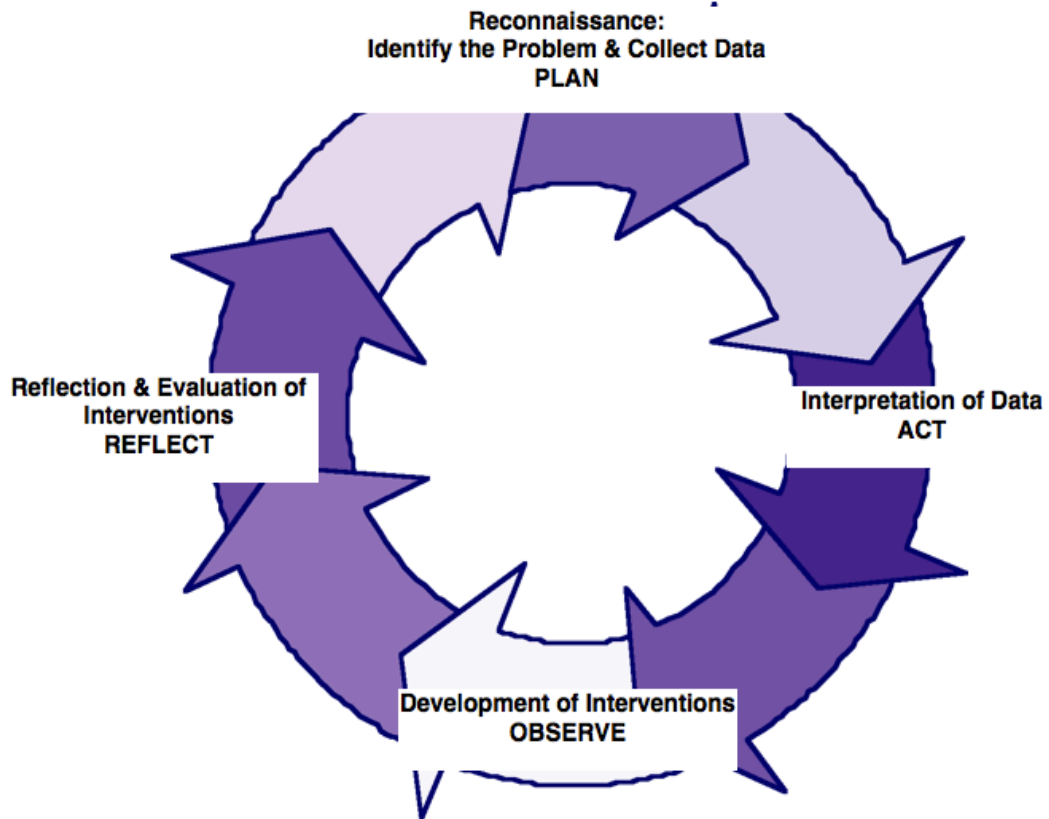


Figure 3.1: Research Approach

Source: Adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988

As can be seen, this cycle provided a strong framework to work within ensuring the effectiveness of proposed interventions. It was a useful strategy that allowed me to function stronger as a practitioner given the researchers' practitioner perspective I was viewing things in.

3.2 The Research Population of the Study

This research aims to develop and improve English language teaching standards through the introduction of professional development schemes for non-native speaking English language teachers. A total of 600 male and female secondary school teachers working within public schools, teaching students between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, were

the base population of the initial phase of the study. The majority of these teachers, as indicated in Chapter 2 were expatriates, given the fact that 75% of the UAE population are expatriates coming from surrounding Arab world countries, mostly from Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Tunisia (Richardson, 2004; Al Saifi, 2007). This group received an initial needs assessment questionnaire.

3.2.1 The Intervention Sample of the Study

In order to select a sample based on the requirement of having participants who were willing to contribute actively to the project, a group was initially selected from a group of candidates who expressed willingness to take part in the different phases of the research. Teachers had the opportunity to express their willingness to be involved in the project through the first section of the needs assessment questionnaire that was distributed at the first phase to the whole population of the study (see Appendix I for further details).

Out of 600 secondary school teachers, 98 provided their full contact details indicating a provisional interest in the project, approximately 16% of the total population of the study. The criteria listed below were used in selecting the final 17 teachers who comprised the sample taking part in the intervention strategy.

- Candidates who expressed willingness to contribute to the research by providing their full contact details in the Needs Assessment Questionnaires;
- Candidates who understood the nature of the research and were willing to take on the necessary work associated with the interventions;
- Candidates for whom the Ministry of Education's approval could be obtained to work closely with through regular meetings, classroom observations and training sessions;
- Candidates who could be accessed regularly to observe lessons, to meet with them in schools and during other scheduled sessions;
- Candidates who, as a group, would represent the social, cultural and educational background that the majority of the teachers in the population share;
- Candidates with from three to fifteen years of language teaching experience.

Given the above criteria, Table 3.3 below summarises selected candidates to formulate the sample of the study:

Table 3.3: Intervention Sample Overview

Nationality	Gender		Total
Egyptian	Male	4	6
	Female	2	
Jordanian	Male	2	5
	Female	3	
Syrian	Male	2	2
	Female	0	
Tunisian	Male	2	2
	Female	0	
UAE	Male	1	2
	Female	1	
			17

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

This section will look into the different data collection instruments utilised during the reconnaissance phase of the research in addition to the other phases of the research. Due to the nature of the research, many of the data collection tools were devised more than once in the different phases of the research. This further ensured the reliability of identified data, making it realistically present field findings.

The main data collection tools used were:

- Needs Assessment Questionnaires
- Semi-Structured Interviews
- Lesson Observation Checklists
- Post Classroom Observation Discussions
- Documentary Evidence

- Feedback Forms
- Research Journal

Multiple sources of data collection were used to better understand the educational and social working environment of participants involved in the research (Ferrance, 2000). As recommended by several researchers (Denzin, 1994; Ferrance, 2000; Altrichter *et al.*, 2008), data triangulation was used to confirm collected and interpreted data about teacher needs and interests. Data collection tools were used to feed into one another and help validate findings.

Lesson observation checklists were used to confirm data identified in interviews. Data identified in interviews was used to validate earlier data specified in the questionnaires. Post-classroom observations and discussions, together with documentary evidence of teachers' work, were used to confirm findings from earlier data collection tools. Therefore the staged sequence in using the data collection tools was essential in identifying and validating collected data as demonstrated in Figure 3.2 below. This was crucial in ensuring that collected data provides a clear and thorough understanding of the participants, resulting in the ability to develop more appropriate courses of action or interventions.

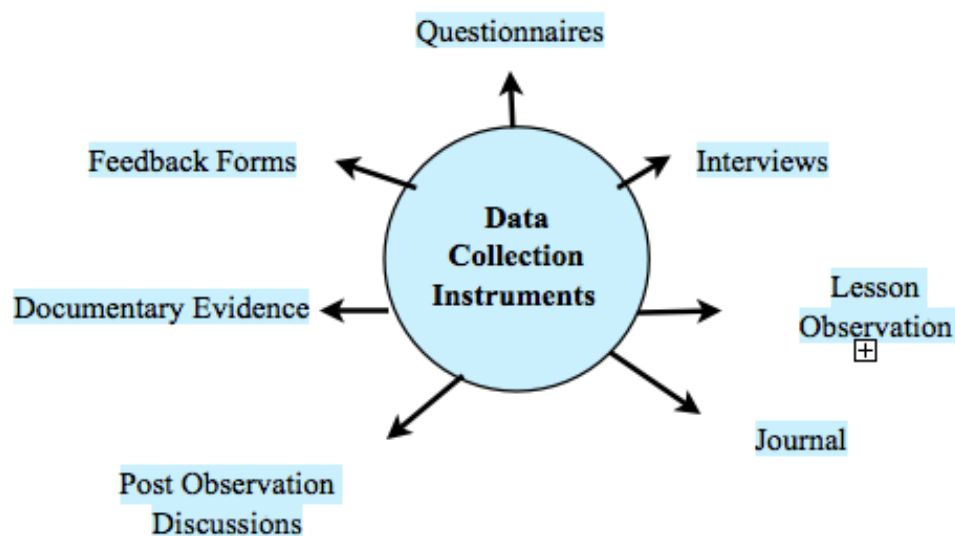


Figure 3.2: Data Collection Tools

Given that the teachers were experienced in English, in addition to it being the UAE Lingua Franca all data collection was conducted in English (see Context of the Study). Having the data collection tools delivered in English was not considered to be an obstacle as teachers were competent in communicating in English, although perhaps not all were fluent. This avoided the need to translate documents or transcripts and any associated bias.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire was seen as the appropriate tool to provide a broad based profile of teacher perceptions and needs assessment in the UAE. The questionnaires were used to collect educational and social background information on the teachers, in addition to their areas of interest in educational practice. They also gave teachers an opportunity to provide their contact details to indicate their willingness to take part in the research project as a whole. Questionnaires were distributed at the beginning phases of the research, during the reconnaissance and were used as the initial source of data collection.

A total of 600 teachers received the questionnaire with a covering letter explaining the purpose behind the questionnaire and informing them that data provided would be treated in strict confidence (see Appendix I). The general distribution of the questionnaire was done in nine consecutive stages, and according to the region in which the teachers worked; Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Western Region, Ajman, Um Al Qiwaan, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah and Sharjah. From the 600 questionnaires, a selection of 17 teachers was made, based on the criteria that can be found on page 83 in the Methodology of the Study, in order to formulate the active participants involved in the research project.

The questionnaire was in English and divided into three main parts. The first section elicited demographic information. It asked for details of teachers' gender, age group, marital status and nationality. Teachers had the option of providing their name, so as to be available for further contact when necessary. The majority of teachers did not provide their names to keep their data input confidential.

The second part of the questionnaire had to do with teachers' educational background and experience. Teachers were asked to provide information on their level of education, degrees, number of years' experience in teaching English as a Foreign Language, grade levels taught, and computer literacy. This was in addition to their utilisation of current teaching practices as in the integration of multimedia and Computer Assisted Language Learning.

The final part of the questionnaire addressed teachers' key points of view regarding training and professional development. Teachers were asked for their point of view regarding whom they believe should be held responsible for training and professional development, whether it should be the Ministry of Education itself, the university or college that the teacher graduated from or the employer. It also assessed teachers' views regarding teacher training being obligatory for those who want to pursue a career as teachers. This section further inquired about the teachers' previous involvement in training programmes, periods of training, training organisers and providers. This section concluded with a checklist of 15 key areas in language teaching from which teachers could select those representing their required needs.

The questionnaire closed with an open ended question to give teachers the opportunity to provide any ideas or suggestions they might have that could help in improving the quality of teaching English in their schools.

The questionnaire was originally piloted in Jordan to check its capacity to provide focused data on teachers' attitudes and needs. A total of 60 teachers were involved in the pilot. The first questionnaire format was composed of three pages with several more open ended questions, and did not have clear headings for teachers to refer to. Few teachers completed the questionnaire in full: some found a few questions misleading and could not understand them and accordingly had to ask me to explain what I meant. It also seemed that the teachers did not want to spend a lot of time completing the questionnaire and therefore the majority of teachers completed the questions that required a tick to answer, leaving others empty. Accordingly, the final questionnaire was designed in a more direct format having all the questions require a tick for an answer with one open ended question at the end.

3.3.2 Interviews

As part of the reconnaissance, interviews were used as a means to deepen understanding of teachers' needs and to establish rapport with the group of key participants. The initial analysis of the questionnaire findings suggested areas I could follow up on through one-to-one interviews with teachers in addition to areas for further exploration. Teachers interviewed were those who had provided their contact details in the questionnaires, most of which formulated the active participants of the study. Interviews were used to validate and confirm data collected through the needs assessment questionnaires. Interviews also gave me an opportunity to establish personal contacts with the participants and get to know them better as individuals rather than simply sources of data.

Six teachers were interviewed in depth, with the remaining eleven teachers interviewed as part of group discussions. Open discussions were held to give the teachers a sense of comfort, feeling that the interview was not a form of interrogation they would be judged by. Discussions were recorded through journal notes. Using a voice recorder was avoided to ensure participants' comfort in the setting, and to limit any reservations towards being officially held responsible for what they were discussing informally with me as a trainer. This also allowed for an opportunity to reflect on ways of interaction among teachers and myself as a researcher (Dunne *et al.*, 2005).

Additionally, interviews were conducted before and after the development and implementation of interventions. The first set of interviews conducted was mainly to confirm and validate collected data: the questions addressed during interviews covered the same broad areas provided in the questionnaire (see Appendix II and III). The semi-structured interviews allowed teachers an opportunity to further elaborate on points they felt like sharing, for example their current experience as teachers, their views on their students, school environment, their relationship with their supervisors and the difficulties they faced. Interviews were not guided by a schedule of standard questions.

Interviews were carried out in English in a relaxed and friendly manner. Through the interviews, teachers spoke freely about their ideas regarding the new material they had adopted (see Chapter 2 for further details) and how this newly introduced curriculum

had made an impact on their performance and on their students. This helped to informally assess teachers' language communication skills and ability to communicate confidently in English.

3.3.3 Classroom Observations

The third data collection tool used was a classroom observation checklist. Observations were seen as an appropriate tool to provide information on actual professional practice as opposed to teacher accounts of practice provided during the interviews. The first set of classroom observations was done to better understand how teachers function and interact in their work environment as part of the reconnaissance. They helped in confirming data identified in earlier stages through interviews and the needs assessment questionnaire. These visits were very useful in constructing a clearer picture of how teachers perceive their performance in the classroom compared to how they actually perform. It was a view into the existing reality of teachers' working conditions, environment and performance rather than relying on teachers' self-descriptions.

Observation forms were used during classroom visits in order to note down information I found useful for the purposes of the research (see Appendix IV). The observation forms mainly noted details regarding the process used to begin and conclude a lesson, classroom communication tools, sequential development of ideas in the classroom, and teachers' management skills in addition to the way the lesson was conducted overall.

Observations were also used after interventions as part of the monitoring strategy. The set of observations performed after the interventions were done to study the impact on teacher performance. The checklist was a useful tool in comparing teacher performance before and after the interventions. Observations allowed insight into whether interventions had actually impacted on teacher performance, and helped in identifying the nature and extent of this impact. This was a different approach and one that teachers had not been accustomed to in terms of follow up and support after having received training.

Teachers did not mind being observed while teaching, as I had informed them upon entering that I was not there to assess their work as a supervisor, but my presence was to

learn and observe the strategies and techniques that were employed while teaching. My main interest was to understand how teachers performed in the classroom by observing time management skills, lesson introductions and endings, and any strategies employed to help involve the learner in the class.

3.3.4 Post-Classroom Observation Discussions

After classroom visits and observations, teachers were encouraged to reflect on their performance through informal discussions. Being initially accompanied by the Head of English Language at the Ministry of Education, teachers were eager to discuss their students' attitudes and willingness to learn and how that might affect their ability to teach. These discussions were also carried out before the development of interventions and after having implementing them.

Although I was mainly a silent observer at this stage, teachers generally expected that I would share my point of view regarding their teaching and performance in the classroom. They were keen to discuss their performance and the overall flow of the lesson. The first discussions were informal and teachers welcomed the opportunity to explain themselves and, for example, why they would resort to a particular way in teaching a certain concept. Teachers were often defensive towards the approaches they followed and assumed they were the most appropriate in the conditions they worked within.

The set of discussions held after the interventions focused mainly on reflection and how teachers could improve their performance in future classes. This allowed participants to contribute to the construction of findings of the research through their input on what they found to be useful and effective from interventions implemented. They also provided me with insight on teachers' attitudes towards change and how teachers were responding to requests to change.

3.3.5 Documentary Evidence

Documentary evidence was the last data collection tool used to support earlier data collection instruments. Documentary evidence was mainly paperwork used and prepared by teachers for the purpose of lesson preparation and delivery. This included

the printed material used, photocopiable resources (Wyles, 2013) and lesson plans (Barroso and Pon, 2005). All of these gave information on preparation measures taken before the lesson, students' work and assessment measures in addition to the overall job requirements of the teacher. Documents prepared by the teachers were also studied before and after interventions. This allowed me to compare teachers modes of teaching before and after interventions, in addition to understanding how teachers developed the material on which they based their teaching. These documents were used to stimulate discussion during school visits.

Having a particular opportunity to study prepared lesson plans gave insight on how teachers systematically prepared for their lessons, the identification of learning objectives, and teaching strategies and evaluation tools. Combining lesson observations with documentary evidence such as lesson plans, allowed reflection on what teachers had prepared for and what they had actually delivered. Documentation provided a useful tool that helped make a link between what teachers assumed they were doing and what they were actually doing.

3.3.6 Feedback Forms

Feedback forms were used to collect immediate feedback from teachers after interventions, particularly those to do with training sessions and workshops. These were also used to collect information on teachers' views on the delivery and content of the training.

Feedback forms were divided into two main sections, the first requesting contact details for the participants and the grade levels they taught. The second section was on the actual training delivery and content. It had five main subsections, the first two being multiple choice options in relation to the general training content and delivery, and the final three sections being open ended questions requiring teachers to note down information on individual training sessions, future topics of interest and other comments or remarks.

When combined, much of the data collected through the multiple instruments discussed above provided a detailed account of teachers' educational and professional

background, and their development needs and interests, working conditions and environment. This pattern of data collection within an Action Research frame had not been previously used within UAE schools and was a novel opportunity for teachers to experience and share their own views.

3.3.7 Journal

The last data collection tool, which was used throughout the different phases of the research mainly to take note of my own views as a researcher, field findings and experiences, was my personal journal. The personal journal was a very useful tool in tracking my experiences from the beginning phases of the research. It was particularly useful in identifying my group of active participants and my different experiences in the different educational settings that had an impact on my views as a practitioner and a researcher. It also allowed me to take note of my experience while working with participants of the research. Generally, the journal helped in recalling and reviewing data collected in the different phases of the research, providing an insight to my experience as an individual and a researcher. It has allowed the provision of a rich narrative context to my research and a place for the reflexive generation of ideas.

Table 3.4 below briefly summarises the different data collection tools in the different phases of the research, together with their contributions.

Table 3.4: Data Collection Tools Used in the AR Phases

Data Collection Tool	Phase		
	Reconnaissance	Intervention	Monitoring and Evaluation
Needs Assessment Questionnaire			
Interviews			
Classroom Observations			
Discussions			
Documents			
Feedback Forms			
Research Journal			

3.4 Research Phases

The following section will outline the research phases involved in this project. It will provide an insight into how the initial need to develop research in this area was identified, the data collection tools used during the reconnaissance phase, the interpretation of data, development of interventions based on identified data, followed by the evaluation of the findings and effectiveness of the first intervention. The time frame of the research as a whole allowed for the completion of two complete cycles, having the first serve as a reconnaissance phase for the latter.

3.4.1 Reconnaissance

At the initial phase of the research, it was necessary to explore the existing circumstances teachers were working within. This mainly helped to identify the research focus and collect the necessary data to interpret and base interventions on. Data explaining the need to develop more custom made professional development schemes can be found in the Critical Contexts of the Study (see page 13).

In order to investigate and identify key areas of importance regarding language teaching, the following areas of interest were identified.

- Defining current interests and needs of teachers of English that are based on their own personal judgments and experiences.
- Assessing the attitudes and interests of teachers towards teacher education professional development programmes.
- The assessment of teacher training needs that teachers feel are necessary to have in order to perform efficiently.
- Identifying the key areas that should be addressed within teacher training or professional development programmes designed for EFL teachers.

In order to collect the necessary data, the set of data collection tools identified in the section above were utilised. These included a needs assessment questionnaire, interviews, classroom observation checklists, informal discussions after lesson observations and, finally, documentary evidence of teachers' work in the classroom.

3.4.2 Data Interpretation and the Formulation of Interventions

In order to formulate interventions that addressed the needs and interests of teachers, in addition to the general requirements of the Ministry of Education in the UAE to update teaching practices, it was necessary to collate and interpret the data sourced from the reconnaissance phase. According to Glanz (1999), this is an important phase in the research: to describe data clearly, search for consistent patterns, and provide a basis upon which to establish a professional development scheme that addresses the existing needs and interests of teachers of English in the UAE.

Significant data from each collection tool was tabulated. This helped in identifying consistent patterns of practice from among the group of participants. Conclusions were then drawn from individual table datasets and aligned to similar findings of other data collection tools to identify frequencies of occurrence. Common themes identified from the datasets were fed onto the development of the data strategy.

In summary, data was mapped into tables to formulate percentages, frequencies, and simple descriptive tables to represent findings (see Appendix VIII).

Intervention Strategy

The reconnaissance phase that was conducted during this research was a unique approach used in identifying teachers' needs and interests. This allowed the development of interventions that were specifically designed to address particular needs of English language teachers working in the UAE.

Data generated identified through the different data collect tools was first extracted and tabulated. Each data collection tool generated data sets which were confirmed by comparing data sets identified with data sets generated from the other data collections tools. The first set of data sets extracted from the needs assessment questionnaires, after being tabulated, were compared to the general themes identified through the utilisation of lesson observation forms during classroom observations in addition to the data generated from discussions and interviews carried out with teachers. Having collected and tabulated all the data, general themes were identified to be used as a focus when developing interventions (see Appendix VIII) . See chapter 4 for further details.

Following the interpretation of data, an effective plan needed to be developed based on the identified needs and interests of teachers in the area of professional development. General themes identified in the reconnaissance phase of the research suggested the need to adopt a variety of professional development approaches, which can be summarised as follows:

- workshops on educational practice and methodology
- demonstration lessons on suggested practices and approaches
- group reflection sessions on how teacher performance can be improved
- post-training lesson observations and field support
- consistency in follow up

The above would need to be considered the light of variables related to teachers' practices, including educational background, professional experience, nationality and previous involvement in professional development.

The next stage required that a plan be put in place in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. This included a training schedule for a series of workshops, followed by scheduled follow up on teachers through classroom observations and meetings in person, whether individually or as a group (see Appendix IV).

The involvement and interaction of teachers during the different phases of the intervention needed to be closely monitored and noted through post workshop feedback forms, observations, and interviews. Therefore the implementation and monitoring of interventions was carried out simultaneously.

Intervention Content and Materials

Developed training content was discussed and provided to trainers who were involved in the delivery of the training through trainer notes (see Appendix VI). Trainer notes provided detailed explanations on the objectives, activities and stages of each session: this ensured consistency in the delivery of the training content. Trainers were asked to address all session objectives to make sure that all teachers received the same information. Trainers were also allowed to make minor adaptations as necessary in

terms of the mode of delivery, but were asked to discuss this with other trainers and myself well before conducting the sessions.

A key objective for the sessions was to give teachers the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences while reflecting on new notions and ideas being introduced within the workshops. Sessions focused on the encouragement of group work, pair work and overall participant interaction. Training topics were initially selected by analysing the data provided in the needs assessment questionnaires and other information collected during the reconnaissance through interviews, classroom observations and informal discussions with teachers. On the other hand, topic selection for the second phase of training was based on the data provided in the feedback forms distributed after the training, in addition to further observations made during classroom visits and informal interviews, which were conducted during the three month period in between the training phases.

In order to make any necessary changes or refinements on the training content during the period of training, trainers – including myself – met each evening before and after the training in order to discuss the suggested changes that would help make the training content either more interactive, engaging or relevant to the teachers' experiences and needs. Such meetings were very useful in constructing and reconstructing training content and stages based on the immediate feedback and observations experienced by the trainers.

Each training period ended by having attending teachers complete a two page feedback form (see Appendix VII), which aimed at assessing the general training content, method of delivery, applicability and effectiveness.

During the first intervention, only 52% of the total population of teachers completed the feedback forms, with the rest needing a better motive to do so. In order to ensure that teachers completed the forms, it was made clear that they would need to fill out the forms in order to receive attendance certificates, which was of apparent importance to them. Furthermore, it was made clear that comments and recommendations noted on the feedback forms would be taken into serious consideration, giving teachers another

opportunity to suggest further topics that would be of interest to them and the comfort of knowing that they would be heard.

3.4.3 Delivery of Interventions

Although I worked closely with 17 key participants during the different phases of the research, developed interventions were implemented on a wider scale to cover the whole population of the study. As a researcher, I interacted closely with my group of participants, who were the main source of data during interviews, lesson observations, documentary evidence and small group discussions. On the other hand, the whole population of the study served as the data provider at the initial phase of the research during the distribution of the needs assessment questionnaire, and following the delivered interventions through post training feedback forms (see Appendix VII).

In order to deliver developed interventions to the wider population of the study (600 secondary English language school teachers), it was necessary to work closely with a group of experienced teacher educators and trainers. This was a nationwide project that required a lot of coordination and support from the Ministry of Education. Being targeted towards a larger group of teachers meant that teacher educators would need to be recruited to work alongside myself in the delivery of interventions, which included training workshops, demonstration lessons, group discussions and meetings in addition to lesson observations.

Role and Recruitment of Trainers During Both Interventions

Trainers were recruited for each of the two research cycles. Feedback provided by participants and the wider population of the study after the first cycle was used to evaluate and assess trainer performance and their ability to relate to teachers' backgrounds and needs. It was also used to identify more specific characteristics to be considered when recruiting trainers for the second cycle and future interventions.

For the implementation of the first set of interventions, the Ministry of Education asked to see and consider the curriculum vitae of suggested trainers to be assigned to work with me as part of the team. Generally, the Ministry of Education and the active research participants expressed a preference for native speaking western trainers, mainly

from the UK, US or Canada. Being a native speaker was a core criterion for the selection of candidates. In addition, it was preferred to have candidates who were experienced in teaching and teacher training. There was no preference for gender, given that both female and male trainers would be expected to conform to local dress codes.

The first set of trainers recruited were six native speaking selected on the basis of their experience in working with teachers in Europe or the Middle East. Four female trainers and two male trainers were chosen. The Ministry of Education expressed a preference for native speaking trainers to allow an opportunity for teachers to interact with trainers in English, and to ensure that teachers had the opportunity to be exposed to an authentic source of language. Table 3.5 below briefly summarises the profiles of the trainers recruited during the first intervention.

Table 3.5: Profile of Trainers Recruited During the First Intervention

Trainer	Profile
Trainer 1 British Female	27 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in UK, Spain, Italy, Indonesia, China, UAE, Qatar, Canada and Australia.
Trainer 2 British Female	15 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, Spain, Italy, China, Greece.
Trainer 3 British Female	30 years of teacher training and language experience in Senegal. 30 years of teacher training and language experience in Italy, Spain, UK and Sri Lanka
Trainer 4 American Female	32 years of teacher training and language experience in USA, Syria, Jordan, UAE and Qatar.
Trainer 5 British Male	24 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, Italy, China and Japan.
Trainer 6 British Male	13 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, New Zealand, Spain, Paraguay.

For the second intervention, the majority of trainers recruited were native speakers, but had been appointed from the region and therefore had a better understanding of the local culture and educational environment. After careful evaluation, only one trainer from the first intervention was re-appointed. New trainers all had substantial years of experience, were currently working in the Arab world, and had some knowledge of Arabic. This was

done as a response to teachers' preference towards working with trainers who are familiar with the local environment, needs and obstacles that teachers face.

Table 3.6: Profile of Trainers Recruited During the Second Intervention

Trainer	Profile
Trainer 1 British Female	27 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in UK, Spain, Italy, Indonesia, China, UAE, Qatar, Canada and Australia. Beginning speaker of Arabic.
Trainer 2 American Female	32 years of teacher training and language experience in USA, Syria, Jordan, UAE, and Qatar. Fluent speaker of Arabic
Trainer 3 British Male	36 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE. Moderate Speaker of Arabic.
Trainer 4 British Male	27 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, Oman and the UAE. Fluent Arabic speaker.

Establishing effective profiles for recruited trainers for the delivery of interventions in UAE was one of the direct and immediate findings of the research project. Responding to immediate findings related to trainers and the delivery of interventions in the first cycle had a positive impact on the construction and delivery of the second intervention.

Training Organisation

Normally, training courses conducted within the region were based on a series of workshops related to a specific area such as teaching young learners, assessment and evaluation methods and Computer Assisted Language Learning. Training usually lasted one day and there would be no follow up or support provided by the trainers.

Instead of the usual intensive period of workshops (Lieberman and Pointer Mace, 2008), trainers were supported as they worked with teachers and were informed by the feedback provided after each set of training sessions and workshops. Teachers were trained on a set of different topics or areas of concern approximately every three to four months. This gave teachers the opportunity to interact with the trainer over time, giving them continuous support during and after the intervention phase while teaching and practicing new teaching strategies.

The period between training phases was used to interact with teachers on a regular basis through online forums, emails, interviews and discussions, as well as classroom visits. Teachers had the opportunity try out recommended practices and thereafter to report their experience to fellow teachers and the trainer in the following phase.

Training for the collaborating teachers ranged from a couple days to a couple of months. Teachers were regularly monitored and supported by the trainers to help maximise the benefit of the interventions.

Follow up and monitoring was a critical feature of the training programme developed through this Action Research project. Teachers were offered continuous support both during and after the training took place. Teachers in this case always had an academic reference point other than their supervisors (see Chapter 2 for further details).

Training Implementation

Fortunately, the UAE MoE was very cooperative in terms of organising teachers' attendance and training venues: all teachers to be trained were taken off duty during the period of training. Accordingly, and in order to avoid the complications of finding substitutes for teachers attending the training, it was arranged to have training sessions last for a period two days every month on a regular basis. This would ensure regular contact with the trainer in addition to gradual professional development input that would allow teachers to implement and try recommended practices in their classrooms. Training, following up and monitoring the progress of trained teachers were an essential strategy used in the project.

This gradual approach in training was also adopted due to it being in line with the Action Research framework where it was conducted in phases, having each stage of training refined and adapted as per the feedback received from previous training in hope of ending up with an effective training programme that could best address the needs of teachers and the reforming educational system.

The first cycle of training was implemented during the second week of May 2007, which was at the end of the second academic term. The second cycle of training, which was also designed and conducted in the same manner as the first training, was

conducted at the beginning of the following academic year, November 2007. Usually the academic year starts in early September. However, Ramadan took place during the middle weeks of September, which meant that the working day would be shortened and teachers would be too tired to be involved in the training itself. Following advice from the Ministry of Education, the training therefore had to take place mid-November 2007.

Table 3.7: Research Implementation Phases

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Reconnaissance				Intervention (1)	Summer break		Monitoring/ Evaluation			Intervention (2)	
Questionnaire, Interviews, Observations				Workshops, Discussion Panels			Interviews, Classroom Observations			Workshops, Discussion Panels	

The training was conducted as part of the efforts made by the UAE MoE to improve language teaching in their schools as part of its educational reform.

Training was held during a period of three consecutive weeks. Participants were put in groups of approximately 30 teachers. Teachers were divided according to gender and, in few cases, mixed due to the limited number of teachers attending. Areas with larger populations such as Dubai, Al Ain, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi had the largest numbers of teachers attending with an average of 150 teachers per territory, where males and females were separated. On the other hand, towards the Western region, Fujairah and Ras Al Khaimah, training for males and females was conducted in the same training hall due to fewer teachers taking part in the training: in total there was an average of 15 teachers per session.

Training Venues

The majority of the workshop-based training was conducted in official teacher training centres or adult learning centres that were designed and specifically used for adult education and teacher training. Fortunately all training centres were well equipped with whiteboards, markers, LCD projectors, and laptops or computers for the trainers' use. Internet access was available in the major cities such as Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah. All available resources and limitations were taken into consideration when developing

the training content in order to avoid any disruptions or delays that may happen due to the lack of equipment and resources.

Managers of the training halls were local UAE citizens and were very welcoming and cooperative during the period of training. They helped with the photocopying and classroom arrangements necessary for the sessions. They also provided space for teachers to rest and enjoy the half hour break between the sessions with a few cold and hot drinks as well as some small sandwiches, all of which was sponsored by the publishing house supplying the books and sponsoring the training.

Supervisors' Participation

Supervisors took the role of monitoring and taking attendance in the majority of the training centres. Only a few supervisors, 11 out of 71 acted as research participants; these were involved in the training and participated with teachers in the actual workshops. Supervisors who worked as participants were specifically those working in remote areas, such as in the town of Ruweis, which is in the Western region of the UAE and closer to the Saudi Arabian borders. It was very clear at this stage that a huge wall was forcefully built between supervisors and their teachers (see Chapter 5 for further details).

School Visits

The period in between the training phases, which was approximately three months of school, was used to meet with the 17 selected school teachers and observe their lessons. It was also used to reconstruct the future training programme in terms of delivery, trainers, dates and topics.

The UAE Ministry of Education had provided me with a schedule and plan to visit various public and model schools throughout the country, observe classes and meet with the selected teachers and their colleagues. As noted earlier, selecting schools was based on the teachers' willingness to cooperate in the project, motivation to learn further from such post-training activities, and the facilitation offered by the school management.

As a female researcher, access to female schools was a lot easier than to male schools. Some schools were avoided due to their reservation towards having a female observer in

the school or in male classes. A few male schools that did welcome me as a researcher and educational consultant behalf of the UAE Ministry of Education, still had doubts as to how male students would react while in my presence. Although dressed very conservatively, I realised at a later stage that it would have been easier were I wearing the black “Abaya” when visiting male schools, which is the traditional UAE dress code for females. However when inquiring if this would have made a difference towards the access I would have to male schools, English Committee members informed me that it would not, since it was not about dress code but about female presence in male territory. To overcome this obstacle as much as possible, regular contact was established with male and female teachers through the online forums, emails and in discussions following training sessions.

During my school visits, I was accompanied by members from the English Committee, approaching schools as an official party representing the Ministry of Education. This helped in granting me a lot of access to schools, teachers and even school management. Without the cooperation of the Ministry of Education and the English Language Committee members, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to access schools in such a manner.

Ten schools were visited in total; five model schools and five public schools. Schools were located in Dubai, Sharjah, Al Ain, Fujairah and the Western Region (see below).

Table 3.8: School Visit Arrangements

Location	Male/Female	Total no. of Teachers	Public School	Model School
Dubai	Female	3	2	1
	Male	2		2
Sharjah	Female	3	2	1
	Male	2	1	
Abu Dhabi	Female	2		1
	Male	2		1
Western Region	Female	1	1	
	Male	2	1	
Total		17	5	5

School visits also gave the opportunity to observe the educational environment and social surroundings students and teachers were involved in. During these classroom visits, observation forms were used to record lesson procedures (the same that were used during the reconnaissance), in order to indicate any differences observed after the training had been implemented by using the same scale of observation by comparing classroom observations before and after the training.

School visits were carried out for a period of two months. See table 3.8 for the number of teachers visited per school. I would observe 3 lessons per teacher in each school in order to get a more accurate observation on the teaching practices and pedagogies teachers follow. Classroom observations were followed by discussions in the school meeting room and immediately after observations. These discussions were mainly between the teachers observed, the supervisor, the Ministry of Education representative and myself and were a general reflection on how the teachers used particular teaching strategies. A few meetings were held in the presence of the school principal. This immediate engagement allowed for more continuity in the profiling of teachers. It also reassured teachers about their position and role in the research. Discussions were considered as a form of coaching used during the implementation of interventions (Garet *et al.*, 2001). This period was very useful in building a trusting relationship between the researcher and the UAE ministry officials as well as the teachers and school administration.

3.4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Due to the nature of the research, and the various phases involved, monitoring was considered to be a critical part in assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of the intervention. Monitoring at this stage was set to observe and reflect on the following aspects:

- Teachers *expectations before* the training sessions.
- Teachers *interaction within* the sessions.
- Teachers *immediate oral and written feedback* after the sessions.
- Teachers *reflective feedback* after completing the first phase of training.
- Teachers *response to recommended practices suggested and encouraged* during the sessions.
- Teachers ability to effectively apply recommended practices discussed during the sessions.
- *Students reactions* towards newly applied techniques or strategies.

The same methods of data collection used in earlier phases were employed to monitor the implementation and response to the interventions. This enabled comparisons between teachers' performance, attitudes and interests before and after the intervention. Monitoring was done during and after the implementation of the intervention in order to collect immediate feedback from participants.

3.4.5 Evaluation

Evaluating interventions was necessary to establish the effectiveness of interventions. The data collected through interviews, post-training feedback forms, classroom observations and discussions, were useful in identifying both the strengths and weaknesses in intervention design. Evaluation and reflection on schemes was necessary to refine the intervention strategy. The evaluation of the first implemented intervention also constituted a reconnaissance phase for the second cycle of this project.

The evaluation assessed two main stages; the first being the intervention plan itself and how well it was conducted in terms of modes of delivery, timings, settings and overall impact on the quality of teaching. The second stage being the whole cycle of the Action

Research and how well it fulfilled the objective of improving teaching standards of English as a Foreign Language within the region.

General criteria defining the success of the programme as a whole were based on the feedback provided by teachers, on how well students responded to teacher practices, and on how confident teachers felt implementing recommended strategies. The evaluation was based on the following questions:

- 1 Was the Action Research framework devised able to effectively identify teachers' present needs?
- 2 Was the action plan practical and applicable to educational contexts in the UAE?
- 3 Was the developed action plan effective in meeting its goals?
- 4 Could the action plan be further improved?
- 5 How familiar were teachers with the type of the research framework devised?
- 6 How did the teachers' awareness of such a framework affect the research procedures and findings?
- 7 How did the nature of the researchers' identity affect the overall implementation of the project?
- 8 Further recommendations for the phases to follow.

3.5 Ethical Considerations in Relation to Researcher Identity and the Power Relations in the Research

3.5.1 Ethical Considerations of the Research

The following section will address the code of ethics as set by the guidelines provided by the British Education Research Association (2004), in relation to the responsibility towards participants of the study, the University of Sussex and the community of practitioner action researchers.

Clarity of Research Intentions and Purpose

As clarified in the Context of the Study, my role at the Ministry of Education was to create a professional development scheme that better addresses the needs and interests of local teachers due the recent change in the adopted language programme used for English Language at secondary level. Officials at the Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Director, Professional Development Division Manager and English Language Committee members, were all informed of my additional research intentions and interests in working with participants from the field to formalise the results of my needs assessment and analysis through official research as part of my DPhil candidate research requirements at the University of Sussex. Based on a mutual understanding between the Ministry of Education officials and myself as a practitioner researcher, facilitations were further made to gather necessary data and work with participants. My dual role further strengthened the confidence the ministry had in my role as an educational advisor, which had a positive impact on my overall role at the Ministry of Education and involvement in educational projects.

On the other hand, if it were not for the dual role I played, as a researcher and a practitioner, it would have been very difficult to gain access to participants who were willing to actively contribute to the research. My professional identity gave a stronger reason and purpose for participants to work closely with me on the research. Working as a researcher alone would have not been well received by the Ministry of Education or the group of participants engaged in the study. This can be exemplified from my experience in working with the group of teachers from Jordan. This was a key factor in the involvement and recruitment of participants in the research (Karneilli-Miller, 2009).

Understanding the Research Process alongside Participant Contribution

In order to ensure that all participants actively involved in the research understood the research process as a whole, and the importance of their contribution to the different phases of the research, an introductory meeting was held with participants to discuss the research objectives, stages and overall intentions. Besides having some guidelines provided on the cover page of the needs' assessment questionnaire, the importance of the participants own reflection and contribution was highlighted to ensure the success of the research. Participants were advised that they would be working alongside the

researcher as practitioner researchers themselves, to assess if recommended practices and strategies through interventions were effective through their own implementations, reflections and assessed feedback. Participants were aware of their significant level of involvement in the construction of knowledge in this project. They were expected to implement and thereafter examine and report their own experiences, while my role would be to study and examine their experiences during the project. The actual power relations reflected in the different phases of the research will be discussed in the following section.

Given the significant involvement of participants in the research, I shared all my research goals and objectives in relation to the development of a more effective training scheme that could better address their needs, which was also a part of the DPhil programme I was enrolled in at the University of Sussex. Participants were clearly aware of the dual role I played as an educational advisor working with the Ministry of Education alongside my role as a research student. This also ensured that participants were aware that their contributions would not go to waste but would be seriously considered when developing any professional development schemes in the future. It added accountability to the resulting professional development schemes, given that they were research based rather than commercial.

All participants had access to my contact details which allowed them to consistently communicate with me during the different phases of the research by phone and email.

Gained Knowledge

Due to the reflective nature of the research, and how it was aimed towards improving educational practice, the researcher advised participants that the research in general should aim at improving their experience as teachers in addition to the experience of other teachers based on the results and contributions of the research project. This developed a stronger sense of responsibility in participants, given that their experiences and findings would be used on wider scale to improve and develop experiences for other teachers who share similar backgrounds.

Reporting Research Results

Participants were informed that results of data collection tools would be strictly confidential and no one but myself, the researcher, would have direct access to it for the purpose of the research. On the other hand, data required as part of my role at the Ministry of Education was shared with committee members at the Ministry of Education for the purpose of providing background information to justify the decision to use particular strategies in the offered professional development schemes.

Research results were normally officially reported to the Ministry of Education in report format based on findings of data collection tools. Specific data identified when teachers in school were interviewed and observed together with an official representative from the Ministry of Education and was clearly communicated to the Ministry through myself and the ministry representative. Generally, there was no need to hide data from Ministry of Education officials, given that all participants were aware that data provided would be used to further improve decisions taken by the Ministry of Education in relation to professional development schemes offered.

My objectives as both a researcher and a practitioner were identical. My motivation was not only to earn an academic degree or publish my findings (Berg and Smith, 1985; Woods, 1986), but to contribute effectively to the establishment of a professional development scheme that addresses the needs of teachers in the UAE specifically and the Arab world in general. My research was rather a way to formalise and publish my findings and experiences in creating a professional development scheme under proper guidance and supervision made available through the University of Sussex, while using a structured and systematic methodology of practitioner research. As a researcher, I did not have any underlying intentions of using collected data for different purposes that would serve my research.

Researcher Identity

Researcher identity played a significant role during the different phases of this research and the general implementation of the project (Dunne *et al.*, 2005). My role as a researcher did not only have an impact on the implementation of the different phases of the research, but also on how the participants perceived and took part in the research,

which consequently had an impact on the findings of the study. As noted in Reason (1994) and Whitmore (1994), participants involvement in the research was mainly because of their need to express themselves and be heard; they also had an interest in the research outcomes and resulting interventions. Participants assumed that my official role would enable them to be heard by the Ministry of Education.

3.5.2 Existing Power Relations in the Different Stages of the Research

As per the stages identified in Karnielli-Miller *et al.* (2009) the existing power relations between the participants and me can be demonstrated in Figure 3.3 and are clarified in the sections that follow.

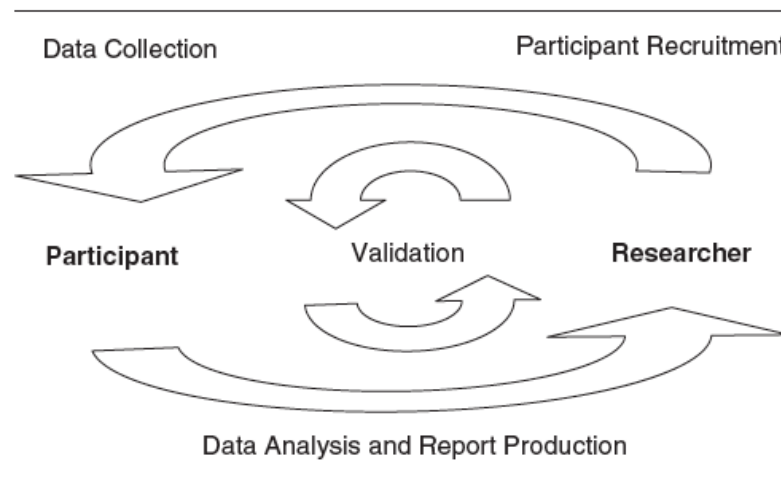


Figure 3.3: The Flow of Power Relations in Qualitative Research

Source: Karnielli-Miller *et al.* (2009, p.284)

Participant Recruitment

At the initial phase of the research, during the identification of participants of the study, I had full control of the research in terms of disclosing information on the research goals, the importance of their contribution and my affiliation with the University of Sussex. My source of authority or power was also due to the official role I played at the Ministry of Education. Although there was a strong hierarchical relationship between the participants and myself, which required their actual participation (Peel *et al.*, 2006), I still wanted them to willingly and voluntarily contribute to the research. Mainly, I wanted to persuade participants to take part in the research and voluntarily share their experiences. I chose to be very transparent and inform them of my dual intentions;

creating a professional development scheme for teachers in the UAE, in addition to formalising the project through official research as part of my research requirements at the University of Sussex. This was to maintain clarity from the beginning to make my research ethically acceptable and in line with the code of ethics suggested by BERA (p. 3, 2004).

As a researcher I provided participants with details on the aims and nature of the research in addition to the possible consequences of the research, which would be the establishment of an official professional development scheme that the ministry may decide to adopt and follow in similar situations. Participants were also advised that they would be informed of the initial findings of the needs assessment, which would be carried out through multiple forms of data collection (questionnaires, lesson observations, interviews and the presentation of official documents). This was done in order to justify the rationale behind the concluded interventions to be implemented. It also demonstrated that their input and feedback was seriously taken into consideration when taking decisions in relation to the construction of interventions.

On the other hand, with my experience with the first group of participants in Jordan, where I performed as a researcher only, participants had stronger authority in the research which was expressed by their indirect refusal to take part and contribute to my research regardless of the clarifications I provided. It was therefore concluded that, in order to be able to implement such a project, I would need to have a more powerful and influential role to gain access to active participants who would be willing to take part in such research.

Data Collection

During the collection of data, participants had a stronger and more active role in the research. Although participants appeared to be rather in control of the data they provided in some settings (questionnaires and interviews), my authority and official role raised a more obligatory setting to the data participants should be willing to provide. I also chose to use additional methods in collecting data, such as informal meals and showing care to participants, to gain access to data that was genuine and not just as part of their obligations (Kvale, 1996).

Triangulation of data collection was another method used to ensure the validity of collected data that was not made clearly available in certain settings. Additional rapport building tactics used were sharing meals (Dickson Swift *et al.*, 2006) and developing friendships with participants (Duncombe and Jessop, 2002). On the other hand, in order to maintain ethical values in relation to the data collected through different tactics and informal settings as suggested by Dickson Swift *et al.* (2006), I did not take notes of any irrelevant data disclosed.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Having worked with the participants in collecting and identifying required data, the formal control of the research returned to me as the researcher. In reporting the findings of the data collection tools and their interpretations, I had control over the nature of reported data and how it would be reported. As described by Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) my control was absolute. My responsibility was now to deliver data that was of substantial educational value to all involved parties; the participants, the Ministry of Education, the community of educational researchers and the University of Sussex.

Assessing and Validating the Effectiveness of Developed Interventions

To limit the risk of misinterpreting participant experiences and shared contributions, validating collected findings and feedback on developed interventions was done by allowing participants to discuss and share their views regarding interventions. Data shared with participants was on the findings of the needs assessment conducted through the questionnaires, interviews, and lesson observations. This was also to justify the decision towards selecting topics and areas of interests addressed in interventions. It also provided participants with the rationale behind the type of interventions employed (workshops, demonstration lessons, discussion forums). In addition to participant feedback, my field observations as a researcher were essential in order to assess the effectiveness of interventions. Sharing particular data on the findings was necessary to show participants my commitment to involving them in the decisions taken about recommended practices (Karnielli-Miller, 2009) in addition to confirming my understanding about the collected data (Enosh and Buchbinder, 2005).

Publishing Research Findings

At the early phase of the project, and in order to maintain clarity in the dual objective of the research, all involved parties (the Ministry of Education, participants, University of Sussex), were informed of my intentions to create a professional development scheme that served the needs and interests of the UAE Ministry of Education in addition to implementing the project as part of my research requirements as a DPhil candidate at the University of Sussex. My role as a researcher was classified as being a detective investigating and discovering what others in the same field, including teachers, have not observed or understood until today. Although participants worked with me in different parts of the research, the relationship remained highly hierarchical given that the participants were not actual experts in the field of professional development (Mason, 1996), and were rather responding to prompts and interventions developed by the researcher.

Given that all data collected and used in the research were in line with the original research objectives, the publication of the findings can be seen as the responsibility of the researcher. After having the data transferred from the field and into the realm of research, it became research property; nevertheless it was still used under the condition that I committed myself to comply with following ethical guidelines as specified by Karnieli-Miller (2009, p. 285). These conditions are as follows:

1. Participants fully understood (at the level known to the researcher) the meaning of the research and voluntarily agreed to take part in it.
2. Messages conveyed through participants were not distorted.
3. Participant anonymity was protected.
4. Benefits, where possible, were made available to participants, which were balanced against risks.
5. As a researcher I had an obligation to non-maleficence that required doing no harm to participants.

The relationship between the participants and the researcher was seen as a continuum; a high level of partnership on one side, during the data collection and the validation of the finding of the study, and an asymmetric one on the other end, where I had full authority

and power over the reporting and analysis of data, as will be clarified in the following chapter. Participants served as respondents to research prompts. I served as a researcher setting to further investigate (Mason, 1996). To ensure credibility for the research, it was necessary for me to maintain critical adherence through the followed methodology and researcher transparency.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Presentation

After the valuable and interesting experience shared with fellow teachers involved in the different phases of this research project, and the various research stages identified in the earlier chapter on the methodology of the study, this chapter will attempt to clearly and accurately summarise the data collected. It thereafter will clarify interpretations made for the data through the identification of general themes and clusters of topics.

The first section of this chapter will discuss the research strategy in relation to some general themes identified as crucial for the research to be implemented, such as availability of time, research expertise, availability of on-going support and finally general communication that occurred within the research community.

The following section will elaborate how the research data was collected, categorised and analysed. This will then be followed by a presentation of identified data through tables and graphs, which will generally summarise key theories and schemes deduced from the data. Finally the chapter will end with an interpretation of the evidence identified.

4.1 Research Strategy

This section will look into the devised research tactics that allowed a better approach in handling some obstacles practitioner action researchers may face when conducting their research (Nunan, 2006). According to Nunan (2006), the main concerns practitioner researchers may face while conducting their research have to do with time, professional expertise in the area they are researching, availability of on-going support and communication strategies devised among the research community.

4.1.1 Time availability

Fortunately, as a practitioner researcher, I was fully dedicated to the establishment and development of a custom made teacher training scheme that was more effective than existing pre-packaged professional development packages. I had sufficient time to work

on the research for two full phases. This was due to my official practitioner role, in which I continue to perform at the Ministry of Education in the UAE.

4.1.2 Researcher Expertise

Due to earlier experience and background in working alongside non-native speaking teachers in the Arab world and the European Union, as a practitioner I felt confident being able to perform and communicate research findings within the field of study. I was confident of my experience in the area of teacher training and professional development of non-native speaking teachers based on the several engaging opportunities I had before. The decision to conduct research in this field was due to my experience and realisation that this was an area that needed to be further investigated due to the lack of existing custom made professional development schemes that sufficiently addressed the needs of non-native speaking English teachers from the Arab world.

The lack of familiarity I had for practitioner Action Research required that I conduct thorough research on the most appropriate Action Research strategy to be devised to best put my research into evident practice. Although, I was confident of the stages my participants would undergo while performing the Action Research project, I still needed to undertake thorough research on the approach that would be used to report the findings of the study on a continuous basis. This was very time consuming and a drawback for the nature of the research I conducted, as I found no standard approach in delivering my results in written form, unlike other traditional research practices, such as qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

4.1.3 On-going Support

Although the lack of on-going support is one of the most reported obstacles faced by practitioner action researchers (Nunan, 2006), I did not have problematic issues relevant to the support necessary to conduct this research, particularly in relation to financial obligations, assigned tasks and authoritative action taken. As clarified in the Context of the Study, this was due to the official role I was assigned to when taking on the project, which provided me with the necessary authority and influential decision making impact working in the Ministry of Education headquarters. On the contrary, being a practitioner

researcher working with the Ministry of Education in the UAE increased the ministry's confidence in the decisions and measures I took, as they were more comfortable with the academic background I had and my objective in creating a professional development scheme that would best address their needs and interests. The ministry viewed me as an educational professional working in the area of professional development and teacher training, rather than a business person seeking to generate profit out of constructed training schemes, as those they had already implemented.

4.1.4 Communication Strategies Devised Among the Research Community

Communication within the research community was very clear and direct. Active participants, all 17 of them, were aware of the key objective of the research and how they would need to contribute actively during the different phases of the research. The objectives of the data collection tools devised were also made very clear from the beginning. This enabled the participants to better understand the research and its objectives. Findings of the research were also discussed immediately to explain the necessary changes that needed to be made to improve the effectiveness of interventions.

The Action Research methodology was ideal in this case as it allowed for transparent communication between all those involved in the research. Unlike other research strategies that are normally performed in the region, such as case studies and qualitative research, results and responses to data collection tools were shared with the participants and other parties involved, such as the Ministry of Education headquarters and officials. This further strengthened the appreciation for the contribution my research would make towards their professional development environment.

4.2 Analysing the Action Research Data

After having collected all the data required to develop interventions, a set of codings and classifications were performed to classify data into categories and establish patterns that could identify general conclusive themes. The following sections will look into the general themes identified through the different data collection instruments and clarify how findings were confirmed through the triangulation of data collection.

4.2.1 Data Identified Through Needs Assessment Questionnaires

As noted in the methodology of the study, a needs assessment questionnaire was seen as the appropriate tool to provide a broad based profile of teacher perceptions and needs assessment in the UAE. The questionnaires were used to collect educational and social background information on the teachers, in addition to their areas of interest in educational practice. The questionnaire enabled me to have a more thorough general background profile on the population of the study, given that it was distributed to the whole population of the study and very much the starting point for the research.

The general areas identified by the needs assessment questionnaire are shown in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: General Areas Identified by the Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Theme	Sub Themes
Demographic Data`	School Type Gender Age Group Marital Status Nationality
Education and Teaching Experience	Educational Background Years of Experience in Teaching Levels (grades) taught Computer and IT Skills Use of resources in the classroom (realia, multimedia and IT)
Training and Professional Background	Exposure to teacher training Effectiveness of training schemes experienced Availability of post training follow up Nature of post training follow up Teacher's willingness to share knowledge Areas teachers felt comfortable in sharing information and experience about

In light of the above general areas of focus, the following findings were conveyed.

Demographic Data

Gender

The number of female teachers slightly exceeded the number of male teachers. However this may be due to the higher number of female students than male students. On the other hand, the number of expatriate male teachers was higher than the number of female expat teachers as can be seen in Figure 4.1 below. This meant that there were more trained female teachers than male teachers.

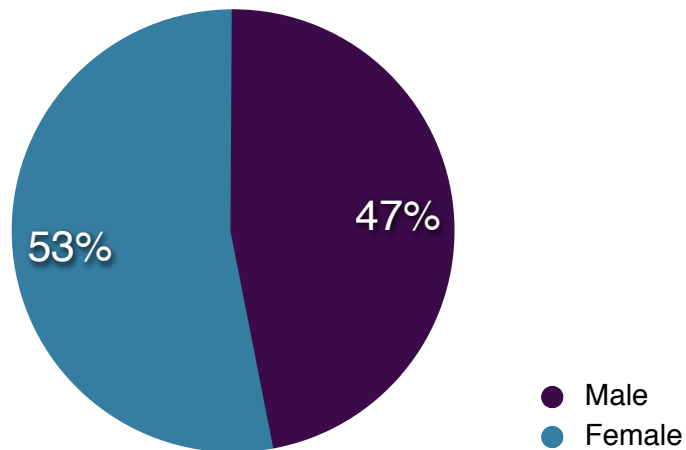


Figure 4.1: Gender of Secondary School Teachers

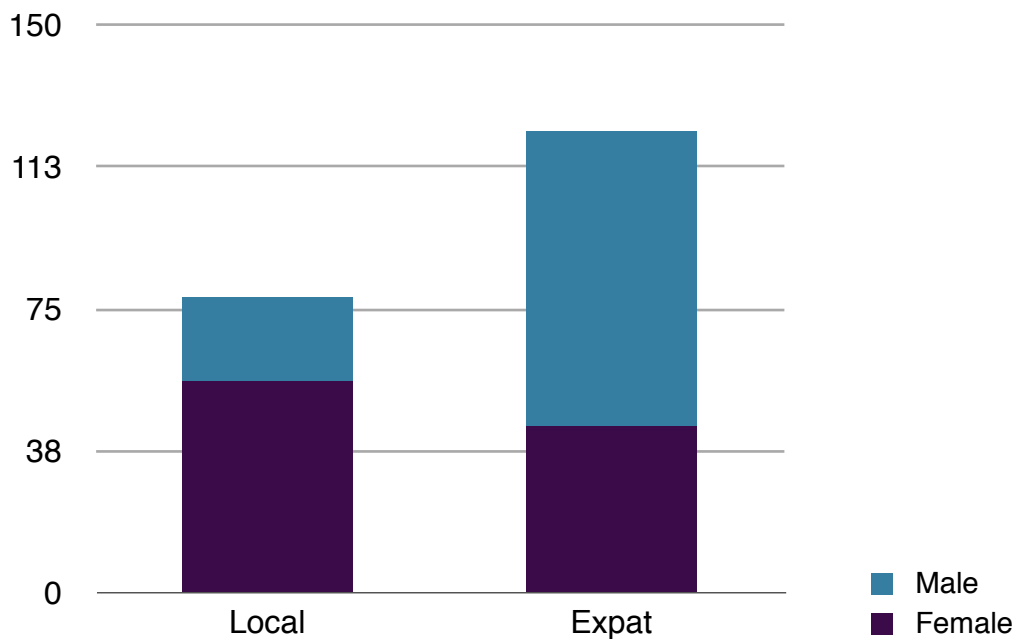


Figure 4.2: Number of Male Expatriate Teachers vs Local Teachers

Age Group

Four categories were given to teachers to choose from. The most common age range expatriate teachers selected, with a total of 89%, was 31-41 years. On the other hand, the most common age group local teachers selected, with 83%, was 21-31 years.

Marital Status

The number of single local school teachers was higher than the number of expatriate teachers, as can be seen in Figure 4.3 below.

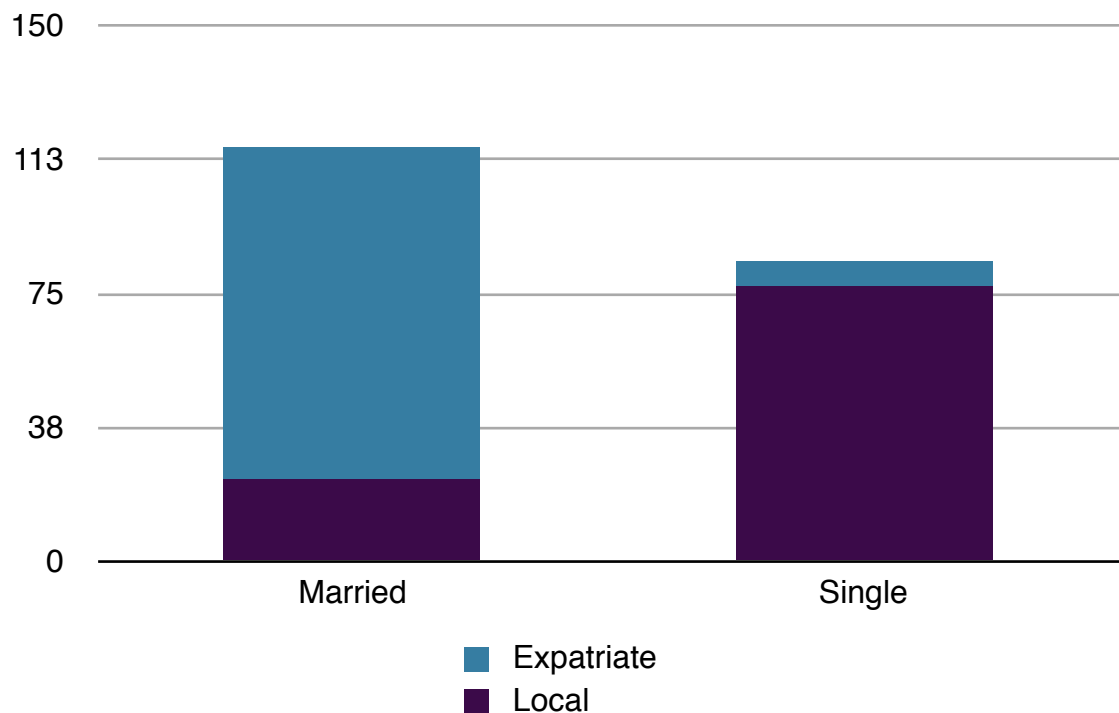


Figure 4.3: Marital Status of Expatriate and Secondary Local Teachers

Nationality

As can be seen in Figure 4.4, the number of local teachers was 16% of the total population of secondary school teachers. Egyptian and Jordanian teachers dominated the teacher population with a total of 50% of the teacher population. The remaining 34% was for teachers with other nationalities; Palestinian, Syrian, Sudanese and Tunisian.

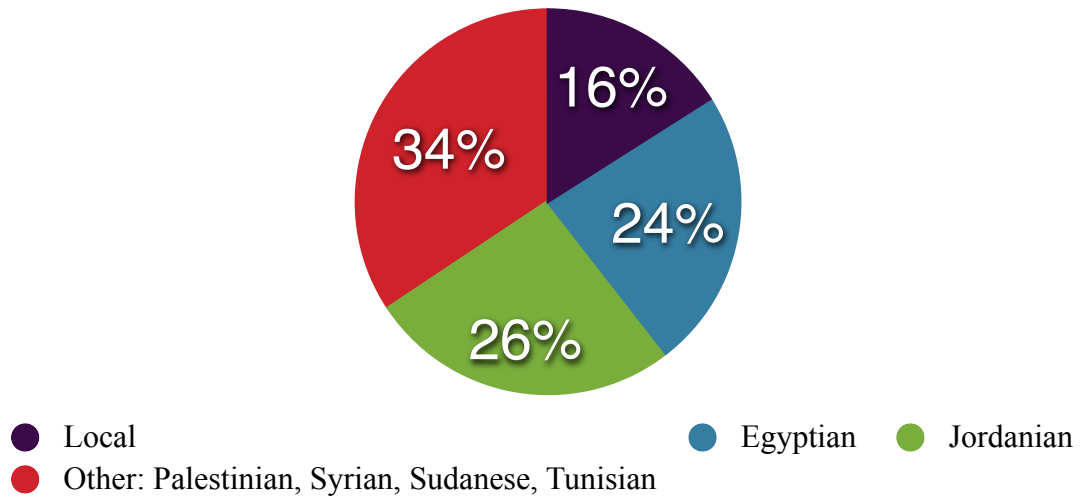


Figure 4.4: Classification of Teachers According to Nationality

Education and Teaching Experience

The second section in the questionnaire prompted participants to provide details in relation to their experience and educational background. Findings are noted below.

Educational Background

The most common qualification teachers held was a four year degree in English Literature. Translation and Linguistics was the second most common degree. Teachers with a degree in English Language Teaching formed 12% of the total population of secondary school teachers (see Figure 4.5).

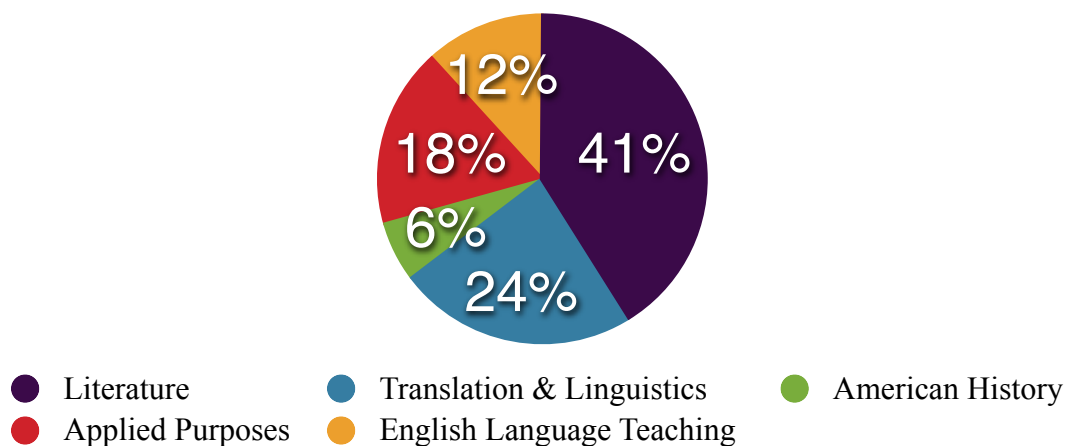


Figure 4.5: Breakdown of Educational Background of Teachers

Of the total population of the study, 11% were working towards their post-graduate degree, 9% of which were local teachers. The remaining 3% were expatriates.

Years of Experience in Teaching

When prompted to indicate the number of years of teaching experience teachers had, 91% of local teachers noted that they had one to three years of teaching experience. On the other hand, 89% of expatriate teachers noted that they had experience between ten to fifteen years. This indicated that expat teachers were employed with a minimum number of years of experience, unlike local teachers who were employed as fresh graduates holding a teaching degree.

The third prompt required that teachers specify the age group they taught. A relationship was found between the years of experience teachers had and the age group they taught, particularly with expatriate teachers. The more years of experience teachers had, the older age group they were assigned to teach. This finding was clarified in the interviews that followed the completion of the questionnaire.

Computer and IT Literacy Skills

When prompted to describe their computer literacy, teachers were given four categories to choose from. As noted in the graph below, the number of expert and intermediate computer literate teachers was equivalent. However, the majority of teachers classified themselves as beginner users of computers, while 19% of teachers described themselves as non-users of computers.

The number of computer literate teachers was limited to recent graduates and teachers with fewer years of experience. Both local and expatriate teachers with an average of three years of experience described themselves as computer literate.

Of the 17 school teachers formulating the sample of the study, six teachers were recent graduates; these expressed their knowledge and interest in the use of technology for educational purposes. The remaining eleven teachers held more than three years of experience, three of which were computer literate but did not commonly use technology in the classroom. The remaining eight teachers described themselves as technologically illiterate, hence their inability to use technology in the classroom effectively was limited (see Figure 4.6).

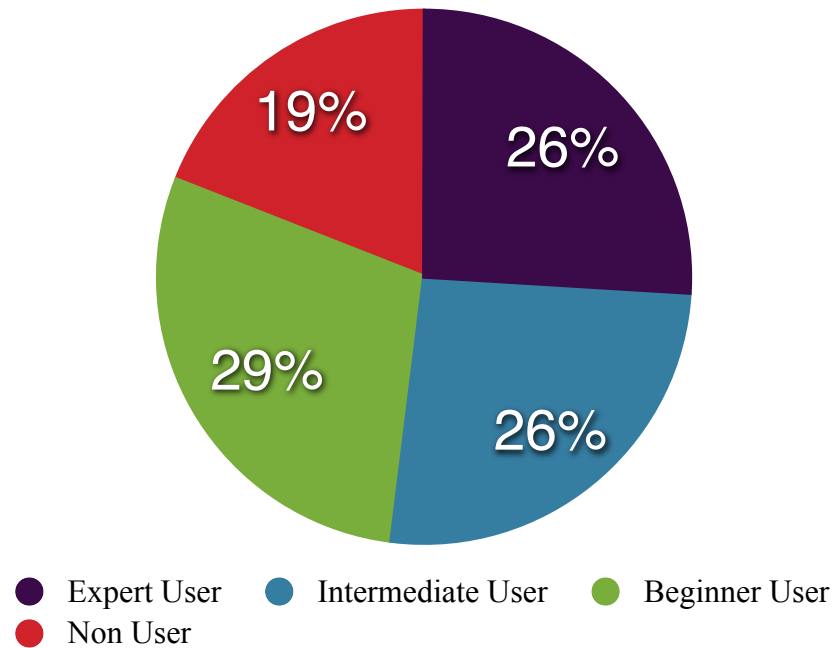


Figure 4.6: Number of Computer Literate Teachers

Use of Computers, Internet and Multimedia in the Classroom

When inquiring about the use of technology and multimedia in the classroom, 62% of teachers noted that they never use any type of technology indicated in their classrooms. The remaining 38% described their use between rare, occasional and always, as indicated in Figure 4.7. Although 26% of teachers described themselves as experts in Computers and IT, only 4% noted that they always used technology in the classroom.

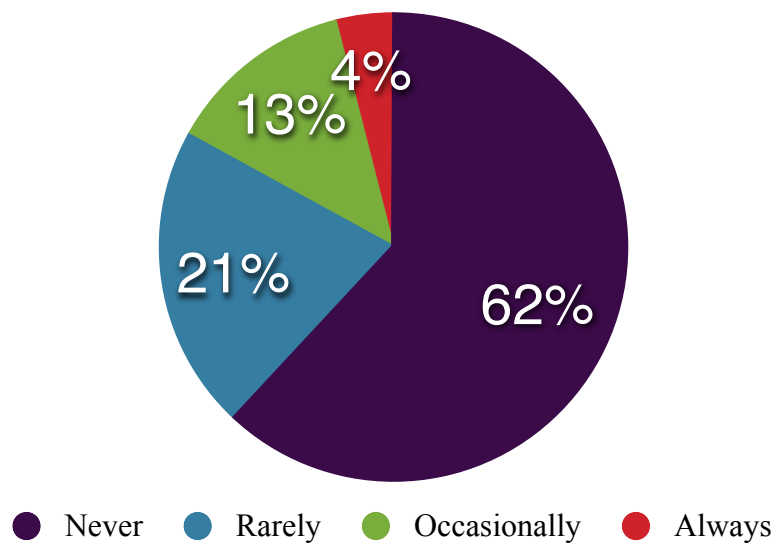


Figure 4.7: Percentage of Teachers Using Technology in the Classroom

Training and Professional Development

The third section of the questionnaire was on the amount and nature of the training teachers had received during their career.

Provision of Teacher Training

Teachers were requested to provide their views in relation to the party they believe should be responsible for the provision of teacher training. Three choices were provided; the Ministry of Education, the employing school and during the course of study prior to graduation. Teachers were requested to tick all parties they found appropriate. Approximately 67% of teachers noted that it was the responsibility of both the Ministry of Education and the employing school to provide teacher training and professional development. The percentage of teachers noting that it should be provided prior to graduation was 13%. This view was later clarified in interviews as teachers noted that not all of them planned to become teachers when attending tertiary education, see context of the study for further details.

Mandatory Training

When asking teachers about their views in relation to the obligation of training, 94% of teachers responded positively and 6% responded negatively.

Training Exposure

The following prompts inquired about the duration of training teachers had and its length. Three main categories were provided to choose from; one to three professional development sessions, four to ten sessions, and a full professional development programme. None of the teachers indicated that they had attended a full professional development scheme, whereas 82% of teachers noted that they had attended one to three professional development sessions (see Figure 4.8).

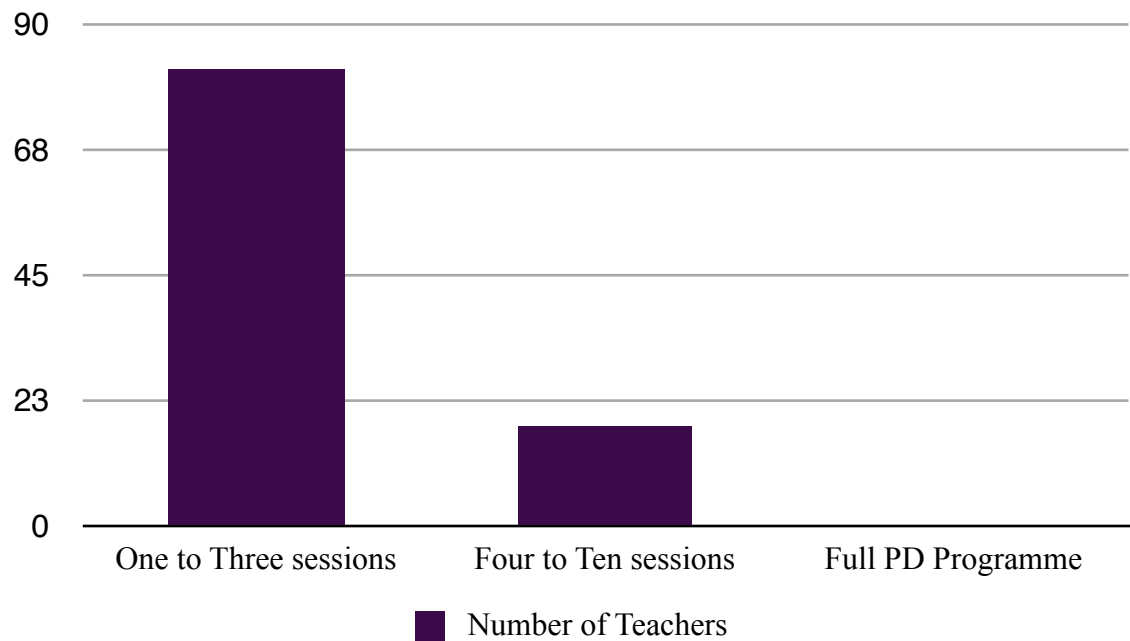


Figure 4.8: Average Training Exposure of Teachers

Training Duration

Teachers were prompted to provide details in relation to the length of the training they had attended. Three options were provided; hours, one to three days and a week or more. The data showed that 98% of the teachers noted that the training they had attended lasted for hours. None of the teachers noted that they had attended training that lasted for one week or more.

Training Provider

When inquiring about the entity that provided the training teachers had attended, 93% noted that the workshops they had attended were provided by publishers, 73% noted that they had attended sessions provided by foreign authorities such as the Centre for British Teachers and the Academy for Educational Development.

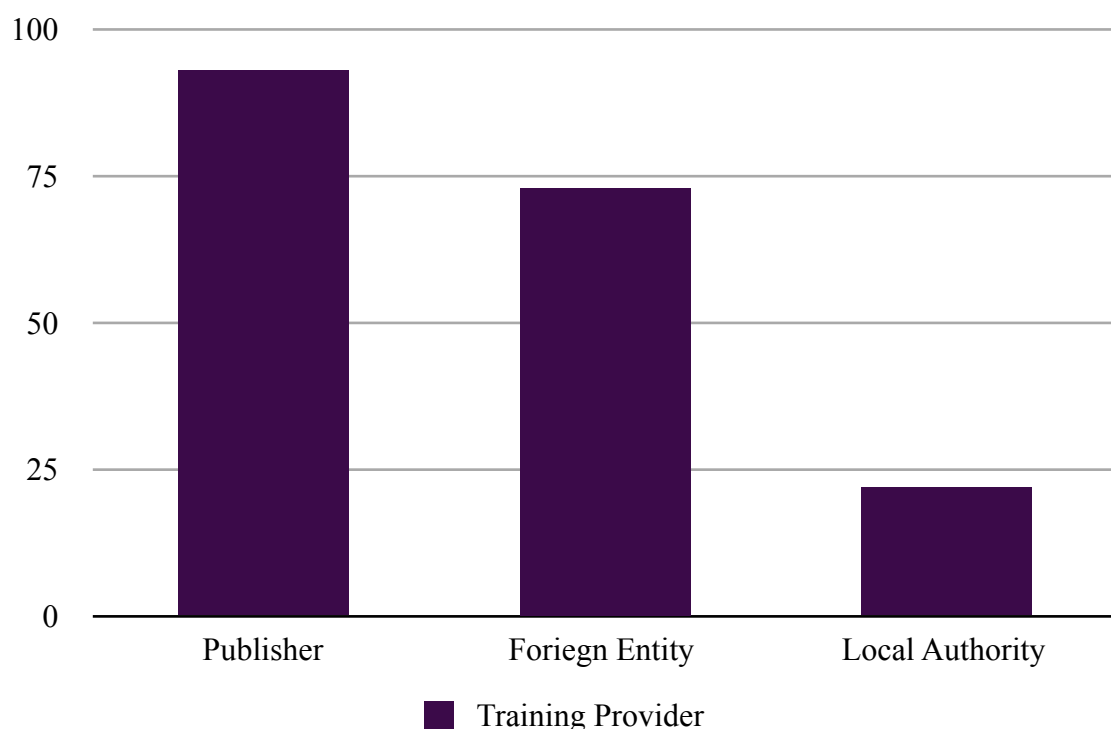


Figure 4.9: Number of teachers Attending Sessions Provided by Different Sources

Training Effectiveness and Follow Up

When inquiring about the effectiveness of the sessions and whether or not they have addressed teachers' current needs, 92% of teachers responded negatively. All teachers had a negative response towards the prompt that inquired about the presence of any post-training follow up. Therefore when inquiring about the nature of post-training follow up, this section was left empty.

Willingness to Share Knowledge

All participants expressed willingness to share experience and knowledge with their colleagues. Of the areas teachers listed, 91% noted willingness to share ideas about teaching grammar, 43% about teaching reading skills and 21% on teaching writing skills. On the other hand, only 7% noted their willingness to exchange ideas about teaching oral skills. None of the teachers noted ideas in relation to the use of technology, realia and other resources in the classroom (see Figure 4.10).

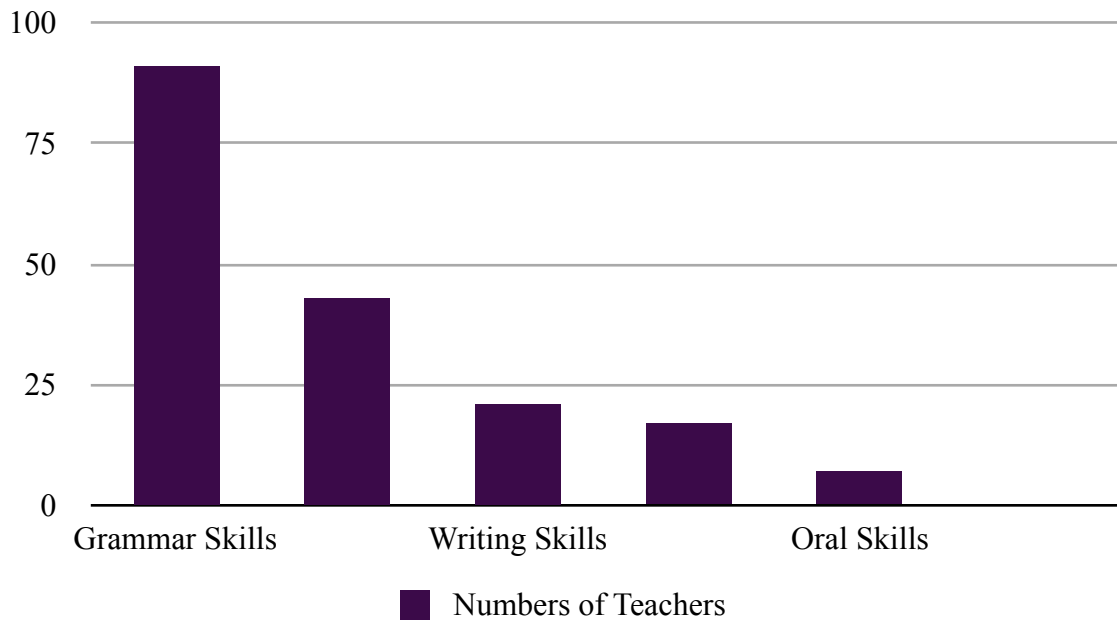


Figure 4.10: Topics Teachers Expressed Willingness to Share Ideas About

Willingness to be involved in more training sessions

When inquiring about teachers' willingness to be involved in other training sessions in the future, 93% expressed their willingness and interest. Although 89% of the teachers expressed their interest in being contacted for future training, only 78% provided their contact details.

In order to further inquire and confirm information provided through the questionnaires, a set of interviews were scheduled with the active participants involved in the research. The active participants of the research, which included those interviewed, were selected based on the data provided in the questionnaires and the ability to access them regularly during the different phases of the research, as noted in the methodology of the study.

4.2.2 Data Identified Through Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held after the completion of the needs assessment questionnaire, on a formal and informal basis, during and after the intervention phase of the research. Interviews were carried out with active participants of the research after the collection of the needs assessment questionnaire to further clarify points of views and responses expressed in the questionnaires. They were also done after lesson observations to discuss practices and strategies used. The interviews also gave

participants further opportunity to elaborate on their responses and explain their rationale behind them.

My research interest was related to teacher qualifications, training exposure, attitude towards change and views towards educational technology. I also wanted to give teachers an opportunity to elaborate on their responses in the needs assessment questionnaires and share their personal views. Based on the discussions held with teachers, data derived from interviews were classified into two main categories, the first being on teachers' education and experience, and the other on training and professional development.

Learning to Become a Teacher

A key area of focus within the discussions with teachers was on their opportunity to become a skilled teacher, and how teachers learn to develop necessary teaching skills to become a teacher. Emphasis was placed on learning from the work field and learning as a by-product of work (see page 23). Question prompts were based on the first section of the questionnaire that inquired about the teachers' professional and educational background.

Teacher Preparedness and Professional Input

One of the main objectives of the research was to evaluate the amount of professional input teachers received before entering the workplace. I also wanted to know more about how well teachers were prepared to teach when entering the classroom. Questions in relation to teacher preparedness and professional input were indirectly raised when holding discussions with teachers.

Faten, a local teacher with five years of experience, showed great interest in actively taking part in the research in addition to sharing her views as a teacher. She was particularly interested in giving recommendations on possible training opportunities she felt teachers needed during their career. I had the opportunity to meet with Faten after having observed a couple of English language lessons she was giving to year seven and eight students. Faten was a confident local teacher, who had majored in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at the Higher Colleges of Technology, and

worked closely with her school supervisor on improving and developing her teaching skills after graduation.

In the beginning, when I first started teaching, I thought teaching was an easy task. I did not realise that teaching was more of skill that needed to be developed and improved over time. For me, I began to teach with little view on teaching practices based on the field experience I had while I was a student. The only guidance I received after graduation was from my supervisor and from a combination of old images of how I was taught as a student and how I was trained during my field experience. I initially started to teach by imitating how my teacher used to teach me. I realised over time that there are plenty of things that needed to change since my students had different interests and needs in addition to the fact that I did not feel comfortable with the teaching methods I was using. They were too boring for me as a teacher; and I felt there needed to be an accommodating point for me to adjust my practices to suit my students interests. I followed more of a trial and error method, where I would practice new ideas in my classroom and based on my students reaction, would extend such practices or avoid them in the future. I also came to find that with the improvement of my teaching skills as a teacher, the more confident I became, the more control I had over my class. Students seem to know if a teacher is confident in her teaching practices, and they react accordingly. I gradually came to adopt the practices I used during my field experience along with other recommended practices by my supervisor. There is no solid way to learn how to become a teacher, teaching is a skill we develop over time (Interview, 06-02-07).

Faten was an example of the locals who had graduated from the Higher Colleges of Technology. She started teaching after having been trained under the supervision of her instructors at the HCT. It was assumed that she had the necessary basic teaching skills required for her work with students in a classroom. Based on her creativity and ability to understand and interact with her students, she appeared to become a more dynamic and responsive teacher. Learning to become a teacher for her was based on stages. She was exposed to theoretical input in the first couple of years of studying, given the opportunity to put theory into practice through field work, and thereafter applied the theory she had been trained on within actual classroom settings of her own. She did however possess an additional characteristic, which was rarely present in all teachers. She was very enthusiastic and energetic towards her students and was motivated to have them engaged in an interesting and fun classroom environment. Therefore, she did appear to put additional effort into making sure she developed the necessary skills to become a more efficient teacher.

On the other hand, Mohammed, a Jordanian teacher with nine years of experience, noted that as expatriates the Ministry of Education were not willing to invest in training them or involving them in professional development schemes, even if this meant poor teaching for their students. *'I have been teaching in the UAE for the past seven years, and have never received any official training'*. The only workshops he had attended were provided by publishers during regional English language teaching events such as TESOL Arabia.

These workshops are usually to promote a new series or book recently published. They are more of an introduction to the concept and pedagogy behind the course. Although these sessions may be useful to some extent, there is a limited opportunity for us teachers to be actively engaged in such sessions and actually implement what some sessions may recommend. Since the presenters have limited if any experience in teaching in the UAE or the region as a whole, it is difficult for them to understand our needs and interests, so the sessions do not always meet our expectations. Nevertheless, I prefer attending them since they are better than nothing (Interview, 11-02-07).

When asked about his professional development interests, Mohammed noted a strong need for training on a variety of topics, particularly modern approaches used to teach oral and productive skills, assessment methods and thereafter more conventional areas like the use of computers, technology and realia. He further noted that as teachers, they required training to develop their actual teaching skills and update them with the modern approaches of language teaching.

Learning conventional techniques like the use of technology is interesting but it is not a priority in our case since we already need to be trained on the basic language teaching skills all teachers should know. Besides we do not have the necessary facilities to put these areas into practice, so why should we be trained on them? (Interview, 11-02-07).

When discussing Jalal's experience of learning to become a teacher, he noted that this came naturally with him.

I never 'learned' to become a teacher; after graduation, I was employed as a teacher in the state schools in Egypt for three years, and gained my teaching experience there. I then got a job in the UAE and have been teaching here ever since...I was never involved in actual training programmes, we did attend workshops held in regional conferences on English language teaching, but aside from learning from my experience, I have had no other professional development

opportunities that were actually effective. We did have a few workshops a couple of years ago, that were related to the new course book the Ministry had adopted for its state schools, but the sessions were mostly irrelevant and unrealistic. How can foreigners come and train us when they have never been in our classrooms? They do not know what we are dealing with specially with our male students (Interview, 12-02-07).

Peer Observations and Learning From Others

Given the amount of professional input teachers received, I was concerned about how teachers actually learned from the workplace while working with their peers. Peer observations are among the techniques recommended to learn from others in the workplace. I wanted to know more about whether peer learning opportunities were encouraged and if teachers' attitudes towards one another enabled such opportunities.

Mohammed appeared to be an experienced teacher who had obviously learnt most of his teaching techniques as a by-product of work through trial and error. When asked about his experience with peer observations, he clarified that this learning opportunity was neither welcomed by the teachers themselves nor by the supervisors: it was seen as a taboo that brought discomfort to the teacher being observed.

If we have our peers come into our classes to observe us, they will end up looking for mistakes and problems we had in conducting our lessons. Being under the observation of supervisors is demotivating as is, so it would be a nightmare to give other teachers the opportunity to observe one another (Interview, 11-02-07).

It was very clear from his feedback, and the feedback of other teachers, that the concept of peer observations and learning from peers was neither encouraged nor part of the micro politics of classroom education. This may have been due to a lack of confidence teachers had towards their own teaching practices and the nature of feedback given by the observer, which apparently was not constructive.

Teachers' Attitudes

When observing and discussing attitudes of teachers, they seemed to reflect a possessiveness towards their own territories, which were their classrooms. For example, being observed by a supervisor was seen as an obligation and not welcomed. The sense of intrusion was not only related to classroom visits, but also linked to having external

trainers or consultants make recommendations. Riyad, a Palestinian teacher with 13 years of experience, had an opportunity to share his view, which was commonly shared among other older male teachers.

Students here do not appreciate us as teachers, so no matter how much effort we put in preparing our lessons, they are not willing to pay attention or take part in our lessons. In fact, they hold no respect for us as teachers. Twenty years ago, students used to look up to their teacher and appreciate them. Nowadays, even if I try to introduce something new or use a different technique with my students, I will have to suffer the consequences of them being disruptive. I therefore, would rather stick to traditional methods I have been using for the past fifteen years, than change to using a more student centred approach that would leave room for students to become out of focus and mainly disruptive. The kids are too spoiled to worry about the technique they are taught in, they are not really interested in learning. Our efforts are always wasted. Besides I have been using the same approach for the past ten years, I do not see why I should change it now (Interview, 13-02-07).

Riyad's point of view was most probably based on his own experiences. Although he did have several years of experience, he did not seem to appreciate the importance of students' interest and involvement in the lesson. The actual attitude towards learners in general was not found to be very positive. Teachers used terms like *lazy*, *selfish*, *spoiled* and *disrespectful* to sometimes describe their students. Generally, such descriptions were used for male students at secondary school level by some expatriate teachers holding over ten years of experience. This may have been due to the possible cultural and socio-economical gap that existed between students and teachers. It also had an impact on how students interacted and responded to teachers.

Riyad was also one of the teachers that were not keen on the training sessions that were held during the first intervention phase. This was common among male teachers, who had been teaching secondary level male students for more than twelve years, all of whom were expatriates as well.

If any training is conducted, the organisers should seriously consider what we have to say as teachers. They also have to consider the lack of interest and motivation our students have in learning English. It is not us who have the problem, it is our students who do not seem to be interested in anything. Any training should be carefully planned and have the teachers actually take part in it. We as teachers know our students and know how to deal with them, I do not think any external expert or teacher will be able to handle the situation any

better than us. All the workshops I have attended so far, have been a waste of time (Interview, 13-02-07).

Riyad was asked about his opinion of using modern approaches such as technology, realia and continuous assessment methods, and his view on developing areas of teaching and how relevant he found them to his approach.

I do use resources like the computer in my classroom but not very often because it distracts my students. I use a lot of extra resources like worksheets to provide my students with extended practice opportunity (Interview, 13-02-07).

Interestingly, when I attended a couple lessons, I noted that Riyad had only used the computer as a form of display for the students, through PowerPoint presentations. There was no interaction involved. The majority of students were very calm but rarely appeared attentive. The lesson was very teacher-centred, with few opportunities for students to interact with one another or with the teacher. The emphasis was mainly on taking control over the class and teaching the students. There was no concern on the actual *learning* taking place. This was a common observation in other lessons observed as well.

Another common remark teachers noted during their discussions, was that learning to become an effective teacher was a very stressful process.

Being an English teacher is very different from being an Arabic or other subject teacher. We are engaged in strict observation session by our supervisors and are expected to be the most productive with our students in terms of project and classwork. Preparation requirements are always over exaggerate and their seems to be a need to put us under major pressure to put effort in preparing our lessons (Interview, 13.02.07).

This view was commonly shared among other teachers I met. Being a language teacher in the Arab world required additional working hours to prepare additional resources and materials. It also involved a heavy monitoring and observational process by seniors such as supervisors and heads of department.

Putting Theory Into Practice

Another interesting observation was the teachers' ability to put theory into practice, assuming that their application of theory was done correctly, but their students failed to

appreciate it. Teachers assumed that the actual approach was to blame for failure. Jalal, an Egyptian teacher with ten years of experience, noted that using a student-centred approach with his 16 year old students always proved to be a failure.

If I have my students work closely with one another, in pairs or groups, they do not pay attention and spend the lesson talking in Arabic. They become difficult to control and more disruptive. I would rather have my students work individually than in groups or pairs, that way I will make sure that they are more focused and pay attention to what is happening in the classroom (Interview, 12-02-07).

The majority of teachers seemed to blame the lack of control they had in the classroom when applying new methods on the actual approach and not on the nature of conducting the new approach.

On the other hand Shereen, a teacher of nine years from Iraq, viewed newly recommended practices as being essential to be effectively used with her students. She stressed that it was essential to have them implemented in the proper manner, and that it was very important to have a teacher that is confident in her approach.

The majority of the teachers here have a problem with confidence. They have problems with their own English language skills and with some of the new information or skills being presented in the material used. This leaves room for a weak lesson delivery, which students do not enjoy and react by being out of focus and showing lack of interest (Interview, 05-02-07).

It was interesting to note what Shereen had to say; she was of the very few teachers who had a strong command in the English language and was capable of expressing her views efficiently. She also appeared to be a very strong and confident teacher, and proved to be so when I attended her lessons. I asked Shereen about her educational background in teaching practices and methodology. She advised that she had studied Applied Linguistics, but managed to gain her teaching experience and knowledge during her years as a private school teacher in one of the leading bilingual schools in Iraq. There she had been involved in regular training sessions for teachers, especially for new teachers. However, after moving to the UAE and continuing her career as a teacher, there was a very limited opportunity for professional development with the state schools.

In conclusion, learning to become a teacher came as a mixture of factors and not through a regular structure or scheme of work. The only teachers that were employed with a set of previously trained opportunities, were local graduates of the Higher Colleges of Technology, who were very much in the minority. With the variety of teacher backgrounds employed to teach in state schools in the UAE, it was almost impossible to control the teaching quality or style teachers used in the classroom. It was also more problematic to maintain teacher motivation by having them work as expatriates out of their native environment. Teachers also appeared to be disconnected from their students; there was limited bonding particularly with male teachers who had been teaching higher secondary levels.

The Mentoring Relationship

Another important area of focus during discussions held was related to the teacher-supervisor relationship and its impact on the development of the teacher, since supervisors played an important role in the careers of teachers.

When asked about her relationship with her supervisor, Faten noted that the current supervisors appointed still use traditional methods of teaching which causes a lot of conflict.

They expect us to teach as they used to teach twenty years ago. They are always difficult when we want to try something new. I do not feel that they are available to help us sometimes, in fact it seems that they usually attend classes to pin point the problems we had. This can very frustrating. Personally, I do not feel appreciated, and am tired of negotiating with my supervisor or superior. In fact, I recently have decided to follow the traditional methods they recommend, even if this may make my students bored, at least I will not have any trouble with my supervisors later on (Interview, 06-02-07).

Similar feedback was given by other expatriates when discussing their relationship with those more experienced than them, in addition to the relationship with their supervisors. Dalia from Egypt had a direct comment on the impact supervisors had on her career;

She is very strict and always expects more. To be honest, I am not very fond of her and do not feel that she has helped me improve in my career. I think supervisors in general feel threatened if we are good teachers, because that might make them appear insufficient in their job; if we are good teachers, we

would not need to be supervised. Being faulty at what we do, gives reason to their existence (Interview, 05-02-07).

Abdullah, from Tunisia felt that the role of supervisors caused more complication in the improvement of teachers' careers. He noted that the presence of supervisors in his career has caused a lot of drawbacks and prevented him from 'trying modern teaching approaches'. He further noted

We are under the microscope all the time and if we dare try something new, that our supervisor has not recommended or asked us to do, it is not accepted. They expect us to teach traditionally and focus on a giving the lesson in a good way rather than a creative way (Interview, 12-02-07).

Abdullah further remarked on the contradiction that came with newly recommended practices teachers were exposed to during workshops, and others their supervisors recommended.

Our supervisors specifically advise us to stick to the norm when teaching, which includes page teaching; teaching all what is on the page and nothing more or less, following a traditional approach in introducing a lesson or other language issues such as grammar, vocabulary and readings. On the other hand, we are still encouraged to provide an opportunity for our students to explore beyond the content of the lesson and give the opportunity for further engaging practice during workshops we attend, unfortunately this cannot be achieved because of the limitations and restrictions put on us as teachers. Our supervisors, although having several years of experience, tend to be traditional in their approach, which conflicts with the needs of our students today (Interview, 12-02-07).

Khulood, a local UAE teacher with almost two years of experience and a degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, seemed to be confident in her relationship with her supervisor.

I am lucky to have a supervisor like Ms Leila. She has given me the necessary support to practice modern teaching approaches I learnt about during my years of studying at the HCT. She is very nice and encouraging. Although she can be demanding at times, I try my best to create a balance between what she expects from me as a teacher and what I would like to do with my students... Although, I am somewhat happy to work with students, I do not think I will continue to work as a teacher for a long period. This job is too demanding and not very rewarding. I was planning to be an English teacher ever since I started studying. But I have recently realised that there are more rewarding jobs that require competent users of English. For example working as a translator or in a bank,

this will not require that I take my work back home with me and will grant me a better pay as an Emarati (Interview, 07-02-07).

A similar point of view was shared by Jassim, another local English language teacher, who was highly dynamic and active in the classroom. Jassim clarified that since he had been teaching for the past eight years, his years of teaching are over.

I have grown a strong interest in business, and my country supports the development of local business. Therefore, I plan to take this opportunity and establish my own business which will be more rewarding and independent, needless to mention that I will be working in a more relaxed and appreciative environment (Interview, 13-02-07).

I had the opportunity to raise the issue of supervisor-teacher relationship with Ms Leila, who had been an English teacher for the past fourteen years and had been appointed to work as a supervisor for the past eight years. Leila had been supervising Khulood, together with sixteen other English language teachers working within the same educational zone. She noted that Khulood was one of her few preferred teachers as she had a strong command of the English language, confidence in class, and knew how to accommodate her student requirements very well.

Khulood is well aware of teaching practices, which most probably has to do with the two years of field training she completed as a student teacher at the HCT. Having a strong methodological background in addition to a good command of language means that she only needs guidance, encouragement and mentoring for her teaching. She is competent enough to make judgements about what practices are efficient and others that are not. This also may have to do with her character; she is very dedicated and enjoys working with her students. She does not look at teaching as a form of delivery, she is very dedicated and engaged in it. There are few teachers who are like this nowadays; the majority want to do their job and go back home as soon as they can. They have lost their spirits as teachers (Interview, 07-02-07).

Ms Leila was known to be one of the most demanding supervisors; although an expatriate, she had several years of experience in working in the UAE and had a strong view about the practices of new and old teachers. She also was aware of the impact supervisors had on teacher practices. She noted that they sometimes had created an obstacle for teachers to advance in their career and use more creative modes of teaching that are more interesting for their students. Ms Leila further explained that the majority

of teachers in the UAE, being expatriates, had no structured training opportunities or support before or even during their career as teachers.

Having subject graduates is not efficient enough to teach students, knowing the language theoretically does not mean one can deliver it in the form of effective communication when teaching. The majority of our teachers know theory and mostly grammar, but they do not know methodology. Therefore, supervisors come in with a previous assumption that all these teachers lack the methodological knowledge they need to be effective teachers. Mostly they are right, but sometimes they can be wrong, which frustrates competent teachers (Interview, 07-02-07).

Interestingly, Mr Ahmad, who was a Tunisian supervisor, had a very strong view towards the way he addressed his teachers and their capabilities. In his view, although teachers may be experienced, that would not always mean that they are competent teachers; neither does it mean that they have been using effective practices.

In order to control and maintain the quality and consistency in teaching practices, I must make sure that my teachers are using practices that I have found to be useful in their classroom. Teachers need to be strictly guided, too much variety will add room for confusion and complications (Interview, 12-02-07).

Mr Ahmad further noted that teaching practices several years ago were effective for them as students and found no reason to change such practices since traditional ones meet the needs and requirements of learners. Although I tried to discuss with Mr Ahmad that needs and interests of students have changed a lot these days, in addition to the way they learn and the amount of exposure they get to a language, he insisted on his view as a supervisor.

Needs and Interests

Another key area of discussion with the teachers was related to their current interests and needs as teachers in order to become more effective in the classroom. In the majority of the discussions, teachers all shared the point of view of needing to be exposed to, and trained on, new teaching methodologies that include the use of realia and the integration of technology in teaching. Teachers also expressed a serious and strong interest towards assessment strategies, such as the use of portfolios and

continuous assessment. Other key areas of interest included topics on motivating and generating learner interest as well as dealing with special needs learners.

Mr Mohammed, a Jordanian language teacher of nine years, noted that the majority, if not all, of the teachers have yet to be trained on modern teaching practices. More challenging areas such as the adaptability of the content to suit learner needs and interests, as well as dealing with special needs learners, are a definite requirement that should come at a later stage after having been trained on general modern teaching approaches.

The majority of teachers may have read and learnt about teaching theories, but only few have been given an opportunity to put these theories into practice. Teachers only assume what they are doing in their classroom is in line with the theories they have studied. Unfortunately, our supervisors do not give us the opportunity to explore new practices and approaches neither do they encourage or recommend us to do so, but I am sure this is mainly because of their lack of knowledge and confidence. Our supervisors are very traditional in their teaching recommendations and practices and that is one of the obstacles we have in terms of progressing and developing in our careers (Interview, 11-02-07).

On the other hand, the majority of local teachers, who were graduates of the HCT and had been trained on teaching practices, seemed to be more interested in the use of digital resources and realia in their teaching practices. They expressed further need towards focusing on special needs students and the adaptability of the material.

I have been trained on the use of different teaching techniques in the classroom and have practiced doing so. My interest is to go beyond that and explore more advanced areas in teaching, which I did not get an opportunity to learn about in my years at University (Interview, 07-02-07).

We have been trained on various teaching practices, it is now up to us to use these teaching techniques with new educational technology that has been increasing over the past few years. The Ministry of Education encourages the use of such technology, therefore it is initially trying to install LCD projectors and computers in all schools. Unfortunately, not all teachers can use such facilities efficiently, which is causing an unbalanced approach in how our students are taught (Interview, 13-02-07).

A key area of interest was related to improving the language skills of teachers, which had been previously noted in the needs assessment questionnaires. The majority of

teachers noted that they would appreciate being exposed to native speaking environments through exchange programmes. This would provide the opportunity to interact on a day to day basis in English with other native speakers of the language. The majority of these teachers have never had the opportunity to travel abroad and interact within such environments. As a researcher, I questioned whether this interest in language exposure was simply to travel, or if it was for a sincere interest in developing their own language communications skills. Nonetheless, due to the poor language performance teachers had in social settings that would require them to communicate in English, it was clear that the majority of teachers did need an opportunity to practice and develop their own language skills. This would also further encourage and motivate them as teachers providing a beneficial training experience. Although exchange programmes may be highly recommended, there was a concern about the sponsorship of expenses associated with such programmes. All teachers noted that they would not be able to take part in any exchange programme due to their low salaries. Alternatively, teachers recommended that these expenses be covered by their employers.

In conclusion, the following listed remarks were noted, based on formal and informal discussions with teachers from the UAE.

- The majority of teachers seemed to be aware of the changes that take place in educational practices, but are unable to link these changes with their actual practices.
- Teachers have limited professional development opportunities and are only involved in workshops provided by publishers promoting a particular course or during regional events.
- There is a lack of consistency in professional development opportunities for teachers in the UAE.
- There is a strong gap between experienced and novice teachers. During informal discussions with teachers, there seemed to be a clash between teachers belonging to younger age groups and those more experienced.
- Teachers in the UAE do not share an open culture in which to express their views, interests and needs. Apparently, there is limited openness when it comes to professional career needs.

- The majority of teachers in the UAE regard learning from their peers through observations as a process used to criticise what went wrong in the lesson, and do not appear to understand the value of such a reflective process. They do not appear to be aware of how to offer constructive feedback and express their points of view.
- Teachers in the UAE are aware of the current changes in educational practices, but do not feel that newly recommended schemes addressing these changes fit their teaching styles.
- Teachers in the UAE have no preference towards trainers selected, on the condition that they have native-like language performance and are competent enough to address their needs and interest.
- The majority of native speaking trainers do not always appear to understand the experiences and obstacles non-native speaking teachers from the UAE deal with when teaching English as a foreign language, since they have not engaged in learning a foreign language themselves.
- Experienced non-native speaking trainers with native-like competence are welcomed to train non-native speaking teachers. This is because their approach is usually found to be more practical and realistic in terms of addressing the needs of non-native speaking teachers in the UAE.
- Trainer identity and background has a significant impact on how the trainee teachers interact in and view training sessions.
- The relationship between trainee teachers and the trainer is a very important factor in the success of lengthy training programmes that require a trusting and two way relationship between the teacher and the trainees.
- Teachers in the UAE have not been given the opportunity to engage in longer training programmes that help equip them with the necessary skills.

Having reflected on the interviews and discussions held with teachers in the UAE, establishing a link between what was discussed and practiced was necessary. Lesson observations were conducted using an observation checklist (see Appendix IV) in order to assess and analyse the data collected in regards to teachers' practices in the classroom. Observation checklists were used to clarify the teachers' relationship with

the students, classroom environment and teaching approach. This was very useful in providing the researcher with a further insight on what goes on in the classroom.

4.2.3 Data Reflected Based on Lesson Observations

This section will reflect on the data collected during the observations made in classroom visits assigned to the active participants of the research. Classroom observations were necessary to get a general understanding towards teachers' performance, lesson atmospheres, students' response towards teachers, and types of classroom interaction (student-student, teacher-student, student-teacher), in addition to other characteristics signified in the observation checklist. Lesson observations also provided further opportunity for the researcher to reflect on the data collected through the needs assessment questionnaires and the interviews. It brought further attention to how teachers put their concepts into practice.

Lesson Observation Summary

Classroom visits were done in collaboration with a Ministry of Education representative, which gave me official access to schools and classrooms. This arrangement facilitated my scheduled visits and access to schools at a time of convenience required for my research. Data collected was noted on the observation checklist in an objective and direct manner.

Classroom visits were scheduled three times a week, attending and observing two lessons a day for the same teacher. Scheduled visits were conducted in two phases, before and after the intervention. The first set of classroom visits was arranged during the reconnaissance phase of the research and after distributing the needs assessment questionnaires. This was done in order to collect the necessary data about the teachers' actual performance in the classroom in addition to further understanding the classroom and school environment that teachers work within. The second set of classroom observations was done after having implemented the intervention. In order to assess the applicability of what was covered during workshops and discussions, it was necessary to attend and observe lessons of the participating teachers.

It therefore can be concluded that each stage in this project required two different phases of classroom observations, which were also crucial for developing the following phase of intervention. Table 4.2 below further clarifies the stages in which the lesson observations were conducted.

Table 4.2: Research Project Phases

Month	A R Stage	Tool
Jan 07	Reconnaissance	Distribution of Questionnaire
Feb 07	Reconnaissance	Classroom Observations/Interviews
Mar 07	Reconnaissance	Classroom Observations/Interviews
Apr 07	Intervention Development	Development of Plan for interventions, workshops, discussion forums and demonstration classes.
May 07	Intervention 1	Workshops/Discussion Sessions
Jun 07	Summer Break	
Jul 07	Summer Break	
Aug 07	Monitoring/Evaluation	Classroom Observations/Interviews
Sep 07	Monitoring/Evaluation	Classroom Observations/Interviews
Oct 07	Monitoring/Evaluation	Classroom Observations/Interviews
Nov 07	Intervention 2	Workshops/Discussion Sessions
Dec 07	Intervention 2	Workshops/Discussion Sessions

Classroom Setting

Two main settings existed in the schools managed by the ministry of education, public and model school classrooms. Public school classrooms accommodate an average of 25 students, who are individually seated at their desks. The teacher usually stands in front of the class, with the whiteboard in the back. Teachers always begin the lesson standing in front of the class, greeting them and thereafter telling them what they will be covering during the lesson. The lesson is rather systematic as the teacher appears to be there to deliver the lesson only regardless if students have an engaging learning opportunity or not. In the majority of the lessons, the lesson content is mainly derived from the textbook, with limited extra-curricular material being used. The majority of teachers rarely walk in between students during a lesson and remain in the front of the class. It appears to be a preference for the majority of teachers, to stay in the front of the class rather than walk in between students sitting at their desks. The majority of teachers cannot be considered as in being fluent speakers of English, as several weaknesses in pronunciation and spelling, as well as writing, were noticed.

On the other hand, model schools have an average of 15 students per class. The majority of teachers appear more confident and willing during the lesson. Students are seated differently: some students are seated in groups of four with their desks facing one another; other students are seated in pairs. Teachers remained at the front of the class while using a PowerPoint presentation to display the page students are on during the lesson. The slide show is a continuous reference point during the lesson.

Noted Observations

The following listed observations were made based on classroom visits. Listing of the findings is based on the sequence the notes appear in the observation forms:

Lesson Introductory

The majority of the classes attended did not have a clear set of objectives, neither myself or attending students had an understanding of what would be covered during the lesson.

Teachers in general would introduce the topic or unit of the lesson orally after greeting the students.

Lesson introductions and areas of focus would be topic oriented with a key emphasis on Grammar. In other words, teachers would start the lesson by telling the students what the lesson was going to be about, demanding limited deduction skills from the students while using similar introductions to the following:

‘Today we will talk about the Reported Speech....’

‘Our lesson today is about describing things that happened in the past...’

‘Today we will read about the Solar System...’

Lesson Performance

The majority of teachers did not appear to have the skills required to relate students’ experiences and interests to the lesson. The majority of the teachers appeared to be unaware of methods to generate student interest and involvement towards the topic of the lesson, which made the majority of the lesson introductions limited in terms of inter-activities.

The majority of teachers appeared to be more comfortable and in control of the flow of the lesson when teaching Grammar rather than other language skills; Listening, Speaking and Reading.

The majority of the teachers had poor time management and dedicated more time than required in particular areas that did not address necessary language skills, such as translating meanings into Arabic and working on areas irrelevant to the lesson objectives.

The majority of teacher language communication skills were rather weak and below generally required expectations. It was later noted by the assessment and evaluation department head at the Ministry of Education headquarters, that over half the teachers employed at the Ministry of Education scored between 3.5-4.5 on the IELTS conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2009 (Interview, 17-05-07). Teachers had issues with pronunciation, spelling and conveying ideas to students in the English language. As a result, several teachers would resort to using the mother tongue in the classroom.

The majority of the students attending did not appear to be fully engaged in the lesson and were rather passive participants. Students sitting in the front rows of the class were

the most active. Students did not appear to be fully engaged in the majority of lessons attended, particularly in public schools.

The majority of teacher resources were restricted to the student book and workbook. There was a limited number of additional resources used other than printed material. Teachers did not appear to put effort into using a variety of resources to help engage students in the lessons. Lesson introductions appeared to be minimally engaging based on student responses in the classroom.

All lessons were more teacher-centred rather than student-centred. Teacher talking time was more than 90% in all lessons observed. The majority of student involvement was in response to teacher prompts and queries. There was limited opportunity for students to actively involve themselves in the lessons.

Although a few teachers managed to have students seated in pairs or groups there was limited if any use of seating arrangements. Students worked individually although seated among others. Students mostly worked on tasks individually with limited opportunity to discuss and interact with their peers or the teacher.

It seems that all teachers were more concerned with disciplinary issues and teaching rather than any actual learning taking place. Seating arrangements, discussions and tasks were arranged so as to give minimal opportunity for students to interact with one another and share ideas.

Lesson Conclusion

Only a few teachers managed to finish the lesson on time in order to assign homework or further evaluate the expected learning outcomes of the lessons. The majority of teachers would continue working to the last minute of the lesson, leaving no time to assign homework or further evaluate the covered learning objectives.

A general impression noted based on lesson observations made was that teachers were more focused on completing content areas rather than developing learning skills. Teachers seemed to be urged to complete a number of pages during a lesson, rather than define general sub-skills they wanted to develop in their students while using the

available resources they had. For example, when teaching Reading, the main focus was on teaching the meaning of a passage rather than the sub-skills required for students to become effective readers (e.g. reading for specific information, reading for meaning and extracting meaning from context). When teaching grammar, teachers were concerned with having students know the syntactic rule, but not actually using structures in meaningful contexts. For example, students learning the reported speech or the simple present tense would study syntactic structures in isolation rather than in context, resulting in an unproductive learning experience as they would not be able to effectively apply these rules in authentic settings.

4.2.4 Data Reflected Based on Documentary Evidence

During classroom observations, I had an opportunity to look at the material teachers used to prepare and conduct the lesson. This included lesson plans, handouts, games, electronic resources and other resource material. This was done to better understand teachers' views on what they found to be useful support material to help students learn. The observations listed below were noted:

- The main resources teachers use are paper-based. Teachers would regularly distribute handouts and other photocopyables among the class.
- Electronic resources are limited to the use of data projectors in the classroom. Activities and texts tend to be a central reference for the classroom. No interactive resources are used in the classroom.
- Lesson plans were prepared as a form of routine. Teachers were expected to fill out standard lesson plan forms, which were reviewed and assessed by their supervisors.
- The majority of teachers were unable to address all the objectives listed in the lesson plan forms.

4.3 Concluding Themes Identified Through Triangulation of Data

After the data was collected using multiple sources and following a sequence that would provide an opportunity to provide feedback and elaborate on key issues raised (such as having interviews with teachers after they completed the needs assessment

questionnaires), general conclusions were made. These conclusions were used to identify areas that would need to be taken into consideration when developing the first intervention during the first phase of the research. These areas are summarised below:

4.3.1 Demographics

As the majority of teachers working within the UAE were expatriates, this meant that there was a very limited number of teachers who had been officially trained on educational methodologies and practices used to teach English language. Accordingly, the majority of teachers lacked a profound background in the necessary teaching and methodological skills required to effectively teach English as a means of communication.

Generally, the teaching population was not homogenous, which meant that any training scheme developed would need to avoid any generalisations and take note of differences among the teaching staff.

The age group of expatriate teachers was older than the age group of local teachers. This created a gap between expatriate and local teachers in terms of interests and ability to accommodate and understand students' interests. Local teachers, belonging to a younger age group, meant that they better associated with students and were generally more aware of using teaching approaches that better related to their students. This was because all local teachers were graduates from the Higher Colleges of Technology and held a teaching degree.

4.3.2 Mentoring and Professional Support

There was a large gap between the supervisors and teachers. Although supervisors were expected to mentor and support teachers professionally, there was a clash between what teachers believed would be useful and interesting for their students and what supervisors wanted teachers to do. Although teachers were keen on experimenting in the classroom, supervisors would generally prohibit this due to the fear of having things get out of control.

The collaborative relationship between teachers and supervisors was very limited and, in some cases, non-existent. It was assumed that supervisors held a stronger professional background regardless of whether they were effectively capable of mentoring and supervising their teachers. There was a clear need to have supervisors trained separately from teachers on how to become effective mentors. Supervisors also needed to appreciate the necessity of introducing and recommending the use of more modern teaching approaches that would be considerably more appealing to learners.

4.3.3 Education and Experience

None of the expatriate teachers held a teaching qualification, but were more subject specialists. Teaching as a skill was developed through experience. As indicated by Darling-Hammond (1995), it was apparent that teachers used a model of teaching that focused heavily on the memorisation of facts. There was no systematic or professional strategy used to engage teachers in professional development opportunities and prepare them to become teachers before or after employment. Therefore, any training scheme would need to consider that teachers had a lack of methodological background, and should not assume that teachers were aware of or experienced in common methodological practices.

Although 62% of teachers classified themselves as expert and intermediate users of computers, only 4% noted that they always used computers and technology in the classroom. Teachers who did describe themselves as users of computers and technology in the classroom apparently only used them in a passive rather than an interactive way. Teachers were either unaware of how to use these resources in a more interactive manner, or could not use them more efficiently due to the constraints supervisors put on them.

Teachers were interested in training related to educational methodologies and strategies used in the classrooms, in addition to modern teaching strategies such as the use of realia and digital resources. The majority of teachers were aware of their weakness in general teaching strategies, which generated a training preference over being trained on modern teaching approaches and the use of resources.

None of the expatriate teachers, who made up the majority of the teachers working in the UAE, had been involved in any official post-graduate teacher training programme that offered the necessary support and follow up to ensure the smooth and proper implementation of recommended practices. Most of the professional development experiences were through regional and international events that offered a limited number of workshops for one to three hours at the most. Moreover, these sessions or workshops had usually been of a promotional nature, relating to a particular publication being introduced to the market by a publisher or educational entity. Sessions were not obviously academic or aimed at improving teachers' awareness towards new educational practices.

Teachers did not have an opportunity to master recommended educational skills and practices through trial and error. Supervisors limited what teachers could practice in the classroom.

There was no follow up to assess training effectiveness after training sessions. The majority of teachers working in the UAE required a training scheme that offered a comprehensive learning opportunity. They needed post-training follow up to ensure that they had managed to comprehend and master the necessary skills required for them to become more effective.

Several teachers working in the UAE had false impressions and concepts on the practices they were using in the classroom. Teachers had assumed that they were effectively implementing particular strategies during their teaching and were unaware that their understanding towards the implementations was incorrect. Therefore, any methodological training scheme to be developed would need to offer a comprehensive revision on the basics of language teaching in addition to new strategies in teaching English as a foreign language.

Based on the feedback provided by the teachers, the following intervention to be developed would need to focus primarily on the key topic areas of interests and needs as defined by the teachers and confirmed through my observations:

- Modern teaching approaches that raise teachers' awareness towards current educational teaching trends and help them shift to a more balanced approach to teaching that focuses on student learning (Garet *et al.*, 2001)
- Modes of assessment and evaluation required to ensure that learning has taken place among learners
- The use of different resources to help enhance the learning experience for the students
- Modes to help adapt and customise taught content and skills to suit the learners' needs and interests
- Language development opportunities that would support the development of teachers own English language skills
- Developing professional development communities that would help teachers regularly share and learn from their peers, which would include regular peer evaluations, observational classes, and open discussions (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

4.4 Developing the First Intervention Phase

Having assessed the particular interests and needs of teachers working in the UAE by analysing the data collected through the Needs Assessment Questionnaires, Interviews and Observations, an effective training scheme needed to be developed that could address them. The thorough reconnaissance phase that was conducted during this research was a unique approach used to identify teachers' needs and interests, which had never been conducted before for the purpose of training and professional development within the region. This allowed room for the development of an intervention that was specifically designed to address particular needs of English language teachers working in the UAE, who were mostly expatriates.

4.4.1 First Phase Intervention Summary

The active participants involved in this research were involved in a series of intensive workshops, discussion panels and peer observation sessions within a period of four weeks. Teachers' interaction and involvement during the different phases of the intervention was closely monitored and noted. This intervention had also been

conducted in a set of phases to allow proper building blocks to give teachers as much of an opportunity as possible to learn from the process.

4.4.2 First Phase Intervention Approach

The intervention started by teachers being involved in a series of intensive workshops for a period of two weeks. In addition to attending the training, teachers had no responsibilities other than responding to the training requirements and tasks. During the two week period, teachers were involved in two to four sessions a day with a coffee break in between. During the first week, teachers were engaged in two sessions a day, having each session last for three hours. These sessions gave teachers the necessary background information on educational methodologies and practices related to language teaching, most of which teachers may have not been aware of due to them being subject specialist in areas such as English Literature, Translation and Linguistics, as indicated in the Context of the Study.

Topics covered during these sessions were based on the interests and needs teachers had expressed during the reconnaissance. In addition, topic areas I thought would be useful based on my observations were also covered. The reconnaissance gave a detailed view on how these topic areas should be addressed and monitored. This was a key stage in developing training content related to the topics as listed below:

- An introduction to methodologies and approaches used in teaching English as a foreign language.
- Strategies and approaches used to teach essential English language skills:
 - Listening and Speaking
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Grammar
 - Vocabulary
- Modes of Assessment and Evaluation
 - Continuous Assessment and Evaluation
 - Constructive Feedback

- Assessment Criteria and Rubric Development per Skill: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.
- Creating professional learning communities that encouraged learning from the workplace and learning as a by-product of work.

During the following week, teachers were engaged in more hands-on sessions. These sessions required an ability to engage in activities and tasks that they could effectively take and apply into their classroom. Sessions were considered as a continuation from the previous week, where areas covered were further addressed in a more practical and applicable approach. Four sessions were covered each day, each session being approximately 90 minutes, with a break after every two sessions.

Topic areas covered during this week were as follows:

1. Material Development and Adaptation: Adjusting towards students interests and needs (Gardner, 1999)
2. Enriching curricula through the use of realia (Short, 1991)
3. Integrating ICT and CALL where possible (Leach, 2005)
4. The importance of Cross Curricular/Cultural Exposure (Beane, 1997)
5. Motivating learners and engaging them in the learning process (Dornyei, 2001)
6. How to assess students' language skills based on previously specified criteria (Colorado, 2007)

In total, participants were involved in 60 hours of intensive training conducted within a two week period. In order to ensure proper monitoring of the effectiveness of the interventions made towards this initial stage of intervention, feedback forms were distributed after each workshop (see Appendix IV). To add variety to the training style and approach delivered during the session, I worked closely with other native speaking trainers who had flown in from the UK for the purpose of the training, some who had experience working in areas in the Middle East. I was the only non-native speaking trainer.

During the two week period, teachers were given the opportunity to actively participate in discussion forums to share their views and concerns, in addition to interacting with

their peers. This was a vital part of the training that teachers had never experienced before. Discussion forums made a successful contribution towards increasing teachers' confidence among peers, in addition to creating a vibrant atmosphere that welcomed their participation. These discussion forums gave teachers a rich opportunity to communicate in English with other native speakers and their peers, which was an opportunity rarely made available.

Following the two weeks of workshops and discussion forums, teachers returned to their assigned classes and regular working schedule. Three weeks after the training, school visits and observations were also arranged in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. This required another two weeks to complete. Following the classroom observations, meetings were held with the teachers to discuss their concerns, obstacles, needs and interests.

4.4.3 First Phase Intervention Observations

As a result of the first intervention phase above, the observations and feedback below were collected during and after the intervention phase. This was important and crucial in assessing the intervention and making the necessary changes and improvements required for it to be more effective in the following phase. Observations and data identified was made through tabulations of frequency of occurrences, noted numerical data collected through the needs assessment questionnaires in addition to my own observations which generally related identified data to existing practices in the field.

Training Content

- The majority of the participants indicated their preference towards having the demonstration lessons included in training conducted by the trainers in order for them to view recommended practices in action.
- The majority of the participants noted that workshops alone were not considered enough for them to understand the effectiveness and applicability of recommended practices. Teachers noted a preference to seeing a role model implement recommended practices discussed in sessions.

- The majority of the participants expressed a preference towards the sessions conducted in the second week of the training, due to them being more hands on and activity based rather than discussions led by a trainer.
- All teachers noted that they had benefited from the training sessions and discussions forums conducted.
- All participants noted the necessity of having opportunities to be involved in exchange programmes with other teachers from the EU. This would give them the opportunity to reflect on experiences with other language teachers while using English as a medium of communication with one another.
- During discussion forums, participants were more open to sharing ideas and raising their concerns, particularly those of a younger age group with less than six years of experience.
- Due to the lack of computer competence in the majority of teachers, the use of digital resources in the classroom was limited. Only a couple of younger participants managed to use PowerPoint presentations in their lessons. Teachers expressed their discomfort when using resources and expressed preference towards more conventional methods.
- Several participants noted their willingness to share their experiences in future training conventions.

Delivery of Training

- The majority of participants expressed strong preference to have trainers that had experience in working with students coming from the UAE or other areas of the Gulf. They explained that trainers who did not have such experience would mean that they would be unable to relate to the teachers' experiences.
- All teachers expressed interest in associating training content and pedagogies to the materials they teach, and constantly referred to their course materials for trainers to use as examples. Teachers felt the need to associate addressed areas to the materials they were using.

Teachers' Attitudes

- Teachers with over twelve years' experience seemed to be the most resistant towards recommended practices. Such teachers insisted that there was a need for

a traditional approach to be used within the UAE as in other Arab countries in order to best control teacher performance in the classroom. They also assumed that students were yet not ready for current practices used globally.

- Teachers with over twelve years' experience did not appear to appreciate the necessity to accommodate students' interests in their practices and strongly disagreed with the need to use more modern student-centred approaches.
- Teachers with over twelve years' experience seemed to express their discomfort towards training sessions led by expatriate trainers through disruptive comments that often initiated a long debate towards the applicability of recommended practices in their classrooms. They also questioned the actual need to have participants change their teaching practices having used them for so long.
- Teachers with more than twelve years' experience did not appear to welcome the observations conducted by the researcher.
- Novice and less experienced teachers seemed to be more open towards recommended practices in the training and expressed serious interest in further engaging themselves in such practices.
- Novice and less experienced teachers were more engaged in training sessions and worked as active participants during the two weeks of intensive training in which they were involved. They were also the most active during formal and informal discussions held after the training sessions.
- Novice and less experienced teachers were more welcoming towards having their lessons observed by the researcher after being exposed to the training. This was in order to reflect on the gained learning practices and experiences they applied in their classrooms.
- Teachers seemed to be more engaged and motivated to share their experiences, views and interests before the training, knowing that their input would be seriously considered and taken as the basis of forthcoming training programmes.
- All teachers expressed interest in being further engaged in similar training sessions that addressed their previously defined needs, and noted their willingness to actively take part in workshops to share their own experiences as teachers.

Implementing Recommended Practices

- The majority of novice and less experienced teachers seemed to welcome newly recommended practices they had experienced during the training and used them in their classroom, but faced a serious issue with their supervisors who limited their opportunities to further engage in such current practices.
- Female participants seemed to be more receptive to recommended practices and experimented with their students. The majority of male students however struggled with the concept of changing their approach in teaching, and seemed to have particular concerns about their ability to effectively control and monitor the classroom.
- The majority of teachers struggled with their own language communication skills, particularly when having the opportunity to use English in an informal context during discussions, where they were required to provide oral response towards unexpected prompts led by the researcher or other teachers among the group.

4.4.4 Developed Interventions in Response Teaching Population Characteristics

In response to the above noted characteristics and observations of teachers in the UAE and more widely in the Arab world, the first intervention phase was constructed and delivered in light of the details given below.

Teacher Population

Given that the teacher population was non-homogenous, the intervention strategy needed to encourage the exchange of ideas between experienced and less experienced teachers. It also needed to allow teachers of different origins to interact with one another in a flexible way. The most appropriate form of intervention that encouraged doing so would be through the encouragement of discussions and exchange of ideas and experiences within guided sessions and workshops. It was necessary to start off the intervention by gathering the teachers together when launching the training in order for teachers to get to know one another and the trainer (researcher), in addition to understanding the general professional development scheme in which they would be participating.

Teachers' Qualifications

The teacher population did not hold any teaching qualification, but were rather subject specialists in related language areas. Their knowledge of English was much higher than their knowledge of the pedagogy of how to teach it. In order for the interventions to be effective, it was necessary to focus on methodological practices that gave teachers a better opportunity to understand how to teach English most effectively, and enrich students' learning opportunities. Therefore, teachers received sessions on methodological practices, and were given the opportunity to put these into practice with their students. Teachers were involved in workshops that conveyed the most recent methodological practices recommended for use in the classroom, and were thereafter requested to apply these approaches in their classrooms. Follow up discussions after the workshops and implementations were conducted to share experiences in how the implementations were received.

Teachers' Language Proficiency

Due to the teachers' generally low language proficiency, the interventions needed to encourage practicing using English during the period of training. In addition, the interventions considered the language weaknesses teachers had, which hindered them from actively engaging in sessions. To address this issue, training sessions were used as an opportunity for English teachers to communicate in English out of the classroom and within rather informal settings. On the other hand, trainers were advised that they would need to be very clear when communicating with teachers and understand how the teachers' low proficiency level in English might hinder their ability to interact during the sessions. Native speaking trainers in addition to myself were selected to deliver the training during the first intervention phase.

Delivery Strategy

It was decided that the most appropriate form of intervention to be implemented would be a combination of workshops, discussion forums, and reflective feedback through small group discussions conducted after observations. Workshops were used to introduce and expose teachers to educational concepts as well as provide them with an opportunity to engage in hands-on activities that encouraged their thoughts and views about certain strategies. Observations would be carried out afterwards to monitor

teachers while implementing newly recommended strategies. Discussion forums would allow teachers to share their experiences and feedback on implemented strategies in the classroom.

Follow Up

Follow up and monitoring was a key element to ensure the effectiveness of interventions. It was also necessary for the researcher to establish a trusting relationship with teachers and ensure consistency within the training scheme. It was a unique feature of the training scheme, where teachers were assessed on their ability to practice what was covered during sessions and given the opportunity to reflect effectively on their experience.

Teacher Ability to Use Technology

Although teachers in general have been recommended to accommodate the educational challenges students are experiencing through the use of interactive technology and digital media, schools are not necessarily prepared with such resources. Therefore training sessions offered appropriate alternatives that could deliver the same objectives but in a different manner. The inductions also demonstrated how to use technology effectively in the classroom and limit teachers fear towards using such strategies with their students.

Workshop Topics

Session topics were selected based on the most common themes identified in the initial needs assessment questionnaire; see Chapter 4 on the methodology of the study for details. This was done to ensure that teachers were active participants in the decision making process. This helped in making teachers more engaged in the sessions they were taking part in, and developed a sense of responsibility in them. It also directly addressed defined needs of teachers and was considerably more relevant to their requirements.

Teachers' Interest vs. Student Interests

Developed interventions raised the awareness of teachers towards the existing changes that students were experiencing in their social and educational culture, particularly in how students wanted to learn and communicate. Interventions demonstrated how teaching practices could be formulated in a more appealing way to students, regardless

of the age gap that existed between teachers and their students. They introduced the use of ICT in the classroom as a form of social interaction with students, such as the use of Facebook and emails.

Mentoring Approach

Given that the relationship between teachers and their mentors or supervisors was highly hierarchical and teachers had a general obligation to abide by what their supervisors recommended, the interventions considered the restrictions imposed on teachers by their supervisors. They also raised the awareness of teachers' independence in the classroom through the development of teacher confidence and ability to discuss areas of interest with their superiors.

Due to the reflective nature of the research framework, the first intervention phase served as a thorough reconnaissance stage for later interventions, which were more refined. The monitoring and evaluation that took place during the first interventions helped the researcher develop more appropriate interventions in terms of target areas to be addressed and delivery strategies. These changes are clarified in the following section.

4.4.5 Evaluating the First Intervention

The general aim of the first intervention, and the research project as a whole, is to utilise an Action research framework to develop a training scheme that addresses actual pre-defined needs and interests of teachers, unlike existing pre-packaged training programmes. Therefore, it was essential to have the first phase of intervention evaluated and assessed for its effectivity and make the necessary changes to make the later interventions more effective where possible. This also meant that the first intervention was used as a reconnaissance for the second intervention.

Success Criteria

The assessment of the first intervention provided the necessary input to establish the later interventions that would be more effective. The first intervention was reviewed in terms of the criteria below:

- The effectiveness of utilising practitioner action research to better understand and respond to teachers' needs and interests
- The method of having the training scheme conducted in relation to format and time
- Levels of involvement of teachers in the training
- The selection of trainers used to deliver the training
- Inclusion of demonstration lessons as part of the training
- Areas of focus during the training
- Time distribution of sessions
- Impact of English language teaching supervisors on the required outcomes of the training
- Relating the topic areas covered in the training to materials teachers are already familiar with
- Recommended schemes and practices for teachers to follow in order to enhance their own computer and language communication skills

4.5 Implementing the Second Intervention

The success criteria listed earlier were used to evaluate the first intervention. A second intervention was scheduled approximately six months after the completion of the first intervention with the same group of participants, which coincided with the beginning of the following academic term. The second intervention ensured consistency in the professional development opportunities offered by following up on the progress of participants. It established a sense of reliability for the teachers by appreciating the value of their earlier noted feedback, which had been taken into consideration literally in developing the second intervention.

The period between the first and second interventions allowed the researcher to maintain a strong connection with participants via email, text messaging and direct telephone calls. This further ensured that the participants were being directly followed up on, developing a trustworthy relationship between the researcher and the participants, including those with several years of experience. This six month period, where the researcher maintained contact with the participants, was also a crucial part of

the training scheme offered. It had an additional effective impact on the attitudes of teachers and their willingness towards accepting recommended changes in their teaching practices. It also supported the development of a more welcoming attitude from all participants to further engage in the later intervention.

Maintaining contact with the participant teachers was further supported by the Ministry of Education, which had a strong role in implementing the action plan of the research effectively. It also restricted obstacles created by English supervisors responsible for the group of participating teachers in the action plan.

4.5.1 Implementation of Second Intervention

The first intervention was considered to be a part of the reconnaissance phase of the second intervention. It was seen as a continuity of the professional development scheme. The implementation of the second intervention was much more welcomed by the teachers than the first. Teachers were aware that the development of the second intervention was based on the feedback and assessment of the first and rather a continuation of the scheme they were involved in. As noted in Garet *et al.* (2001), this continuation of professional development activities is more effective and allows teachers to try out new practices in the classroom and regularly obtain feedback on their teaching. Carrying out the second intervention strengthened the impact of the action research project as a whole on teachers' performance, attitudes and understanding of reflective practices in their teaching.

The second intervention involved a more diversified set of workshops, observations, and discussions. It focused on demonstrating and guiding teachers on how to implement effective teaching practices (Rubio, 2010; Borich, 2000 and Gurney, 2007). The workshops were more directly focused on key issues teachers appeared to struggle with based on my observations and results of the first intervention. Workshops delivered in the first intervention were more theoretical in how they addressed teaching practices. The second intervention was more detail oriented in targeting more specific areas that teachers needed support in. For example, the topic of assessment and evaluation was addressed during the first intervention. It covered the different types of assessment teachers needed to be familiar with; such as continuous, summative and formative

assessment. Based on observations noted, it became clear that the majority of teachers were not familiar with the use of rubrics to standardise their assessments, particularly when assessing learners writing skills. Therefore, Rubric Design was addressed in the second intervention, which provided teachers with guidelines on how to develop their own rubrics to effectively assess their students. See Appendix V for a sample of an outline for a selection of workshops given. Table 4.3 below summarises a selection of the topics addressed in each set of interventions.

Table 4.3: Selected topics addressed in the first and second set of interventions.

First Intervention	Second Intervention
Introduction to the new English language programme	Introduction to the new English language programme
Teaching Reading Skills	Continuous Assessment, Monitoring and teacher reflection
Developing Writing Skills	Developing Learner Writing Skills
Assessment of Different Skills	Grammar in Context
Pronunciation	Multiple Intelligencies and How to Motivate Language Learners

Based on the success criteria mentioned earlier, the Table 4.4 below summarises the differences between the first and second intervention.

Table 4.4: Differences Identified Between First and Second Interventions

Criteria	Intervention Phase 1	Intervention Phase 2	Comment
Method of conducting training scheme in terms of time and format	Workshops were approximately one and a half hours having two workshops each day that may be different in topic area	Workshops were approximately two hours each day. Sessions on the same day were a continuation of one another.	This was done as a response for teachers' requests for more time to be spent per topic area.

Criteria	Intervention Phase 1	Intervention Phase 2	Comment
Involvement of teachers	Sessions were mainly conducted by trainers with secondary input from teachers	Teachers were encouraged to take part in the sessions and offer demonstrations were possible	This was done as a response to their willingness to share information with their peers about topics they were interested in. It also made teachers feel more appreciated.
Selection of trainers used to deliver the sessions	Majority of trainers were native speakers from the UK, with only a couple having experience in working in the Arab world. I was the only Arab trainer giving training among the trainers.	The majority of trainers were native speakers, but had been appointed from the region. Trainers with years of experience and who are still working in the Arab world, while holding some Arabic knowledge were chosen to take part in the training.	This was done as a response to teachers' preference towards working with trainers who are familiar with the local needs and obstacles teachers face.
Inclusion of demonstration lessons as part of the training	Workshops and sessions had valuable activities and tasks that had teachers engaged.	Workshops and sessions included a set of demonstration lessons towards the middle of each session in order to demonstrate and reflect on what was covered during the sessions.	Teachers had specifically requested this, initially stating that the sessions were not practical. Thereafter I came to conclude that by practical they meant demonstration lessons.
Area of focus during the session	Emphasis was on theory and then application	Emphasis was on applicable situations that were discussed and analysed requiring a lot of work from trainee teachers	This was done in order to have teachers more engaged in the sessions.
Time distribution of Sessions	Two sessions of approximately one and a half hours a day and a 15 min break was offered.	Two sessions of approximately two hours a day was offered.	This was as a response to teachers' request for more time to cover each topic.
Impact of Supervisors	Supervisors were allowed to attend and take part in the sessions	Supervisors were not officially requested to attend sessions. Separate training had been arranged for the supervisors.	Separate training conducted for the supervisors is a separate area of research, but followed the same action research methodology

Criteria	Intervention Phase 1	Intervention Phase 2	Comment
Relating topic areas to materials used by teachers	Sessions were of an academic nature, not related to any particular material.	Sessions were tied in with teachers' materials to help associate learning opportunities to authentic applications.	This was done in order to show applicability to what was covered during sessions.

Training Summary

The next intervention was initiated by conducting scheduled training sessions over a period of two weeks, all of which were task oriented and workshop based. All teachers had to take part actively in the sessions, not only as recipients but also as contributors. Participants were involved in hands-on tasks and short demonstration lessons which linked theory to practice. The workshops associated tasks to the existing teaching resources and materials teachers were using in the classroom. Each session was conducted for an average of two hours, having two sessions each day with a fifteen minute coffee break in between. The first one and a half hours of the sessions were the practical part, leaving room for discussions, drawing conclusions and making recommendations during the remaining half an hour of each session.

Delivery of Training

Two trainers, in addition to myself, were involved in conducting the training. Selection of trainers was based on their strong language competence and their previous experience as language teachers and trainers in the region, particularly in the UAE. Both trainers were native speakers of the language, who learnt Arabic language during their years of experience in the Arab world. Their ability to minimally communicate in Arabic with teachers created a more trusting relationship between the trainers and the participants. It was also noted that the trainers themselves had the experience of learning a foreign language that was of a non-Latin origin, which participants were more familiar with.

Training Content

In order to provide teachers with reference materials, all participants were provided with a training manual that included a detailed introduction with background information on me as a researcher. The introduction emphasised the trainers' educational and

professional background and experiences in working in the Arab world and other European countries where English is taught as a foreign language. This raised teachers' awareness towards trainers' backgrounds and their capabilities in relating to their needs and interests. The manual also included notes on the sessions to be conducted together with the hand-outs teachers were required to use during the sessions. This kept the session activities and points of discussion well organised.

All of the training content was associated to material teachers were familiar with. It provided an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their current use of materials and how much further they could adapt, improve and amend the content. Mainly, teachers were given an opportunity to better understand how the lesson's objectives could be addressed differently to provide students with a better learning opportunity. It also reflected the possibility of being able to apply recommended practices to any course or grade level taught. They also demonstrated the applicability of different strategies in the teachers' classes.

Discussion forums held after the training sessions gave teachers an opportunity to engage in discussions with one another and the trainers in the English language. Discussions included affordable and possible recommendations teachers could use to improve their own language skills. Recommendations included listening to the BBC and watching television programmes without subtitles in order to train their audio visual receptors effectively. It was also suggested that they read aloud in order to enhance oral fluency and pronunciation. Teachers also had an opportunity to raise concerns regarding issues covered during the sessions in addition to sharing their views.

Supervisors' Influence

There was a need to control supervisors' influence on participating teachers during the intervention and monitoring phases of the research. Therefore a couple of meetings were held with them in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in order to clarify the participating teachers' involvement in the project phases.

Supervisors had also been introduced to the key concepts on which participating teachers were being trained. Although they expressed concern about the teachers' capability towards adjusting to recommended changes and being able to apply them,

supervisors were further assured by the Ministry of Education representative and the researcher that participating teachers would be well monitored and mentored during this period. Supervisors were also advised that they would be participating in a professional development scheme at a later time of mutual convenience: this would be announced later by the Ministry of Education. It was suggested that supervisors take part in the training scheme conducted during the intervention to be aware of what teachers were involved in. The majority of attending supervisors were not very keen on the whole action plan, but were obliged to comply with requests made by the Ministry of Education since it was viewed as an official plan imposed by the Ministry of Education.

Post Training Follow Up

Three weeks after having conducted the training, schools visits were arranged in cooperation with the Ministry of Education representative. Teachers appeared to be more comfortable towards my presence as a researcher during the second intervention because of the contact we had maintained for the past months, developing a good relationship with one another. Teachers taking part in earlier sessions, who had been struggling towards accepting recommended practices, were more keen on being involved in the training and more welcoming towards the observation sessions. The consistent contact I maintained with the teachers established a stronger relationship between the teachers and me as a researcher and a professional. During the classroom visits and post-training discussions, teachers came to realise how important their views and experiences were for the success of the developed interventions.

4.5.2 Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Second Intervention

The second intervention was reviewed in relation to its effectiveness on teacher practice in the classroom. The lesson observation checklists were used to take note of these changes. By comparing the results of the checklist used prior to the second intervention with the findings of the checklists after the second intervention, general conclusions were made. These conclusions were compared to previous studies defining effective teaching practices (Rubio, 2010; Borich, 2000 and Gurney, 2007).

As noted in Rubio (2010) effective teachers need to focus on the achievement of learners. Borich (2000), further notes that the responsibilities of effective teachers are to

have lesson clarity, instructional variety, teacher task orientation, engagement in the learning process and student success rate. Gurney (2007) suggested that to be an effective teacher there should be an interaction among different factors. Views in relation to effective teaching found in Rubio (2010), Borich (2000) and Gurney (2007) have been reflected in the lesson observation forms. One of them is the teachers' knowledge, enthusiasm and responsibility for learning. Another factor is the engaging opportunity teachers should provide their students with. In addition to creating a warm environment and a relationship with the students in which respect will enhance learning.

The following observations were made in regards to teachers' in-class performance and teaching practices following the second intervention:

Lesson Introduction

The majority of the classes attended had a better defined set of objectives; 14 out of the 17 teachers appeared to be more aware of the importance of reflecting on the lesson's objectives at the beginning of each lesson. Students appeared to have an understanding towards the areas to be covered in the lessons. Teachers would generally greet the students and thereafter introduce the lesson's topic using a set of different prompts as recommended in the workshops. These included asking students about their views on particular topics, linking the area to be addressed to students' earlier experiences, using word maps on the board, and pictures. This generated further interest among the students and created their involvement from the beginning of the lesson. Lesson introductions were much more lively than earlier observed lessons.

The majority of lesson introductions and areas of focus conducted by 16 out of the 17 teachers were theme oriented, linking a general concept or theme to students' current experiences. With the use of word maps and pictures, students were guided indirectly to the main focus area of the lesson.

Lesson Performance

A direct approach was still adopted by 13 teachers for introducing grammar, and later advised that the more direct they were, the clearer it would be for students to learn. It was apparent, however, that teachers felt more comfortable using a direct approach as it was easier to teach.

Teachers appeared to be more aware of the skills required to relate students' experiences and interests to the content of lessons. The majority of the teachers engaged in methods to generate student interest and involvement towards the topic of the lesson, which made the majority of the lesson introductions attended more active.

All teachers appeared to be more comfortable and in control of the flow of the lesson when teaching grammar rather than other language skills; Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Nevertheless, teachers with fewer years of experience, under five years, used recommended strategies when teaching other skills. Teaching reading in particular had more variety and was engaging for the students. The majority of teachers still had difficulty in generating student interest and involvement when teaching oral communication skills in addition to writing.

Language communication skills for the majority of teachers were still rather weak. Only three teachers mastered a good command of English. Nevertheless, teachers appeared to be more confident in communicating with the students. A few teachers resorted to body language and miming when unable to convey an idea in English and had students guess the meaning. Teachers still had issues with pronunciation, spelling and conveying ideas to students in English. As a result, several teachers would resort to using the mother tongue in the classroom.

The majority of the students appeared to be more engaged in the lesson and were more active than before. Students sitting in the front rows of the class were the most active, although students at the back were also engaged but at a lower level.

The majority of teachers referred to extra-curricular resources that helped generate students' interest. Some teachers provided students with assignments that required research skills using the Internet and library. A few teachers appeared to put effort into using a variety of resources to help engage students in the lessons. With this in mind, lesson introductions were more engaging, having topic areas covered in sync with students' interests and needs.

Although the majority of lessons were teacher-centred rather than student-centred, teacher talking time was around 70% in all the lessons observed. A lot of students'

involvement was in response to teacher prompts and queries, as well as group and pair discussions. There was more opportunity for students to involve themselves actively in the lessons through discussions, group work and pair work.

The majority of teachers had students working in pairs and groups. Individual work was still apparent, but there was a variety in the classroom arrangements used.

Although all teachers were concerned with disciplinary issues and teaching, there was an increase in awareness towards assessing the actual learning taking place. Students were given further opportunity to interact with one another and become actively involved in the lesson as pairs, groups or individually.

Lesson Conclusion

Out of the 17 teachers, 15 had better time management skills and managed to end the majority of the lessons by assessing if the learning objectives were met.

Out of the 17 teachers, 12 managed to finish the lesson on time, assign homework or further evaluate the expected learning outcomes of the lessons. Only a few teachers continued working to the last minute of the lesson, leaving no room to assign homework or further evaluate the covered learning objectives.

Based on lesson observations made, the general impression noted was that teachers were more aware of the need to develop language learning skills, but still needed to resort to course material so as to define the amount of work completed. Teachers were still working towards completing a number of pages during a lesson, but would extend work where necessary to ensure that learning objectives have been met. Teachers still needed extended training on working towards the development of sub-skills in their students and not only the development of their knowledge about the language. There was an apparent shift between emphasising learning rather than teaching only.

4.5.3 Second Phase Intervention Observations

After having the second intervention implemented and having it further assessed for its effectiveness, it became clear that teachers generally became more responsive towards recommended practices. This was based on having an active involvement in the

construction of a training scheme and providing continuity and consistency of the delivery and follow up of any training. Teachers had a more receptive attitude towards suggestions and observations noted. They were also receptive to peer feedback and to the concept of self-reflection. The second intervention phase further strengthened teachers' reflection on the success of their practices (Journal, 2007).

Teacher Appreciation

In general, teachers were very appreciative towards being involved in the actual construction and organisation of the training. The general attitude of teachers, including those resistant towards the first intervention, was positive and cooperative during both the training and follow up. Teachers wanted to be appreciated and heard. They needed to be involved in the actual decision making process of interventions and professional improvements. They did not want to be seen as receptive individuals only, but as contributors in showing how improvements can be made.

Training Organisation and Follow up

Participating teachers noted an overall improvement of the training organisation and topics addressed during the second intervention. The consistent follow up and support offered by the trainers was a key factor that made the training an effective intervention, very different from earlier trainings teachers had been exposed to. In addition, teachers' sense of active participation in the implementation of the sessions gave them the authority and independence they wanted. This was an opportunity they did not experience while working with their supervisors or during other sessions.

Supervisor Interference

The interferences made by supervisors were limited, which had a positive impact on the implementation of the second intervention. Teachers did not have dual sources of input and were not confused with the set of dual instructions that existed in the first intervention.

Earlier discussions with supervisors created further understanding between the researcher and the supervisor in relation to the purpose of implementing the programme. Preparing and offering separate training sessions and discussions for supervisors was a necessary element to ensure that strategies recommended to teachers were well

understood by their seniors. This was done to avoid any unnecessary conflicts in the future.

Understanding of Educational Culture and Limitations

The provision of trainers who were familiar with the educational contexts and limitations teachers had experienced, increased the trust teachers had towards the knowledge and skills of the trainers and the overall objective of the training scheme. It also had teachers refer to trainers as other experienced educators who understand the classroom and school environment they function within. Trainers were no longer perceived as being external interferers with teachers' business in the classroom, but as equals to teachers, working with them to ensure the effectiveness of the training scheme.

4.6 Response to Overall Evaluation Criteria and Summary

To return to the general evaluation criteria listed in the Methodology of the Study on page 160, the following observations can be concluded:

Was the Action Research framework devised able to effectively identify teachers' present needs?

Due to the reflective nature of the research framework and flexibility in adapting interventions, action research, although relatively new to teachers, successfully identified teachers' needs and interests. It also gave an opportunity of identifying areas in the educational environment that have an active role in constructing teacher identities. The ability to implement two consecutive phases further defined teachers' needs and interests and better accommodated them.

Was the action plan practical and applicable to educational contexts in the UAE?

The research plan was considered both practical and applicable in the context where the researcher was identified as a practitioner from within the workforce. It would have been very difficult to conduct the project as an independent researcher due to limited access to schools and teachers. For the purpose of this project, practitioner Action Research served its purpose well.

Was the action plan effective?

The action plan was effective in identifying the needs and interests of teachers and thereafter reflectively responding to them in the most appropriate contexts. The ability to implement and assess the first intervention provided a good opportunity to adapt and modify future interventions to be more effective. Therefore, the second set of interventions was considered more effective than the first, which was essential for the effectiveness of project and the methodology adopted.

How could the action plan be further improved?

Table 4.3 on page 164 lists the key differences between the first and second interventions implemented within the course of the research. Generally, there needs to be more understanding towards the local culture and the surrounding factors that play an effective role in constructing teacher identity. Therefore, the adoption of pre-packaged training schemes that commonly disregard the educational culture and context will not serve their purpose of improving teacher practices and effectiveness.

How familiar were teachers with the type of the research framework devised?

Generally, teachers were not aware of Action Research as a type of practitioner research. Teachers' lack of involvement in reflective practitioner research meant that they were not aware of how reflection on practices can help improve teaching and students' learning opportunities. Nevertheless, this project gave the participants an opportunity to become practitioner researchers themselves while working with the researcher on improving their practices.

How did the teachers' awareness of such a framework affect the research procedures and findings?

Teachers that did not belong to the same group of participants involved in the research did not appear to appreciate the research framework. In the UAE, research was generally classified as being either qualitative or quantitative. Reflective methods of intervention were a fairly new concept to teachers and therefore received poorly.

How did the nature of the researchers' identity affect the overall implementation of the project?

Researcher identity had a strong role in the construction and implementation of interventions. Further details on the impact of researcher identity are discussed in Chapter 2 on the Critical Contexts of the Study.

Further recommendations and amendments for the phases to follow

In order to improve the effectiveness of interventions made in similar contexts in the future, several recommendations have been noted. See page 188 for further details.

Practitioner Action Research, although rarely understood within the context of the research, appears to be the most appropriate approach towards addressing the professional needs of English language teachers in the UAE. This opportunity provided me with a better understanding towards the educational culture and context teachers work in. It also has provided an alternative for ineffective pre-packaged training schemes that have been regularly offered at high expense with limited tangible results.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Findings

As Turney and Wright (1990) note, the quality of teachers depends very much on the quality of their professional education. This section will provide the key findings and conclusions of this Action Research project, which was conducted over a period of approximately three years. It is important to note that there is a continuous reference to teachers working within the Arab world, and not only the UAE, due to the generally representative nature of the population of the study.

This chapter will briefly recapitulate the key phases of the project. It will conclude with a discussion of the main findings and recommendations for the future in relation to educational policy and practice.

5.1 The Design and Operation of the First Intervention

The reflective nature of the research allowed identification of teacher needs and interests in order to develop effective interventions during the first phase of the research. As noted in the methodology of the study, the use of multiple sources of data collection better defined the context in which teachers were working. As clarified in Figure 5.1 below, this helped in designing interventions that met the needs and interests of teachers while considering the social, professional and educational contexts they were working in.

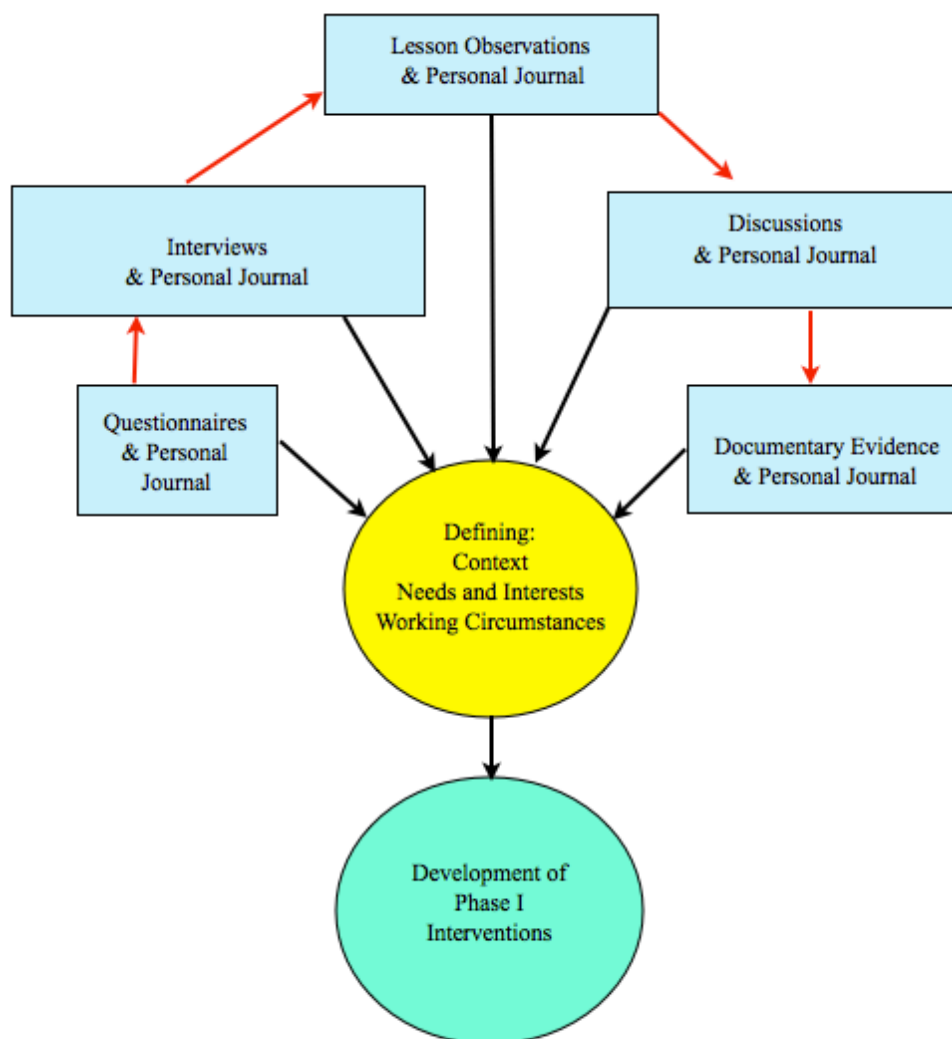


Figure 5.1: Data Collection Instruments and their Contribution to the Development of Interventions

5.1.1 Impact of the first reconnaissance phase on the developed interventions

The following section will look into how the identified data had an impact on the development of interventions in terms of strategy, content and delivery.

Areas to be addressed during the First Intervention

A number of issues in relation to the teaching population in the UAE needed to be considered before making any decision towards the interventions to be developed. These can be further reviewed in detail in the Context of the Study, but can be summarised below

Teacher Population

The teacher population was non-homogeneous in terms of teachers' educational, social and contextual backgrounds. Any developed intervention should not assume that teachers had similar backgrounds, interests or needs. It should rather make use of the differences and encourage opportunities to exchange ideas and experiences.

Teachers' Qualifications

The majority of the teaching force did not hold a teaching qualification. This meant that teachers did not have a well-established background in teaching practices. Their adopted methodology was mainly developed as a by-product of work.

Nature of Professional Development Input

The most common source of professional development input teachers received was through an external provider during regional promotional events and in the form of workshops. No follow up or support was provided to ensure that session objectives were met.

Teachers' Language Proficiency

The language proficiency level of teachers was relatively low; this made it difficult for them to pursue common international qualifications such as the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), or the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA).

Teachers' Economic Status

The economic status of teachers restricted their ability to pursue degrees in education that supported their teaching profession.

Teacher Preparedness to Teach

The local teaching force, although generally less experienced than the expatriate teaching force, was better prepared to become teachers. However, they were a considerable minority in the teaching population.

Teacher Ability to use Technology

Although the majority of the teaching population classified themselves as being either beginner or intermediate users of technology, only a few teachers actually practiced using technology in the classroom. Their use was mainly restricted to the use of PowerPoint presentations: no active or effective use of technology was taking place. This was either due to technological limitations or restrictions imposed by their supervisors. Therefore, any intervention developed would need to be realistic in terms of what teachers wanted to do, and what they could actually do by offering alternatives that were accommodating to what was evidently available in the classroom.

Teachers' Interests versus Students' Interests

There was a growing gap between what teachers assumed would be most appropriate to help engage students in a more productive learning opportunity, and what students were actually interested in being involved in. This was mainly in relation to how learning opportunities were delivered to students and how students responded to them.

Mentoring Approach

There was no constructive or systematic approach in the mentoring strategies devised. The relationship between teachers and their mentors or supervisors was highly hierarchical. Teachers were expected to abide by what their supervisors recommended, which was often restrictive to what teachers could or wanted to practice.

Differences in Educational Practices among Non-native Teachers

Training schemes adopted and implemented by external professional providers working with the Ministry of Education on the development of the teaching force, came pre-packaged without properly defining the characteristics of the teaching force or understanding the teaching context or educational culture. It was commonly assumed that non-native speaking English teachers in the UAE had similar interests and needs to English teachers from the EU. However, this research was able to identify the key differences between language teachers in the UAE and the EU, which is how teacher needs were addressed in a more effective manner.

In constructing interventions, it was useful to note the key differences between learning opportunities offered to non-native speaking teachers coming from the EU and those

offered to teachers from the UAE and more widely in the Arab world. These conclusions mainly relate to two sets of people experienced during the phases of the research and conclusions introduced can be offered as an example. These differences can be summarised in the table below:

Table 5.1: Comparison Between Educational Cultures in the EU and the Arab World

Criteria	EFL Teachers from the EU	EFL Teachers from the AW
Pre-service Teacher Training	All appointed language teachers undergo official teacher training	Teachers graduate as subject specialists and begin their teaching career with limited or no teacher training
Post Graduate training	A range of opportunities exist for teachers interested in being involved in official training schemes to develop their teaching practices	Limited professional development opportunities aimed towards developing teachers' practices are available
Availability of funded training	Teachers are often eligible for several funded training opportunities during their period of service	No available funded professional development schemes
Exposure to Native Language	More exposure on a regular and irregular basis due to the proximity of the UK	Limited exposure due to financial and geographical constraints
Attitude towards change	Generally open and more willing to experiment with new strategies that would help enrich students' learning opportunity	Conservative and hesitant towards change
Hierarchy, micro politics within educational system	Hierarchy often coupled with collegial culture	Strong presence and consideration of seniority in the educational structure. Teachers are led by a supervisor who works as a mentor

Criteria	EFL Teachers from the EU	EFL Teachers from the AW
Professional development opportunities; type, consistency and follow up	<p>Multiple sources of structured and non-structured professional development strategies (Wang <i>et al.</i>, 2008):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops - Mentors - Collaborative learning - Peer Observations - Content-focused teacher induction - Pedagogical-focused induction <p>Induction and learning opportunities are done on a regular basis and assessed based on teachers ability to effectively implement and use newly adopted strategies.</p>	<p>Multiple sources of unstructured professional development strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops - Supervisors - - - - - Content focused induction - - - <p>Induction and learning opportunities are done on an irregular basis and rarely assessed for effectiveness.</p>
Freedom of practice	Teachers are encouraged to apply newly recommended strategies in hope of enriching the learning opportunity for students. Teachers can work effectively with their mentors.	Teachers refrain from applying the majority of recommended strategies unless advised by the supervisor. Teachers work along lines recommended by their supervisors.
Educational Emphasis	Enriching the learning opportunity to ensure that students have an effective learning experience	Enriching the teaching process to ensure that curriculum standards are being met
Teaching Approach	Based on the use of multiple resources while being guided by a set of standards and at some point a curriculum	Based on the use of a single resource which represents the curriculum standards. Limited opportunity to use multiple resources.

The above table attempts to outline some key differences between the educational and professional cultures of employed teachers in the EU and the Arab world. Based on my observations as a practitioner researcher and teacher, these differences have a strong

impact on teachers' learning opportunities before and during employment. Teachers in the Arab world have limited opportunities to receive structured professional development input that is based on their actual needs. Additionally, teachers in the Arab world have limited funding opportunities that allow for more intensive learning experiences on both a social and professional level. Due to the limited opportunities available and the nature of constructed work relationships, teachers in the Arab world are less receptive to change, more conservative towards sharing their views and experiences, and have a tendency to focus more on the actual teaching process rather than the learning that takes place. As in the EU and the Arab world, schools are organised as bureaucratic hierarchies. However, in the EU there is a cultural value put on collaboration between colleagues and individual professional development that is not present in many schools in the Arab world.

Teachers from the EU often have multiple sources of professional development that assist them in the choices they make about more effective teaching practices. As Ingersoll and Smith (2004) note, multiple sources of input provided to teachers has a crucial impact on the decisions teachers make towards their teaching patterns and approach. Teachers from the Arab world do not have this and are limited to the input received from their seniors and supervisors, which does not provide an opportunity to make choices about the most effective teaching practices they might find appropriate.

Teachers within the Arab culture work within authoritarian micro-political structures. This reiterates against the openness to change. Differences also indicate the need to develop independent training programmes that specifically address the needs and interests of teachers from the UAE. It also explains why pre-packaged training programmes may be insufficient to address the needs of teachers in the UAE.

5.2 The Design and Operation of the Second Intervention

The second intervention, developed as part of the second phase of the Action Research project, relied on the observations and feedback collected during and after the implementation of the first set of interventions. In order to better address teacher needs and interests, the first Action Research phase served as a reconnaissance phase for the second intervention as clarified in the figure below.

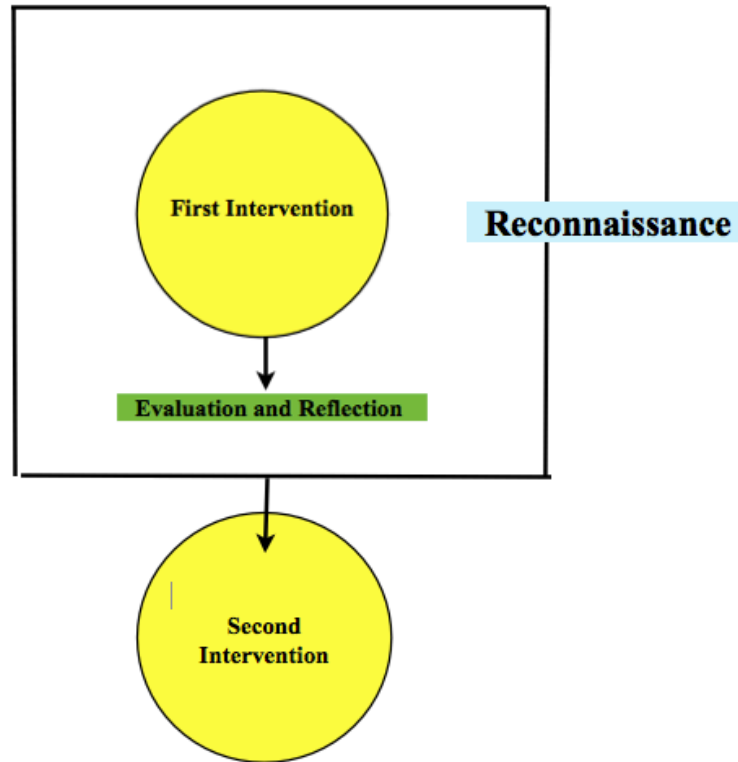


Figure 5.2: Delivery of Second Intervention

5.3 Discussion of Findings

The research strategy was effective in making a positive impact in changing teachers' attitudes towards their practices. The Action Research framework was found to be useful and effective in understanding and addressing the needs of teachers. The research had a positive impact on the policies and decisions taken by the Ministry of Education in the UAE in relation to professional development schemes.

The effectiveness of the trainers' scheme was assessed based on a number of key factors as listed below.

5.3.1 Effectiveness of devising an Action Research framework for the purpose of this research

Devising an Action Research framework was found to be key in determining the success of developing an effective teacher training scheme. Its reflective nature provided an opportunity to respond to findings and refine interventions. It also involved participants as members of the research community, whether in making decisions or in contributing to interventions unlike other research types.

The key factors identified that ensured the effectiveness of the training scheme are listed below.

Local Perceptions and Needs

The previous identification of teacher needs and interest, all of which have been aligned to the requirements set by the official sponsoring entity, in this case the UAE Ministry of Education. It was and remains crucial to discover and identify the needs of teachers. This was achieved through a period of observations and interviews during the reconnaissance phase, which also built a trusting relationship between trainees and the trainer.

Understanding Teacher Culture

The Action Research framework ensured an understanding towards the educational culture and work environment in which teachers function. This helped the trainer to develop a scheme that was in line with the educational culture. It also avoided any clashes in relation to teacher expectations, abilities and limitations. As with pre-packaged training schemes, the lack of understanding towards the educational culture can mean recommendations being made to teachers that would not be effective in the classroom.

Teachers Involvement in Planning Intervention Strategies

The considerable involvement of teachers in developing interventions helped develop a sense of appreciation towards teachers' interests, and reflected the appreciation towards their local knowledge. The establishment of a direct link between teachers' needs and expectations to schemes helped motivate teachers to continue to be involved in their own professional development. This gave them a different role in which they perform as participants rather than merely recipients as in their work with their supervisors.

Monitoring a Reflexive Feedback Loop

The collection of immediate feedback after workshops and sessions were conducted helped to feed in towards the preparation of future workshops, sessions and interventions. Feedback noted in both written form, through the completion of a feedback form, and by informal and formal discussions were very helpful in improving interventions and creating a better understanding of teachers' needs.

Building on Dual Methods of Intervention

Using the existing dual method of intervention – workshops and supervisors – provides minimal support and feedback to the teachers. This popular trend may have been a cause of delay in educational progress in the public sector. As successfully indicated in this Action Research project, it would be useful to involve more collaborative participation in teachers' intervention plans in order to have teachers' visualise and be capable of acquiring new skills. Peer observations, personal reflections, journals, discussions, training themes and pedagogical induction were all part of the professional development scheme and proved to be effective.

Continuing Support for Teacher Learning

It is useful to offer consistent and reflective feedback to support teachers involved in training schemes. This would ensure that teachers are managing to implement newly recommended practices, and are at least experimenting with new strategies with their students.

Supporting a Professional Development Culture

Building 'learning communities' through which teachers can work with one another and share experiences together, making their efforts more public and open to other peers, was a rather rich and effective experience when working with teachers. This also ensured a sense of belonging to a group and of making a contribution to a community where experience and knowledge function as part of the community's property (Lieberman and Pointer Mace, 2008).

Creating 'work groups' through which teachers worked collaboratively on planning, problem solving and sharing professional development activities. This helped in creating practitioner knowledge from teachers' experience, public knowledge from research and theory, and new knowledge from what was created as a community (Lieberman and Pointer Mace, 2008).

Taking Account of Local Organisations

It is necessary to work closely with supervisors to ensure that they are on board when it comes to recommended practices conducted during training schemes. Ignoring their presence will only have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the training scheme,

limiting teachers' response towards recommended practices. It is essential to note that supervisors are considered responsive only when they feel that they also have an active and effective part in the development and implementation of training schemes. This research has also resulted in making suggestions towards training supervisors on various mentoring strategies that can be used among the professional learning communities.

Developing and Sustaining Student-learning Centred Teaching Practices

Helping teachers understand the need to approach students with different teaching strategies in order to provide more engaging learning opportunities can only be done by actually demonstrating and reflecting on the impact of different practices.

5.4 Educational Reform and Teacher Practice

Much of the Arab world is undergoing radical educational reform, especially in relation to teacher preparation programmes. Teachers play a key role in the reform process since they are considered to be facilitators of students' learning opportunities (Cuban, 1990). However, in order to be an effective teacher, much of the literature is consensual in noting the need for:

- a broad range of skills and knowledge, including deep content knowledge
- pedagogical content knowledge
- knowledge of how children and adolescents learn in a variety of settings
- skills for creating a classroom community that is supportive of learning for diverse students
- knowledge about multiple forms of assessment
- the ability to reflect on practice
- the ability to draw on established principles of foreign language learning

(Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005 and Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005 in Lucas *et al.*, 2008)

As demonstrated earlier in relation to data reflection, findings from the project suggest some additional emphasis to improve training schemes. These can be summarised as follows:

- additional language support to help improve teachers' own English language communication skills
- the ability to draw on established foreign language learning principles in relation to the students' mother tongue (Arabic), and how this may impact students' learning opportunities
- the ability to work towards a set of learning standards rather than solely content standards
- the ability to define the major skills and sub-skills of language which can be conveyed to students within their educational context, focusing on the ability to learn how to communicate in a language rather than learn about a language
- the ability to become more accommodating to change and appreciate the need for change in order to improve and develop in line with the aims of current educational reform
- willingness to accommodate changes in students' interests and use flexible teaching practices that are most appropriate for each set of students
- the ability to develop a professional learning community, continuously conveying and sharing experiences which would ensure a better learning opportunity for teachers as noted by Grossman *et al.* (2001).

The intervention phase of the Action Research strategy was developed and devised while considering the educational background, context and framework of language teachers in the Arab world. To improve the effectiveness of the programme, it was refined and implemented in two consecutive action research cycles, the second phase building on the outcomes of the first. Sufficient time allowed the development of a scheme that could be continuously modified, assessed and amended before being officially adopted for use.

One of the objectives of this research was to see how responsive teachers were towards interventions, created with their goals and interests in mind. Interestingly, having teachers work as active participants in the development of the scheme, and not only passive recipients for delivered content, had a strong impact on their educational practices, views and expectations. All participants reported that they had greatly

benefited from the professional support offered and were motivated to be involved in future training schemes.

As Zeichner (2005) notes:

Many teacher educators who conduct research on their own courses and programmes argue that they benefit greatly from these inquiries and that this visible commitment to self-inquiry provides a model for their students. They also argue that improvements in their work as teacher educators and their programs result from these self-studies. (Zeichner, 2005: 750)

Having had the opportunity to engage with the participants of this research for two full cycles, it can be concluded that, despite some local opposition, Action Research adapts well to working with teachers functioning within an Arabic culture. Following such a framework did create several obstacles for me as a researcher, particularly when working with the group of teachers in Jordan. If it had not been for my authoritative identity working with teachers under the auspices of the UAE Ministry of Education, I would have not been able to successfully implement the research strategy.

5.5 Impact of Research on Ministry of Education Policy towards Professional Development

This research has also affected how the UAE Ministry of Education took future decisions towards the adoption of training schemes. The decision makers at the Ministry no longer expect or appreciate pre-packaged training schemes, but require more accommodating and comprehensive schemes that are custom made to suit their local requirements. Professional development providers need to provide their strategy towards using a similar framework in identifying teacher needs and developing the required interventions accordingly. They are required to provide standard follow up procedures that ensure the effectiveness of interventions and assist in refining interventions. Pre-packaged training schemes are no longer appreciated, unless altered to meet the local requirements of teachers and appreciate the educational culture. It has been made clear that needs of teachers in the UAE, and more widely the majority of non-native speaking teachers of English in the Arab world, are different from the needs of other non-native and native speaking teachers of English. This research has made this

difference clearer and has created more understanding towards the complex environment in which teachers in the Arab world work.

5.6 Research Recommendations

As identified through this research, there is a significant need for further research in the area of professional development of language teachers in the Arab world. This project has mainly focused on a group of secondary school teachers; however, primary and middle school teachers could also be usefully involved in a similar research experience.

Linking professional development to career advancement would be a key factor in stimulating teacher development.

Having the opportunity to further understand the impact of the role of supervisors on teacher performance in the classroom and educational structure would be a fruitful area for further study.

Identifying ways of involving supervisors or teacher mentors in a similar action plan would help to improve the impact of mentoring practices on teacher performance. Initially it would need to determine how receptive mentors may be towards change, in addition to identifying areas that may prevent supervisors from welcoming a more flexible approach to their role.

By including monitoring and evaluating activities, the impact of teacher development on student learning could be a vital tool in determining the success of professional development schemes. This could be usefully augmented by focusing on learning strategies and motivation.

It may also be beneficial, in some areas, to benchmark the progress and changes that have taken place in educational practice in the West compared to those in the Arab world. It is still the case that teachers will seek qualifications from the West in preference to the same qualifications they can receive in the Arab world. A way forward would be to attempt to synthesise relevant aspects of western professional development practice with those of local Arab cultures.

This research also suggests areas for further investigation in teaching practices and professional development within the Arab culture. Currently, the delivery of training is dominated by using workshops (Garet *et al.*, 2001). This does not take into account the variability of how teachers teach, and how they and their students learn. The current research offers a model of how teacher educators in the Arab world can support and implement different approaches to professional development through multiple sources of intervention (Lieberman and Pointer Mace, 2008) and the effective utilisation of an Action Research framework.

Teacher development and the underlying reform has been an interesting area of study for me. I will continue to conduct further research in the area of professional development working specifically with non-native speaking teachers of English.

My research has given me a critical opportunity to learn more about my own practice as a teacher educator and has informed planned future developments in relation to teacher preparation and training schemes. A major opportunity for the dissemination of my research, and more generally applied action research, is through my own continuing professional practice (Loughran, 2007). I am currently working closely with the (UAE) Ministry of Education on developing a similar scheme but on a larger scale, to address all primary school teachers.

Action Research has so far proven to be both an effective and accommodating approach to use within the Arab context. Hopefully this research will be a step forward towards change in educational research practices and will help in future professional development schemes. The project has made it possible for teachers to actually influence how and what they learn. It has also given teachers an opportunity to be engaged in thinking about what they need to know, paving the way for a more open learning community than the one that currently exists (Hawley and Valli, 2007).

In light of the feedback received on current professional development practices held within the UAE, it was possible to develop a training and professional development scheme closer to teachers' needs and interests. The study has indicated that an improvement can be made in the attitudes and views of teachers and eventually their teaching practices. It has also demonstrated a clear approach in addressing the current

needs and interests of teachers grounded in an understanding of the educational culture they are functioning within, an environment that severely constrains the variety of classroom practice (Beeby, 1966).

In general, this research has helped in understanding how teachers in the Arab world develop and progress in their careers, the purposes behind teachers' willingness and unwillingness to learn and change, and how multiple factors impact on teachers' career progress (Snowman, 1997). Improvements have already taken place in the nature of professional development opportunities in the UAE due to the impact of this research. This has demonstrated that improvements can be made by addressing current issues in teaching practice. The Ministry of Education in the UAE has been influenced by my work using action research to underpin professional development schemes. In addition, perhaps critically, there is now an increased awareness that the major aim of professional development schemes must be the improved impact such schemes have, not simply on teachers' practice, but also on student motivation and learning.

The key objective behind improving professional development opportunities for teachers, is to facilitate the provision of better learning opportunities for students. The further development of educational action research could substantially address the current needs of teachers and learners in the Arab world.

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Appendix I

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

As a graduate student at the University of Sussex, I have designed this questionnaire to assess the needs of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language to determine and identify the training needed in the area of English Language Teaching (ELT): *Sources of TEFL Training, Economic and Financial Significance, Responsibilities, Generation, Planning, Implementing, Evaluation and Control of Training Programs.*

This questionnaire was developed to help you reflect on your job role in teaching English and to identify areas in which you may benefit from further training and development or be capable of offering assistance.

The more specific, honest and accurate answers you provide, the more effective the training will be and the resulting TEFL Training and Development plan. All information provided through this questionnaire will be dealt with strict confidentiality and will be used for the purpose of research only. Your co-operation and help is highly appreciated.

This two-paged questionnaire is composed of **three main** parts in relation to demographic information, educational background, experience, training and professional development.

Thank you.

Sally Rabi
School of Education
University of Sussex
Brighton, UK

Name (Optional):

Please tick (✓) as appropriate:

Part One: Demographic Information

School: Private ☐ Public ☐ Charity ☐
 Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
 Age: 21-30 ☐ 31-41 ☐ 42-52 ☐ 53 and above ☐
 Marital Status: Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐
 Nationality: (Please specify)

Part Two: Education and Experience

Education College ☐ Bachelors ☐ Masters ☐ Other ☐

Years of experience in Teaching English as a Foreign Language:

1-3 ☐ 4-9 ☐ 10-15 ☐ 16 or more ☐

What levels do you teach? (Tick all applicable)

Primary ☐ Middle ☐ Secondary ☐ High school ☐

How do you describe your computer and technical skills?

Expert ☐ Intermediate ☐ Beginner ☐ Non-user ☐

How often do you use computers, multimedia and the internet in your teaching?

Always ☐ Occasionally ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐

Part Three: Training and Professional Development

In your point of view, who should be responsible for providing training for teachers of English as a Foreign Language? (Tick all applicable)

Ministry of Education ☐ Employing School ☐ Provided prior to graduation ☐

Do you think that training should be obligatory for all teachers and those intending to become teachers? Yes ☐ No ☐

How many training ELT sessions/ workshops did you attend during the last five years?

0- 3 ☐ 4-10 ☐ Full Training program ☐

What was the duration of the training sessions that you attended?

Hours ☐ 1-3 days ☐ a week or more ☐ other ☐ (please specify).....

Who was/were the session(s) conducted by?

Local authority ☐ Foreign authority ☐ Publisher ☐ Other ☐ (please specify).....

If you have attended any ELT workshops/ sessions did you find them effective, addressing your needs? Yes ☐ No ☐

Was there any follow up proceeding the sessions you attended or took part in?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, was the follow up in the form of :

Contact by email/ telephone ☐ Elaborative sessions ☐ Other ☐ (please specify).....

Would you be willing to share the knowledge you have on English language teaching practices with your colleagues, if you thought it would be useful for them to know?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please give no more than three topics in relation to teaching strategies you would like to share with other teachers. (Please leave your name and school details)

.....
.....

Would you be interested in attending further training sessions? Yes ☐ No ☐

Which of the following topics would you be interested in gaining further training on? (Tick all applicable)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Management Strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> Time Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment and Evaluation Strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Design and Construction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Listening/ Speaking skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessing Listening/ Speaking Skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Reading/ Writing Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessing Reading/ Writing Skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Assisted Language Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross Curricular/Cultural exposure |

- ☐ Using Authentic Material and Realia ☐ Improving your own language skills
☐ Dealing with Special Need students (slow learners, ADHD)
☐ Motivating learners and involving them in the teaching process
☐ Other (please Specify).....

Would you be interested in participating in sessions that may meet your needs and help you
 over come obstacles? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please write below any recommendations towards improving the skills of English teachers in
 facilitating the teaching process.

.....

.....

Your help and co-operation is highly appreciated. Thank you for taking part in this questionnaire.
 Please feel free to contact the researcher on the email below for any further details. Results of the
 questionnaire will be made available for those interested.

Sally Rabi

s.rabi@sussex.ac.uk

Appendix II

Interview Questions

1. Tell me more about yourself. How did you begin your career as a teacher?
2. How many years of experience do you have? Do you feel that you have grown within your career, since you have started till now? If so, in what way?
3. What grades do you currently teach, primary, middle or secondary level?
4. What are your views on the recently adopted programme?
5. Are there any particular areas of interests that you have in the area of language teaching and learning? What are they and why do they particularly interest you?
6. How are you with computers? Do you use them in your daily life, if so how often?
7. Do you incorporate digital media and other electronic resources in your teaching? Why/Why not? How often do you use these resources?
8. So far, what has been your main source of professional development? For how long did it last and was there any follow up after the PD scheme? Did you consider it as a fruitful experience?
9. How was this source of PD delivered and by whom?
10. What is your view about making professional development obligatory for all teachers and those intending to become teachers?
11. Are there any particular teaching areas you find yourself competent in? Would you be willing to share your thoughts and ideas with other teachers?
12. How do you feel about the role of supervisors in relation to teacher performance?
13. What are the key obstacles you face when teaching your students? How do you think these can be overcome or improved if possible?
14. Do you have any suggestions you would like to add in relation to how teachers' experiences can be improved while teaching or key areas you feel should be immediately addressed?
15. Is there anything further you would like to add, besides your remarks and notes on the needs assessment questionnaires?

Appendix III

Interview Transcript

Date:

Sunday 4-2-2007

Candidate Background:

Local Female English teacher

Graduate from the Higher Colleges of Technology

Two years experience

SR: Tell me more about yourself. How did you begin your career as a teacher? What made you decide to become a teacher?

HN: My name is Huda, I am from the emirate of Ajman. I studied English Education at the HCT in Ajman....and.... It was the best option available at the time, and I liked the idea of working with children. Also, I was told that work opportunities would be immediately available when I finished studying, so I think, it was a good opportunity.

SR: How many years of experience do you have? Do you feel that you have grown within your career, since you have started till now? If so, in what way?

HN: This is my second year of teaching... I think I have grown in terms of understanding my students more, I think, and the work obligations. I have can make faster decisions about my teaching but I still think that there is a lot to learn.

SR: What grades do you currently teach, primary, middle or secondary level?

HN: I am currently a middle school teacher. Our schools are divided based on cycles, I work at the middle school stream of schools and teach grades 7,8 and 9.

SR: What are your views on the recently adopted programme?

HN: I think it is a good programme, but it needs to consider our culture more and it also needs to have students learn about poetry and literature.

SR: Are there any particular areas of interests that you have in the area of language teaching and learning? What are they and why do they particularly interest you?

HN: I like using creative ideas to teach and to work closely with the students. I like using the internet and other authentic resources. I am also interested in using portfolios as part of continuous assessment requirements. I also would like to know more about new ideas to teach grammar, because it is the most difficult for students to learn.

SR: How are you with computers? Do you use them in your daily life, if so how often?

HN: I like using computers, I have my own laptop and can't imagine my life without computers and the internet. I access my email everyday and also have a facebook account.

SR: Do you incorporate digital media and other electronic resources in your teaching? Why/Why not? How often do you use these resources?

HN: I would love too, but we are obliged to follow instructions for teaching from the supervisors. We can only use power point presentations as part of or lessons. I tried to work with my students through facebook once, but my supervisor was against it and asked me to stick to the materials I have.

SR: I can imagine that it is very frustrating for you not being able to use such resources, which most probably are of interest to your students as well. Could you tell me, so far, what has been your main source of professional development?

HN: Yes, it is and I used to get upset because of all the rules we have to follow and the people we have to listen too, even if I think what I am doing is right... so far my main source of input has been my supervisor. I have also attended workshops during TESOL Arabia, but they weren't very realistic to what we need. We also have taken some workshops with CEPA, but they too weren't very practical.

SR: For how long did these workshops last and was there any follow up afterwards? Did you consider it as a fruitful experience?

HN: All of the workshops were for an hour or an hour and a half. Some lasted for 45 minutes. No, there was no follow up and there never has been. We are

brought in, lectured and then left to go. To be honest, I did not learn anything new from the sessions so far.

SR: So all the training was in the form of workshops?

HN: Yes, are there any other ways? Well, they were more like lectures. We continuously ask for demonstrations but do not always get it.

SR: Can you tell me about your view about making professional development obligatory for all teachers and those intending to become teachers?

HN: It depends on who is giving it. If it would be obligatory for teachers to attend workshops like the ones we have so far, then I do not think it would be useful. But if there are more fruitful training ways, yes it should be obligatory. Not all teachers are familiar with different strategies and new methods. I think getting training is very helpful, just like training that people from other professions have.

SR: What are the teaching areas you find yourself competent in? Would you be willing to share your thoughts and ideas with other teachers?

HN: I think it would be grammar, fun ways to teach grammar and reading.

SR: How do you feel about the role of supervisors in relation to teacher performance?

HN: (In Arabic: You hit the right button), I think supervisors can be very supportive if they are aware of what is happening now in education. To be honest, supervisors here attend our lessons and focus on how bad they went. I have received good feedback from my supervisor, but still I do not feel it is supportive or helpful enough. Let us say, they give us a harder time than they should.

SR: What are the key obstacles you face when teaching your students? How do you think these can be overcome or improved if possible?

HN: Mostly I can say is making my students interested in the lesson. I use different techniques as much as possible, but the material we use isn't always interesting to students. Also I think we have problems when it comes to assessing the skills of Listening and Speaking-these can only be overcome if

we have a less number of students in the classroom. As for student interest, I try to solve this already by using different materials and sources-although my supervisor does not like it.

SR: Do you have any suggestions you would like to add in relation to how teachers' experiences can be improved while teaching or key areas you feel should be immediately addressed?

HN: I think most of the teachers need extra help in their language skills, they also need to be updated with current teaching practices. Also supervisors need to be more involved in the newly recommended practices, at the moment, they are only being an obstacle to the majority of teachers

SR: Is there anything further you would like to add, besides your remarks and notes on the needs assessment questionnaires?

HN: Sure, I just would like to add that everything is changing nowadays so are our students' interests and needs. Our students do not use the same toys, games or books we used to use when we were kids or even ten years ago. We need to learn how changes are affecting our teaching and our students and need to use different ways to deal with our students and these ways may be very different from the traditional ones we were used to- but it is up to us to do this.

Thank you.

Appendix IV

Lesson Observation Form

Date: Class: No of Sts:				
Lesson Topic/Theme:				
Lesson Objectives:				
	Yes	Partial	No	NA / Comment
Lesson Introductory				
Clearly set objectives				
Motivating lesson introductory				
Lesson Performance				
Relating Lesson to previous or familiar experiences				
Learners are engaged in the learning process				
Ability to handle and adapt to unexpected interference's				
Sequential development of ideas				
Time Management				
Classroom Management				
Use of Resources				
Teacher Confidence & Language				
Type of Classroom Performance	Teacher Centred		Student Centred	
Type of student interaction pair work /group work	Pair Work		Group Work	
Overall Presentation of Lesson				
Lesson Conclusion				
Homework/ activity assigned				
Suitable lesson evaluation				
Assessment of Learning Outcomes				
Additional Remarks				

Appendix V

Training Agenda

Day One:

09:00 - 09:30	UAE Skills in English Orientation: An Overview
09:30 - 11: 45	Session One
11:45 - 12:00	Break
12:00 - 14:00	Session Two

Day Two:

09:00 - 11:45	Session One
11:45 - 12:00	Break
12:00 - 14:00	Session Two

Session Topics:

UAE English Skills: Introduction to the Course

Continuous Assessment, Monitoring and Teacher Reflection

Developing Learner Writing Skills

Grammar in Context

Trainer Bio-data – Grade 9

The Garnet Education Approach to Training

Training courses conducted by Garnet Education always take into account the local culture. Garnet's experience and close involvement with the individual country with which they are working means they are sensitive to key issues facing the teachers. In particular, training takes into account the particular factors that affect non-native teachers of English.

Furthermore, the training recognizes that there are certain constraints placed on teachers within the state education sector, such as: time available, demands of teaching mixed levels and large classes, the need to fully exploit the course materials, testing procedures, and other factors that might arise during training.

Garnet Education also acknowledges the importance of involving teachers in the process of change, and the need to reassure teachers that their needs and concerns have been fully taken into account.

Many teachers are well grounded in methodological principles, but cannot see how to apply them effectively in the classroom, or recognise how they link to the aims of the book. The training sessions will help teachers understand the link between theory and practice more fully and guide them to find practical applications which they feel comfortable using in the classroom.

The use of loop input and discovery learning activities means that teachers are active participants in the training. Varied methods of delivery, including discussions, workshops, demonstration lessons and peer teaching ensure that the teachers have a memorable experience which they can take away from the sessions.

Garnet Education accepts that orientation training is only the beginning of a process of change and that follow-up is essential in order to build on initial progress.

Teacher Training Session Outline

UAE English Skills: How the course works; extracts from Themes Grade 9

The purpose of this session is to familiarize you with the overall structure and material components of UAE English Skills. It will also give an insight into the differences and similarities it may have with the previously used course. After reviewing the background of the course, in groups, you will have an opportunity to further explore course components in light of the issues discussed earlier.

Overview of Course Components:

Students Book

Workbook

Teachers Book

Audio

Student Assessment Booklet

Teacher Assessment Booklet

UAE SIE Website: access details and resources available

English for the Emirates vs. UAE English Skills

Language

Cross Cultural Exposure: Topics in Use

Course Structure: a Thematic Approach

Skill Development

Grammar and Vocabulary

Assessment and Evaluation

UAE English Skills Grade 9: Extracts from Lessons

Listening

Vocabulary

Speaking

Grammar

Reading

Writing

FAQs and Feedback

The purpose of this session is to familiarize teachers with the approach to grammar taken by *UAE English Skills*. Teachers will have the opportunity to analyze the grammatical component of some activities in the course and identify different ways to deal with it in class.

Defining Grammar and its Main Purpose: Overview of the Session

Teaching Grammar in Use

UAE English Skills Course Book Grammar Focus

Reflection on the Course: A Lesson in Grammar

Conclusion: A Further Insight into Feedback and FAQs

Teacher Training Session Outline

UAE English Skills: Developing Learners' Writing Skills Grade 9

The purpose of this session is to work on analyzing common writing problems, how to overcome them and motivate students. It will also familiarize Grade 9 teachers with the writing tasks, their objectives and structure within the course content.

Reflecting on Common Writing Weaknesses and How to Overcome Them

Discovery Task: How UAE English Skills addresses Key Problematic Areas in Writing

An Overview of UAE English Skills Writing Lesson

Assessing and Evaluating Your Students Writing Constructively

Moving from Sentence to Paragraph: an example

FAQs and Feedback

Continuous Assessment, Evaluation and Teacher Reflection Grade 9

The purpose of this session is to generate understanding of different assessment approaches and to introduce teachers to the assessment approach adopted in UAE English Skills. It will also help in equipping teachers with strategies for monitoring student progress.

Reflecting on Different Types of Assessment

UAE English Skills Assessment Approach

Importance, Challenges and Strategies of Effective Teacher Monitoring in a Skills

Based Learning Approach

Teacher Reflection and How Students Learn

FAQs and Feedback

Appendix VI

Trainer Notes

Three Modes of Assessment and Evaluation

Session Objectives:

At the end of the session teachers will be able to:

- discriminate between continuous (formative) assessment and summative evaluation
- Identify continuous methods of assessment and evaluation and their benefits
- discriminate between constructive and unconstructive feedback
- identify appropriate opportunities for constructive feedback
- use a rubric to assess a writing sample
- write a rudimentary rubric

Materials:

1. Power Point Presentation
2. Handout #1 – in all of its versions – copied so that each teacher gets only one version.
3. 5 dictionaries
4. Handout #2 (Rubric samples)
5. Hand outs 3.1 and 3.2 – more samples
6. handout #4 – Reading rubric
7. books and teachers books

Stage One:

- I. Introduce the session:
 - a. Slide one: Talk about assessment in the region in general.
 - i. the problem of "point addition"
 - ii. the problem of time spent on assessment – and toward what end?
 - iii. This session should give the teachers tools to reduce the amount of time they spend correcting while at the same time using assessment and evaluation in a more effective way. (yippee!)

Stage Two:

- II. Continuous Assessment:
 - a. Activity: Hand out #1 has 5 different versions – each one with a different word at the top. Hand out the hand out so that the versions are mixed up. Teachers need to get up and find the other teachers that have the same word at the top of their page. This is their group for today.
 - b. Now ask teachers to look-up their word in the dictionary.
 - c. In a large group – collect the definitions and , on the board, write a definition for continuous assessment.
 - d. Go to slide two: review their definitions and show the simple definition on the slide
 - e. Slide three: Further defines continuous assessment – the circle is animated and will go around and around – this is to demonstrate the relationship that should exist between assessment and instruction and does exist in continuous assessment
 - f. Slide four: Defines summative assessment – the $\frac{1}{2}$ circle will wobble when you click on it – to show that it does not inform instruction – it is an end point.
 - g. Slide five: Continues the definition. (The point here being that teachers in the region have a difficult time understanding the need for continuous assessment – if it doesn't go on the report card – why should I spend time on it – is a common attitude) since continuous assessment feeds instruction – summative assessment can improve (point wise) as a result.
 - h. Go back to handout #1:
 - i. The chart includes an assessment activity – what subskill could be assessed with it – and a blank space for teachers to fill in
 - ii. Go through the activities on the left and make sure that the teachers know what they are.
 - iii. describe the 'logs' as I doubt the teachers will know what they are.

- iv. The course books include imbedded exercises that can be used as assessment exercises. For each major skill – find one that could be used as one of the assessment activities.
- v. Trainer should go around the room pointing out possibilities.

Stage Three:

III. Rubrics: a tool used to make continuous and summative assessment authentic.

- a. Slide seven: Here we have two samples of student work. The assignment was "Write an email to your friend about the birth of your nephew, Tariq"
 - i. Ask teachers to assess each one and give each one a point grade out of 5 (they can do this in their groups).
 - ii. Now handout Handout #2 – Ask teachers to reassess based on the first rubric (demonstrate if necessary)
 - iii. Repeat process for each rubric
 - iv. Compare points –
 - v. a rubric offers specific and objective assessment – if the students know what they are being graded on – they know what to work on and they can't argue with the teacher about points gained or lost. Also, both weak students and strong students are allowed to grow as the weak student isn't overwhelmed by the red lines on the page and the strong student can begin to recognize his/ mistakes and continue to develop.
- b. Slide eight: The features of a rubric
 - i. Look at other samples of rubrics (handouts 3.1 and 3.2)– do they fulfill these requirements?
- c. Slide nine: the basic set up -
 - i. Compare the rubrics to the basic set-up.
 - ii. Rubrics can be different – they can be complicated (like these) and simple like the first three.
- d. Slide ten and eleven: Why use a rubric?
 - i. go through each listed point
- e. Slide twelve: Another rubric type
 - i. Handout handout #4: The Reading development rubric. This kind of rubric is used to show skill development without the burden of points. It can help explain to parents why their child isn't succeeding in class (he is an emergent reader, for example, whereas the other students are expanding readers). It can also demonstrate to administration a general picture of skill development in the school. It can show students where there are and most importantly it shows the teacher where her/his students are and where they need to go.

Stage Four:

IV. Constructive Feedback:

- a. Slide thirteen and fourteen: There are four components of constructive feedback.
 - i. The first three components are fulfilled with a rubric
 - ii. the last one has to do with the teachers language
- b. Slide fifteen and sixteen: What not to do
 - i. Have the teachers say these words to their partners. How does it feel? Does it encourage you to work harder? What is your reaction?
- c. Slide seventeen: What to do
 - i. Teachers say these words to their partners (without sarcasm). How does it feel? Does it feel different? do you feel encouraged to continue to work or to correct your errors?
- d. Slide eighteen: Encouraging
 - i. Words like "good" and "great" seem insincere to students. They don't really believe you unless you give specific praise.
 - ii. Try these phrases out on your partner. How does it feel?
 - iii. These three components of praise
 - 1. Describe what you see
 - 2. Describe how you feel
 - 3. point out what needs to be done

are the most valuable tools in your tool box. Try them and see the difference they make.

Stage Five:

V. Summary

- a. Slide nineteen: Point out any final things you want to say to the teachers. Summarize the points made. Read the points on the slide.
- b. Give teachers your email address, and inform teachers that they could always contact the email on the back of their folders for any inquiries.
- c. *Feedback and discussion*

Appendix VII

Teacher Training Feedback Form

In order to plan for future workshops, we would value your opinions on the workshops you have attended. Please take a few minutes to complete the following form as clearly as possible. Note that we need the personal information in order to distribute certificates of attendance.

Your cooperation is appreciated. UAEUAE

General information

Name:	<input type="text"/>
Name of school:	<input type="text"/>
Grades taught:	<input type="text" value="7"/> <input type="text" value="8"/> <input type="text" value="9"/> <input type="text" value="10"/> <input type="text" value="11"/> <input type="text" value="12"/>
Contact address:	<input type="text"/>
Telephone/mobile:	<input type="text"/>
E-mail:	<input type="text"/>
If other than teacher, please state details.	<input type="text"/>

Comments on training

A Did you find the training to be:

- | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | a) very informative? | b) quite informative? | c) not very informative? | <input type="text"/> |
| 2 | a) very beneficial? | b) quite beneficial? | c) not very beneficial? | <input type="text"/> |
| 3 | a) very practical? | b) quite practical? | c) not very practical? | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 | a) very well organized? | b) quite well organized? | c) not very well organized? | <input type="text"/> |

B Did you find that the content of training:

1 met your expectations?

- | | | | |
|--------|-------------------|-------|----------------------|
| a) yes | b) to some extent | c) no | <input type="text"/> |
|--------|-------------------|-------|----------------------|

Comments:

2 was related to your present needs?

a) yes b) to some extent c) no

☐

Comments:

3 was helpful in providing solutions to problems you face?

a) yes b) to some extent c) no

☐

Comments:

C Please comment on the way individual sessions were delivered.

D On the basis of this training, would you be interested in attending further workshops? If so, what topics would interest you?

E Further comments and suggestions.

For further information or feedback, please contact:

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Appendix VIII

Reconnaissance

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
<p>Ministry of Education, United Arab Emirates</p> <p>Secondary Public School Teachers total population: 1430 teachers.</p> <p>Total number of teachers involved in the initial NAQs data collection phase 600, who were assigned to take part in the training by the Ministry of Education. The 600 candidates were selected based on recommendations made by their supervisors and the grade levels they taught, Grades 7,8 and 9.</p> <p>Total number of teachers who actively contributed to the research 17, selected based on their expressed willingness to take part in the research and my ability to access them as teachers. All candidates appeared to have a general interest towards the project and eagerness to be involved.</p>	<p>Defining the most appropriate PD practices that can address the needs of non native, Arabic speaking teachers of English in the UAE, in order to improve the quality and standards of teaching English in schools in addition to increasing the effectiveness of English language teaching practices.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining current interests and needs of teachers of English that are based on teachers' own personal judgments and experiences. 2. Assessing the attitudes' and interests' of teachers towards professional development programmes. 3. The assessment of teacher training needs that teachers feel necessary to have in order to be more effective in their roles as teachers. 4. Identifying the key areas that should be addressed during teacher training or professional development programmes designed for EFL teachers coming from the region. 	

Reconnaissance

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
<p>Key informants in the beginning of the reconnaissance phase were the 600 teachers that made the population of the study. This allowed for an insight on the general needs and interests of teachers through their responses in the NAQs.</p> <p>The active 17 participants were ones that I worked closely with throughout the different phases of the research.</p>	<p>The general population of 600 teachers, which included the 17 active participants, contributed by the completion of NAQs.</p> <p>The active 17 participants continued to contribute to the project through their close involvement in the research (interviews, discussions, classroom observations)</p>		
	<p>Needs Assessment Questionnaires:</p> <p><i>Who:</i> Whole population of the study, 1430 teachers.</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> Questionnaires were used to collect specific data in regards to</p>	Demographic Data	
		<i>School Type</i>	Of the total population, 34 % worked in Model Schools, 66% worked in public schools, both of which were under the UAE MoE management.

Reconnaissance

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
	<p>teacher backgrounds, experience, interests, skills, capabilities and points of view in regards to PD schemes. Also to identify candidates willing to actively contribute to the research and work closely with the researcher through the voluntary provision of the contact details.</p> <p>The NAQ was piloted twice in Jordan, with non native Arabic speaking English Language teachers, and amended to more specifically identify the required data sets. The projects areas of interest were reflected through short an multiple choice answer questions.</p> <p>Questionnaires were in English language to avoid the research bias that may be associated in translating the questionnaires. It was expected that teachers would have a proficiency level that would enable them to answer the NAQ due to them being teachers of English language.</p>	<i>Gender</i>	<p>Of the total population; 47% Male of which 22% were local 53% Female of which 56% were local</p>

Reconnaissance

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
	<p>The first part of the questionnaire addressed information in regard to the teachers' demographic data (Amin, 1997) and (Sheorey, 1986). This was important in order to provide an opportunity to reflect on the various educational contexts the teachers originated from and the impact this has on their teaching practices having ninety percent of the workforce being expatriate (Majaydeh, 2003). In addition, it could also relate certain teaching characteristics with areas that may possibly relate to gender, age, marital status and demographic origin or nationality to the teachers' performance and attitudes towards educational practice.</p> <p>Five areas were addressed in this section, which began by inquiring about the type of organisation the teachers worked in; public, public private partnership and model schools. This was found to be important in terms of giving indicators towards teachers' work environments, needs, interests and point of view in relation to the type of institution they work in. It also was used to reflect on the professional development environment teachers were exposed to.</p> <p>Composed of five multiple choice questions, the first two questions had to do with their qualification and years of teaching experience which were aimed towards giving an estimate on the educational and professional experience these teachers had in teaching English Language to non native speaking students. The third prompt required teachers to specify the age groups they taught, which also would give further information specific towards the teaching tools they may need depending on the age group of their students and whether or not language teachers had a more unified approach to students of the same level. The remaining two questions had to do with the teachers computer literacy and the integration of technology within teaching practices. This mainly was to demonstrate the approach teachers used and their familiarity with new developments in educational resources.</p>	<i>Age Group</i>	<p>Four categorised age groups; 21-30, 31-41, 42-52 and above 52.</p> <p>83% (21-31) Local 89% (31-41) Expatriate</p>

Reconnaissance

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
		<i>Marital Status</i>	<p>93% of expatriate teachers were married.</p> <p>28% of local teachers were married.</p> <p>remaining number of single expatriate teachers were male secondary school teachers, who apparently were at the beginning of their careers with an average of three to five years of experience.</p> <p>Of the 17 teachers that created the sample of the study, 3 were single, 2 expatriate and one local.</p>
		<i>Nationality</i>	<p>16% of secondary school teachers were local. 23.5% were Egyptian and 26.2% were Jordanian.</p> <p>84% of secondary school teachers expatriate</p>

Reconnaissance

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
		Education and Experience	
		<i>Teachers' educational background</i>	<p>All of secondary school teachers in the sample of the study held bachelor degrees.</p> <p>Local teachers in the sample of the study (2), held bachelor degrees in English language teaching and education</p> <p>Expatriate teachers (15) held degrees in language related majors, (7) Literature, (4) Translation and Linguistics, (1) American History, (3) English for Applied and Special Purposes.</p> <p>None of the 15 expatriate teachers had received any official degree in teaching English or Education.</p> <p>Of the total population of the study, 11% were working towards receiving a postgraduate degree of which 9% were local teachers. Note that the MoHE provided local teachers with full scholarships to sponsor their postgraduate studies, unlike expatriate teachers who can afford a PG with difficulty.</p>

Reconnaissance

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
	<p>The second prompt in this section required that teachers specify their actual years of teaching English as a Foreign Language, giving them four categories. Novice teachers were those who had experience ranging between one to three years of teaching, experienced teachers were those who had taught from four to nine years, further experienced teachers had ten to fifteen years of teaching, with the last category being for teachers with sixteen or more years of teaching. It was essential to previously define the years of experience teachers had, specially the sample of the study involved in the actual research. This indicated the period of time teachers had been involved in a school environment, working with students and learning as a by product of work (Eraut and Steadman, 2005). It also gave a clear indication towards the years of experience teachers had and the relation this might have with the teaching strategies teachers used, computer literacy and teaching approach.</p>	<p><i>Years of Experience in Teaching</i></p>	<p>91% of teachers who had experience between 1 to 3 years were local.</p> <p>89% of expatriate teachers had experience between ten to fifteen years.</p>
			<p>A relation was found between the years of experience teachers had and their demographic origin;</p> <p>the majority of local teachers were recent graduates of education with few years of teaching experience</p> <p>the majority of expatriates were experienced teachers who mainly majored in Literature, Linguistics and Translation.</p>

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
	The third prompt required that teacher specify the age group they taught, giving teachers the following four categories: primary, middle, secondary and high school. This also had a clear relation with the teachers' years of experience, since it came to my conclusion that teachers with more years of experience would usually teach older grade levels; secondary and high school. Whereas teachers with fewer years of experience would be appointed to teach students in younger grade levels; primary and middle school.	<i>Levels Taught</i>	<p>the majority of the population of the study were teaching multiple levels at some point; high school and secondary levels, secondary and middle school levels.</p> <p>Teachers did not have a particular age group to work with. As they naturally progress in their career, they progressed in the grade levels they would teach.</p> <p>The higher the grade level, the more experienced you are in teaching and the capability to address older students needs. All school teachers taught more than one age group of students.</p>
	Teachers were required to describe their computer skills through the selection of one of the four categories provided; expert, intermediate, beginner and non-user.	<i>Computer and IT Skills</i>	<p>26% of the population noted having an expert level in their computer and IT skills, all of which had one to three years of teaching experience.</p> <p>29% beginner user</p> <p>26% intermediate user</p> <p>19% non users</p>
	The final prompt in this section, which was based on the previous one related to teachers' computer and IT skills, required that teachers describe the frequency of using computers, multimedia and the internet in their teaching. Teachers were given four prompts to choose from: always, occasionally, rarely and never.	<i>Use of computers, internet and multimedia in the classroom</i>	<p>62% never use any resources listed</p> <p>4% indicated always to the use of resources</p> <p>13% indicated rare usage of resources</p> <p>21% indicated rare usage of resources</p>

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets
		<p>There was an apparent relation between teachers' years of experience, computer literacy and the ability to adopt new teaching practices that involved the use of educational technology such as the interactive whiteboard and other means that develop learner autonomy. Novice teachers or those with less years of experience seemed to be more open to the introduction of CALL and realia in their classrooms. The majority described themselves as in being expert users of computers. Experienced teachers, who naturally would deal with older age groups of students, indicated minimal if any use of technology and multimedia in their classrooms.</p> <p>The number of computer literate teachers was limited to recent graduates and teachers with limited years of experience.</p> <p>Both local and expatriate novice teachers shared a common characteristic of being computer literate.</p> <p>Out of the seventeen school teachers, six teachers were recent graduates, who expressed their knowledge and interest in the use of technology for educational purposes. On the other hand, of the remaining eleven experienced teachers, only three were computer literate, but did not use technology in the classroom. The remaining eight teachers, were neither computer literate or involved in the use of technology, Computer Assisted Language Learning or realia in their classrooms.</p>

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
	The third and last section of the needs assessment questionnaire was related to defining teachers' training and professional development needs, exposure and expectations.	Training and Professional Development	
	The first prompt gave teachers three options to choose from in relation to the responsible party that they believe should provide training for teachers of English as a Foreign Language; the Ministry of Education, the employing school or if it should be provided prior to graduation within their major courses. Teachers were required to tick all the parties they find applicable and responsible for training and teacher preparation.	<i>Provision of Teacher Training</i>	Having questioned the latter with a few teachers during discussions held and interviews, most of them expressed that university graduates are usually not sure about the employment sector they would like to join, so even if they are trained during their years of study, it still does not confirm that all graduates will eventually be employed in schools, wasting effort and time. Therefore it is mostly the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and employing schools to provide teacher training to newly recruited teachers.
	The second prompt in this section asked teachers whether or not training should be obligatory for all teachers in addition to those intending to become teachers.	<i>Mandatory Training</i>	94% responded positively. 6% responded negatively, most of which were teachers with several years of experience.
	The following six prompts in the questionnaire addressed the areas that had to do with teachers' previous teachers training exposure and involvement. The first prompt inquired about the number of training workshops or sessions the teachers attended during the last five years, giving alternatives of none to three sessions, four to ten sessions and a full training programme.	<i>Training Exposure</i>	82% stated that they had attended zero to three professional development sessions. 18% stated that they had attended four to ten sessions. None of the teachers indicated that they had taken part in a full professional development programme.

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
	Duration of the training sessions the teachers had attended, the length of the training the teachers had been exposed to. Teachers had the opportunity to choose from sessions that lasted for hours, one to three days and a week or more. They also were given the opportunity to specify 'other' training durations which may be in the form of a diploma, certificate or prolonged training scheme.		98% , indicated that they had been involved in training sessions that lasted for hours only.
	Entity that conducted the sessions the teachers had attended. Teachers were given the following options to choose from; local authority, foreign authority, publisher and other.	<p>93%, indicated that they had attended training workshops provided by the publisher.</p> <p>73% of the teachers indicated that they had participated in sessions conducted by foreign authorities like the Centre for British Teachers and the Academy for Educational Development.</p> <p>It can be concluded that teachers working in the UAE had mostly received training from either publishers or foreign entities which are usually subcontracted by the MOE. None of the training providers addressed the actual needs of teacher.</p>	
		<i>Effectiveness of sessions and whether or not they had addressed teachers' current needs.</i>	92% of the population of the study responded negatively.
		<i>Post training follow up and support.</i>	<p>All teachers responded negatively when inquiring about the presence of any follow up after the sessions they had attended.</p> <p>There apparently was no form of assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. It seemed that teachers were being called into sessions, lectured and dismissed, with no valid evidence to note that those who have attended did actually make use of the workshops.</p>
		<i>Nature of post training follow up</i>	Left empty by all participants.

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
		<i>Teachers' willingness to share the knowledge and experiences</i>	All teachers expressed willingness to share experiences and knowledge with others.
		<i>Areas teachers believed they could share useful information and experiences with others</i>	<p>91% Areas related to Teaching Grammar</p> <p>43% Teaching Reading</p> <p>21% Teaching Writing</p> <p>No indication that teachers were willing to share their views on other areas of language like teaching oral skills; listening and speaking, the use of technology in teaching or classroom management strategies through peer observations and in service workshops.</p>
		<i>Teachers' willingness and interest to attend other training sessions not mentioned earlier</i>	93% of the teachers answered positively.
		<p><i>Teachers' interested in being contacted for future training purposes and for the purposes of this research.</i></p> <p><i>Teachers were given the opportunity to leave their contact details and school address in order to be contacted at a later notice.</i></p>	<p>89% of the population of the study indicated their interest in being contacted for future training purposes.</p> <p>78% of the population of the study provided their contact details. Contact details provided created the research population of which the sample of the study was identified based on teachers' availability to meet and willingness to contribute to the research.</p>

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
	<p>Teachers' areas of interest that may be addressed through a variety of workshops, discussion panels and training sessions.</p> <p>Teachers were given fifteen topics and key areas to choose from, and had the opportunity to choose more than one topic by ticking all areas of interest.</p>	<p>All teachers expressed their interest in improving their own language skills. 81% expressed interest in CALL, Realia and using authentic material. 73% expressed interest in motivating language learners and involving them in the teaching process. 72% expressed interest in assessment and evaluation strategies. 67% expressed interest in test design and construction. 61% expressed interest in teaching reading and writing skills. 59% expressed interest in assessing reading and writing skills. 42% expressed interest in assessing listening and speaking skills. 34% expressed interest in cross curricular and cultural exposure. 27% expressed interest in teaching listening and speaking. 17% expressed interest in special need learners. 12% expressed interest in time and classroom management strategies.</p>	
		<p><i>teachers' interest in participating in sessions that may meet their needs and help them overcome obstacle</i></p>	<p>81% responded positively. 15% responded negatively. 43% did not respond to this prompt.</p> <p>common recommendation was to be involved in exchange programmes with teachers from other areas and traveling to the United Kingdom to take part in a language course or social programme that would help improve teachers' language skills.</p> <p>Other teachers requested being regularly trained through hands on workshops and the attendance of demonstration lessons.</p>

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
Sample population of the study, 17 teachers.	<p>Interviews: <i>Who:</i> Sample population of the study, 17 teachers.</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> The questionnaire was followed by a number of interviews with with the seventeen active participants in the research. The interview questions were based on the prompts in the needs assessment questionnaire and provided the participants an opportunity to further clarify and discuss their point of view. Interviews were used to collect specific data in regards to teacher responses on the NAQs. They gave candidates an opportunity to further clarify teachers' points of view, discuss their concerns and engage in discussions with the researcher. They were an initial personalised contact point between the researcher/ practitioner and the participants. They were semi-structured interviews that were held in the form of informal discussions with the teachers, targeting areas covered in the NAQs. Interviews were set to confirm/validate data reflected in the NAQs.</p>		

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	<p>Further investigating areas in relation to:</p> <p><i>Learning to become a teacher</i></p> <p><i>The teacher-supervisor relationship</i></p> <p><i>Needs and Interests</i></p>	<p>The majority of teachers seemed to be aware of the changes that take place in educational practices, but are unable to link these changes with their actual practices.</p> <p>Teachers have limited professional development opportunities and are only involved in workshops provided by publishers promoting a particular course or during regional events.</p> <p>There is a lack of consistency in professional development opportunities for teachers in the UAE.</p> <p>There is a strong gap between experienced and novice teachers. During informal discussions with teachers, there seemed to be a clash between teachers belonging to younger age groups and those more experienced.</p> <p>Teachers in the UAE do not share an open culture to express their views, interests and needs. Apparently, there is limited openness when it comes to professional career needs.</p> <p>The majority of teachers in the UAE regard learning from their peers through observations as a process to criticise what went wrong in the lesson and do not appear to understand the value of such a reflective process. They do not appear to be aware of how to offer constructive feedback and express their points of views.</p> <p>Teachers in the UAE are aware of the current changes in educational practices, but do not feel that newly recommended schemes addressing these changes fit their teaching styles.</p>

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets
		<p>Teachers in the UAE have no preference towards trainers selected on the condition that they have native like language performance and are competent enough to address their needs and interest.</p> <p>The majority of native speaking trainers do not always appear to understand the experiences and obstacles non native speaking teachers from the UAE deal with when teaching English as a foreign language since they have not engaged in learning a foreign language themselves.</p> <p>Experienced non native speaking trainers with native like competence are welcomed to train non native speaking teachers since their approach is usually found to be more practical and realistic in terms of addressing the needs of non native speaking teachers in the UAE.</p> <p>Trainer identity and background has a significant impact on how the trainee teachers view and interact in training sessions.</p> <p>The relationship between trainee teachers and the trainer is a very important factor in the success of lengthy training programmes that require a trusting and two way relationship between the teacher and the trainees.</p> <p>Teachers in the UAE have not been given the opportunity to engage in longer training programmes that help equip them with the necessary skills.</p>

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets
<p>Sample population of the study, 17 participants.</p>	<p>Observations: <i>Who:</i> Sample population of the study, 17 participants.</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> Allowed an opportunity to see teachers' perform in class. Helped me further understand teachers working environment, classroom interactions and actual in-class performance. Gave an insight on what teachers thought they do, as expressed in the interviews and NAQs, and what they actually do in class. Helped give me a view on areas teachers appeared to be weak or struggling in. Note down remarks on types of interactions in the classroom (s-t, s-s, s-t-s).</p> <p>Observations were done in collaboration with a Ministry of Education representative, which gave me official access to schools and classrooms. This arrangement facilitated my scheduled visits and access to schools at a time of convenience required for my research. Data collected was noted on the observation checklist in an objective and direct manner.</p> <p>Classroom visits were scheduled three visits a week, attending and observing two lessons a day for the same teacher. Scheduled visits were conducted in two phases, before and after the intervention. The first set of classroom visits was arranged during the reconnaissance phase of the research and after distributing the needs assessment questionnaires. This was done in order to collect the necessary data about the teachers' actual performance in the classroom in addition to further understanding the classroom and school environment teachers work within.</p>	<p>The majority of the classes attended did not have clearly set objectives, neither myself or attending students had an understanding towards the areas to be covered in the lessons.</p> <p>Teachers would generally introduce the lesson after greeting the students.</p> <p>Lesson introductions and areas of focus would be topic oriented with a key emphasis on Grammar. In other words, teachers would start the lesson by telling the students what the lesson was going to be about, demanding limited deduction skills from the students while using similar introductions to the following:</p> <p><i>'Today we will take about the Reported Speech....'</i> <i>' Our lesson today is about describing things that happened in the past...'</i> <i>' Today we will read about the Solar System...'</i></p> <p>The majority of teachers did not appear to have the skills required to relate students' experiences and interests to the lesson. The majority of the teachers appeared to be unaware of methods to generate student interest and involvement towards the topic of the lesson, which made the majority of the lesson introductions limited in terms of inter-activities.</p> <p>The majority of teachers appeared to be more comfortable and in control of the flow of the lesson when teaching Grammar rather than other language skills; Listening, Speaking and Reading.</p> <p>The majority of the teachers had poor time management and dedicated more time than required in particular areas that did not address necessary language skills, such as translating meaning into arabic and working on areas irrelevant to the lesson objectives.</p> <p>The majority of teacher language communication skills were rather weak and below generally required expectations. It was later noted by the assessment and evaluation department head at the Ministry of Education headquarters, that over half the teachers employed at the Ministry of Education scored between 3.5-4.5 on the IELTS conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2009 (Interview, 17-05-07). Teachers had issues with pronunciation, spelling and conveying ideas to students in English language. As a result, several teachers would resort to using the mother tongue in the classroom.</p>

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Where and Who	How	Data Sets
		<p>The majority of the students attending did not appear to be fully engaged in the lesson and were rather passive participants. Students sitting in the front rows of the class were the most active. Students did not appear to be fully engaged in the majority of lessons attended, particularly in public schools.</p> <p>The majority of teacher resources were restricted to the student book and workbook. There was a limited number of additional resources used other than printed material. Teachers did not appear to put effort in using a variety of resources to help engage students in the lessons. Lesson introductions appeared to be minimally engaging based on student responses in the classroom.</p> <p>All lessons were more teacher-centred rather than student-centred. Teacher talking time was more than 90% in all lessons observed. The majority of students involvement was in response to teacher prompts and queries. There was limited opportunity for students to actively involve themselves in the lessons.</p> <p>Although a few teachers managed to have students seated in pairs or groups there was limited if any use of seating arrangements. Students worked individually although seated among others. Students mostly worked on tasks individually with limited opportunity to discuss and interact with their peers or the teacher. Teachers do not appear to be able to effectively make use of such a seating plan.</p> <p>Apparently, all teachers were more concerned with disciplinary issues and teaching rather than actual learning taking place. Seating arrangements, discussions and tasks were arranged so as to give minimal opportunity for students to interact with one another and share ideas.</p> <p>Only a few teachers managed to finish the lesson in time in order to assign for homework or further evaluate the expected learning outcomes of the lessons. The majority of the teachers would continue working toward the last minute of the lesson leaving no room to assign homework or further evaluate the covered learning objectives.</p>

Reconnaissance

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
		<p>A general impression noted based on lesson observations made was that teachers were more focused on completing content areas rather than developing learning skills. Teachers seemed to be urged to complete a number of pages during a lesson, rather than define general sub skills they wanted to develop in their students while using the available resources they had. For example, when teaching Reading, the main focus was on teaching the meaning of a passage rather than the sub skills required for students to become effective readers (e.g. reading for specific information, reading for meaning and extracting meaning from context). When teaching grammar, teachers were concerned with having students know the rule, but not actually using structures in meaningful contexts. For example, students learning the reported speech or the simple present tense would study structures in isolation rather than in context, resulting in an unproductive learning experience.</p>
	<p>Post Observation Discussions:</p> <p><i>Who:</i> Sample population of the study, 17 participants.</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> To share ideas on how participants felt their classroom performance was. To encourage teachers to subconsciously reflect on their classroom performance and how it can be modified to better address their students' interests and needs. To strengthen the relationship between myself as a practitioner and the active participants of the research.</p> <p>PO Discussions were of an informal and un-structured nature, allowing participants to informally engage with me as a practitioner more than a researcher. Help strengthening the relationship between myself and the participants, converting my role from an external researcher to a practitioner researcher who worked with participants as part of a team.</p>	

Reconnaissance

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	<p>Documentary Evidence: <i>Who:</i> Sample population of the study, 17 participants. Quizzes, lesson plans, worksheets, handouts, games and electronic resources.</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> To provide an insight on the different tools and materials teacher's develop for teaching purposes. To give a general assessment on the amount of effort teachers put into preparing their lessons, what they consider useful and the type of resources they use. To provide a view on what teachers see as effective and/or supportive teaching tools.</p>	<p>Main resources teachers use are paper-based. Handouts and worksheets are regularly photocopied and distributed among students.</p> <p>Electronic resources are limited to the use of data projectors in the classroom. Teachers project activities and texts to be a central reference for the classroom. No interactive resources are used in the classroom.</p> <p>Lesson plans were prepared as a form of routine. Teachers were expected to fill out standards lesson plan forms, which were reviewed and assessed by their supervisors.</p> <p>Teachers were required to specify lesson objectives in lesson plans, but the majority of teachers did not know how to write objectives that could be assessed.</p> <p>The majority of teachers did not address all objectives listed in their lesson plans.</p>
	<p>Research Journal: <i>Who:</i> Myself, practitioner and researcher.</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> To record and take note of experiences that effectively contributed to the implementation of the project. This included my response and findings as a researcher and a practitioner. It helped in recording data on the practitioner experiences and responses towards participants involvement and contribution to the research.</p>	

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In conclusion and in reference to the above noted data sets collected based on the Needs Assessment Questionnaires, teacher interviews and lesson observations the below listed teacher training needs and interests were defined:

1. Having the majority of teachers working within the UAE being expatriate meant that there was a very limited number of teachers who had been officially trained on educational methodologies and practices used to teach English Language. Accordingly, teachers lacked a profound background in the necessary teaching and methodological skills required to effectively teach English as a means of communication.
2. Teachers' training interests were related to educational methodologies and strategies used in the classrooms in addition to modern teaching strategies such as the use of realia and digital resources. The majority of teachers were aware of their weakness in general teaching strategies, which generated a training preference over being trained on modern teaching approaches and the use of resources.
3. The collaborative relationship between teachers and supervisors was very limited and in some cases non existent. It was assumed that supervisors hold a stronger professional background regardless of them being effectively capable of mentoring and supervising their teachers. There was a clear need to have supervisors trained separately from teachers on how to become effective mentors. Supervisors also needed to encourage to appreciate the necessity of introducing and recommending the use of more modern teaching approaches that would be considerably more appealing to learners.
4. All of the expatriate teachers, which made the majority of the teachers working in the UAE, had not been involved in any official post graduate teacher training programme that offered the necessary support and follow up to ensure the smooth and proper implementation of recommended practices. Most of the professional development experiences were through regional and international events that offered a limited number of workshops within a set time frame of one to three hours at the most. Teachers did not have an opportunity to master recommended educational

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skills and practices. Moreover, these sessions or workshops had usually been of a promotional nature relating to a particular publication being introduced to the market by a publisher or educational entity. Sessions were not evidently academic that were aimed at improving teachers' awareness towards new educational practices.

5. Further to note, there was no follow up to assess training effectiveness after training sessions. The majority of teachers working in the UAE required a training scheme that offered a comprehensive learning opportunity. They also needed post training follow up to ensure that teachers have managed to comprehend and master the necessary skills required for them to become more effective.
6. Several teachers working in the UAE had false impressions and concepts on the practices they were using in the classroom. Teachers had assumed that they were properly implementing particular strategies during their teaching and were unaware that their understanding towards the implementations was incorrect. Therefore, any methodological training scheme to be developed would need to offer a comprehensive revision on the basics of language teaching in addition to new strategies in teaching English as a foreign language.
7. Any developed training schemes would need to primarily focus on key topic areas of interests and needs of the teachers which can be summed as the following:
 - a. Modern teaching approaches that raise teachers' awareness towards current educational teaching trends
 - b. Modes of assessment and evaluation required to ensure that learning has taken place among learners
 - c. The use of different resources to help enhance the learning experience for the students
 - d. Modes to help adapt and customise taught content and skills to suit the learners' needs and interests
 - e. Language development opportunities that would support in developing teachers' own English language skills

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- f. Developing professional development communities that would help teachers regularly share and learn from their peers, which would include regular peer evaluations, observational classes, and open discussions.

Intervention (1)

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
<p>Active research participants, 17 teachers. 2 Local Teachers 6 Egyptian Teachers 5 Jordanian Teachers 2 Syrian Teachers 2 Tunisian Teachers</p> <p>Training Centres and Schools</p>	<p>Having assessed the particular interest and needs of teachers working in the UAE by analysing the data collected through the Needs Assessment Questionnaires, Interviews and Observations, an effective training scheme needed to be developed, which would address these previously defined interest and needs. The thorough reconnaissance phase that was conducted during this research was a unique approach used in identifying teachers' needs and interests, which had never been conducted before for the purpose of training and professional development within the region. This allowed room for the development of an intervention which was specifically designed to address particular needs of English language teachers working in the UAE, who were mostly formed of expatriates.</p>	
	<p>The active participants were involved in a series of intensive workshops, discussion panels and peer observation sessions within a period of four weeks.</p> <p>Teachers' interaction and involvement during the different phases of the intervention was closely monitored and noted through post workshop feedback forms, observations, and interviews.</p> <p>This intervention had also been conducted in a set of phases to allow proper building blocks to give teachers as much of an opportunity as possible to learn from the process.</p> <p>The first intervention phase served as a reconnaissance phase for the second intervention, which was refined and amended to better address the needs and interests of teachers.</p>	

Intervention (1)

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
<p>Training Centres</p>	<p>The intervention started by having teachers involved in a series of intensive workshops for a period of two weeks. Aside from attending the training, teachers had no other responsibilities than responding to the training requirements and tasks.</p> <p>During the two week period, teachers had been involved in two to four sessions a day with a coffee break in between.</p> <p>During the first week, teachers were engaged in two sessions a day, having each session of about 3 hours. These sessions gave teachers the necessary background information on educational methodologies and practices related to language teaching, most of which teachers may have not been aware of due to them being subject specialist in areas like English Literature, Translation and Linguistics as indicated in the Context of the Study.</p> <p>60 hours of training during the two week period.</p>	<p><i>Workshops (Week One)</i></p> <p>Topics covered during these sessions were based on the interests and needs teachers had expressed during the reconnaissance in addition to topic areas that were based on assumptions made by my observations.</p> <p>Content in the first week was more theoretical than practical and was mostly lecture based by the trainers. This was in order to provide teachers with the necessary theoretical background that they may have needed in order to better perform when putting them into practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An Introduction to methodologies and approaches used in teaching English as a foreign language. - Strategies and approaches used to teach essential English language skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening and Speaking Reading Writing Grammar Vocabulary - Modes of Assessment and Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous Assessment and Evaluation Constructive Feedback Assessment Criteria and Rubric Development per Skill: Listening, Speaking Reading and Writing. - Creating professional learning communities that encouraged learning from the workplace and learning as a by product of work.

Intervention (1)

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
		<p><i>Workshops (Week Two)</i></p> <p>Workshops had a more hands-on and reflective approach to training. Examples were drawn from the textbooks and materials teachers were using in class. This was further supported by analytical discussions on educational practices; the purpose behind each, preferences, trial and error...etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Material Development and Adaptation: Adjusting towards students interests and needs - Enriching curricula through the use of realia - Integrating ICT and CALL where possible - The importance of Cross Curricular/ Cultural Exposure - Motivating Learners and Engaging them in the learning process - How to assess students language skills based on previously specified criteria

Intervention (1)

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	<p><i>Delivery of Training</i></p> <p>Six native speaking trainers selected based on their experience in working with teachers in Europe or the Middle East.</p> <p>Four female trainers Two male trainers</p> <p>The Ministry of Education expressed preference towards native speaking trainers, to allow an opportunity for teachers to interact with trainers in English and to ensure that teachers had the opportunity to be exposed to an authentic source of language.</p>	<p><i>Trainer Profiles</i></p> <p>Trainer 1 British Female 27 years of Teacher training and language teaching experience in UK, Spain, Italy, Indonesia, China, UAE, Qatar, Canada and Australia.</p> <p>Trainer 2 British Female 15 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, Spain, Italy, China, Greece.</p> <p>Trainer 3 British Male 24 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, Italy, China and Japan.</p> <p>Trainer 4 British Male 13 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, New Zealand, Spain, Paraguay.</p> <p>Trainer 5 British Female 30 years of teacher training and language experience in Italy, Spain, UK, Sri Lanka and Senegal.</p> <p>Trainer 6 American Female 32 years of teacher training and language experience in USA, Syria, Jordan, UAE and Qatar.</p>

Monitoring

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
<p>Active research participants, 17 teachers. 2 Local Teachers 6 Egyptian Teachers 5 Jordanian Teachers 2 Syrian Teachers 2 Tunisian Teachers</p> <p>Training Centres and Schools</p>	<p><i>Monitoring of Training</i></p> <p>Feedback forms were distributed after each workshop session for participants to provide immediate feedback after the training.</p>	<p>The majority of the participants (81%) noted their appreciation towards having demonstration lessons included in training conducted by the trainers.</p> <p>The majority of the participants (92%) noted that the sessions helped them better understand the effectiveness and applicability of recommended practices.</p> <p>A lot of participants (89%) noted their appreciation for the sessions being more hands on and activity based rather than discussion led by a trainer and required further sessions that were similar.</p> <p>The majority of participants (82%) expressed appreciation towards the trainers who were familiar with the educational environment they were functioning within. They appeared to be happy to work with trainers, who were Arabic speakers themselves and were aware of the complications associated with learning a foreign language.</p> <p>Several teachers with over twelve years of experience seemed to be more willing to accept recommended practices. Although they had initially insisted that there was a need for a traditional approach to be used still within the UAE, they did realise the changing needs and interests of their students.</p> <p>Teachers with over twelve years of experience did not appear to appreciate the necessity to accommodate students' interests in their practices and strongly disagreed with the need to use more modern student-centred approaches.</p> <p>Teachers with over twelve years of experience seemed to express their discomfort towards training sessions led by expatriate trainers through disruptive comments that often initiated a long debate towards the applicability of recommended practices in their classrooms. They further questioned the actual need to have participants change their teaching practices having used them for so long.</p>

Monitoring

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	<p>During the two week training period, teachers were given the opportunity to actively participate in discussion forums to share their views and concerns in addition to interacting with their peers.</p> <p>This was a vital part of the training that teachers had never been exposed to earlier and had a successful contribution towards increasing teachers' confidence among peers in addition to creating a vibrant atmosphere which welcomed their participation.</p> <p>These discussion forums gave teachers a rich opportunity to communicate in English language with other native speakers and their peers, which was an opportunity rarely made available.</p>	<p>Teachers with more than twelve years of experience did not appear to welcome the observations conducted by the researcher.</p> <p>Novice and less experienced teachers seemed to be more open towards recommended practices in the training and expressed serious interest in further engaging themselves in such practices.</p> <p>Novice and less experienced teachers were more engaged in training sessions and worked as active participants during the two weeks of intensive training they were involved in. They were also the most active during formal and informal discussions held after the training sessions.</p> <p>Novice and less experienced teachers were more welcoming towards having their lessons observed by the researcher after being exposed to the training in order to reflect on the gained learning practices and experiences they applied in their classrooms.</p> <p>During discussion forums held after the trainings, participants were more openly willing to take part in discussions and to raise their concerns, particularly those of a younger age group with less than six years of experience.</p> <p>The majority of novice and less experienced teachers seemed to welcome newly recommended practices they had experienced during the training and used them in their classroom, but faced a serious issue with their supervisors who limited their opportunities to further engage in such current practices.</p> <p>Several participants noted their willingness to share their experiences in future training conventions.</p> <p>All participants noted the necessity of having opportunities to be involved in exchange programmes with other teachers from the EU to have the opportunity to reflect on experiences with other language teachers and while using English as a medium of communication among one another.</p>

Monitoring

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	<p><i>Post Training Classroom Observations</i></p> <p>After three weeks of having conducted the training, school visits and observations were also arranged in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. This required another two weeks to complete. Following the classroom observations, meetings were held with the teachers to discuss their concerns, obstacles, needs and interests.</p>	<p>Novice and less experienced teachers were more welcoming towards having their lessons observed by the researcher after being exposed to the training in order to reflect on the gained learning practices and experiences they applied in their classrooms.</p> <p>The majority of novice and less experienced teachers seemed to welcome newly recommended practices they had experienced during the training and used them in their classroom, but faced a serious issue with their supervisors who limited their opportunities to further engage in such current practices.</p> <p>Several participants noted their willingness to share their experiences in future training conventions.</p> <p>All participants noted the necessity of having opportunities to be involved in exchange programmes with other teachers from the EU, who shared the same background of teaching English as a Foreign Language, to have the opportunity to reflect on experiences with other language teachers and while using English as a medium of communication among one another.</p> <p>Female participants seemed to be more receptive to recommended practices and experimented with their students. The majority of male teachers however struggled with the concept of changing their approach in teaching and seemed to have particular concerns about their ability to effectively control and monitor the classroom.</p> <p>Due to the lack of computer competence in the majority of teachers, the use of digital resources in the classroom was limited and only a couple of younger participants managed to use power point presentations in their lessons. Teachers expressed their discomfort when using these resources.</p> <p>All teachers expressed interest in associating training content and pedagogies to the materials they teach, and constantly referred to their course materials for trainers to use as examples. Teachers felt the need to associate addressed areas to the materials they were using.</p> <p>The majority of teachers struggled with their own language communication skills, particularly when having the opportunity to use English language in informal context during discussions, where they were required to provide oral response towards unexpected prompts lead by the researcher or other teachers among the group.</p>

Monitoring

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
		<p>All teachers expressed interest in being further engaged in similar training sessions that addressed their previously defined needs and noted their willingness to actively take part in workshops to share their own experiences as teachers.</p> <p>Teachers seemed to be more engaged and motivated to share their experiences, views and interests before the training knowing that their input would be seriously considered and taken as the basis of forthcoming training programmes.</p> <p>All teachers noted that they had benefited from the training sessions and discussions forums conducted.</p>
	<p><i>Researcher Journal</i> A researcher journal was used to note overall observations and remarks before, after and during classroom observations, when carrying out informal interviews with teachers and when reflecting on findings or experiences within the research phases.</p> <p>The journal was very useful in giving an exact time frame for events and plans. It was also helpful in reflecting on the role of researcher identity and how this strongly effected such a research having it conducted on a large scale and not on a limited number of teachers who are known to the researcher, but on the scale of a whole educational reform project.</p> <p>The journal was very useful in recording data related to how I felt as a researcher and my role in making such a plan effectively constructed. It was also very useful in noting down information provided and discussed during informal interviews with teachers</p>	<p>Researcher identity had a strong impact on how teachers responded to the data collection tools, such as the need assessment questionnaire and how they interacted with the researcher during the various phases of the research.</p> <p>Teachers' response and reaction towards the researcher had an impact on the nature of the information collected.</p> <p>Teachers involved in the research did not appear to have taken the research requirements seriously when interacting with me as an independent researcher. On the other hand, the role of an educational consultant for the benefit of the school teachers in the UAE, enabled me to collect data that was found to be more reliable due to teachers' willingness and need to cooperate with me based on official instructions given by the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>The research journal was quoted several times in the duration of the research project to provide further insight in relation to research experience and identity.</p>

Evaluation

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
The evaluation of the whole action research devised was in aim of answering a set number of questions.	<p>Was the action research framework devised able to effectively identify teachers' present needs?</p> <p>Was the action plan practical and applicable to educational contexts in the UAE?</p> <p>Was the action plan effective?</p> <p>How could the action plan be further improved?</p> <p>How familiar were teachers with the type of the research framework devised?</p> <p>How did the teachers' awareness of such a framework affect the research procedures and findings?</p> <p>How did the nature of the researchers' identity affect the overall implementation of the project?</p> <p>Further recommendations and amendments for the phases to follow.</p>	Responses to these will be provided after the evaluation of the second intervention.
The evaluation of the first intervention was based on the following listed criteria.	The method of having the training scheme conducted in relation to format and time	Targeted topics required more time to be covered with more focus on each area.
	Levels of involvement of teachers in the training	Teachers needed to be actively involved in all sessions, including those discussing theories behind educational practice.
	The selection of trainers used to deliver the training	Trainers should have had more experience in working with EFL teachers in the Arab world and more specifically the UAE. Only two out of the three trainers were found to be the closest in understanding trainee requirements. Other trainers, although experienced in training non native speakers, had difficulties in relating to the requirements of local teachers that were mainly influenced by the mother tongue or local educational culture.
	Inclusion of demonstration lessons as part of the training	The majority of the teachers (88%) noted in the feedback forms their requirement for demonstration lessons. When discussing what they meant, they noted that they preferred to watch the trainers demonstrate what they discuss in an actual classroom setting or to give a demonstration during the training.

Evaluation

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	Areas of focus during the training	Teachers expressed preference towards having sessions that were more practical rather than theoretical. They were not keen on exploring theory before practical applications.
	Time distribution of sessions	Teachers felt that two one and a half sessions per day was not enough and they needed more time to explore the target topic area.
	Impact of English language teaching supervisors on the required outcomes of the training	The majority of the Supervisors, 94% had a hindering impact on the progress of the sessions. They regularly interfered with the flow of the sessions and sometimes made contributions that would contradict with the session objectives. The majority of the supervisors, 62 out of the 74, worked as passive participants in the sessions and were there to monitor attendance and teacher contribution.
	Relating the topic areas covered in the training to materials teachers are already familiar with	Sessions were of an academic nature, not related to any particular material. Teachers requested to have recommended practices tied in to the materials they use to see how these theories can be put into practice within their educational settings.

Intervention (2)

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	<p>The first intervention served as a reconnaissance for the second intervention.</p> <p>The implementation came after approximately six months of completing the first intervention and was implemented with the same group of participants. This occurred at the beginning of the following academic term.</p> <p>The second intervention ensured consistency in the professional development opportunities offered by following up on the progress of participants.</p> <p>It established a sense of reliability for the teachers by appreciating the value of their earlier noted feedback, which had been literally taken into consideration.</p> <p>The period between the first and second interventions allowed the researcher to maintain a strong connection with participants via email, text messaging and direct telephone calls. This further ensured that the participants were being directly followed up on, developing a trustworthy relationship between the researcher and the participants, including those with several years of experience.</p> <p>The six month period, where the researcher maintained contact with the participants was also a crucial part of the training scheme offered and had an additional effective impact on the attitudes of teachers and their willingness towards accepting recommended changes in their teaching practices. It also supported the development of a more welcoming attitude from all participants to further engage in the following intervention.</p> <p>Maintaining contact with the participant teachers was further supported by the Ministry of Education, which had a strong role in effectively implementing the action plan of the research. It also restricted obstacles created by English supervisors responsible for the group of participating teachers in the action plan.</p>	

Intervention (2)

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
	Feedback on the first intervention was taken into consideration and changes were made to better adjust to teachers needs and interests.	Method of conducting training scheme in terms of time and format	<p>Workshops were approximately two hours each day. Sessions on the same day were a continuum of one another.</p> <p>This was done as a response for teachers' requests for more time to be spent per topic area.</p>
		Involvement of teachers	<p>Teachers were encouraged to take part in the sessions and offer demonstrations were possible. Sessions were based on teacher experiences and their willingness to contribute and share ideas.</p> <p>This was done as a response to their willingness to share information with their peers about topics they were interested in. It also made teachers feel more appreciated.</p>
		Selection of trainers used to deliver the sessions	<p>The majority of trainers were native speakers, but had been appointed from the region. Trainers with years of experience and who are still working in the Arab world, while holding some Arabic knowledge were chosen to take part in the training.</p> <p>This was done as a response to teachers' preference towards working with trainers who are familiar with the local needs and obstacles teachers face.</p>

Intervention (2)

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
		Inclusion of demonstration lessons as part of the training	<p>Workshops and sessions included a set of demonstration lessons towards the mid of each session in order to demonstrate and reflect on what was covered during the sessions.</p> <p>Teachers had specifically requested this, initially stating that the sessions were not practical. Thereafter I came to conclude that by practical they meant demonstration lessons.</p>
		Area of focus during the session	<p>Emphasis was on applicable classroom situations that were discussed and analysed which required involvement from trainee teachers.</p> <p>This was done in order to have teachers more engaged in the sessions.</p>
		Time distribution of Sessions	<p>Two sessions of approximately two hours a day was offered.</p> <p>This was as a response to teachers' request for more time to cover each topic.</p>
		Impact of Supervisors	<p>Supervisors were not officially requested to attend sessions. Separate training had been arranged for the supervisors.</p> <p>Separate training conducted for the supervisors followed a similar framework, but received more resistance by the participants.</p>

Intervention (2)

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	<p><i>Training Delivery</i></p> <p>Four trainers were involved in the delivery of training content. All trainers had experience in working with teachers in the Arab world, including the UAE.</p>	<p>Trainer 1 British Female 27 years of Teacher training and language teaching experience in UK, Spain, Italy, Indonesia, China, UAE, Qatar, Canada and Australia. Beginning Speaker of Arabic.</p> <p>Trainer 2 American Female 32 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in USA, Syria, Jordan, UAE and Qatar. Fluent speaker of Arabic.</p> <p>Trainer 3 British Male 36 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE. Moderate Speaker of Arabic.</p> <p>Trainer 4 British Male 27 years of teacher training and language teaching experience in the UK, Oman and the UAE. Fluent Arabic speaker.</p>
<p>Active research participants, 17 teachers.</p> <p>2 Local Teachers</p> <p>6 Egyptian Teachers</p> <p>5 Jordanian Teachers</p> <p>2 Syrian Teachers</p> <p>2 Tunisian Teachers</p>		
<p>Training Centres and Schools</p>		

Monitoring 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
<p>Active research participants, 17 teachers. 2 Local Teachers 6 Egyptian Teachers 5 Jordanian Teachers 2 Syrian Teachers 2 Tunisian Teachers</p> <p>Training Centres and Schools</p>	<p><i>Monitoring of Training</i></p> <p>Feedback forms were distributed after each workshop session for participants to provide immediate feedback after the training.</p>	<p>The majority of the participants (97%) requested their preference towards having demonstration lessons included in training conducted by the trainers in order for them to view recommended practices in action.</p> <p>The majority of the participants (89%) noted that workshops alone were not considered enough for them to understand the effectiveness and applicability of recommended practices.</p> <p>The majority of the participants (94%) expressed a preference towards sessions conducted in the second week of the training, due to them being more hands on and activity based rather than discussion led by a trainer.</p> <p>The majority of participants (92%) expressed strong preference to have trainers that had experience in working with students coming from the UAE or other areas of the gulf, explaining that trainers who did not have such experience would mean that they would be unable to relate to the teachers' experiences.</p> <p>Although teachers with over twelve years of experience seemed to be the most resistant towards recommended practices and assumed that students were yet not ready for current practices used globally, they were more welcoming to new practices and were less disruptive in sessions.</p> <p>Teachers with over twelve years of experience still struggled to appreciate the necessity to accommodate students' interests in their practices and were reserved towards the use of current student-centred approaches.</p> <p>Teachers with over twelve years of experience were less disruptive in sessions and were more interested in knowing the trainers experience in the applicability of recommended practices in their classrooms.</p>

Monitoring 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	<p>During the two week period, teachers were given the opportunity to actively participate in discussion forums to share their views and concerns in addition to interacting with their peers.</p> <p>Teachers appreciated that their views and comments were taken into consideration. A more collegial environment was created, one that did not exist before, establishing professional learning communities among teachers.</p> <p>These discussion forums continued to give teachers a rich opportunity to communicate in English language with other native speakers and their peers, which was an opportunity rarely made available.</p>	<p>Teachers with more than twelve years of experience were more welcoming towards the observations conducted by the researcher.</p> <p>Novice and less experienced teachers seemed to be more open towards recommended practices in the training and expressed serious interest in further engaging themselves in such practices.</p> <p>Novice and less experienced teachers were more engaged in training sessions and worked as active participants during the two weeks of intensive training they were involved in. They were also the most active during formal and informal discussions held after the training sessions.</p> <p>Novice and less experienced teachers were keen towards having their lessons observed by the researcher after being exposed to the training in order to reflect on the gained learning practices and experiences they applied in their classrooms.</p> <p>During discussion forums held after the trainings, participants were openly willing to take part in discussions and to raise their concerns, particularly those of a younger age group with less than six years of experience.</p> <p>The majority of novice and less experienced teachers welcomed recommended practices they had experienced during the training and used them in their classroom, but were more resistant towards supervisors who limited their opportunities to further engage in such current practices.</p> <p>Several participants shared their experiences in training sessions and openly discussed their experiences.</p> <p>All participants still noted the necessity of having opportunities to be involved in exchange programmes with other teachers from the EU to have the opportunity to reflect on experiences with other language teachers and while using English as a medium of communication among one another.</p>

Monitoring 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
	<p><i>Post Training Classroom Observations</i> After three weeks of having conducted the training, school visits and observations were also arranged in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>This required another two weeks to complete. Following the classroom observations, meetings were held with the teachers to discuss their concerns, obstacles, needs and interests.</p>	<p>Novice and less experienced teachers were more welcoming towards having their lessons observed by the researcher after being exposed to the training in order to reflect on the gained learning practices and experiences they applied in their classrooms.</p> <p>The majority of novice and less experienced teachers welcomed practices they had experienced during the training and effectively used them in their classroom, they were more resistant towards their supervisors and defended their practices and strategies.</p> <p>Several participants appeared to enjoy sharing their experiences in training conventions and were actively contributing to sessions.</p> <p>All participants noted the necessity of having opportunities to be involved in exchange programmes with other teachers from the EU, who shared the same background of teaching English as a Foreign Language, to have the opportunity to reflect on experiences with other language teachers and while using English as a medium of communication among one another.</p> <p>Female participants were more capable of flexibly applying recommended practices and experimenting with their students. The majority of male teachers were more open towards changing their approach in teaching but maintained concerns about their ability to effectively control and monitor the classroom.</p> <p>The lack of computer competence that existed with the majority of teachers, limited the use of digital resources in the classroom. Teachers still expressed their discomfort when using these resources.</p> <p>All teachers appreciated the applicability of training content and pedagogies to the materials they teach, and engaged in discussion and examples during sessions. Teachers were more capable of relating their experiences to the topic areas addressed in sessions given the context they were put within.</p> <p>The majority of teachers still struggled with their own language communication skills, particularly when having the opportunity to use English language in informal context during discussions, where they were required to provide oral response towards unexpected prompts lead by the researcher or other teachers among the group. Nevertheless, they were more confident in engaging in discussions.</p>

Monitoring 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets
		<p>All teachers appreciated that the training sessions addressed their previously defined needs and actively took part in workshops to share their own experiences as teachers.</p> <p>Teachers seemed to be more engaged and motivated to share their experiences, views and interests before the training knowing that their input would be seriously considered and taken as the basis of forthcoming training programmes.</p> <p>All teachers noted that they had benefited from the training sessions and discussions forums conducted. This was observed in their performance in classrooms.</p>

Evaluation 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
The evaluation of the first intervention was based on the following listed criteria.	The method of having the training scheme conducted in relation to format and time	Targeted topics required more time to be covered with more focus on each area.	
	Levels of involvement of teachers in the training	Teachers were actively involved in all sessions, as they followed a more hands-on applicable approach.	
	The selection of trainers used to deliver the training.	Trainers were selected based on their experience in working in the Arab world and in the UAE in specific. All four trainers were native speakers, but also knew how to speak Arabic to an extent. This was in order to have trainers better relate to the teachers and their educational experiences.	
	Inclusion of demonstration lessons as part of the training	All sessions were directly linked with the materials teachers were using and demonstrated how methods and schemes can be put into practice. Teachers were also actively involved in sessions.	
	Areas of focus during the training	Session content was directly linked to materials teachers were using and to the curriculum adopted by the Ministry of Education. This was to demonstrate the applicability of sessions.	
	Time distribution of sessions	Session times were lengthened and expanded to two hours, trainee received two two hour sessions a day, both of which were linked or connected to one another.	
	Impact of English language teaching supervisors on the required outcomes of the training	Supervisors were not expected or required to attend training sessions, unless they wanted to actively take part in sessions. This limited the tension in sessions as teachers appeared to be more relaxed and willing to engage in sessions.	

Evaluation 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
	Relating the topic areas covered in the training to materials teachers are already familiar with.	Training content was directly linked to the curriculum teachers were using in order to reflect on the applicability of recommended practices.	
	<i>Classroom Observations</i>	<p>The majority of the classes attended had a better defined set objectives.</p> <p>Fourteen out of the seventeen teachers appeared to be more aware of the importance of reflecting on the lesson objectives at the beginning of each lesson.</p> <p>Students appeared to have more of an understanding towards the areas to be covered in the lessons.</p> <p>Teachers would generally greet the students and thereafter introduce the lesson topic using a set of different prompts as recommended in the workshops, such as asking students about their views on particular topics, linking the area to be addressed to students' earlier experiences, using word maps on the board and pictures. This generated further interest among students and created students' involvement from the beginning of the lesson.</p> <p>Lesson introductions were much more lively than earlier observed lessons.</p> <p>The majority of lesson introductions and areas of focus conducted by sixteen out of the seventeen teachers were theme oriented, linking a general concept or theme to students current experiences. With the use of word maps and pictures, students were guided indirectly to the main focus area of the lesson.</p> <p>A direct approach was still adopted by thirteen teachers for introducing grammar, and later advised that the more direct they were, the clearer it would be for students to learn. It however was apparent that teachers felt more comfortable using a direct approach as it was easier to teach.</p>	

Evaluation 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
		<p>Teachers appeared to be more aware of the skills required to relate students' experiences and interests to the content of lessons. The majority of the teachers engaged in methods to generate student interest and involvement towards the topic of the lesson, which made the majority of the lesson introductions attended more active.</p> <p>All teachers appeared to be more comfortable and in control of the flow of the lesson when teaching grammar rather than other language skills; Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.</p> <p>Nevertheless, teachers with less years of experience, under five years, used recommended strategies when teaching other skills. Teaching reading in particular was more variant and engaging for the students. The majority of teachers still had difficulty in generating student interest and involvement when teaching oral communication skills in addition to writing.</p> <p>Out of the seventeen teachers, fifteen had better time management skills and managed to end the majority of the lesson by assessing if the learning objectives were met.</p> <p>The language communication skills for the majority of teachers were still rather weak. Only three teachers mastered a good command in English. Nevertheless, teachers appeared to be more confident in communicating with the students. A few teachers resorted to body language and miming when unable to convey an idea in English and had students guess the meaning. Teachers still had issues with pronunciation, spelling and conveying ideas to students in English language. As a result, several teachers would resort to using the mother tongue in the classroom.</p> <p>The majority of the students appeared to be more engaged in the lesson and were more active than before. Students sitting in the front rows of the class were the most active, though students in the back were also engaged but at a lower level.</p> <p>The majority of teachers refereed to extracurricular resources that helped generate students interest. Some teachers provided students with assignments that required research skills using the internet and library. A few teachers appeared to put effort in using a variety of resources to help engage students in the lessons. With this in mind, lesson introductions were more engaging, having topic areas covered in sync with students' interests and needs.</p> <p>Although the majority of lessons were teacher-centred rather than student centred, teacher talking time was around 70% in all the lessons observed. A lot of students involvement was in response to teacher prompts and queries in addition to group and pair discussions. There was more opportunity for students to actively involve themselves in the lessons through discussions, group work and pair work.</p>	

Evaluation 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
		<p>The majority of teachers had students working in pairs and groups. Individual work was still apparent, but there was a variety in the classroom arrangements used.</p> <p>Although, all teachers were concerned with disciplinary issues and teaching, there was an increase in awareness towards assessing the actual learning taking place. Students were given further opportunity to interact with one another and become actively involved in the lesson as pairs, groups or individually.</p> <p>Out of the seventeen teachers, twelve managed to finish the lesson in time, assign homework or further evaluate the expected learning outcomes of the lessons. Only a few teachers continued working toward the last minute of the lesson leaving no room to assign homework or further evaluate the covered learning objectives.</p> <p>The general impression noted based on lesson observations made was that teachers were more aware of the need to develop language learning skills, but still needed to resort to course material so as to define the amount of work completed. Teachers were still working towards completing a number of pages during a lesson, but would extend work where necessary to ensure that learning objectives have been met. Teachers still apparently needed extended training on working towards the development of sub skills in their students and not only the development of their knowledge about the language. There was an apparent shift between emphasis on learning rather than teaching only.</p>	
	<i>Evaluation of the whole action research devised.</i>	Was the action research framework devised able to effectively identify teachers' present needs?	Due to the reflective nature of the research framework and flexibility in adapting interventions, action research, although relatively new to teachers, successfully identified teachers' needs and interests. It also gave an opportunity to identify areas in the educational environment that have an active role in constructing teacher identities.
		Was the action plan practical and applicable to educational contexts in the UAE?	The research plan was considerably both practical and applicable in context which the researcher was identified as a practitioner from within the workforce. It would have been very difficult to conduct the project as an independent researcher due to limited access to schools and teachers.

Evaluation 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
		Was the action plan effective?	The action plan was effective in identifying the needs and interests of teachers and thereafter responding to them in the most appropriate contexts. The ability to implement and assess the first intervention provided a good opportunity to adapt and modify future interventions to be more effective. Therefore, the second set of interventions was considerably more effective than the first, which was essential for the effectiveness of project and the methodology adopted. The first cycle as a whole served as a reconnaissance phase for the second intervention.
		How could the action plan be further improved?	Generally, there needs to be a more understanding towards the local culture and the surrounding factors that play an effective role in constructing teacher identity.
		How familiar were teachers with the type of the research framework devised?	Generally, teachers were not aware of action research as a type of practitioner research. Teachers lack of involvement in reflective practitioner research meant that they were not aware of how reflection on practices can help improve teaching and students' learning opportunities.
		How did the teachers' awareness of such a framework affect the research procedures and findings?	Participants that did not belong to the same group of the researchers did not appear to appreciate the research framework. Research was classified as in being either qualitative or quantitative. Reflective methods of intervention was a fairly new concept to teachers.
		How did the nature of the researchers' identity affect the overall implementation of the project?	Researcher identity had a strong role in the construction and implementation of interventions. Further details on the impact of researcher identity are discussed in chapter six.

Evaluation 2

Where and Who	How	Data Sets	
		<p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <p>As identified through this research, there is a significant need for further research in the area of professional development of language teachers in the Arab world. This project has mainly focused on a set of secondary school teachers, however, primary and middle school teachers can also be involved in similar research.</p> <p>Further investigation on systematic connections between linking development to career advancement is a key factor to be further investigated.</p> <p>Having the opportunity to further understand the impact of the role of supervisors on teacher performance in the classroom and educational structure as a whole is an essential area for study. So far, there has been no research that evaluates the work of mentors in the Arab world. This is a necessary field for study in the development of the mentor-teacher relationship to promote and sustain desired educational reform.</p> <p>Identifying ways of involving supervisors or teacher mentors in a similar action plan would help to improve the impact of mentoring practices on teacher performance. Initially it would need to determine how open mentors may be towards change in addition to identifying areas that may prevent supervisors from wanting to change towards a more flexible approach to their role.</p> <p>By including monitoring and evaluating activities, the impact of teacher development on student learning could be a vital tool in determining the success of professional development schemes. This could be usefully augmented by some study of student learning strategies and motivation.</p> <p>It may also be beneficial, in some areas, to benchmark the progress and changes that have taken place in educational practice in the West compared to those in the Arab world. It is still the case that teachers will seek qualifications from the West in preference to the same qualifications they can receive in the Arab world. A way forward would be to synthesis relevant aspects of western professional development practice with those of local Arab cultures.</p> <p>Further research on the applicable nature of Western educational practices in the West should be further investigated.</p> <p>A study on the differences and similarities between non native speaking teachers in Europe and teachers in the Arab world would be useful in observing the key professional development opportunities that exist among each group and how they may impact on teacher performance and attitudes.</p>	

