English Language Teachers’ Perceptions of Educational Supervision in Relation to Their Professional Development: A Case Study of Iran

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Abstract
This study indicates the nature of instructional supervision carried out in SAFIR English Language Academy and Ferdowsi University of Mashhad- Iran. It followed the qualitative method involving questionnaire and interview. The paper commences with theoretical underpinnings of dual terms, educational supervision and professional development in relation to English language context. 45 teachers participated in this study and also interviews were conducted face to face. The results of the study show that educational supervisors highlight the strengths of English language teachers’ performances and encourage them for further practice to remove their weaknesses and overcome them. However, some problems stated by the teachers participated in this survey regarding educational supervision which will be pointed out later in detail. Two important aspects of language teaching were discussed and concluded in this study which are on one side the remarkable difference between language teachers’ belief and real experiences concerning supervision and on the other side their expectations of effective supervision by supervisors.

Keywords: Educational supervision, Supervision, Professional development

1. Introduction
There is a growing consensus in the literature regarding the elements of effective professional development for teachers. It incorporates principles of adult learning: Adult learners need to be self-directed; they display readiness to learn when they have a perceived need; and they desire immediate application of new skills and knowledge (Knowles, 1980). Effective professional
development is embedded in the reality of schools and teachers’ work. It is designed with teacher input. It fosters critical reflection and meaningful collaboration. It is internally coherent and rigorous, and it is sustained over the long term (Little, 1993; Renyi, 1996; Sparks & Hirsch, 1997). Promising professional development is organized with both effective teaching and learning.

These elements underlie various professional development structures such as university-school partnerships (Darling-Hammond, 1997), teacher networks and collaboratives (Little, 1993; Renyi, 1996) and teacher study groups (Clair, 1995; 1998), to name a few. What these structures have in common is opportunities for teachers to feel responsible for the professional development process to be knowledge creators as opposed to mere receivers of information.

To maintain ongoing professional development, English language teachers get involved in many professional activities or build up their own self-development strategies either individually or collaboratively. Also peer-coaching, study groups, action research, teaching portfolios, team teaching, and in-service training are some other effective professional development strategies. Cark (cited in Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992, p. 81) proposes that professional development is basically ‘a solitary journey’; however, almost all teachers need assistance and support during that journey from colleagues or supervisors to enhance their own development, by which they can gain an inside perspective on other teachers’ experiences and raise their awareness via reflecting on their own situation. At this point, Edge (cited in Bailey et. al., 2001) notes that working in isolation holds teachers back and subjective experience shared with no one cannot contribute to their development, but through the quality collaboration teachers have a chance to eliminate subjectivity and draw some conclusions regarding their experiences and opinions.

Many studies were conducted on educational supervision in teachers’ professional development; for instance, Wallace (1991), Ur (1996), Freeman and Johnson (1998), Freeman (2001), and Richards and Farrell (2005) write about teachers’ professional development by emphasizing the vitality of self-development in their career. Moreover, Okeoforth and Poole (1992) studied on the role of educational supervision in teachers’ professional growth. In this vein, educational supervision, a cooperative problem solving process, can be regarded as a key feature in English language teachers’ professional development.

However, there is still no agreement on the precise definition of the term ‘educational supervision’ since some differences have been mentioned related to orientations, perceptions, comprehension and familiarity with aspects of the framework and also analysis of its content in different studies. To illustrate that point, Allan (1990) describes ‘educational supervision’ as a set of duties and a comprehensive process which aim to help teachers to develop their profession to achieve their
pedagogical objectives while Daresh (2001, p. 25) defines this term in thorough way as a dynamic process that leads to studying and improving all factors that affect the education situation. On the other hand, according to Kilminster et al. (2007, p. 2), educational supervision is a matter of guidance and feedback regarding personal, professional and educational development in the context of trainee's experience. Bailey's (2006) point of view, the modern educational supervision is characterized as follows is a technical process which aims to improve teaching and learning through the care, guidance and simulation of continued development for not only teachers but also any other person having an impact on the educational context.

It is a consultation process, based on respect for the opinion of teachers who are mainly affected by the work of supervision. It is a collaborative process in different stages since it welcomes various views that represent the proper relationship between the supervisor and the teacher so as to address the educational problems and find appropriate solutions.

It is an academic process which encourages research and experimentation whose results can be used to improve setting and achieving clear, observable and measurable objectives in the educational setting.

It is a leadership process which requires the supervisor to have the ability to coordinate teachers' efforts by aiming to achieve the teaching objectives.

It is a humanitarian process in which the supervisors recognize the value of individuals as human being so that they can build a mutual trust between themselves and the teachers and know the exact and varying capacities of each teacher they deal with.

By considering all these definitions, some functions are worth mentioning here (Brown & Bourne, 1995; Kadushin, 1992; Salaman, 1995; Smith, 2005), which are grouped into six main categories stated as follows:

1. Development of curricula
2. Supervision and organization of the educational setting
3. Supervision of the teachers' professional development
4. Supervision of the teaching methods and techniques
5. Supervision of the novice teachers
6. Evaluation of the educational process
The issues surrounding supervision have been debated by teachers, administrators, higher education scholars, and legislators (Gland & Neville, 1997; Glickman, 1992; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002).

According to Glickman (1992), "without a strong, effective, and adequately staffed program of supervision, an effective school is unlikely to result". Supervision can be defined as "the glue of a successful school" (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007). Supervision has become a major component in the operation of schools (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002).

1.1. Supervision as a tool for improvement

Goldhammer (1969) suggested that supervision should increase teachers' willingness and ability to supervise themselves and their colleagues. Zepeda (2003) advocated the term, "auto supervision," to describe the ability of teachers to supervise themselves, and has provided the sense for peer coaching. Supervision can be seen as similar to teaching in that teachers wish to improve students' behavior, achievement, and attitudes while supervisors wish to improve teachers' behavior, achievement and attitudes (Glickman, 1992).

1.2. Supervision as an obstacle

Zepeda and Ponticell (1998) conducted a study to determine what teachers "need, want, and get from supervision". Their findings supported the positional power of the supervisor dominating over the inferior teacher. Blumberg (1980), in Supervision and Teachers: described the negative relationship between supervisors and teachers, describing the resentment teachers felt toward supervisors, and this resentment continues to be a major barrier in achieving benefit from the practice of supervision.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The study aims to answer the following questions

1) What is the nature of supervision in English language institutes?
2) What are the perceptions of the experienced and inexperienced teachers regarding supervision practiced by the supervisors?
3) Are the teachers really benefited by the process of supervision?
2. Method

The aim of this study is to find out through qualitative and quantitative analysis of collected data whether the educational supervision plays a minor or major role in English language teachers' professional development and also what language teachers' perceptions are concerning educational supervision.

2.1. Participants

Forty five non-native teachers, thirty of them working at Safir English Language Academy in Mashhad-Iran and fifteen of them were Ferdowsi University students (M.A.) which were teaching English in different schools or institutes participated in this study. Teachers' ages ranged from 20-47 years-old with an average age of 27.

The number of female teachers was higher than that of male teachers as seen in the graphic below (Figure 1). The educational system in Safir English Language Academy consists of three types of classes: Termic, Intensive and Fridays which overall provides twenty sessions each semester. Language teachers in this institute have different qualifications such as: FCE, CAE, CPE, IELTS certificates and most of them are university graduates. When they pass the first step which requires the head office (Tehran) confirmation, they will have a week training orientation. If they meet the requirements, they observe the experienced teachers classes in order to be familiarized with the system and gain some experiences.

Furthermore, in this system the teachers are observed once or more each semester and they receive some feedback in a session called "briefing session" relevant to other activities that will support teachers professionally. It can be pointed out that teacher meetings, on job training programs (OJT) and teacher training courses (TTC) are also organized to which attendance is of great importance.
2.2. Research instruments

2.2.1. Pre-questionnaire

A pre-questionnaire was administered to the teachers before they started answering the post-questionnaire. This section asked the subjects their age, gender, previous experience in the related field.

2.2.2. Post-questionnaire

A post-questionnaire was administered to the teachers after their last English class session in 2010-2011 Academic Year. The purpose of the post-questionnaire was to find out English language teachers’ perceptions of educational supervision in relation to their professional development which was studied on these seven subcategories:

1. Teachers’ experience
2. Educational leadership and humane relations
3. The curriculum and teaching methods / techniques
4. The students
5. Teaching materials and activities
6. Classroom management
7. Assessment

The content validity of this questionnaire was established through a review of five professors working in universities, and then some slight changes were made based on their recommendations. Later, the questionnaire was piloted in a group of 12 English language teachers, who were also
asked to comments on the appropriateness and ease of the survey instrument, which led to simplifying the wording of some items. After all revisions, to make sure of the reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used and the reliability was (0.88) for the questionnaire.

2.2.3. Interviews

The researcher with the aid of the supervisor interviewed with each other and the teachers to cross-check teachers' responses to the post-questionnaire and to find out more information on their responses which was not possible in the post-questionnaire. Hence, interview questions contained three items:

1. Do you give enough importance to your professional development? If no, what impedes you from keeping your continuous professional development?
2. Do you think that educational supervision is significant for your professional development?
3. Which ways of educational supervision are you familiar with?

2.3. Data analysis

Fifty copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the targeted sample at the end of 2010-2011 Academic Year to choose the suitable statement given five point Likert-scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD) and the data was tabulated and analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Office Excel.

3. Results

3.1. Post-questionnaire

As can be seen from Table 1, the majority of responses for most of statements are on the agree side, which implies that most of the teachers contend that educational supervision positively effects on developing their experiences in their field. Moreover, when looking specifically at the second item, it appears that 62% of the teachers strongly believe that supervisors encourage the teachers to be aware of the latest issues in the field. On the other hand, for statement 6 and 7, the number of neutral responses are more than other statements, which shows the lack of case studies and also post-graduate studies among teachers. Also, they perceive the supervisors as a professional who specifies teachers' needs and encourages them to update their educational experiences.
Table 1.
Teachers’ perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers’ professional development in terms of developing experiences in the field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>The main fields and their sections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prepare the teacher’s mind to accept the development by explaining the importance of the latest educational issues.</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Encouraging teachers to be aware of the latest educational issues in order to exchange successful experience with their colleagues.</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Guide the teachers to the books, research papers, and educational journals which may help them with professional development.</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hold meetings with the teachers to study and discuss the educational circulars sent by Ministry of Education.</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Encourage the teachers to the self-learning to update profession experiences.</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Encourage the teacher to conduct case-studies to solve some problems that they encounter.</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Encourage the teachers to continue their post-graduate studies to raise their professional and academic levels.</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Direct the teachers to benefit from TV and radio computer programs and the Internet.</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Participate in organizing educational workshops, conferences, and symposiums and invite specialists in education to give lectures.</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Participate in organizing educational workshops, conferences, and symposiums and encourage teachers to give lectures.</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nominate the teachers to attend educational workshops to encourage them to develop professionally.</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Specify the teachers’ professional development needs.  

Advise the teachers to participate in different courses which help them to update their educational experiences.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>The main fields and their sections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Educational leadership and human relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Allows the teachers to act freely towards their duties to be accustomed to carrying out responsibilities.</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Distributing responsibilities among the teachers in a suitable way relevant to their knowledge and professional abilities.</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Give opportunity to the teachers to express their professional opinions to gain benefits from them.</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Table 2 suggests that almost all teachers agree on the positive effects of educational supervision in terms of educational leadership and human relations. However, for statement 14 there are some answers on disagree side and neutral side. Although the percentage is low (15%), it seems that some problems occur as to the case that some systems do not let teachers act freely.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>The main fields and their sections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The curriculum and teaching methods/techniques</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Train the teachers to use modern teaching techniques.</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is very vivid that in Table 3 nearly all responses are on the agree side by indicating the belief on positive impact of educational supervisor in terms of the curriculum and teaching methods and techniques. Considering statement 24 some responses appear on neutral side and disagree side which implies that teachers approve of being involved in curriculum development.

Table 4.
Teachers’ perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers’ professional development in terms of the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>The main fields and their sections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>The students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Guide teachers to identify the students’ developing characteristics to create positive learner attitudes towards learning.</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The same continues here. What is put forward here is that the teachers really expect the supervisors to collaborate with them in order to solve the problems related to the students through discussions, which will help their professional development to a great extent. What is striking here is that there isn't any strongly disagree response in the first three items which proves our previous perceptions. Also, for statement 30, there are some responses on neutral and disagree side which implies that the dealing with outstanding students is problematic for teachers.

**Table 5.**

Teachers’ perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers’ professional development in terms of teaching materials and activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>The main fields and their sections</th>
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<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>5) Teaching materials and activities</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Direct teachers to use classroom activities which develop the learners’ thinking skills.</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Encourage the teachers to carry out extra-activities (e.g. English club, magazines, competitions...)</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Table 5 indicates that 95% for statement thirty-three and 80% for statement thirty-four of the population agree on the positive role of supervisors in teachers’ professional development. They believe that the supervisors encourage them to use extra and new classroom activities and carry out some activities thereby the students will receive novel information and develop their thinking skills.
Table 6.
Teachers’ perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers’ professional development in terms of classroom management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
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<td>6)</td>
<td>Classroom management</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Make the teachers familiar with different techniques of classroom management.</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Guide the teachers in encouraging their students to express their ideas.</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Direct teachers to establish a positive relationship with the students.</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Explain to the teachers the ways of considering and teaching students with mixed abilities.</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.05</td>
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</table>

As can be seen from Table 6, the supervisors are expected to hold meetings so that teachers can learn recent ways of classroom management and reflect upon their own practices. Also, guide the teachers to encourage their students to express their ideas. Moreover, supervisors are desired to direct teachers to establish a positive relationship with the students and endure the active participation of the learners during the lesson which is agreed by the majority of the teachers.

Table 7.
Teachers’ perceptions about the effect of educational supervision on English language teachers’ professional development in terms of assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>The main field and their sections</th>
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<tr>
<td>7)</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Make the teachers familiar with assessment techniques (i.e. continuous assessment, formal testing...).</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Encourage the teachers to take notes about students’ in-class performance and use them as assessment record.</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Train the teachers to design effective exams to be used in their classes.</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.12</td>
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</table>
Table 7 shows that the great number of the teachers agreed that supervisors are to update the teachers’ knowledge about the techniques used for assessment since there is continuous change in every educational system and also the supervisors are expected to help the teachers diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of test types and modify them according to teaching and learning situation. Furthermore, as the item forty-five suggest, the supervisors should make recommendations about how to use the assessment results to suggest solutions for all challenges.

3.2. Interviews

The researchers interviewed with each teacher to reveal their specific ideas regarding the effect of educational supervision on their professional development. As stated earlier, interview questions contained three items. Interview questions were posed to each teacher. The researchers transcribed language teachers’ responses to the questions as they heard from their utterances.

In response to Question 1 regarding whether they give enough importance to their professional development or not, 25 (62%) teachers responded positively; yet, 16 (40%) expressed that they are not able to think of their professional lives due to many reasons in both their personal and professional lives. To illustrate,

... Motivation, devotion and love are the factors you need to have in your job in order to obtain what is prepared for you. As a teacher I have rarely been prepared by feedback on my work except SAFIR INSTITUTE also I believe you need to be fed by the system to be able to work and think of professional development which I got both in my work.
I might give enough importance to it but I feel like sometimes I'm not quite aware of all the sources available and plus working sometimes doesn't leave me enough time to develop as much as I want.

Frankly I didn't give enough importance to my professional development but recently I'm trying to get rid of unnecessary issues and focus on my job.

actually I give enough importance to my professional development but having too many classes and writing the lesson plans doesn't leave me enough time to do anything else.

In relation to Question 2 regarding the significance of educational supervision in their professional lives, teachers displayed controversial ideas, which reflect the diversity between what they believe in and what they actually experience. Almost all of the teachers noted that they consider educational supervision as a concept that can contribute to their professional progress which is expressed as follows:

I think that educational supervision has been significant for my professional development but sometimes supervisors can be too critical and pay too much attention to unimportant details that only confuses the teacher and makes the teacher feel insecure about every activity he or she designs.

A third eye usually detects weaknesses and problems better.

Under some conditions I agree with the idea of educational supervision:

Continuous educational supervision shouldn't lead to an atmosphere of anxiety and stress so that the teachers don't feel emotionally drained.

The observer should be highly trained and able to maintain an objective point of view.

definitely yes especially for me that I'm majoring in an irrelevant field, so using the supervisors experiences will be of great help.

As to Question 3 related to which methods of educational supervision they are familiar with, they mostly weren't aware of all educational supervisions and they just mentioned class observations and peer observation which those who are working in SAFIR institute are quite familiar with, since teachers are observed in this institute at least once per class. For instance some noted that:
…class and peer observations which we are quite familiar with these methods in our institute and are very helpful.

...seminars and workshops and also teacher's meetings are considered as educational supervision.

4. Discussion

The findings of the research reveal that English language teachers seem to show a very positive attitude towards professional development whereby they are able to build on previous activities by learning new trends in the field, discuss their experiences with other teachers, reflect upon their own teaching, and gain practical experiences of other opportunities encouraging their ongoing professional development, which is the main point in the recent educational system that accepts the significance of effective and continuous professional development (CPD) (Birman et al., 2000; Borko, 1995; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Lowden, 2006). However, there are major impediments on the way of teachers' desired professional development, which are allocated time and financial resources. In particular, the teachers need time both to make professional development a continuous part of their work (Bush, 1999) and to see the outcomes of their efforts (Dorph & Holtz, 2000), which clearly indicate that lack of time is one of the greatest challenges to implementing effective professional development (Abdal-Haqq, 1996). As to the financial resources, although funding is of great importance in each educational organization or effective professional development, it is usually quite low even though its significance in teachers' professional development was reported in many studies conducted all around the world.

However, as Bush (1999) points out, overcoming these impediments or problems is not enough to provide effective professional development opportunities for teachers. What is needed by many teachers is ongoing support and guidance (Lind, 2007). To put it differently, the main professional need for many teachers is to obtain practical ideas, strategies, and resources that can be applied in or outside the classroom (Beale, 2003). It is the educational supervisor who can assist the teachers to develop themselves professionally. Similarly, several studies report the leadership of supervisors is of utmost importance to support teachers’ professional development in schools (Fernandez, 2000; Moore, 2000; Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001; Marshall et al., 2001). As for the characteristics of a supervisor, Robbins (1999) stresses that a supervisor is to provide the teachers with support, guidance, feedback, problem-solving skills, and a network of colleagues who share resources, insights, practices, and materials. These characteristics of a supervisor are totally in line with how English language teachers conceive educational supervision. However, certain misinterpretations have been noticed in the light of interviewed teachers’ perspectives when going beyond their perceptions and considering their experiences in a virtual setting. In particular, the language
teachers believe that educational supervisors attempt to detect teachers’ mistakes in classrooms, focusing mainly on control, as in the first stage of supervision lasting till 1860s (Daresh, 2001). Also, they regard the supervisors as people who look at their job performance in a judgmental way. This situation shows that educational supervision does not extend beyond the traditional notion of supervision that evokes the sense of forcing them to prescribe to a specific educational philosophy which will lead to a less desirable effect on the teaching process. Instead, educational supervision should provide the teachers with adequate support to encourage them to develop their own ways and means for using their own capabilities that will create a culture of collaboration or community of practice (Sergiovanni, 2005).

Furthermore, The teachers consider that some severe problems are involved in this control-based applications of educational supervision (Sullivan & Glanz, 2000) such as the method used for supervision and the way it is carried out.

However, such methods of educational supervision as individual interview, group meetings, exchange visits between teachers, model lesson, educational research, educational circulars, educational training, and so forth, can be applied according to the goal of educational improvement, requirements of the educational supervision, the surrounding environmental conditions, and the characteristics of the teachers (Alhabeeb, 2004; Bailey, 2006; Mone, 1998; Richards et al., 2001, 2005; Wallace, 1991). In fact, classroom visits can extremely be beneficial for the teacher on condition that they are conducted in an appropriate way; otherwise, some adverse effects may emerge on the teachers’ classroom performance that can be from being observable, comprehensive and distinguishing in nature and there may be great differences between the results of supervisors’ observations on the same teacher at different times, which can yield a decline in the teachers’ trust and respect towards supervision (Memduhoglu et al., 2007). At this juncture, the huge importance of communication and collaboration becomes very clear, so the unpredictable nature of classroom visits or other methods of educational supervision needs certain changes. Before supervision takes place, supervisors are expected to have a brief conference with the teacher to be observed and inform her/him about the style and the form of the supervision, then enter the classroom together with the teacher, not during the lesson (Mone, 2001); however, this happens in an unexpected fashion in practice. Moreover, the supervisors are supposed to hold a meeting including the staff, during which observations and evaluations are shared and additionally, they think that a supervision report should be written about observations, defects, improper and desirable practices so as to make some suggestions and provide future insights for the coming supervision (Açıkgoz, 2001; Taymaz, 2001). In brief, supervision is to be regarded as a process of interpersonal relationships whereby people would listen to each other, bring alike problems, come together with
resources to find solutions and feel secure in the educational process (Wiles & Bondi, 1996), which is, according to Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993), very important in achieving school goals at school.

The perspectives discussed above briefly suggest that a great number of teachers are of the opinion that educational supervision brings about emergent outcomes to the overall teaching and learning community in case it provides a continuum of collaborative relationship where teaching experiences are reflected upon and shared with other staff in building a community of practice (Downey et al., 2004; Glickman et al., 2007). In this respect, the term, reflection, begins to appear as a vital phenomenon to be encouraged and promoted during the supervision process (Clarke, 1995) by which the teacher:

- becomes curious about certain aspect of practice setting;
- frames aspect in terms of the particulars of the setting;
- reframes that aspect in the light of past knowledge and previous experience;
- develops a plan for future action.

All in all, the findings which can be drawn from this study are on one side the great difference between English language teachers’ beliefs and actual experiences about educational supervision and on the other side their expectations concerning effective applications of educational supervision to be managed by effective supervisors who are able to (Memduho et al., 2007):

- observe and reflect on practice
- give constructive feedback
- teach
- identify alternatives
- solve problems
- motivate
- foster autonomy
- provide information
- appraise self and others
- manage a service
- create a supportive climate
- negotiate
- manage time
- organize
The feedbacks from this study reveal that still observation is conducted on traditional basis in most educational systems. However, there are some institutes which are doing well in improving this trend. Just as the knowledge based for teaching foreign languages remains highly contested, what a supervisor needs to know and be able to do and where that knowledge comes from are all questions that remain little addressed in the research or practice literature for L2 teaching and learning. That said, based on our experiences working with teachers and supervisors, we have tried to make the case here that effective supervision requires flexibility and, perhaps most of all, attention to the bigger picture of sustainable teacher development. Lastly, it is essential to note that although important progress has been made in most educational supervision systems today, further reforms are necessary to renew the purpose, function, method and structure of educational supervision.

References


**Bio Data**

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