

## Further Readings

### The Epistemological Beliefs of Tertiary Education Teachers in Algeria

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#### Abstract

In the field of teaching, many researchers have noticed and asserted that university teaching and students' "behaviour, in the process of learning, is mainly related to adapted theories of teaching which drive the beliefs and assumptions of these teachers about their own teaching. To get back to the point, these beliefs are shaped to offer insights to teachers and to form their conceptions of teaching across the educational settings. In a like manner, Schommer (1994) thinks that these beliefs vary from naïve to sophisticated. A teacher who holds naïve beliefs generally sees knowledge as simple, clear and specific, and then, the learning ability is innate and fixed and can be directly transmitted to the learners. Contrariwise, the teacher whose beliefs are sophisticated regards knowledge as being complex and uncertain, and can only be gradually fuelled to the learner. As a matter of fact, it is conceived that Algerian university teachers may be ranged among the naïve teachers according to Schommer (1994). The purpose of this paper is then to raise teachers' awareness about their beliefs on teaching which could be refined and re-enacted only through a professional development if accredited by officials.

**Keywords:** teachers' beliefs, tertiary education, professional development, naive and sophisticated beliefs.

#### Introduction

There is, undoubtedly, recognition among teachers and educationalists that tremendous efforts are to be deployed to raise the teachers' awareness towards new developmental strategies to ensure better English language teaching. To this view, teachers must divert their attention to the building of a new vision which paves them out of the routinized methods of the teaching/learning process which consists of

applying the pooling of ideas and practices suggested by many researchers in the field. Likewise, in this area of pedagogy, teachers should be encouraged to observe value and understand their own experience and to evaluate and integrate relevant external practice and knowledge into their own evolving model of effective teaching and learning.

### **The Conceptions and Beliefs of University Teachers**

Generally, teaching is evaluated by the professional development teachers have been subjected to. It is, in fact, the process that plays an essential role in successful education, in which teachers work under supervision to learn how best to adjust their teaching to the learning needs of their students. Professional development is also considered as a bridge between would be teachers and experienced ones having the same objective which is guiding learners in achieving high standards of learning and development. Quite often, this professional development triggers a flip in attitudes and therefore make it possible for teachers to gain new visions and new beliefs which shape their teaching and launch them in an ongoing quest of quality teaching. To get back to the point, those beliefs are shaped to offer insights to teachers and to form their conceptions of teaching across the educational settings. What is worthy to note, also and in another context, is that those beliefs have an undeniable impact on the judgements of the teacher about the relevance of knowledge in particular situation (Pajares, 1992). To be brief, this necessarily means that there is a relationship between the teacher's beliefs and their conceptions of teaching. In a like manner, Schommer (1994) thinks that those beliefs vary from naïve to sophisticated. A teacher who holds naïve beliefs generally sees knowledge as simple, clear and specific, and then, the learning ability is innate and fixed and can be directly transmitted to the learners. Contrariwise, the teacher whose beliefs are sophisticated regards knowledge as being complex and uncertain, and can only be gradually fuelled to the learner (Purcel, 2000). As a matter of fact, it is conceived that Algerian university teachers may be ranged among the naïve teachers according to Schommer (1994) and Purcel

(2000). Alternatively, Hashweh (1996) in his research on naïve and sophisticated beliefs, found that teachers who had sophisticated views were more likely to undertake the approach of facilitating lectures dispensing; whereas, those who held naïve beliefs viewed utterly teaching as only transmitting knowledge. Both views are, therefore, distinguished in the sense that, the former stands for a learner-centred approach; whereas, the latter, tends to direct their teaching to a teacher-fronted approach. To this specific end, (Varnava-Marouchou, 2007) pointed out that the learner becomes dependant when the teacher thinks he is the only one who knows the subject and accurately transmits it, so this conception is referred to as ‘lecturer-dependant’. A student-centred conception, on the other hand, is one where high-quality learning which is viewed by (Watkins; 1998) as “requiring active construction of meaning and the possibility of conceptual change on the part of the learners” (Watkins, 1998: 20). From this pedagogical alternative, the teacher runs the lecture implicitly by facilitating and encouraging the learner to become responsible for his/her knowledge acquisition. Being that, this conception is referred to as ‘student-dependant’ (Varnava-Marouchou, 2007).

### **The current State of Professional Development**

The needs of educationalists and academic officials throughout the world are to identify the learners’ needs and to improve them, to enhance teaching efficiency, to increase the use of information and communications technologies and to raise awareness of the impact of globalisation on academic life (Nicoll and Harisson, 2003). These needs definitely represent the main objectives the Algerian university officials wish to reach in order to ensure with the academic staff the promotion of quality teaching and perfection in education. Nevertheless, quality teaching requires teachers to change their beliefs on the articulation of their classroom practices and sometimes radically (James, 2005), but this cannot be achieved unless the teacher is in a position to seek a never-ending quest of training or development. In other words, it is imperative for university teachers to learn how to teach before and during teaching (pre-service and in-service training). Henceforth, teacher learning, as a

process which has become increasingly important to ensure teachers to be successful in matching their teaching goals with their students' learning needs, is a necessary condition for student learning. Professional development is also needed for teachers to enable their students to develop proficiency in the target language and understanding of the cultures associated with that language. Regarding this, it is currently believed, that it is no logic to speak about all these in the Algerian university, since teachers have not been subjects of special and official accredited training courses, nor have they been launched in an on-going bottom-up teacher education development, which allows them to improve teaching quality and student learning. Ample evidence, however, is provided by educationalists stating that training can indeed improve various aspects of teaching especially when this is evaluated by the learners themselves. Thus university teachers who received training can, by all means, gain insights and effective strategies to improve their students learning. In this special context, (Trowler and Bamber, 2005) highlighted: "Train higher education teachers to teach, they will do a better job than the untrained ones" (Trowler and Bamber, 2005:80).

This indubitably clears up the idea that on-going development is essential in the teaching field to such an extent that teachers who do not inquire about developing to become real teachers are to possess everything but the potential to teaching effectively. In our department of English, no single teacher has been subject of any training and so are newbies as well as experienced teachers. It is claimed on another ground that all teachers, whether prospective, tenured, experienced or even professionals are liable to make awkward practices, but this awkwardness is hidden away from these teachers because it is involved in a ritual behaviour (Underhill,1985). What goes well in a classroom goes unnoticed and what goes badly goes unnoticed, too. The point is that the perennial situation in which language teaching prevails in our universities due to the absence of training and development in our department, has given rise to non-conformity of the teaching profession. Thereby the problem is that the Algerian officials tend, in their official speeches, to ignore the

situation and focus on just one expressed will to 'improve'. There is increasing evidence with this attendant view that university teachers need emphatically to attend special training courses for their professional growth; otherwise, their teaching will not bring satisfaction and success, and this is what really happens in the department of English of Tlemcen university. In this line of thought (Edge, 2002) cited that:

*Teachers teach at their best in different ways. For this reason and out of a sense of professional respect for colleagues whose development will take different paths than my own, and lead to different outcomes, I feel that I need to offer them the same sense of empowerment that I claim for myself: if you are making the kind of commitment to continuing professional growth that I have been talking about, I believe that you deserve respect for your teaching (Edge, 2002:51).*

Edge's quotation urges teachers to be engaged in a professional development since it is crucial and has the power to substantiate the whole process of teaching and learning. What is more important, teachers undertaking the path of development would change their beliefs which in turn would lead to an important expansion of their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth and enhance their effectiveness with their learners. Henceforth, they become more respected and conscious as inquirers than any other teacher among academics could ever be, and so would grow their teaching.

### **Teacher Inquiry**

Being distinct but not distant from reflection, inquiry is viewed as an academic issue which needs to seek a set of questions. Those ranges mainly from the platform of pedagogical traditions to the approaches put in to be used moving along to syllabuses elaboration. On a further stand, teacher inquiry is supposed to be the capstone that can be used by teachers to alleviate the complexities that happen in the profession. Another perspective of inquiry articulated by Cohen and Manion (1994) consists of

isolating an area and asking questions about it. Likewise, teacher inquiry is clearly identified by a teacher's investigation of a new paradigm of learning that can definitely lead to educational renewal and radical change. To put it another way, when in the state of a newbie, tenured, or mentor teacher, the teacher who recognizes that his professional practice should be problematized, can effectively be committed to simultaneous renewal and reform of the teaching profession and teacher education. Around this thought, Smith and Lyttle cited that "in any classroom where teacher inquiry is occurring, there is quiet kind of educational reform in process radical, but (1993:101). That clears up the fact that any individual engagement in teacher inquiry can be tremendous outlook and contribution to larger educational reform; more importantly, a reformulation of the teaching profession which is usually portrayed as a highly complex, context-specific and interactive activity. To this is linked the critical importance of the differences across classrooms and schools.

### **Characteristics of Teacher Inquiry.**

Teacher inquiry stretches to an infinite number of components or characteristics which make the platform over which change towards curricular reforms can be achieved. All these components need to be articulated by teachers themselves, as being detached members from the administrative staff, by building the structure of the process of teaching as well as of learning. Teachers, with regard to this, should be real agents of change without expecting others to bring for them changes towards which they might behave sceptically and reticently, and in a later stage, their assumptions and perceptions about the changes would turn to downright dismay and so would become their teaching. The characteristics of inquiry teachers must be imbued with may range from:

### **Engagement and Devotion**

It is obviously known that within collaborative inquiry that teachers integrate new approaches to reset new dimensional teaching instructions all along their teaching continuous professional development. This fitting process serves teachers to re-enact their personal knowledge base about what is meant to be a teacher. Thus inquiry constructs an understanding of the classroom encounter where instruction, curriculum, and students actions intersect (Moore 2004 ).

In confined terms, teacher inquiry when collaboratively articulated, teachers accordingly inquire about their students' learning and engagement. Common sense seems to highlight that collaborative is learning that can provide new insights unavailable in inquiry processes that are done individually.

Subsequently, one of the most crucial objectives of inquiry is that any instructional methodology must thoroughly meet the needs of learners, acquainting them with rich personally relevant learning. Worthier can it be, an inquiry is the cornerstone of the learning process where the students learning grows gradually close-knit to this process and gets embodied in a never-ending quest of generating new knowledge and insights that may have both immediate and longer-term consequences for teaching and learning.

### **Reflection and Repetition**

Reflection is important and critical to good teaching. It, in this regard, happens many times, that teachers make decisions to change their classroom practices. With this intention, they reflect on their learners' engagement and learning resulting from their past decisions (Schon 1983). On the other side, the fact reflection, which is considered as a major component of inquiry, cycles back within this process; it grows more and more powerful and offers the opportunity to teachers to progress in thinking. Also within iterative, collaborative inquiry, teachers can identify frequently emerging themes, questions, reason and probe ideas in order to push thinking of the group further. Such, iterative reflective work is facilitated by regular and consistent analysis of what is being learned and how.

## **Investigation and Adaptation**

It is fully understood that among the questions that teachers pose every now and then, are those which require an on-going adaptation of the pedagogical approaches, and a fairly balanced reformulation of their teaching practices, through regular data collection, in response to their work in the classroom. These collected classroom data enhance teachers to investigate new engaging and relevant questions that are mainly grounded on how learners receipt, at best, the capacities to reach proficiency in knowledge acquisition.

By the same token, inquiry is emphatically called as a concept in which teachers engage in what others have discovered about a giving teaching area. (Coburn & Stein, 2010). In this vein, Harste (2001) cited that “Education as inquiry provides an opportunity to explore collaboratively topics of personal and social interest using the perspectives offered by others as well as various knowledge domains.” Harste (2001:47)

## **Inquiry versus Reflection**

Reflection is known to be, for many researchers in the area, as an in-ward-looking form of inquiry. It is not intentional as inquiry could ever be. It is important and critical to good teaching (Zeichner& Liston 1996). It is also a key component of teacher inquiry. Nonetheless, teacher inquiry is different from reflection in time and pace in and on practice. Teacher inquiry is a fronted approach to the professional growth of teachers because its process requires teachers questioning the goals of their teaching, systematically studying their own practices, and ultimately changing these practices. This reveals a reversed image of traditional professional development for teachers which focuses on the knowledge of a top-down instructional methodology being shared with groups of teachers, which in turn, when disseminated never brings about classroom changes as inquiry does.

To get back to the point, it is quite significant to distinguish reflection from inquiry by pointing out to the fact that reflection seldom occurs intentionally in the busy complex process of teaching. In other words, teachers while reflecting on their practices, many of them do that in an unplanned way and in different settings that could be held inside or outside the university walls, either individually or collaboratively.

This is just to raise the fact that reflection is consciously planned; thereby, only very few teachers think of making it neat and cautious the way it should ever be. Conversely, teacher inquiry invites intentional, planned reflection based upon problem posing of the variables the teaching complexities embody. Regarding this statement, when teachers launch themselves in inquiry, their thoughts and assumptions about teaching are made public for discussion, sharing, debating and academic conversation. Such a rising of inquiry is commonly identified, by some experts, as a teacher research.

### **Teachers as Researchers**

Teacher research was cleared up by Lori Brown as “a method of gaining insight from hindsight. It is a way of formalizing the questioning and reflecting we, as teachers, engage in every day in an attempt to improve student learning” (Lori Brown 1999). Similarly, Cochran Smith & Lytle went on citing that “Teacher research is systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers about their own school and classroom work” (Cochran Smith & Lytle, 1993: 24).

All along their career as teachers inquire about their practices and need to alter from them what is awkward and badly designed, they first need to embark in such an inquiry holding it by a positive attitude which lays its basis on its principles. Ultimately, it is further agreed that the second paradigm is a worthwhile critical reflection on and in the teacher’s own teaching practices laying a special emphasis on the most important exploratory tasks namely and mainly, and most definitely, peer

observation which is considered as a change-based procedure and thought-provoking activity.

### **Teachers as Inquirers in the Algerian University**

In a narrowed scope, teacher inquiry is identified as being public, intentional and systematic. It is said to be public because it could happen in a more or less collaborative way where teachers meet and discuss their wonderings on their pedagogical practices. Such are the results of collecting data from their classes, from which they gain insights. In this line of thought, (Patricia Stiles, 1999) cites that: “A teacher inquirer is someone who searches for questions as well as answers. I am learning that saying, “I don’t know” is not admittance to failure, but a precursor of positive change. I have become comfortable with the expressions: “I wonder...”, “I think...,” and “what if...?” (Patricia Stiles 1999).

Teachers, whose classroom role is to generate knowledge, usually stand as researchers. It is generally, in educational settings, a tradition that focuses on the concerns of teachers, along with their pedagogical growth, helps them to be engaged in designing, data collecting and interpreting these data around their questions. Hereby, Donald Schon (1987) portrays teacher professional practice as a cognitive process of posing and exploring problems and dilemmas identified by the teachers themselves. Hence, those teachers who participate in such a process are emphatically those who get involved in the area of research action and become capable of re-examining and generating their professional growth and who are pro-active rather than reactive. In down to earth terms, all those assignments and principles of inquiry have never been reflected in the Algerian university and more particularly in the department of English of Tlemcen University.

What admittedly constitutes an asserted failure is that teachers rarely inquire about the goals of their teaching and neither do they intentionally proclaim a re-enactment of the content of the syllabuses. This is to assert also and solely that, in the present

state of knowledge, university teachers in our Department do not make clear and probe further their wonderings, do not reformulate and modify their questions and do not enlighten their perceptions and their conceptions of teaching, though it is widely known among the whole academic staff that inquiry is a powerful and dynamic stimulus which has the potential to transform the educational profession as well as the teacher's research. It is claimed therefore that inquiry is not compulsory and neither consciously nor tacitly articulated by academics in some Algerian universities.

Even more, argued by Schon (1983, 1987) action research is seen as an on-going process in which teachers generate, in an effective method, an autonomous professional development which incessantly entails reflections on their own professional practice and help them maintain and increase their effectiveness as teachers. This ultimately sustains the idea that being an inquirer professional development means definitely a self-initiated growth. It is very much like a do-it-yourself activity with maintained morale, sustained vigour and increased personal effectiveness. In this specific context, Richard (1999) argues that: "The process of change occurs when teachers articulate to themselves and others what they want to change and why, when they identify the factors that inhibit change, and when they develop strategies to implement change over time." (Richard,1999:143).

Taking on reformulated conceptions of teaching, teachers learn together as a professional community within which they collaborate on different projects set goals and make plans by organizing academic events by sharing resources of pedagogy to explore different learning contexts, Miranda (2012).

### **Development as making the basic advanced**

The nitty gritty of development within this view is "to make things better". It refers to the individual efforts of the teacher to improve him/herself or by the institution to promote teacher improvement. All too often, training organisations offer development

courses, and schools and universities discuss and sometimes advertise their teacher development programmes. In this vein, Edge (2002: 15) writes that “training is what other people do to you. Development is what you do to yourself.”

Yet, in ELT the distinction above is not always clear. The training courses the institution provides to improve teaching usually take the form of what is generally referred to as “supervised self-development”. Edge (1992) has, himself, invoked “cooperative development” to refer to the collaboration among teachers themselves to attain development. He rightly posits that “I need someone to work with, but I don’t need someone who wants to change me and make me more like the way they think I ought to be. I need someone who will help me see myself clearly.” (Edge,1992:38)

### **Development as a result of recent events:**

Under this last definition, development is intimately associated with the impact of some recent events and incidents conducive to a change in modelling ways of teaching. These events and incidents do not happen deliberately; they are not chosen. They generally come from external sources; for instance, complaints coming from the institution about the students’ little progress, or the introduction of new technology in the classroom (interactive whiteboards).

To sum up, then, we have shed light on three possible definitions of the term development and applied them in relation to ELT. We have come up with the conclusion that the teacher can change or develop in the following ways:

- Unconscious change (to change without noticing the change)
- Deliberate change ( to make things change)
- Change as a result of recent happenings.
- Teacher development: a Necessity in Education

By and large, professional development in any domain is crucial as it helps learn and

apply newly acquired knowledge and skills which, in turn, will improve one's performance at work. What is more, development is seen as an on-going learning that is not only approved by the profession, but rather a requirement for keeping the job.

In the field of education, research has evidenced that teaching quality and school leadership are the most important factors in enhancing student achievement. For teachers to be as effective as possible, they have to "continually" expand their knowledge and skills in order to put into practice the best pedagogical strategies. Also, teachers learn how to help students learn at the highest levels and how to better cope with their needs and weaknesses.

Regretfully, many teachers may not be well aware of the most efficient methods for improving their own teaching on the one side and their students learning strategies on the other. Besides, many misunderstandings do exist among teachers about the notion of development, its purpose and function. Teacher development seems to be one of the most needed strategy educational institutions have to strengthen and support at a time when quality education accounts too much. In a nutshell, then, teacher professional development is undisputedly the gateway to attain better teaching and learning as well.

## **Conclusion**

Professional development of teachers is certainly the cornerstone of any educational system in which it is compulsory for teachers to be acquainted with the variables of the teaching-learning process that might emerge here and there according to situational pedagogic circumstances. It is, therefore, the task of academic officials to lay a substantial emphasis on how to regain the teacher's confidence in the classroom, take measures that give rise to effective teaching practices by founding a broad consensus between the administration and the whole academic staff on teaching regulations and teaching assignments that must be upheld by every single teacher.

Moreover, the importance that stands now in our university is the responsibility which must be placed on the professional development which imperatively must be viewed, by official deciders, as a mandatory component of being a teacher so as to transform the process of language teacher preparation into a never-ending quest for quality by reformulating, refining and reconsidering their epistemological beliefs.

## **Reflections as a major socio-pedagogical component to teaching development**

**Abstract:**

*Reflective teaching as a bottom-up process of learning teaching is said to be articulated all over the world, but in Algeria. This has led to a fatalistic apathy which has made teachers, in secondary schools, turn nonchalant and perform an insipid teaching. It is believed then that if a teacher never questions the goals of his teaching and never reflects on his teaching practices, can, in no way, achieve positive learning outcomes. It is truism that teaching at the level of secondary schools must be backed up by an instructional methodology which is dished out by managers and teachers have to follow blindly what is imposed on them. However, if they remove themselves from jadedness and make reflections on their daily teaching practices and get rid of awkward ones, their teaching will, by all means, turn to be effective and achieve better results. This paper clearly describes teaching in our secondary schools and highlights the positive effects of the concept of reflection if undertaken by these teachers.*

**Keywords :** *secondary schools, teaching, reflection, learning, outcomes.*

**Résumé:**

## **1. Introduction**

Because of the new reforms in the educational system that are carried out in many countries of the world, the professional development of teachers (pre-service and in-service training) is going to new dimensions, which consist in putting teachers on the track of an on-going learning process, in which they engage deliberately to learn how best to adjust their teaching to the learning needs of their learners. These needs may incorporate issues of methodology, language and pedagogy. Moreover, teachers' professional development has become, increasingly, important as a way to ensure teachers to succeed in enabling their learners develop proficiency in the target language accompanied by implications on the target culture. On a worthier side,

educators and teacher trainers insist nowadays, that language teachers, all along their professional development, should be involved in the new trend of teacher education development. Consequently, many pedagogues believe that workshops are the most suitable place wherein teachers can be acquainted by this concept because, simply, in workshops they have the possibility to exchange their teaching practices and experience with their colleagues. Hereby, teachers are asked to examine their practices, to reconsider them and to refine them for better.

The tackling ground is therefore an urgent investigation that should be undertaken to unveil the real state of teacher pedagogic preparation and to analyse teachers' professional development which include pre-service training (at the level of university for would-be teachers) and in-service training (for working teachers).

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. *Teacher Education Development***

The conception of Teacher Education Development TED as a reflective process is the one in which every aspect and stage of teacher education experience becomes open to critical examination and reconsideration. It asks teachers to observe themselves, collect data about their own classrooms and their roles, and to use the data as a basis for self-evaluation, and for change. In other words, TED encourages teachers to benefit from the procedures of classroom research and self-reflection to understand better themselves and what is happening in their own classrooms in order to gain a renewed sense of purpose and direction (Ourghi :2002).

Teachers who find it hard to carry on their routinised ways of teaching and would like to change thoroughly their teaching practices, by trying new ideas or changing the ways they use old ones, not only they improve their own performance, but also they learn more about teaching and about themselves. The concept of teacher education development can be introduced while teachers attend in-service training to both prospective and experienced teachers.

Ely suggests that while in teacher training, Teachers learn clearly defined skills and behaviours appropriate to second language instruction...teacher development is concerned with preparing teachers for the exigencies of unforeseen future teaching situation. It attempts to bring about pedagogical development through heightening teachers' ability to observe, reflect upon, and modify

their own instructional patterns. (Ely 1994:336)

Ely discusses the new language teaching/ learning paradigm in which teachers whether prospective or experienced can be involved and which entice them to change their assumptions and their attitudes of teaching for better and for improvement.

Teacher development can be a career-long process which may be undertaken by experienced teachers as well as prospective ones. If separated from training, development means something distinct and unusual, and that people who have little or no experience of teaching are not ready with the issues it raises. Yet, this is a misrepresentation of the nature of teacher development, which is a reflective way of approaching whatever it is that teachers are doing at whatever level of experience they are doing it.

The focus of teacher education is extended from a narrowly based training model towards a broader approach in which developmental insights are learned alongside classroom teaching skills. Henceforth, it is the role of teacher educators to design and implement teacher education programmes both at pre-service and in-service levels. Pennington argues: “Viewing teaching as a profession provides a motivation for continuous career growth, and that teacher educators have a responsibility to prepare teachers right from the start to adopt a development perspective.” (Pennington 1990: 134)

This is to say that this developmental perspective aims at setting programmes which will have, as goals, the development of a set of classroom skills and knowledge.

## **2.2. *Reflection the key concept of TED***

Teachers, who launch themselves in the trend of reflection, become aware of their behavioural ways of teaching. This will help them to connect their actions to their learners’ by collecting data about their teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices, for self-evaluation and for change. By doing this, they can move beyond routinised responses to classroom situations and can also attain a higher level of awareness.

The involvement in reflective teaching provides teachers with data and with procedures which can shape or structure myriad of activities which, in turn, generally lead to achievable objectives. Likewise, Pennington posits that:

The term reflective teaching has come to signify a movement in teacher education, in which students' teachers or working teachers analyze their own practice and its underlying basis, and then consider alternative means for achieving their ends." (1992:48) She goes on writing "The use of the term reflection in the context of instruction can be interpreted in the sense of (1) thoughtful consideration, as well as in the sense of (2) mirroring, symbolizing or representing. (ibid)

Further, this approach is teacher initiated and directed, rather than imposed from elsewhere because it involves instructors observing themselves, collecting data for self- evaluation and for change and for professional growth. However, what is worth noting, is that reflection can be exerted either during the performance of a lesson in the classroom setting, or outside of it. Hereby, many writers have emphatically theorised two distinctive temporal dimensions of reflection.

### ***2.2.1. Reflection-in-action***

Teachers who have attained a technical expertise in shaping and refining their practices, are mainly the ones who can reflect immediately and automatically while they are acting. Their actions are spontaneous, intuitive reactions to problems that may arise while a lesson is in progress. What they do, in fact, is to combine the skill of making on-the-spot decision with a reflective approach, to change the course of the lesson, to see what influenced it and to set appropriate solutions. In this way, they engage themselves in a process of self-directed learning based on personal experience. Schon argues:

There is some puzzling, or troubling, or interesting phenomenon with which the individual is trying to deal. As he tries to make sense of it, he also reflects on the understandings which he surfaces, criticizes, restructures, and embodies in further action. It is this entire process of reflection-in-action which is central to the art by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict." (1983:50)

According to Schon reflection in action questions the assumptions underlying the routine that has been disrupted: ‘we think critically about the thinking that got us into this fix or this opportunity; and we may in the process, restructure strategies of action, understandings of phenomena or ways of framing problems’ (Schon1987:28) This is to say that with the rising of the problem, the teacher recalls his past experience so as to set up alternative practices which can easily give way to a better involvement of learners.

### ***2.2.2. Reflection on teaching***

It is called mirroring experience. (UR1991) states that reflective teaching is a personal reflection. Self-inquiry and critical thinking can help teachers in re-considering how their teaching process is guided and re-evaluating their planning and their action sources. It helps raise awareness of what should be done later to avoid weaknesses. Thus, such practice can be attained by recalling own experiences in a collaborative way by meetings and discussions with a colleague or some colleagues to enlighten ambiguities through suggestions and providing solutions. This implies that this reflective dimension can happen at any time during or after the teacher’s work day, as a result, the existing plans may be reformulated or eventually, completely modified.

When embracing the concept of reflective teaching, committed teachers do often internalize the skills to change their teaching and become better at teaching over time. This commitment enhances them to take a responsibility for their own professional development, which is the key note of the idea of the reflective teacher. Perhaps, the most convenient time for teachers to start being responsible is when they carry out this teaching with some developmental activities which underlie change towards betterment of the teaching / learning process.

### **2.3.1 Journals Writing**

Teachers collect all the events which occur within the classroom practices and mention them in a diary. The gathered events will serve the teacher to make reflection

upon what change in classroom practices will appear. Keeping a journal helps the teachers achieve a better classroom management and brings in a deeper understanding of the teaching / learning process. Putting a journal can also be of great importance in collaborative teaching in the sense that it helps teachers meet, discuss and exchange ideas when they use one another journals

### ***2.3.2. Lesson Report***

It is a structured inventory wherein the teacher describes all the features of his lesson. The aim of lesson report is to provide the teacher with the procedure which he will adopt in order to organize the features of the lesson for a later practice. Timing is an important aspect since the teacher mentions the timing of each part of the lesson in the lesson report. Effectiveness is another feature of lesson report; it is a thorough description of what actually happened from the teacher's point of view.

### ***2.3.3. Peer observation***

Peer observation can be a powerful source of insight and discovery though it can be intimidating, especially in context in which it is usually undertaken only for supervision and evaluation. To be effective in teacher development, observation needs to be thought of as cooperative discovery process. A focus on shared students and their attempts to negotiate meaning and construct understanding in both classes can help keep the attention focused on students learning, rather than on teacher effectiveness.

## **3. Methodology**

In order to check the accuracy of informants' responses, a combination of different analytical devices (viz. a questionnaire, unstructured interviews and classroom observation) are used in this research work. Bogdan & Bicklen (1998:100) observed that: "Many sources of data were better in a study than a single source because multiple sources led to a fuller understanding of the phenomenon you were studying."

The questionnaire, however, is chosen as an eligible and effectual research

instrument, since it offers the possibility to gather a great amount of reliable data from anonymous informants in a very short period of time. The interview, on the other hand, was designed to record the opinions of representative partners (inspectors of secondary schools) regarding several aspects pertaining to their role as being ELT specialists and training supervisors.

At last, the classroom observation is pointed out as a complementary research tool which will provide us with extra empirical data of teachers' practices. These teachers are believed to represent the outstanding pole in this research. So as to collect a maximum amount of information, the researcher got profit from the period of the Baccalaureate exam correction (session June2007) in "Lycee Maliha Hamidou" where teachers came from different parts of the "willaya" of Tlemcen. They were about seventy-five correctors, but, the questionnaire was distributed to fifty-eight EFL teachers. What can be stated about the questionnaire is that the inclusive questions whether close- ended; open-ended or combined are hopefully expressing the hypotheses proposed in the onset of the problematic.

The unstructured interview, as another contributory research instrument was conducted by the researcher during a seminar, entitled "Bridging the gap" wherein the teachers of middle schools met the ones of secondary schools. Yet, it was a fairly good opportunity because there had been the possibility to conduct an unstructured interview with an inspector who was asked to give his opinion on the programmes scheduled in seminars and study-days.

Finally, classroom observation data collection as a crucial triangulation component aimed at obtaining a richer description of teachers' reflection on their practices and expectations on the prospects of becoming better teachers. The researcher overtook this research instrument by taking structured notes and paying attention to the observed teachers' methodology. Thus, in such observations, the teacher is targeted rather than the learner. This, of course, was developed over a period of two months during which the researcher attended only lessons on the reading skill (as a selected sample) which were performed by one of his colleagues.

### **3.1. Data collection**

The data we collected from teachers on the issue of shortcomings of teacher training and teacher development are many and diverse. First, and above all, teachers highlight the mismatch between teachers' pedagogical preparation, at both levels of pre-service and in-service trainings and what truly happens in the classroom. Teachers also insist on another mismatch which recently arose between modern ELT approaches and the language situation that prevails in the EFL context. Henceforth, in term of suggestions, many of the respondents proposed that teacher preparation and ELT practice should be reformulated and sustained by more enlightened educational decisions so that EFL teachers know what they need to know in order to start a change which can bring about effectual results.

As for teacher education development, teachers recommend that a new range of seminars and study days should be organised on a regular basis and which should bring the objectives of disclosing the concept of TED and to set up a steady strategy whose goal is to foster independent teachers who know what they are doing.

With a five-year experience the interviewed inspector, shows great eagerness in holding a discussion. After having been thoroughly briefed of our topic, the inspector then reports that the majority of seminars and study days that have been organized so far aimed at adapting syllabuses and programmes, and slimming down the numerous tasks and activities within the new textbooks. This is to help teachers better cope with the newly implemented approach. In addition to this, new teaching objectives are accordingly set and require from us to work together in order to design new files and lessons' plans.

### **3.2. Interview**

Concerning the cancellation of the insets for students and working teachers, the inspector believed that the causes might be economic. He then confirmed that the last INSET was held in Tlemcen in 1999, and that it is a pity because whatever they do, teachers need to reconstruct and reconsider their knowledge of the skills the methods, the techniques, the language and all the items related to the area of pedagogy. More

importantly, teachers who are subjects to INSETS can highly benefit of well-planned formal teaching and ensure coherent development opportunities. To this end, he resumed, INSETS should be reset as soon as possible.

Actually, the inspector argues that many teachers have been carelessly prepared and therefore cannot ensure many of the pedagogical practices. As a matter of facts, these teachers might contribute greatly to the crumbling of the teaching/learning process and this has really given rise to the unavoidable state of the low achievement which is reflected by the bad results recorded by pupils in official exams.

As for the programmes of seminars and study days, the inspector asserts that anything which is communicated to teachers is imposed by the officials from the Ministry of Education and inspectors are not free to deliver haphazardly things that they think are valuable and worthwhile for the benefit of teaching and learning. Concerning the exclusion of TED within these programmes, the interviewee explained that for the time being the concept of TED is almost unknown to all of the teachers because it has never been the subject matter of any seminar or study day.

### **3.3. *Classroom Observation***

Classroom observation can be one of the most informative triangulation data-collection technique, since it facilitates the gathering of various aspects of teachers' teaching practices. Within this study, the aspects include the teacher's reactions to unpredictable teaching/learning situations in a short-term range (reflection in-action) and reactions, which lie in a long-term range (reflection on-action). It is worthy to note that in such observations the teacher is targeted rather than the learner, but this does not mean that it is a way of evaluating (teaching) but a way of gathering information about (teaching). The researcher, in this phase of investigation, opted for a systematic recording of practices, that were articulated by the teacher, during the teaching of comprehension skill. It should be pointed out, hence, that the choice of reading comprehension was not made purposefully for specific intentions, but was just a mere choice.

Evidence made that the observation had to be conducted over two months of

time. This was owing to the fact that the investigation needed sufficient time to be completed. Yet the observation focused on two main procedures: taking structured notes and checking if the observed teacher made reflection in-action (during a given lesson) and reflection on-action (within the subsequent lessons). However, the emphasis was laid on the following practices articulated in reading comprehension:

- The way the teacher starts the warming up
- How he introduces the topical lexis
- On which part of the board he writes the topical lexis.
- Eliciting responses from his learners.
- Writing wrong answers on the BB for later comparison with right ones.
- Whether he reads out the text or urges the students to read it silently.
- Urging his learners to skim through and to scan the text.
- Explaining the tasks to be performed by the learners.
- Whether he turns around, checks and helps the students while reading the text and doing the tasks.
- Whether he proceeds to collective correction on BB.
- Urging pupils to write right answers on the BB.
- Correcting pupils who give wrong answers.

### **3.4. *Teacher's Profile***

The teacher with whom we undertook this research methodology is a young man of thirty-five years of age, with a teaching experience of twelve years. He got the degree of English in 1995 from the University of Tlemcen. He sat for the Capes exam in 1997 and passed in the first time. He is average graded by the inspector. He has taught third year classes for many years and has been very successful. He is said to be very cautious and neat in his work. The headmaster has always counted on his teaching capacities.

## **4. Results Interpretation**

Respondents were asked in the first three questions about whether the knowledge, they bring to their teaching has been learnt in formal training (preset or inset) or much of it accumulated from experience. Most of the respondents answer that they are applying in their teaching what they have learnt from their personal teaching experience. This conspicuously shows that formal training in our country did

not bring satisfaction, efficiency and consistency in language teaching education (LTE).

Besides, attention is to be drawn on the fact that respondents have been teaching for more than fifteen 15 years. Therefore, it can be inferred that these teachers felt quite diffident in the beginning of their career and even though many of them were devotees of teaching they feel less motivated as time flows. By these facts we come to the conclusion that these teachers take no experience from initial training nor any profit from the insets they were subjected to. Now, they assert they feel at ease because of an on-going self-reliance experience.

The remaining respondents, who have about an experience of less than fifteen 15 years, say that their “savoir faire” is grounded on the basic elements of language teaching they acquired only in presets and insets. On the other hand, some teachers even commented that INSET courses offer little if anything new or worthwhile because they do not take into account practical considerations, but must lay on emphasis on the problems that arise in the classroom setting.

Roughly speaking, language teaching education in Algeria has proved to be hollow and not adequate in terms of the preparation of teachers’ practical courses to tackle their work with determination and commitment. Concerning teachers who analyse their own practices and consider alternative means for achieving their ends, it can be asserted that many a teacher has no knowledge of what reflective teaching is, may be because the byways of reflection still remain ignored at the level of our educational system.

This fact is indubitably the one which makes teachers still bewildered in applying the right techniques that can help them to extricate from practices which are no longer in current use. Furthermore, the subtle influence of the instructions that fall from above, have remarkably turned-out teachers to blind followers of the designed syllabuses. Conversely, this must not prevent us to claim that there exist a great number of well- prepared, effective and caring teachers who are concerned about their work and have always examined their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices and use the resulting insights to improve their teaching. (Richard &

Lockhart, 1994)

Most of these skilled teachers have attained a high degree of expertise and an advanced level in the ongoing process of conveying knowledge. Though provided by a broad explanation of each investigative procedure, some teachers answer positively in using lesson reports in their daily teaching. But what is contradictory is that they have added that the notes they take in their reports are all the same they mention in the lesson plans. Thus, we come to the conclusion that these teachers misunderstood the concept. What should be inclusive in a lesson plan, however, is the aim of each activity.

Conversely, many teachers answer negatively to the questions because they claim that they have never heard of such a pedagogic task. In a nutshell, one may perspicaciously say that lesson report as an exploratory procedure is almost absent in our teaching practices and has never been assigned by officials to seek change and betterment.

Among questions about the investigative procedures which were briefly explained in the questionnaire, the respondents are to point out whether they observed a colleague teaching a lesson or have, themselves, been observed by one of their mates. To this end, most teachers put a cross in the yes square, thinking that the observation is the one which is scheduled one time a year by the administration, and which is called a demonstration class.

All too often, the lesson, in a demonstration class, is mainly performed by the most experienced teacher, who must follow an instructional methodology imposed by the external agenda. It is, then, compulsory for all teachers to attend the demonstration class and take notes of each step of the lesson. The headmaster also attends the performance and takes notes for later comments and recommendations. At the head master's office, the teachers discuss the lesson performed by their peer step by step and make comments and remarks. They also exchange ideas beliefs and teaching strategies. In all, if the lesson is considered as successful by the head master (Most of the time school's directors have no single knowledge of the English language) he /she urges the teachers to apply their mate's strategies and "savoir faire"