

1 English teachers' attitudes towards the post-lesson discussion in Oman

Sulaiman Mohammed A'Shizawi

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims

This study sets out to investigate English teachers' attitudes towards the post-lesson discussion in the Omani teaching and learning context. It aims to explore how English teachers perceive the role of regional supervisors of English (RSEs) in conducting the post-lesson discussion (PLD) and considers how teachers' opportunities to improve and develop professionally in their work can be maximized through this form of interaction.

1.2 Background

RSEs have wide and varied administrative and instructional roles. The latter include observing teachers in classrooms, conducting PLDs and producing advisory reports based on the visit and discussion. Senior English teachers (SETs) share the responsibility with the RSE in providing advice and support to teachers.

1.3 Rationale

Very little, if any, research has been carried out to investigate English teachers' attitudes towards the PLD in the Omani context. Yet, from my personal experience as both English teacher and RSE, I believe that the PLD plays a vital role in supporting teachers, especially novices. I believe that understanding teachers' attitudes is likely to provide us, as RSEs, with valuable information on how we can better support these teachers in developing professionally in their work.

The need for such research is even more vital when supporting teachers working in an educational context different from their own (Randall & Thornton, 2004). In Oman, besides a growing number of Omanis, there are still many expatriate teachers from diverse backgrounds with differing attitudes towards teaching/learning and the role of the RSE. By understanding their attitudes, we may be better able to support and guide these teachers.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher development can be facilitated through supervision (Richards & Nunan, 1990), and specifically through the PLD. It is through the provision of feedback that teachers can be supported and guided to reflect upon their teaching experiences and encouraged to manage their own professional development.

Teacher development has been described as ‘a self-reflective process’, drawing “on the teacher’s own inner resource for change” (Head & Taylor (1997, p. 1), so that personal awareness in making sense of experience is crucial (Freeman, 1989). Approaches such as reflective teaching (Bartlett, 1990) emphasize the importance of self-initiation in achieving professional development.

Yet, external factors can also support teachers in constructing knowledge. Following Vygotsky (1978), there is greater understanding of how we learn from others through discussion and interaction, and the role of the supervisor in the PLD can be seen from this perspective. How supervisors actually conduct their difficult and complex work varies enormously (Wiles & Bondi, 1991), though Gebhard (1990) identifies a number of supervisory models he suggests they select from. Of these, the directive model involves much traditional telling, while in contrast the nondirective involves the supervisor in listening attentively while demonstrating understanding. Gebhard argues that different models might be appropriate for different situations. He recommends flexibility.

Managing PLD feedback in a way that promotes learning requires of supervisors highly developed communication skills, such as active listening and empathizing (Egan, 1994). Effective support can be provided teachers, Randall & Thornton (2004) argue, if the supervisor creates the right atmosphere, deals with feelings and leads towards critical self-awareness.

Supervisors need to develop such skills. Empirical research suggests they enjoy a privileged position in the PLD, initiating topics, determining when responses are sufficient and redirecting (Waite, 1993, cited by Oprandy, 1999). The teacher is accordingly left in a role that is passive, collaborative or adversarial, though the latter might be rare (ibid). The role they adopt is likely to relate to their attitude. As earlier noted, there is a lack of research into English teachers’ attitudes towards the PLD, particularly in an Omani context.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My research question is as follows: What are English teachers’ attitudes towards the post-lesson discussion?

To answer this question, I developed a semi-structured questionnaire, a research tool that can be useful for obtaining the views of a group of respondents on a particular topic. There are other advantages of questionnaires. Firstly, data collection can be very efficient, particularly in terms of time and effort (Robinson, 1993). Secondly, if the questionnaire has been well constructed, then the time needed for coding and analysing responses can be short (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

However, like other research instruments, questionnaires can also have some disadvantages. For example, answers can be superficial, and the reliability of

responses can be questionable. In addition, with predetermined or closed-questions, sometimes the respondent's opinion may not be reflected by any of the permitted answers. In order to overcome these limitations, I used some open-ended questions so that respondents would spend more time thinking about their answers.

Since the aim was to explore English teachers' attitudes towards the PLD, I designed a questionnaire that would elicit background information and opinions, which they could express both qualitatively and quantitatively. I structured the document in three parts, and then piloted it with colleagues in Leeds. Once this process was complete, I sent the questionnaire, along with an explanatory letter for participants, to Oman, where they were distributed and administered by RSEs during visits to schools. The average time for completing the questionnaire was approximately 30 minutes.

The sample consisted of 100 teachers from one region of Oman that I had access to through their RSEs. 50 male and 50 female teachers from a range of schools and teaching a range of levels took part in the study. They represented approximately 10% of the total number of teachers in the region.

4 FINDINGS

In this section I present findings, first summarizing the quantitative results, which suggest positive attitudes towards the post-lesson discussion (PLD). (The full results, including tables, can be found in A'Shizawi, 2005.)

4.1 Quantitative results

A large majority of the teachers (83%) agreed that the length of the PLD was usually appropriate, while an even higher proportion (97%) felt that the content was relevant to the lesson observed. A big majority (94%) agreed they were given opportunities to reflect on their lessons, while most (84%) reported usually finding the ideas and suggestions provided by their RSE useful. A similar proportion (88%) agreed that they were given the opportunity to explain their ideas about teaching, and, indeed, most (81%) felt that their RSE understood their professional needs. However, a majority (52%) disagreed with the statement that they should always accept their RSE's opinion, while another quarter were unsure. Under half the respondents reported usually taking notes during the process.

4.2 Qualitative results

Qualitative data elicited in response to questions 9-14 shed further light on teachers' views concerning the purpose and benefits of the PLD, their structure and the topics discussed, the nature of the help teachers require through them and how they can be improved. In analysing the qualitative data, my procedures were to identify common responses and then create categories.

4.2.1 Purpose

Regarding the purpose of the PLD, teachers' viewpoints fell into two main groups:

1. To provide professional support for teachers through:
 - sharing ideas with the RSE
 - discussing issues that would help teachers to teach better
 - providing opportunities for identifying new techniques for teaching
 - solving problems and difficulties
 - raising awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses
 - encouraging teachers to reflect critically upon their lessons

In the responses, there seemed an overall agreement that reflection is a crucial aim. This is how one of the teachers expressed her view about the purpose of the PLD: "This is done mainly with a purpose to look back at the lesson critically, analytically and thoughtfully and to provide opportunities for self-development."

2. To provide evaluation of teachers through:
 - identifying strengths and weaknesses of the lesson
 - discussing the extent to which the lesson's objectives were achieved
 - checking the usefulness of the lesson
 - writing reports on teachers

Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson was the most frequently occurring response in this group. Perhaps, on one hand, this has a link to the notion of reflection mentioned above and on the other it has an evaluative purpose. I shall return to this point in the discussion.

4.2.2 Structure

Regarding the structure of the PLD, there were no distinctive variations in the responses, with the following pattern identified: PLDs start with an elicitation of the teacher's impression of the lesson followed by a question eliciting aims. Then, the teacher is asked to reflect upon different parts of the lesson, trying to recall events and why they happened in such a way. This process of reflection is supported by questions used as prompts to encourage the teacher to talk. The teacher is then asked to suggest ways of improving the lesson. Within this pattern of interaction, the RSE sometimes interjects with a question or provides suggestions. Finally the RSE thanks the teacher.

4.2.3 Benefits

Regarding the benefits of the PLD, I categorized responses into two main groups, classroom practices and general professional development.

1. Classroom practices

Teachers felt that the PLD helped them to:

- improve their board work
- give clearer instructions to students
- become better at classroom management
- become better at timing tasks
- become better at motivating students
- become better at dealing with less able students
- improve teaching techniques, e.g. using group work

2. General professional development

Teachers also felt that the PLD helped them to:

- improve their abilities to reflect upon their lessons
- gain more confidence in teaching
- raise self-awareness of individual differences between the learners
- raise self-awareness of their professional development
- become better at planning lessons
- expand their general knowledge about teaching and learning

Typical comments expressed by teachers were as follows:

- “These discussions have helped me grow as a teacher and have made me aware of the techniques of teaching English as a foreign language in Oman.”
- “Post lesson discussions are very useful and have certainly helped my teaching and professional development.”

4.2.4 Topics

Regarding topics focused on during the PLD, I can categorize these into two main groups, relating to classroom performance and administrative duties.

1. Classroom performance

- classroom management, i.e. classroom control, seating arrangements
- students’ participation during the lesson
- teaching techniques used during the lesson
- timing of tasks
- achievement of aims/objectives of the lesson
- lesson delivery
- use of visual aids

Typical comments were as follows:

- “My regional supervisor focuses on all the aspects of my work as a teacher. In fact he deals with everything and he tries to give all the necessary advice.”
- “He focuses mainly on achievement of the lesson’s objectives.”
- “The regional supervisor focuses on the techniques used, visual aids, class participation, group discussion, lesson plan and aims of the lesson.”

Topics such as classroom management, students’ participation during the lesson and achievement of aims and objectives were found the most focused on.

2. Administrative duties

- record keeping, e.g. continues assessment record
- remedial plans for less able students
- follow-up of Teacher’s Preparation Book

In supervisory visits, there are invariably references to the teacher’s preparation of the lesson, as many teachers pointed out.

4.2.5 Help required

Regarding the help teachers feel they require through PLDs, they reported that they would like more guidance in how to:

- create an encouraging classroom atmosphere

- motivate students
- teach grammar effectively without translating rules into Arabic
- teach pronunciation and writing
- use games in the classroom
- supplement the course materials with external resources
- adapt and modify tasks to suit individual learners' levels
- give feedback to students

4.2.6 Suggested improvements

Regarding suggestions to improve the PLD, I have grouped these under three categories: interpersonal relationships (the most commented on), RSEs' professional knowledge and the teacher's role.

1. Interpersonal relationships

- Discussions should always be held in a friendly, open atmosphere.
- RSEs should be empathic regarding practical difficulties faced by teachers inside the classroom.
- Discussions should be practical, interesting and relevant, based on joint understandings.
- Teachers' efforts should be appreciated, with positive as well as negative points mentioned.

Typical comments were as follows:

- "Post lesson discussions should encourage the teachers rather than discourage them, ignoring minor points or mistakes."
- "It should be friendly."
- "The discussion should be fruitful, i.e. the teacher and the supervisor should listen to each other."

2. RSEs' professional knowledge

- PLDs should always be informed by up-to-date knowledge of teaching methodology.
- RSEs should always be fully aware of the circumstances of each teacher, e.g. timetables, workload, extra curricula activities.
- PLDs should always be conducted in English.

3. Teacher's role

Suggestions for improving the PLD from the side of the teacher include:

- Being ready to accept advice.
- Believing in the value of one's contributions to the discussion.
- Taking notes during the discussion.
- Playing an active role in finding solutions to problems.

4.3 Summary

It seems clear from this presentation of teachers' attitudes towards the PLD, that the majority of them are positive about the supportive and developmental role of the RSE. Many teachers stated explicitly in their responses that the PLD helped them improve their teaching. However, the analysis also revealed areas in which improvements are possible, particularly with regard to interpersonal supervisory skills. In the next section, I discuss these findings.

5 DISCUSSION

I will organize this section around themes, drawing on my analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data to get a fuller picture. The organizing themes are as follows:

- The nature of the PLD
- The benefits of the PLD
- How to improve the PLD

5.1 The nature of the PLD

By 'the nature of the PLD', I refer to a set of findings that include the way the PLD is organized and conducted, the content of the discussion and its relevance, aspects of the teachers' work focused on, and the areas in which they feel they need help and support. I also discuss what happens during the PLD and how teachers respond to RSEs' suggestions and comments.

5.1.1 *How the PLD is organized and conducted*

As reported (in 4.2.2) above, findings revealed that PLDs are structured in very similar ways, which suggests consistency in supervisory behaviour. This surprised me, as I was expecting differences in the way supervisors organize and conduct such discussions, even within a limited number of PLDs. This finding is consistent with the literature, though. Arcario (1994), cited by Roberts (1998), found a persistent pattern in the way post-observation conferences between ESL teachers and supervisors were constructed. Perhaps, the most significant finding in the teachers' descriptions is that they all seem to agree that reflection is central to PLDs.

5.1.2 *How relevant the PLD is*

Virtually all the teachers felt the content of the PLD was relevant to the lesson observed, which suggests there was a clear focus on this. As Randall & Thornton (2004, p. 49) point out, "the function of the observation is to provide a description of what happens in the lesson ...to discuss and interpret during feedback." Clearly, the RSEs appeared to use data from the observation in this way, which suggests there was a professional commitment on their part towards guiding and supporting teachers during the discussion. Such commitment is vital if RSEs are to improve and develop teachers' abilities and knowledge.

5.1.3 *Whether sufficient time is allocated to the PLD*

A large majority of the teachers felt the PLD was of sufficient length, which for me was an unexpected finding, based on my personal experience of the teaching contexts in which these teachers work. Very often it is difficult, in my experience, to allocate sufficient time for the PLD, either because the teacher is not free, with another class to teach, or the PLD is conducted during a break between lessons, when it is difficult to cover 40 minutes of observed events. This is a problem acknowledged by Fanselow (1990, p. 185): "Although allowing time for discussions of observations as part of a teacher's load is a policy I advocate, this policy is rare.

Even in teacher preparation programmes, there are not always long periods of time for discussion". In such circumstances, Fanselow (ibid) argues, "rather than putting off discussions until sufficient time is available which may never take place," he suggests that observations and discussions should be as little as five minutes. He argues that although seeing five minutes of a lesson prevents us from seeing lesson development, in many classes thirty questions are asked in a minute and a dozen instances of feedback are made.

5.1.4 Areas of teachers' work focused on

There was some uniformity in the responses of teachers. They highlighted aspects of classroom performance and administrative duties as being the topics discussed during PLDs. This is not surprising. However, the crucial issue is perhaps 'what opportunities did such a focus create for teachers to learn from their experiences?' As Hargreaves & Fullan (1992, p. 2) point out, teachers need to be equipped "with the knowledge and skills that will increase their ability to provide improved opportunities to learn for all their pupils".

5.1.5 Areas in which teachers feel they need support

Findings showed that teachers felt they needed support and guidance from the RSE on a range of aspects concerning their work, all of which concerned teaching skills, such as the ability to create an encouraging classroom atmosphere or to teach grammar more effectively. However, an emerging question that I can raise here is 'will the RSE be able to provide all this kind of support?' If the answer to this question is yes, how much time is needed for such a matter? Is there really sufficient time during the PLD to deal with these issues? Perhaps, with hindsight, it might have been good to ask the teachers how long their PLDs normally are.

Giving the RSE all these responsibilities makes their task complex and even more challenging. But is this not what RSEs should be doing? Are not their responsibilities to support and guide these teachers? I believe that, in responding to such demands, firstly, the RSE has to be able to diagnose each teacher's professional needs and secondly, organize some in-service developmental programmes which cover the areas the teachers feel they need help and support in.

A large majority of the teachers appeared to acknowledge that their RSE possessed the ability to diagnose their professional needs as they reported their needs were understood. Based on the diagnoses of RSEs', in-service developmental programmes can be conducted. These interventions might include seminars, workshops, summer programmes and professional meetings (Gaies & Bowers, 1990). With a greater focus on in-service professional development, many of the teachers' anxieties will probably be sorted out.

5.1.6 Note-taking during the PLD

Many teachers reported not taking notes during the PLD, which surprised me. Perhaps, the extent to which teachers take notes depends on the nature of the discussion and the importance of the issues being discussed or perhaps some might feel that note-taking prevents them from fully concentrating on the discussion.

However, I was surprised that more teachers did not take notes, firstly, as these can be a resource to refer to later, and, secondly, as there is an inherent feeling in the teaching/learning context that supervisors appreciate such an activity. Unfortunately, I could find no literature on the subject in the field of supervision to relate this to.

5.1.7 Agreement with supervisors

A majority of the teachers reported they felt they should not necessarily agree with what the RSE said. This suggests the teachers are probably aware they can select from the advice offered, based on their priorities or on the conditions in which they operate. Differences are inevitable. As Roberts (1998, p. 157) puts it: "Each supervisor has her personal theories: about the target language; effective teaching; her image of herself as a teacher; how student-teachers should behave; and relationships with them". These theories affect all aspects of supervisory behaviour. However, the key point in such supervisor-teacher talk is that there should be a shared understanding between the two parties.

5.2 The benefits of the PLD

Teachers surveyed believed that the PLD created different kinds of learning opportunities, as I detail below.

5.2.1 Opportunities for reflection

Reflection creates opportunities for teachers to examine and assess their knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes and abilities about teaching and learning (Calderhead & Gates, 1993; Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Roberts, 1998; Korthagen, 2004). The findings here showed that the vast majority of the teachers felt that one of the main aims of the PLD was to provide them with opportunities to reflect upon their lessons. Since a majority also reported that they were given sufficient opportunities to reflect, this in turn suggests awareness amongst the RSEs of the importance of reflection in promoting professional development.

5.2.2 Opportunities for explaining ideas and views

A large majority of the teachers felt they were given opportunities to explain their ideas and views about teaching. This suggests that perhaps a 'non-directive' model of supervision was sometimes used. If supervisors use this model, teachers are free to explain and clarify their views about teaching and to try out new ideas (Gebhard, 1990). Furthermore, the use of such a model implies that supervisors may not make teachers feel that what they are saying is not worth listening to. Randall & Thornton (2004) refer to such supervisory behaviour as 'effective attending'.

5.2.3 Opportunities for learning from ideas and suggestions

The great majority of teachers stated that they found the ideas and suggestions provided during the PLD useful. Perhaps, this acknowledgement derived primarily from the teachers' own experiences of implementing the suggestions practically in

their teaching. In a response to an open-ended question, the teachers reported that the PLD helped them improve at two levels, relating to the classroom and their general professional knowledge. At the classroom level, teachers believed that the PLD helped improve their board-work, the clarity of their instructions, their classroom management, their ability to deal with less able students and their ability to set up group activities. At the level of their general professional knowledge, the teachers believed that the PLD helped them in their abilities to reflect upon their lessons, gain confidence in teaching, improve in lesson planning, gain self-awareness of their own professional development and expand their general knowledge about teaching and learning.

My interpretation is that these ideas and suggestions may have been provided in a positive spirit. If suggestions are imposed on us, they are less likely to be accepted or, indeed, have any effect on our practice. On the contrary, if ideas are provided in a positive manner, through a process of negotiating and sharing, they are more likely to be accepted. If sharing characterizes the way in which we provide advice to teachers, we would then categorize this model of supervision as 'collaborative supervision' (Gebhard, 1990) or what Cogan (1973) calls 'clinical supervision', when teaching is a problem-solving process.

5.3 How to improve the PLD

I focus here on suggestions provided by the teachers (in 4.2.6, above), which I have categorized as follows:

- interpersonal relationships
- the RSEs' professional knowledge
- the teacher's role

5.3.1 *Interpersonal relationships*

The importance of establishing good interpersonal relationships to support teacher development has been widely acknowledged (Freeman, 1990; Malderez & Bodóczy, 1999). Indeed, the teachers surveyed emphasized the importance of good relationships in this context, which suggests they are more open to advice from their RSE if trust, respect and a sense of shared understanding inform the mutual dialogue. According to Malderez (2004), teachers should feel the RSE is there to help them, guide them and place stepping-stones to help them develop professionally in their work.

Bearing these suggestions in mind, the RSE should neither be evaluative nor directive but rather supportive when discussing lessons with teachers. As Randall & Thornton (2004, p. 94) argue: "In the realm of dealing with feelings, supportive interventions are central to all aspects of giving advice".

5.3.2 *RSEs' professional knowledge*

In addition to the importance of interpersonal relationships, teachers feel the PLD should always be informed by up-to-date knowledge of teaching methodology. As Day (1999, p. 7) points out: "to succeed as a professional over a career span, subject knowledge will need to be regularly updated and teaching organization and

methods and skills revisited". Such suggestions should be taken into account for RSEs to continue to operate effectively as facilitators of knowledge transfer. As Day (ibid) adds, "teaching takes place in a world dominated by change, uncertainty and increasing complexity". There is therefore a need for new knowledge, skills and capabilities to respond to such demands. As Richert (1995, p. 6) argues: "Teacher educators need to be learners so that they can respond to the changing circumstances of their work and constantly learn to do it more effectively".

5.3.3 The teacher's role

The third element of achieving success in PLD sessions depends largely on the teacher's role. I would argue teachers can contribute more effectively by being ready to accept advice or by playing an active role in finding solutions to problems. In the literature review, I discussed three roles teachers assume in PLDs, referring to Waite (1993), cited by Oprandy (1999). Evidence, (4.2.6, above), suggests teachers should assume collaborative rather than passive or adversarial roles. Teachers who assume collaborative roles tend to listen actively and develop communicative competence through practice.

5.4 Summary

I have attempted to answer the question: 'What are English teachers' attitudes towards the post-lesson discussion?' In analysing the surveyed teachers' answers, which revealed positive attitudes, I have focused on the nature of the PLD, the benefits of the PLD and I have considered how the PLD can be improved.

Inevitably, there are limitations, as this was small-scale research gathered from a limited number of teachers in a particular region of Oman, using only one method of data collection. Triangulation, perhaps involving interviews and observations, would have increased the validity of the study. In this light, the implications of the study are discussed in the next section.

6 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Clearly, the PLD plays a central role in the professional development of teachers, and the great majority of those surveyed had positive attitudes towards it. However, more can be done to make PLDs useful, and in this section I consider how learning opportunities can be maximized. Implications I discuss relate to the PLD, RSEs and teachers.

6.1 Implications for the PLD

From my analysis of the way PLDs are organized and conducted, I realized there is generally no specific focus. Rather, as many areas as possible are often covered in the time allowed, though teachers feel they need support and guidance in specific areas of their work. This suggests there is a need for focused observations on topics agreed in advance. Ideally, then, we can move away from traditional ways of conducting PLDs to adopt a more flexible approach, based on teachers' needs and giving them responsibility to identify suitable topics in advance. Ultimately, such opportunities would help teachers acquire some degree of professional autonomy

and also develop awareness of principles (e.g.; as discussed by Richards, 2005) that underlie effective teaching. This is in line with contemporary developments. As Todd (2004, p. 113) argues: “Recently, there has been a movement towards helping teachers become thoughtful, adaptive decision makers”.

6.2 Implications for RSEs

Although the role of the RSE was positively viewed by a majority of the teachers in this study, there are still some areas of their work open to development. Interpersonal skills and professional knowledge, in particular, could be upgraded. Three implications arise from this. The first one is related to the findings themselves, which if incorporated into training sessions for RSEs, could have developmental value, in raising awareness of professional needs. The second implication is related to the initial preparation programmes for RSEs. If we accept that interpersonal skills play a central role in the process of supporting teachers’ development, then these skills should be explicitly addressed in some way through these programmes. The third implication is related to professional knowledge. In order for such knowledge to be up-to-date, RSEs could be involved in reflective cycles or ‘professional learning spirals’ (Malderez, 2004). For example, they could obtain feedback from teachers and then reflect on this feedback in a way that helped them examine their own knowledge and skills. Another strategy to support professional knowledge development would be through the provision of in-service training.

6.3 Implications for teachers

It was clear that some teachers surveyed lacked the readiness to accept advice or to play an active role during the PLD, thus adopting behaviour that can be described as adversarial or passive rather than collaborative (Waite, 1993, cited by Oprandy, 1999). Such unhelpful attitudes towards the PLD can be caused by a combination of factors. Initial teacher preparation programmes should raise awareness of the importance of in-service developmental activities, preparing teachers to see professional growth as a continuing process.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

This is a small-scale study, with findings geographically and numerically limited to a particular region in the Sultanate of Oman, and there is a need for further research into a number of issues raised. Research is necessary in the following three key areas:

- The PLD from a broader perspective, considering the views of RSEs, SETs and teachers.
- The role of the RSE, particularly regarding interpersonal skills and the influence these skills have in supporting teachers.
- Initial teacher preparation programmes to investigate how these programmes prepare teachers to perceive in-service developmental activities, such as the PLD.

6.5 Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate English teachers' attitudes towards the PLD in the Omani teaching and learning context. Findings revealed positive attitudes, as the majority of teachers surveyed felt that the PLD was beneficial. Many teachers reported that the PLD helped them develop in their practice as classroom teachers and in their general professional knowledge of teaching. The study also addressed key issues in supervisory practice and emphasized the importance of interpersonal skills in creating an atmosphere of trust and empathy, which is central to the process of giving advice to teachers. Considering the role of the teacher, it was argued that raising awareness of professional development should be part of initial teacher preparation programmes. In conclusion, the task of promoting teachers' professional development is a very important yet complex one. It requires cooperation from many parties, including English teachers, SETs, RSEs, schools and the human resources department within the Ministry of Education in order to create the optimum conditions for success.

REFERENCES

- A'Shizawi, S. (2005). *English teachers' attitudes towards the post-lesson discussion in Oman*. Unpublished MA dissertation: School of Education: University of Leeds, UK.
- Bartlett, L. (1990). Teacher development through reflective teaching. In Richards, J. C. & Nunan, D. (Eds.). *Second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Calderhead, J. & Gates, P. (Eds.). (1993). *Conceptualizing reflection in teacher education*. London: Falmer.
- Cogan, M. (1973). *Clinical supervision*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Day, C. (1999). *Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning*. London: Falmer.
- Egan, G. (1994). *The skilled helper: A problem-management approach to helping* (5th ed). Belmont, California: Brooks Cole.
- Fanselow, J. (1990). Let's see: Contrasting conversations about teaching. In Richards, J. C. & Nunan, D. (Eds.). *Second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Freeman, D. (1989). Training, development and decision-making: A model of teaching and related strategies for language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23 (1), 27-45.
- Freeman, D. (1990). Intervening in practice teaching. In Richards, J. C. & Nunan, D. (Eds.). *Second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gaies, S. & Bowers, R. (1990). Clinical supervision of language teaching: The supervisor as trainer and educator. In Richards, J.C. & Nunan, D. (Eds.). *Second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gebhard, J.G. (1990). Models of supervision: Choices. In Richards, J.C. & Nunan, D. (Eds.). *Second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (1992). Introduction. In Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (Eds.). *Understanding teacher development*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Head, K. & Taylor, P. (1997). *Readings in teacher development*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Korthagen, F. A. J. (2004). In search of the essence of a good teacher: Towards a more holistic approach in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*, 77-97.
- Malderez, A. (2004). A teacher educator's story of developing understanding. In Hayes, D. (Ed.). *Trainer development: Principles and practice from language teacher training*. Melbourne: Language Australia.
- Malderez, A. & Bodóczy, C. (1999). *Mentor courses: A resource book for trainer-trainers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oprandy, R. (1999). Exploring with a supervisor. In Richards, J.C. *Language learning awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Randall, M. & Thornton, B. (2004). *Advising and supporting teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. (Ed.). (2005). *Language learning awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. & Lockhart, C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C. & Nunan, D. (Eds.). (1990). *Second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richert, A. (1995). Introduction: Learning to teach teachers. In Russell, T. & Korthagen, F.A.J. (Eds.). *Teachers who teach teachers*. London: Falmer.
- Roberts, J. (1998). *Language teacher education*. London: Arnold.
- Robinson, P. (1993). *Teachers facing change*. Adelaide: NCVER.
- Todd, R.W. (2004). Trainer journals, reflection and development. In Hayes, D. (Ed.). *Trainer development: principles and practice from language teacher training*. Melbourne: Language Australia.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Minds in society*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Waite, D. (1993). Teachers in conference: A qualitative study of teacher-supervisor face-to-face interactions. *American Educational Research Journal, 30* (4), 675-702.
- Wiles, J. & Bondi, J. (1991). *Supervision: A guide to practice*. (3rd ed). New York: Merrill.