The Status of ESL / EFL Continuous Professional Development in Private Schools in the U.A.E Based on the Perceptions of In-Service Teachers and Administrators

حال التطور المهني المستمر للعاملين في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية في المدارس الخاصة لدولة الإمارات العربية من منظور المعلمين والاداريين

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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January -2016

Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine and evaluate the status of Continuous Professional Development in private schools in the context of the United Arab Emirates. It investigates the perceptions of in-service ESL / EFL teachers and administrators along with focusing on their preferences and attitudes towards their current CPD programmes. This dissertation follows a mixed research approach and involves several private schools from across the U.A.E. The results of the data analysis reveal some shortcomings that are currently associated with CPD programmes in private schools. The study provides several recommendations to avoid these shortcomings and suggests a workable policy that could improve CPD in private schools in the future.

ملخص الأطروحة

تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى فحص وتقييم حالة التطوير المهني المستمر في المدارس الخاصة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. وتقوم بدراسة ميول مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغير الناطقين بها العاملين في مجال هذا العمل بالإضافة إلى الإداريين الذين لهم صلة بتدريس هذه المادة في تلك المدارس، مع التركيز على مواقفهم واستجاباتهم لبرامج التطوير المهني.

وقد سلكت الأطروحة منهجاً بحثياً يجمع بين اتخاذ الكم والنوع معياراً للدراسة والبحث، بعد أن استهدفت مدارس عديدة في أنحاء دولة الإمارات كافة.

وقد كشف تحليل البيانات الذي قامت بها الدراسة عن بعض جوانب القصور المرتبط حالياً ببعض برامج التطوير المهني في المدارس الخاصة.

هذا وقد قدمت الدراسة العديد من التوصيات الهادفة إلى تجنب تلك المشكلات التي كشفت الدراسة عنها. كما اقترحت منهاجاً قابلاً للتطبيق من شأنه تحسين التطوير المهني في المستقبل.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1.   Importance and Significance of CPD

Continuous Professional Development (henceforth CPD) is increasingly being acknowledged as an essential part of professional life in the context of education. A huge number of schools and educational organizations around the globe appreciate the value of CPD and work constantly to promote it among teachers and educators. Many schools and institutes in the U.A.E were not far behind their international counterparts in acknowledging and adopting the basis and principles that CPD stands upon. CPD could refer to any activity that aims to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge through orientation, constant training and support (Coetzer, 2001, p.78). In addition, the notion that such development is likely to positively affect the teachers' attitudes and their learning and teaching approaches has made CPD a very valuable concept (Bolam in Early & Bubb, 2004, p.4; Day & Sachs, 2004, p.3). The demand for TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) has dramatically increased within the last few decades in the U.A.E due to the intense economic growth. This situation called for new arrangements where thousands of ESL /EFL teachers in the U.A.E were required to be up to the international standards and the need for proper professional development became paramount. Many schools and educational institutes in the U.A.E rushed to explore and import the methodologies and procedures that would allow them to stay up to date and fulfill the increasing demand for their valuable services. However, numerous schools and institutes are yet to make a greater commitment to staff development. The fact that even those schools and institutes, that had genuinely good intentions when they invested in developing and designing their CPD programmes, have adopted different methodologies and concepts based on their judgements creates a need for an investigation into these programmes. One of the aims of this dissertation is to take part in this investigation by exploring the perceptions of ESL/EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E in order to analyze the conditions of CPD from the point of view of the insiders who are in direct contact with this concept. This dissertation also reviewed the points of view that were presented by several expert administrative members in private schools in the U.A.E in order to compare their views with those of the teachers in an attempt to unveil the truth

about the hindrances, if any that are standing in the way of improving and implementing CPD. The study also focused on the teachers' attitudes, level of awareness, and recommendations in relationship to their in-service training and the level of acquired knowledge from CPD and how it is put into practice. There is no doubt that the importance that is placed on CPD is increasing in many educational organizations in the U.A.E. However, defining CPD and the types of processes that are associated with it may vary from one organization to another. Therefore, it is essential to inspect the insights of a wide sample of ESL/EFL teachers and administrators from all over the U.A.E to review their definition of CPD, and how they believe it should be conducted successfully.

It is natural that the content of education that teachers acquire before and after graduation is rapidly getting outdated with the day-to-day advance of new educational methodologies and techniques. Thus, CPD is becoming one of the most important necessities of modern teaching practice and an urgent need to stay linked with new developments. Teachers regardless of their level of experience need to stay in touch with the new advancing requirements if they want to provide the quality of education that is needed nowadays. In order to achieve such an important goal teachers as well as their employers should have positive attitudes towards CPD and both parties should help each other in terms of providing and facilitating the conditions that would help CPD to flourish. Technical innovations that are integrated into teaching practice are considered to be new topics for both novice and experienced teachers alike. Such circumstances have made CPD an objective that every teacher should seek regardless of their level of knowledge and skill. Although these arguments stress the importance of CPD and the need for it to be widely implemented in the U.A.E, this does not mean that implementing CPD will end our troubles. The quality and practicality of CPD are another issue that should be examined carefully if the educational community in the U.A.E wishes to have effective outcomes that truly make a change. Therefore, investigating whether CPD programmes exist within schools and educational institutes in the U.A.E should not be the final aim. The final aim of the investigation should be to establish whether these programmes are effective or not and why.

There are several types of CPD activities that ESL/EFL teachers as well as their employers in the U.A.E could familiarize themselves with if they want to steadily improve the quality of teaching and learning. Activities may include developing a reflective approach to the

teachers' work, intensifying the teachers' pedagogical skills and awareness through working, sharing the obtained knowledge with colleagues as well as creating a supportive community, and of course, enrolling teachers in workshops and courses. This dissertation investigates the teachers' preferences and conditions in relation to the activities that they undergo as part of their CPD and the availability and variety of these activities. A large part of this dissertation has also been dedicated for collecting/reporting the points of view of the administrative members in private schools and what they consider as the obstacles that stand in the way of achieving the goals of CPD. Future planning is also an important issue that many international and local educators consider to be crucial for the currently available CPD as it helps both teachers and administrative members to set their future goals and provides a background for both parties to monitor their progress in the near future. It also shows the level of commitment that both teachers and their employers have towards professionally developing themselves and it is an aspect that this study did not ignore. All participants in this study whether teachers or administrative members in private schools in the U.A.E were requested to provide information about their future plans in a relationship with CPD in order to create a fair idea about the pathway that CPD is taking in this part of the world.

The fact that many private schools in the U.A.E are using English as the sole medium of instruction, not only for ESL/EFL classes but also for all subjects, has increased the burden on ESL/EFL teachers in terms of their liability to deliver effective lessons. This is mainly because the level of efficiency in their lessons could affect the students' attainment in all subjects. This provided another reason to be added to a long list of reasons that would make successful CPD a priority for these teachers and their employers. Using English as the sole medium of instruction is becoming a growing global phenomenon, and many private schools in the U.A.E are promoting this feature as an advantage that they have, and are using it for marketing purposes. This means that these schools need to pay special attention to their students' language competence and provide all possible means to enhance it if they want to fulfil the image that they want to create for their customers to see. One of the most effective means to enhance the students' language competence is to provide those students with efficient ESL/EFL teachers that are capable of delivering education of the highest quality, and this can more easily be achieved if those teachers adopt CPD as an indispensable part of their professional lives.

1.2. Rationale

As will be seen in chapter three of this dissertation, this study investigates many aspects and elements that relate to CPD in private schools in the U.A.E. The study draws on the in-service years that the author spent working in private schools in the U.A.E. During these six years the author did not receive any significant CPD training or support that was specifically designed for ESL/EFL teachers in any of the three private schools that he served in, despite all his attempts to improve himself professionally. This lack of attention towards ESL/EFL CPD made the author wonder about CPD conditions and other teachers' perceptions about them within the remaining private schools in the U.A.E. Many questions were asked to a large community of ESL/EFL teachers and administrative members from various private schools across the country, and on many occasions the replies to these questions involved mutual accusations that teachers and managers exchange when trying to identify the problem. The author was not satisfied with these ambiguous replies and felt the necessity to conduct a serious study that would investigate this topic from different angles and survey a representative sample of ESL/EFL teachers and administrators.

1.3. Problem Statement

Previous local research has found evidence of the existence of CPD programmes within the local educational settings (Alwan 2001; Al-Neami 2007). However, the conditions and implementations of these programmes, especially in private schools in the U.A.E, need to be reviewed and revised since many of these studies were conducted a long time ago. Besides, there could be many factors that have changed or have been newly introduced from the time when many of these studies introduced their results. Factors like the current global economic conditions, shifting towards using English as the sole medium of instruction in many private schools, using new technologies and integrating them with teaching, and having yearly inspections and evaluations by many governmental Educational bodies may have had an influence on the variety and implementation of CPD programmes during the recent years.

Findings of previous local research also need to be followed up to monitor the changes that might have occurred within the context under investigation. Many researchers like Al Banna (1997) and Alwan (2001) have identified several negative characteristics that were associated with CPD in the U.A.E. Some of these negative features involved lack of effective organization, lack of consideration towards the teachers' specific needs and poor communication with the teachers in regards to selecting their CPD programmes. Many recommendations and possible solutions were recommended by local researchers to address these shortcomings. Now, what has been done since these recommendations were given? Were these shortcomings resolved? What are the new outcomes? Are there any newly emerged shortcomings? All these questions require clear answers. The main problem that this study wants to address is the fact that many ESL/EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E are still complaining about their CPD progress and the effectiveness and / or lack of the programmes that they get from their schools. This conclusion is based on the researcher's observations about many of his colleagues who work in the private sector. The presence of these complaints and dissatisfaction from part of many ESL/EFL teachers leads to an assumption that suggests the existence of some flaws within these programmes that should be fixed. These flaws are to be clearly identified in order to suggest some recommendations that are based on the findings of this study in an attempt to solve the problem.

1.4. Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to critically assess the CPD programmes in private schools in the U.A.E in order to identify factors, which contribute to the performance and efficiency of these programmes to provide a list of recommendations that address the shortcomings in these programmes and serve as a strategic framework for educators to follow.

1.5. Research objectives

This dissertation examines and evaluates the status of Continuous Professional Development in private schools in the U.A.E by investigating the perceptions of in-service ESL / EFL teachers and administrators. It focuses on the teachers' and administrators' preferences and attitudes towards their current CPD programmes, and it catches on their suggestions that aim to improve their CPD conditions.

The main objective of this dissertation is to collect the necessary data, which would allow the researcher to determine the shortcomings that are associated with the current CPD programmes that exist in private schools in the U.A.E, analyze their causes and generate a workable policy to avoid these shortcomings in the future. This objective is better achieved if it is addressed based on the factors that could contribute to its success, and it can only be achieved when other related objectives are achieved as well; therefore, a list of objectives was created as following:

1. To develop educational research tools that would allow the researcher to collect accurate data for the research.

2. To communicate with a sample of the population of ESL / EFL teachers and administrators, and gain accesses to their data.

3. To use the research tools to collect data sets from in-service ESL / EFL teachers and administrative members in private schools in the U.A.E, then compare, and contrast the collected data sets.

4. To analyze the collected data and state the findings.

5. To prepare a list of recommendations that is based on the findings to function as a framework that could be utilized to enhance CPD in private schools in the U.A.E in the future.

1.6. Dissertation Structure

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter is this introduction, which highlights the importance of CPD and gives a brief explanation of its significance, explains the rationale for this study, and gives details about its aims and objectives. The introduction is followed by a literature review, Chapter 2 that reviews both international and local existing literature. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology used and the tools that were developed to conduct this research. Chapter 4 introduces the data analysis and results. Chapter 5 discusses the findings, and provides recommendations based on them.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. What is Continuous Professional Development?

Knowledge about Continuous Professional Development (henceforth CPD) may vary from teacher to teacher; some teachers believe that CPD merely touches on what is known as pedagogical knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge can be defined as the knowledge about the methods of teaching or the practices that enable a teacher to transfer knowledge and attempt to achieve the goals of education. Pedagogical knowledge involves knowledge about curricula and instruction, as well as teaching and learning (Luneta 2011). Other more experienced teachers may believe that CPD involves a lot more than that. During the 1980's scholars began to focus on the role of CPD and what should be included in it. Shulman (1986), an American scholar, considered content knowledge to be the key to the success of an effective teacher, but he also believed that content knowledge should be combined with the pedagogical knowledge to create the perfect combination that would dramatically enhance effective teaching. Shulman claimed that teacher development programmes deal with pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge from two different angles and that both types of knowledge are dealt with separately. According to Shulman, these two fields of knowledge should be combined in one form of practical knowledge that would guide teachers to perform well in the context of a classroom (Shulman 1986). Subsequently, a large number of scholars agreed that CPD programmes should always involve three types of knowledge: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and conceptual knowledge (Murray 2010; Luneta 2011; Banegas 2009; Hill, Schilling & Ball 2004). According to Schneider & Stern (2010), conceptual knowledge provides an abstract understanding of the principles and relations between pieces of knowledge in certain domains, in other words, it is "to know why something happens in a particular way ". (Hiebert & Leferre

1986). Content knowledge, on the other hand, can be defined simply as the knowledge of the subject matter that is supposed to be learned or taught to students at the school. The term 'pedagogical content knowledge', or PCK, which is usually associated with Shulman (1986) represents Shulman's point of view regarding what students need from a teacher. They need a teacher that is not only knowledgeable in the subject matter but also capable of teaching that subject in an effective manner. This point of view that adopted a combination of content and teaching knowledge led to the introduction of PCK. PCK is "the experiential knowledge and skills acquired through classroom experience" (Lee & Luft 2008. p.1345). Now one may ask if PCK can be simply acquired through classroom experience, then why it is usually involved in CPD. One logical answer to this question could be that not all teachers have sufficient classroom experience or that not all teachers succeed in obtaining PCK through the classroom context. Therefore, this knowledge has to be transferred or passed from teacher to teacher by other means that may involve peer-to-peer observations, which are usually considered as CPD, or simply by using instruction. It appears that in order to reach an effective teaching level, teachers should be capable of integrating the three types of knowledge (content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and conceptual knowledge) that many scholars acknowledge as necessary elements for CPD in order to create excellent learning opportunities for their students. In other words, effective teaching can be defined as a presentation of content that is presented to the students through a suitable context that involves excellent instruction. (Guskey 2003: Murray 2010: Rosemary & Feldman 2009).

It is also apparent that the idea behind the provision of CPD is based essentially on the common perception that teachers need constant review of the three types of knowledge in order to remain focused and skilled in using effective pedagogical strategies, and that for them to retain their professional teaching qualities these areas of knowledge must be reinforced. Research has supported this perspective. (Ball & Bass 2003; Barber & Mourshed 2007; Luneta 2011). Most of the various definitions of CPD found in the literature contain expressions related to the three categorical types of knowledge.

While reviewing previous research papers one can encounter plenty of definitions that try to describe and explain the nature of the continuous professional development of "the kind that produce change in teaching practice and student outcome" (Archibald, Coggshal, Croft & Goe

2011, p. 2). This quality of CPD seems to be of great importance in preparing new teachers as well as keeping experienced teachers in good academic shape. It is also clear that the purpose of having CPD is to sharpen and enhance the skills and knowledge that teachers have in order to improve both the learning and teaching processes (Luneta 2011, p. 26). Therefore, CPD could also be defined as "all types of professional learning undertaken by teachers beyond the point of initial training". (Craft 1996, p. 6).

Hoyle (1995, p. 24) gives further details by defining CPD as "the process by which teachers acquire the knowledge and skills essential to good professional practice at each stage of a teaching career". Shaw (1995, p. 17) adds that CPD might also involve the knowledge that we obtain unconsciously through mixing with other teachers who are probably more experienced, and discussing educational matters with them. He explains, "teaching and management learnt from other colleagues both consciously and unconsciously, as well as individual and team staff development gained in meetings with other teachers to discuss matters of common concerns" (ibid:17). This means that the knowledge that teachers acquire from other more experienced teachers through discussions or through observations that involve their classroom pedagogical is a valuable part of Continuous Professional Development.

2.2. Why is Continuous Professional Development important?

Being a teacher of English as a second language requires a high degree of skill in conveying knowledge, as well as leadership skills in order to help the students master the language. In order to maintain the necessary skills that are required to perform this important role, constant and continuous training is needed. This explains why people who want to join this profession and be effective teachers should undergo a long pre-service training process before actually becoming effective teachers, and why some of those new teachers should demand more training even after a short time of their graduation. Continuous and novel research findings are currently developing at a rapid pace in the education sector. In fact, this process has been going on for thousands of years. These days, in the context of our modern pedagogy, this means that any acquired skill or knowledge can be easily outdated in a short period, and the only way to keep up the level of necessary knowledge and skills is to maintain Continuous Professional Development.

Numerous studies have been conducted to study the importance and effects of Continuous Professional Development, and many of the findings of these studies are in favor of having it, and acknowledge its importance in terms of having positive effects on education. Saunders (2000, p.12) acknowledges the positive effect of CPD as he considers professionally well-developed teachers to be effective teachers that possess the appropriate level of knowledge of the subject matter and can effectively use their pedagogical skills to not only create but also sustain a learning environment that is effective and productive. Lotter, Warwood and Jose Bonner (2006, p.16) had similar results which recognized the need for CPD. The results also stated that in order to ensure a premium level of teaching and learning outcomes, educators should regularly be involved in Continuous Professional Development programmes that especially focus on the knowledge base that is directly related to their specific context. In spite of having so many research papers that were written by well-known scholars that acknowledge the important role of CPD, we have other scholars that are more cautious regarding the amount of importance that should be given to CPD. Many of these studies state that CPD is important and effective only if a certain number of conditions are fulfilled. Among the studies reviewed was that conducted by Opfer & Pedder (2010, pp. 413-431). In this study, the authors state that in order to acknowledge whether CPD programmes are effective of not, a set of relevant questions should be answered. These questions do not merely ask if there are benefits taking place or not, but also who is benefiting, and how, what is effective, who determines what is effective, and what criteria is used.

2.3. What benefits should we expect from CPD?

The main source of knowledge in an ESL / EFL classroom is usually an effective teacher. Teachers play a vital role in terms of transferring knowledge and supporting students through continuous guidance. This is probably why CPD is an essential need for a teacher if he or she wishes to contribute effectively to the learning of ESL / EFL students. According to Opfer and Pedder (2010, pp. 413-414) the impact of possible benefits of CPD may be divided into three types:

1. Direct impacts that directly affect the students', the teachers', and the schools' practice and lead to direct desirable changes in these areas.

2. Indirect influences to teachers that are represented through enhancing the teachers' status. (e.g. salary increases or career prospects)

3. Indirect influences to the institute or school that encourages CPD through increasing the level of recruitment at that specific institute or school.

In other words, CPD has direct and indirect benefits that might be considered desirable depending on what teachers, administrators, or students believe is effective in terms of general enhancement of education. Many studies have already shown that the teachers' knowledge improves when he or she gets involved in CPD (McLinden et al 2006; Miller and Glover 2007;). Other studies affirmed that teacher attitudes towards education change positively after CPD (Pedder 2006, Wilde 2005). Bolam and Weidling (2006, p.113) stated, "well-structured CPD can lead to successful changes in teachers practice, school improvements and improvements in pupil's achievement" this indicated that CPD has a wide range of benefits that can be reflected on by teachers, schools and students. The findings of this study support the finding of another study conducted by Cordingley et al (2007), in which the results indicated that involving teachers in CPD has a positive effect on students' academic level.

In another attempt to list the various benefits of Continuous Professional Development, Johnston (2002) adds another valuable benefit, which is "understanding". He claims that teachers, especially the novices, face many unexpected and variable situations and circumstances inside their classrooms; they have to understand these situations and prepare themselves to deal with them rather than change them. Johnston also believes that CPD allows these teachers to have a better understanding of what they might encounter in their classrooms and that it would give them a better chance to correctly deal with these unexpected situations.

From another completely different perspective, it looks as if having constant technological updates that are emerging in the practice of teaching every day has created another potential benefit that could be linked to CPD. It appears that teachers do not only need to learn how to deal with technology, but they also need to learn how to use technology as an effective pedagogical tool that would strongly enhance the teaching practices inside their classrooms (Velazques – Torres 2006). Teachers need to be competently at the technological forefront, keeping up with these advancing technologies if they do not want to end up using outdated teaching strategies and techniques. Seemingly the only effective way to achieve this is through CPD. Administrators

should understand this conceptually and practically, naturally providing their staff with all the necessary means to keep up with the fast phase of technological development. The fact that these technological developments are changing so fast will most likely create a challenge for both experienced and inexperienced teachers alike. It does not matter how experienced a teacher is when the concepts that he or she is dealing with are newly presented and have nothing to do with the teacher's past experience. In this particular situation, teachers might vary in terms of how hard it would be for them to deal with these new technological advances based on their previous expertise or based on other possible factors such as; age, education, culture, etc. These obstacles, if one may call them that, could probably be overcome through Continuous Professional Development, especially since "learning to teach is a lifetime process" (Atay, 2004, p.143). In a recent study that was conducted in the United Arab Emirates to investigate the teachers' perceptions of the use of tablets in mainstream classrooms in the United Arab Emirates it was stated that "teachers need guidance, instruction and professional development in terms of how to integrate such devices into the teaching and learning process" (El-Shaar. 2012, p.28). El-Shaar also argued, "without proper training and workshops, tablets become expensive devices that the students use as personal e-readers. The professional development should be focused on, and the teachers should receive training about how to enhance reading, writing, and listening skills while using tablets" (ibid, p.28). This is definitely another study, which supports the notion that technological training is another benefit of CPD. Judging from today's rush to use tablets beside many other technological devices in thousands of schools all around the globe, it looks as if this type of CPD, which targets the integration of technological devices and software with teaching practices for the purpose of enhancing the quality of delivery inside the classroom is subject to growth and expansion. The fact that schools in the future might wholly depend on technology and ignore most of the traditional methodologies, techniques and teaching strategies, could be something that a current teacher will not be able to endure without having Continuous Professional Development.

2.4. International Research

Research about CPD has been relatively active in recent years both internationally and locally. The reason behind this is probably the increasing level of awareness about the importance of teachers' readiness, the significance of sustaining the teachers' academic level,

and the effectiveness of teaching and delivery. Many studies have been designed to measure the claimed benefits of CPD while many others were designed to investigate the quantity and quality of CPD programmes. An interesting study conducted in England was that of Opfen and Pedder (2010) who aimed to measure the benefits, status and effectiveness of CPD for teachers in England. This study followed a mixed method approach in which 'snapshots', as called by the authors, were taken in nine primary, and three secondary schools. The quantitative part of the research involved insights from a literature review of reports of pragmatic research about CPD since the year 2004.

The results of this study were very thought provoking and can be summarized as follows:

1. It was found that there was a lack of effective CPD with regards to contextual practice, teamwork (collaboration with colleagues), and the ability to link research with professional learning, which is, in other words, the effective usage of information for academic learning and good professional practice.

2. There was also an absence of effective CPD concerning the form of CPD provided as well as the duration of the practice involved in it.

3. The study found very little evidence to support the general proclamation that suggests that the investigated CPD programmes had a highly significant impact on the academic level. The impact on the academic level was investigated in terms of elevating the standards and/or narrowing the gap related to achievement. This shocking piece of information was determined in spite of the fact that the majority of teachers who went through these CPD programmes had a positive effect on students learning.

4. Many teachers listed a wide range of claimed CPD benefits. However, these benefits varied significantly according to the different characteristics of the teachers themselves and the schools where these CPD programmes were applied.

5. School administrative staff stated that the CPD programmes that are based inside the classrooms or school, and focus on enhancing the pedagogical level of lessons and improving the learning process, provide a better value for money than the CPD programmes that are organized outside schools.

The results of this study are considered to be very interesting because they contradict a widespread/widely held opinion which suggests that CPD programmes have a great impact on students' academic results and that they also have a great deal to do with raising the academic standards of both schools and education in general.

Quan-Baffour (2007), from the University of South Africa, carried out an earlier study that aimed to determine the needs of teachers in schools, to identify possible areas of insufficiencies in their teaching practice and to test a strategy that was supposed to enhance the quality of teaching at the school level. For this study, the author chose forty teachers from five different schools located in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa as his study sample. The chosen schools were purposefully selected for the study because of their remote location. The author explained that he chose those remote schools because he assumed that remote schools would probably have unique issues related to new methods of teaching due to possible lack of resources and the ability to attract more experienced and capable teachers. Teachers who formed the sample for the study were divided into three categories; novice teachers who have less than three years of experience, relatively new teachers who have between three to six years of teaching experience, and experienced teachers who have more than ten years of experience. The strategy tested in this study aimed to encourage teachers to discuss in depth the issues that are considered to be challenging or mysterious for the teachers. Focus group discussions were held with novice and experienced teachers where they had to discuss their teaching experiences. Issues related to curriculum and pedagogical transformation. The impact they create in their teaching practice were heavily discussed and analyzed among both novice and experienced teachers. The aim of these focus group discussions that lasted about an hour at each school was to gather information about the teachers' CPD needs in relation to their context. According to the author, these discussions helped the teachers realize that they were not alone and that the challenges that they faced on a daily basis were also faced by other teachers. In these focus group discussions, no specific questions were asked, but teachers were asked to speak freely about their pedagogical challenges and needs. This approach probably helped teachers to talk freely about their problems and gave teachers the courage to point out the issues that they consider challenging or unreasonable. The results of this study were mainly collected by manually coding the various concerns discussed by the teachers and then these codes were categorized according to their relationships. For example, all the responses that had to do with common challenges or shortages

in needed elements were categorized under the same category and so on. An interesting outcome was that, even though the focus group discussions were held in 5 different schools and under different circumstances and occasions, many common concerns and challenges were shared by participants from different schools in the sample group. The responses of the participants in the sample were divided into five main categories as following:

1. Concerns related to teaching methods in the outcome-based classroom. (95% of the participants)

2. Concerns related to the effectiveness of classroom management in harmony with recognition of lesson outcomes. (90% of the participants)

3. Alternative ways of evaluating learners holistically (88% of the participants) and preparing lessons for effective instruction. (86% of the participants)

4. Putting students in groups and effectively managing their activities for better teaching and learning outcomes. (85 % of the participants)

5. The act of enforcing discipline in the classroom. (85 % of the participants)

These findings suggest that the focus group discussions are effective in identifying the CPD needs of teachers as they show high percentages of teachers sharing similar concerns and having similar feelings regarding some common issues that they consider challenging or ambiguous. However, identifying the needs of teachers' prior CPD programmes is not the end of the line. Teachers should be provided with effective training that has to eventually overcome all the obstacles and fix all the problems that worry them. In order to achieve this final goal, adequate CPD programmes have to be carefully designed in a specific way that would not only allow teachers to address the targeted problems, but be very exact and precise to avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding. In this particular case (the Quan-Baffour study), the author in cooperation with the administrations of the five schools where the study took place, applied mentorship programmes in which more experienced teachers guided the novice ones with help from the administration. These mentorship programmes were specifically designed to address the areas of deficiency that the teachers pointed out earlier in their focus group discussions, and only tutors who had adequate and sufficient experience in these targeted areas were chosen as mentors

for their groups. The administrations at the five participating schools had their share in contributing to the programmes as they provided variable resources, structural settings, support, and evaluations based over three months. The author of the study took part in the evaluations that were held later to evaluate the mentorship programmes at the five schools that participated in the study and, according to him, there were noticeable improvements in teacher performance and self-confidence. For evaluative purposes, he used a questionnaire to gauge the views of the principals, mentors and headmasters of each school, and met with the mentees at each school in meetings that lasted around 30 minutes each. The meetings with the mentees were held to compare their perceptions with those of the administrative staff and see if there were any conflicts. After analyzing the data, the author stated that the results indicated a high degree of confidence among teachers in outcomes-based teaching methods, and high levels of understanding in applying effective lesson preparation as well as a noticeably increased level of mastery in the supervision of students' activities, assessment and classroom control in terms of discipline. In his conclusion, Quan-Baffour stated that his paper discussed school-based CPD because CPD programmes arranged by regional education offices tend to be generic and usually do not address the specific needs of a particular school that definitely has a negative effect on their influence and efficiency. This study was attention grabbing because it highlighted the important role of school-based CPD programmes. School-based CPD programmes could be very effective as they target the very specific needs of a particular school, which often means less time and wasted effort as they more directly deal with the problematic issues that urgently need solving. These programmes also tend to be much cheaper as they are organized in-house and regularly require less additional settings than those that are usually associated with external specialized CPD program providers. Another possible advantage might be the extra confidence that these programmes provide for both local mentors, who are usually the most experienced teachers in the targeted educational field, and the mentees or novice teachers.

McArdle and Coutts (2010) discussed the role of the concept of reflection in relationship to CPD. Reflection is usually associated with CPD as it is considered as a way of learning from one's own experiences. In this form of training, teachers provide reflection for each lesson they teach in order to understand their weaknesses and strengths, and by reviewing their actions and thoughts teachers presumably are able to strengthen their weaknesses and to encourage the use their stronger practices more often. The authors of this paper focused on

shared sense-making and collaborative engagement as activities that can enhance reflection. In their paper, McArdle and Coutts suggested some points that they think would explain the role of reflection and suggest ways to enhance it. These points can be summarized as following:

1- "Both action and reflection are required and both have individual and social dimensions" (McArdle and Coutts 2010, p. 209).

According to the writers, teachers make sense of their practice settings by making an action and then reflect on that particular action individually, but sometimes they do that by collaborating with other teachers and this gives their activities and reflections four dimensions that could be named as; active, reflective, individual and social.

2- "Both reflection and action are concerned with individual and social identity formation" (ibid. p. 209).

The authors of this paper also suggested that the communities that are usually involved in the teaching practice are very closely linked together, and because of this, individual teachers who have successfully reflected upon their practice enhanced their professional role and shared their success with others, enjoy a sense of developmental push. This sense of achievement could be used as a driving motivation for further success in relation to continuous professional development.

3- "Reflection must involve challenge and have critical edge" (ibid. p.210).

McArdle and Coutts also state that a teacher who works in a larger community may, at first, be challenged, but he or she will eventually be sustained by the idea of having a personally distinct theory of practice of his or her own. This would give the teacher a sense that proposes his or her ability to contribute to the community. CPD programmes and activities are necessarily social in such settings according to the authors and they should involve challenges and variable perspectives or alternative views shared by many other teachers in a social environment.

4- "Sense-making through engagement is necessary to integrate the dimensions of reflection and action" (ibid. p, 210).

Sense making could be described as "an approach to thinking about and implementing communication research and practice and the design of communication-based systems and activities" (Twente 2010)

The authors of the paper suggested a model where we have sense-making that represents collaboration with action and reflection as a way of intellectualizing the incorporation the two dimensions in both their social and individual practices. The authors also suggest that learning from self-experience happens when activities intersect during the process of sense making as engagement with action and reflection. In other words, they believe that when designing CPD practices, one should include reflection on the necessity to take action. This action should have the purpose to change, which is essential for professional development and thus vital for the design of CPD activities.

5- "Sense-making and engagement are self-sustaining and lead to professional renewal" (McArdle and Coutts 2010, p 210).

The authors of this paper eventually explained that the concept of continuous professional development that is happening in a community of practice leads to new dialogues that are naturally related to professional renewal and the regeneration of professional knowledge. They conclude that investigative and reflective discussions among educators might be a practical and sustainable form of continuous professional development. . This is a notion that was introduced earlier by Clark (2001). McArdle and Coutts (2010) approached CPD in a special manner where concepts beyond reflection were discussed. Sense making in a rather social manner and collaborative engagement were presented as key factors for professional renewal, which are notions that might enhance the structural designs and forms of CPD programmes.

2.5. Local Research

Local research about CPD had very little to contribute in the past, but in recent years, it seems that there are more regional scholars keen to investigate the status of CPD programmes in the United Arab Emirates and / or to contribute to designing and evaluating these programmes.

In 2002, Abdelhamid did a study that aimed to design a scheme that would organize formative peer observation in a language centre at one of the U.A.E Universities. The purpose of designing the scheme was to assist teachers in their teaching objectives; specifically, to enhance

their teaching practice by highlighting and putting into practice the refining features of peer observation those teachers seemed to prefer over traditional evaluation. For this reason, Abdelhamid (2002) conducted a small-scale study to investigate the teachers' perceptions in this language centre towards peer observation and tried to unveil the type of scheme that was more favoured within the department. The study followed a qualitative method of research in the form of a case study that involved questionnaires, peer observations and interviews with teachers that took part in the previously mentioned peer observations. The specifically designed questionnaire was distributed among thirty-three teachers and administrators, but only twenty-four of the questionnaire papers were returned which forms about 73% of the total number of questionnaire forms. The observations, on the other hand, took place in a language centre of the university and involved three female teachers as volunteers. The volunteers started a set of peer observations where they would reflect on their performance as well as the performance of other participants for a total duration of two weeks. Following that, the researcher conducted a set of interviews with the participants in which they were asked about their perceptions regarding the experience in general and how they felt about it. The fact that the observation part of the study involved only three teachers from the same gender is probably one the most distinctive weaknesses of the study, however, the author conveyed very interesting findings that could be summarized as following:

1- 91% of the participants in the questionnaire were interested in knowing how other teachers conduct their classes.

2- 75% of the participants in the questionnaire were willing to be part of CPD peer observation.

3- For the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, the majority of teachers had positive answers regarding using formative peer observation, but some of them stated that it should be used under certain conditions. Some of the main conditions that many teachers agreed upon were confidentiality, constructive feedback, and that formative peer observation should not be used by the administration as a tool to punish teachers.

4- The three volunteers that participated in the peer observation stated positive perceptions about the experience during their interviews. They also mentioned that the feedback that they got was constructive and helped them realize some weaknesses that they were not aware of.

This study highlights the role of school-based CPD programmes, which in this case is using formative peer observation. The study also indicated that many teachers feel that in order to use CPD programmes that are based on formative peer observation effectively, a certain set of conditions should be met. The most important general condition according to the author is that these observations should not be for evaluation purposes; otherwise, they would lose their objective, which is to help the teachers.

Al Neaimi (2007) conducted a research study to investigate the availability and effects of CPD programmes for ESL/ EFL teachers in the U.A.E. The study followed a mixed method of research where questionnaires were distributed among teachers and interviews with department supervisors were conducted to check if there was a difference between the attitudes and opinions of both groups. The sample size for the study was of adequate number as it involved 78 teachers; however, all these teachers were female teachers. The author explained that it was more appropriate for her as an Emirati woman to choose such a sample and that this was preferable to her. The interviews with the department supervisors that were conducted also involved one gender and all the participants were women. In spite of the single-gender of the study sample which is usually considered as a limitation, the study revealed very interesting replies from the participants who answered the questionnaire, and these answers showed many common concerns and opinions that those teachers shared. For example, 76% of the participants stated that they were in need of CPD programmes, 73% of the participants stated that they did not think that CPD training is a waste of time, money or effort and 82% of the participants stated that they believed that the main reason that prevents teachers from pursuing CPD is the lack of time. Nevertheless, the most important finding that resulted from the study was probably the fact that the majority of teachers and supervisors believed that there is a lack of resources and adequate CPD programmes in the U.A.E. These results support the findings of Alwan (2001), who conducted an earlier study that had the same aims and almost similar results. Alwan stated that CPD programmes for English teachers might be available to a certain degree in the U.A.E, but the quality and effectiveness of these programmes required some review since many of these programmes ignore the specific needs of English teachers and some of them are, in general, incompetent (Alwan 2001).

AlHassani (2012) conducted another local study that aimed to examine the perceptions of ESL teachers towards the CPD programmes that were given by Public Private Partnership Schools (PPP) at Al Ain. The author wanted to know the degree to which teachers thought these programmes helped them develop their skills. The data was collected through a set of interviews and a survey and the study was carried out in Al Ain educational zone. The participants who represented the interview sample were 18 teachers of both genders. The findings of the study reflected that the majority of teachers were in favor of CPD models that encourage collaboration among teachers. It also showed that many of the participants thought that the CPD programmes that were offered by (PPP) schools were possibly not successful because they lacked content focus, consistency, and that they had little consideration for the actual needs of ESL teachers. The results also showed that almost all the teachers (89%) felt that the CPD programmes that were offered by (PPP) schools in Al Ain were repetitive, and offered nothing new in the previous couple of years that preceded the study. The results of this study sustain the recommendation of putting the specific needs of ESL teachers as a priority when designing CPD programmes and highlight the importance of diagnostic analysis that should usually precede the designing of such programmes.

Abou - Kouta (2012) carried out another interesting local research study that was also conducted in 2012, but, this time, it was about the impact of ESL/EFL teachers' CPD on their students' achievement. The study aimed to examine the relationship between ESL/EFL CPD and the students' outcomes. The researcher followed a Quasi-Experimental research methodology to investigate whether teachers' continuous professional development has a positive influence on students' grades or not. The Quasi-Experimental study was directed to make an estimation of the differences in the mean and standard deviation of the students' marks. The study involved 231 grade 12 female students from three high schools. The chosen schools had an ongoing one-year CPD training program that lasted throughout the study. The researcher conducted a set of tests to figure out if the content of CPD sessions had any influence whether positive or negative on students' achievement. The tests gave the researcher basis for several comparisons that emphasized the differences between expected outcomes and the results of data analysis. The scores of the participant students were gathered within three different timeframes as they were gathered prior, during and by the end of the CPD training. The results were later on analyzed and compared to estimate the impact of teachers' CPD on them. The findings of the study were

highly thought provoking, as they did not only confirm that the CPD sessions had no positive effects on students' outcomes, but that they had a negative impact on them. In her dissection about her findings, the researcher explored some reasons that may have led to such results. For example, the researcher mentioned that because the participant schools followed the ministry's curriculum, the final exams of the participant students were unified and were written by administrative members of the ministry of education. The unified questions did not consider the level of thinking that the student practiced with their ESL teachers throughout the academic year, which was based on CPD sessions on how to encourage critical thinking. The questions were designed to assess lower levels of thinking, which, is something that might have distorted the results. The author explained that around 80% of the final unified questions lacked the type of questions that encourage critical thinking, and were merely assessing knowledge and comprehension levels. The author also stated that the writing that formed part of the final assessment was controlled and guided, and students were not only provided with the type of writing structure that they should follow, but also with the ideas and vocabulary that they should include. Abou - Kouta (2012) also stated that lack of alignment and harmonization between all the groups in charge of syllabus delivery and assessment might be another possible factor that affected the students' grades. This conclusion was clear according to the author because the grades of the students show a sharp drop prior and at the end of the training while they showed improvement in between. The discussion also emphasized the importance of applying the newly acquired concepts through CPD in all the stages of instruction, including assessment in harmony with the schools policies. After all, what is the use of CPD training if teachers are trained to follow one thing while the institutional policies where they educate require something else?

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1. What was this study about and how was it conducted?

This study tackled the in-service CPD of ESL / EFL private school teachers in the U.A.E. The aim of it was to investigate the issues that are related to the quality, availability and quantity of those CPD programmes. The study focused on the teachers' opinions, attitudes, level of awareness, and recommendations in relationship to their in-service training. The study also examined the attitudes and opinions of the administrative staff members who are in charge of organizing these CPD sessions for the teachers, and the obstacles that they encounter during the implementation of these programmes. The level of acquired knowledge from these CPD sessions and how it is put into practice was another subject of investigation. The study followed a mixed method of research. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from teachers and face-to-face interviews were used to collect qualitative data from a supervisor, a headmaster,

and four heads of department. The study involved seventy-four participants from twelve private schools across the U.A.E.

3.2. Hypotheses and research questions

This study was an attempt to find adequate answers to three main research questions that were based on three different hypotheses. Each of the research questions was designed to investigate a different outlook on CPD. The research questions probed the status of CPD in private schools in the U.A.E, teachers' perceptions of their training programmes based on different levels of experience and the identity of people who decide the type of targeted CPD. The three research questions were as following:

1. Do private schools in the U.A.E provide sufficient professional development opportunities for ESL/EFL teachers?

2. Do ESL / EFL teachers in private schools who have a longer experience in the U.A.E's teaching and learning environment have different perceptions about CPD than those who have a shorter experience?

3. Do ESL/EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E get to choose their CPD programmes?

The three hypotheses that triggered the main research questions were as follows:

1. Private schools in the U.A.E are not providing sufficient professional development opportunities for ESL/EFL teachers and this is negatively affecting TESOL.

2. ESL/EFL teachers in private schools who have a longer experience in the U.A.E teaching and learning environment have different perceptions about CPD than those who have a shorter experience.

3. Teachers in private schools in the U.A.E do not get to choose the CPD programmes that they join in their schools.

3.3. Approach and setting

The author of this study distributed eighty questionnaires in twelve private schools across the United Arab Emirates, yet only sixty-seven questionnaires were returned. This represents

around 84% of the total number of questionnaires that were distributed.   All the schools that participated in the study provide ESL / EFL lessons as part of their graduation requirements for grades one to twelve except two schools, a school that was recently established in Al Ain, which has enrolled students up to grade nine, and one in Fujairah, which goes up to grade ten. The school educational system in the U.A.E has four educational stages or cycles that can be represented as following: (Kindergarten (4-5 years), Elementary (6-11 years), Intermediate (12-14 years) and Secondary (15-17 years). All the participant schools are of mixed gender and have teachers of many nationalities. The number of participant teachers varied from school to school depending on the number of teachers available at the time the data was collected or depending on the total number of ESL teachers in each school. The author divided the participant teachers depending on their years of experience. Teachers were divided into three main categories; novice teachers who have less than three years of experience, relatively new teachers who have more than three but less than five years of experience and experienced teachers who have more than five years of experience. The reasoning behind dividing teachers into three main categories was to determine whether they had differing points of view concerning continuous professional development based on the time they spent in-service. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted with six different administrative members from five different schools. The administrative members included; a supervisor, a headmaster and four heads of department. These interviews aimed to collect qualitative information from the point of view of the administrators in order to compare them with the quantitative data that would result from the questionnaires. The other aim of these interviews was to collect information that is only accessible to administrative members since it concerns their job description and is distant from the teachers' specialty. Issues such as the cost of CPD programmes, their availability, and the obstacles that hinder the process of providing these programmes are none of the teachers' concerns and such pieces of information could only be encountered by consulting the management.

3.4. Theoretical Framework

One of the most inspiring theories that work in harmony with the currently practiced form of CPD is Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory. Kolb introduced a learning styles model that focused on transferred experience as well as the learners' internal cognitive processes. His

experiential learning theory functions in two parallel directions; a cycle of learning that consists of four stages, and four distinct learning styles (Kolb 1984). The four stages that Kolb called 'the cycle of learning' consists of:

1. Concrete Experience - (a newly encountered experience, or an understanding of an already existing situation).

2. Reflective Observation (of the newly encountered experience)

3. Abstract Conceptualization (Reflection provides new ideas, or promotes a change of an existing abstract concept).

4. Active Experimentation (the learner applies the new ideas or concepts in an experimental way to see what outcomes will result from that)

Figure 3.1: The four learning stages in Kolb's learning theory.
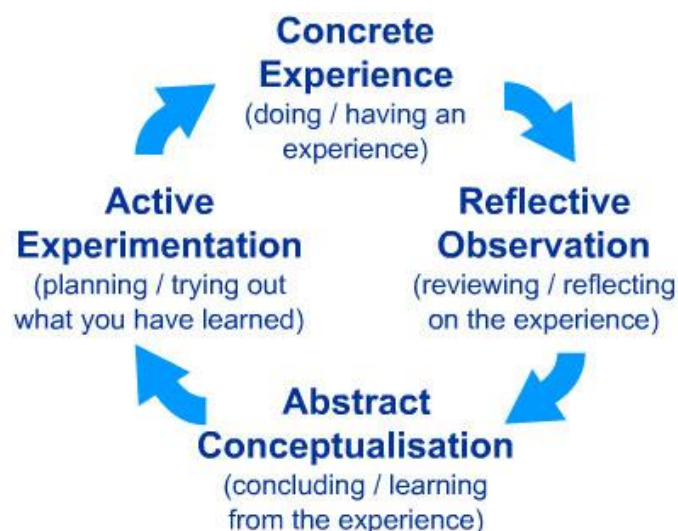
Kolb believed that the learning process involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be practically applied in many situations. According to him, the driving force for developing new concepts or positive change starts with new experiences.

Kolb also stated that people have different learning styles and that these distinct styles are the result of many possible factors. They include the educational experience of an individual, their social background, their cognitive capacity etc. Yet, according to Kolb, no matter what affects an individual to choose his or her preferable style of learning, the preference style itself is produced because of two sets of variables or choices that an individual makes when he or she selects a learning style. In a typical presentation that aims to explain Kolb's concept on how people choose their preferable learning style, we would encounter a two-axis diagram. The east-west axis is named the processing continuum representing the way we approach a task, while the north-south axis is named the perception continuum that represents our feelings, and emotions regarding the tasks that we do. (See figure 3.2)

Figure3.2: Kolb's learning styles variables.
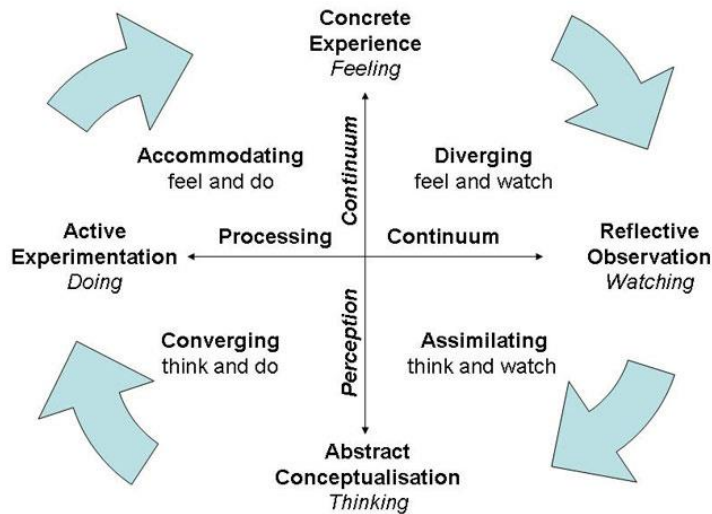
Concisely, Kolb believes that his cycle of experimental learning should always involve action and reflection, theory and practice where there is always a clear connection between thinking and experience. The ultimate goal in this combination is to establish positive change and improvement (O'Sullivan, 2006). These ideas of Kolb were widely adopted by many educational institutes around the globe. They also became the basis for designing and implementing many CPD programmes. The fact that many CPD programmes nowadays start with identifying the needs of teachers, plan an action based on these needs, implement the plan of action and finally review the results is a vivid example of Kolb's influence on Continuous Professional Development. Experience was a keyword that Kolb presented as the power to feed our learning process and create knowledge as he stated: "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb 1984, p. 38). There is no doubt that Kolb's ideas were a solid foundation that supported the infrastructure that current reflective practice has today. They obviously agree with the suggestion that Schön (1983) offered where he considered that the ability to reflect on action with the aim of participating in the process of continuous learning as one of the crucial features of professional practice.

Shortly before Kolb, by the late seventies of the twentieth century, Argyris and Schön presented the concept of a theory of action, stating "a set of logically connected statements that

connect people's actions with their consequences for quality and performance" (Stoll, Harris and Handscomb 2012, p. 4). It is another decorative way to say that, based on experience, if we do "A" we expect "X", but in education, it is not always that easy to get the desired results, especially if you are a novice teacher and have already tried without success. This simple formula could only work if a certain set of actions and conditions happen in between "A" and "X". Theories of action involve a number of assumptions that aim to clarify the steps that set a teacher in the direction of achieving long-term goals, and highlight the connections between the activities and outcomes that happen in the process. In other words, they offer maps of the way change is proposed to happen or compare the final intended goals against what is truly happening in reality (City et al 2010). Attaining positive change that would enhance one's profession or quality of performance seems to be the ultimately desirable goal in this concept, and mapping the steps required to achieve this goal, and how far we stand from it are rungs on a ladder that one should climb during the process. This harmoniously goes with the theory of educational change that was introduced by Fullan (1991). While trying to explain his theory of successful educational change, Michael Fullan stated that; if we want to "highlight the problems and possibilities in bringing about educational change through some deliberate means, the basic question is how to get good at change ..." (Fullan 2001, p. xiii). Fullan explains in one of his YouTube videos titled (Topic Series 12 - Practice to Theory) that practice leads to theory better than the other way around; therefore, it is better to start with practice. He gives further details by stating that he and his team of real practitioners follow a pattern by collaborating with increasingly large chunks of the educational system. Then they work together to improve the situation, learn about the things that work and the things that do not work, and then write about it and say, "this is what we know" (Fullan 2015). This is very interesting as it emphasizes the role of the knowledge that experts already have and the power of cooperation between them that could lead to a positive change. This type of knowledge, if we may call it that, is the same kind of knowledge that was traditionally passed from generation to generation through old educational approaches, and which Schön described as "specialized, firmly bounded, scientific, and standardized" (1983, p. 23). What generally happens in a successful CPD programme is based on these concepts; teachers pass knowledge from generation to generation and exchange knowledge about their practices; they discuss what worked and what did not work and then try to extend and elaborate on the use of what has shown to be effective.

Even before Fullan, many scholars tried to find simple answers to a basic question that asked how we could become good at change. Covey (1989) believed that we need self-awareness to achieve that. According to him, self-awareness is a unique human endowment that distinguishes humans from animals and gives them the ability to develop further because it provides the capacity to spot weaknesses or talents and thus eliminate what is bad and improve what is good. He stated that "through our human endowments of self-awareness and conscience, we become conscious of areas of weakness, areas for improvement, areas of talent that could be developed, areas that need to be changed or eliminated from our lives" (Covey 1989, P43). This explains why reflective practice is an essential part of CPD. Reflective practice uses self-awareness as a tool to spot the flaws and strengths in the pedagogical practice that gives teachers the chance to enhance their practice through positive change. This matches Kolb's viewpoint regarding the use of observation and reflection in order to contemplate upon our experiences and presents self-awareness as a powerful instrument that should be used within Kolb's cycle of learning.

Gibbs (1988) was one of the scholars who were influenced by Kolb's cycle of learning and he constantly tried to simplify the process by reducing it to bare bones. He suggested the use of structured debriefing because he believed that this would enable people to use Kolb's cycle of learning more effectively. Gibbs believes that it would be much easier to a get a fully structured analysis of a situation if we start each stage by asking prompt questions. His simplified staged method is usually referred to as Gibbs' reflective cycle. Gibbs' reflective cycle consists of the following stages (Gibbs. 1988):

1-Event Description: the main question at this stage is; what took place? Answers usually involve descriptions of locations, people involved in main actions or activities, the contexts of the events and the results.

2. Feelings & Thoughts: the main question at this stage is; what are you thinking and feeling? Answers usually involve descriptions of people's internal and external feelings and thoughts, before, during and after a relevant event.

3-Evaluation: the main question at this stage is; what was good and bad about it? Answers usually involve an evaluation regarding what triggered the event, a holistic assessment of the whole experience and the consequences whether good or bad that might result from it.

4. Analysis: the main question at this stage is; what sense can you make of the situation? Answers usually involve a description of the advantages and disadvantages of the event from an individual personal point of view that accounts his or her role in the event.

5. Conclusion: the main question at this stage is; what else could you have done? Answers usually involve descriptions of people's cognitive ideas and insights that were created throughout the process of reflection with special consideration to individual roles within the event.

6. Action Plan: the main question at this stage is; what would you do if it happens again? Answers usually involve futuristic plans that consist of behavioral adjustments in case similar events occur in the future.

Figure 3.3: Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle

Source:

http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/public/liss/documents/skillsatcumbria/reflectivecyclegibbs.pdf
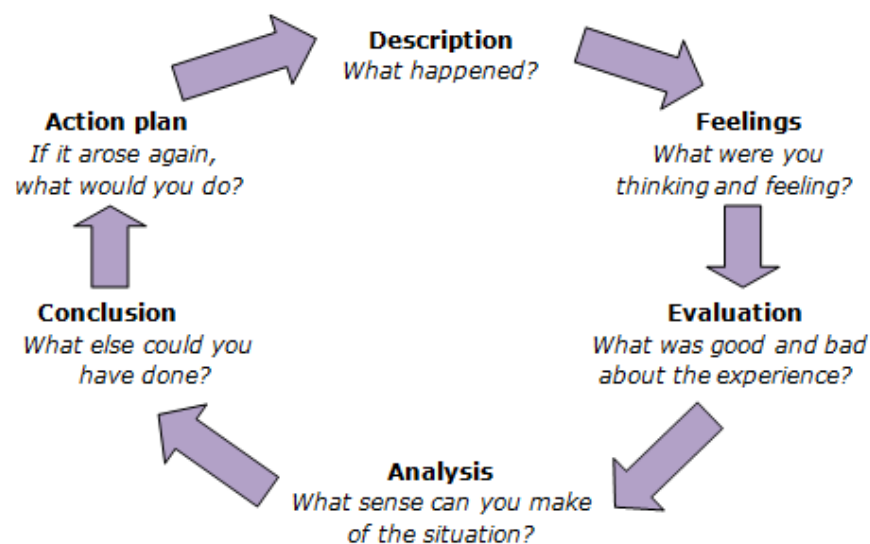
Gibbs' attempts to simplify Kolb's cycle of learning and make it more user-friendly attracted the attention of many educational institutes. The fact that he used simple and to the point prompt questions was so appealing for many professional organizations that were interested in finding a suitable and simplified framework for reflection. Yet, another scholar believed that it was necessary for the Gibb's model to require more depth for a professional to reflect on his or her practice. Johns (1995) introduced a structured mode of reflection, which

was designed to provide professionals with guidance towards getting a better understanding of their practice. The model emphasized the role of sharing information with colleagues and mentors, which is an act that would allow the acquired experience to develop into concretely learnt knowledge at a rather rapid pace that is more effective than merely using reflection.

Johns emphasizes the significance of experienced knowledge and the capability of a specialist to access, comprehend and use the knowledge that has been obtained through experiential means. According to him, reflection happens by looking into someone's thoughts and emotions, then looking out at the circumstances that have been experienced.

Figure 3.4: Johns' Model of reflection

Source: https://knowingnursing.wordpress.com/2013/07/10/reflective-models-johns-1995-vs-gibbs-1988/
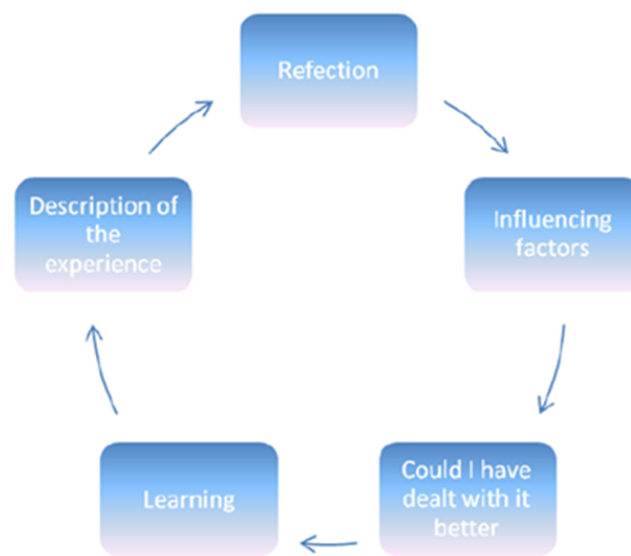
Within the stages of learning in Johns' model, Johns integrated further analysis of the ways of thinking that someone's experience might have changed and the kind of change that took place after the experience. Johns argues that professionals should ask themselves about how the experience that they have been through changed their way of knowing. He suggests several aspects that we should check for positive change and growth in knowledge. According to him these aspects are:

a. Empirics – scientific (How did this experience change my scientific knowledge?)

b. Ethics – moral knowledge (What was the moral lesson?)

c. Personal – self-awareness (How did this experience change me as a person?)

d. Aesthetics – (How did this experience change my aesthetic sensitivity?)

If we try to make a simple comparison between Gibb's and Johns' models, we would definitely notice that the prompt questions in Gibb's model are somewhat imprecise but more user-friendly that those in Johns' model. Gibb's prompt questions are less specific and require shallower answers that lack the necessary depth that a professional might need to analyze a certain event. Furthermore, we would also notice that Gibb's model lacks the ethics and empirical analyses that Johns integrated into his model. Regardless of the differences that the two models may have, there is no doubt that both of them had and still have a huge influence on CPD design and implementation. The fact that these models offer straightforward and simple prompt questions to facilitate structure reflection made them favorable for many educational bodies that are concerned with CPD. However, some scholars claim that a wider, more critically reflective approach is required. Zeichner and Liston (1996) claimed that teachers who reflect on their practice should not merely question whether it is working or not, but they should go deeper and critically investigate more standardized values and how their practice could bring about positive change, quality assurance and respect for diversity. Zeichner and Liston emphasized many modern concerns that were aroused in recent years and were neglected or ignored in the past (issues such as students' backgrounds, the role of teachers in curriculum development, teachers' responsibility regarding their CPD, cultural contexts, etc.) The issues that were pointed out by Zeichner and Liston brought in a higher level of perception into the pedagogical practice and called attention to key features that should be considered carefully by teachers. According to the authors, five key features make a good reflective teacher. These key features are widely considered nowadays by many educational institutes, especially when designing CPD programmes, because they set the difference between traditional teachers and reflective teachers. The five key features were as follows:

1. A reflective teacher "examines, frames, and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice" (Zeichner and Liston 1996, p.6). This suggests that teachers may encounter many unwanted issues inside their classrooms that are possibly related to lack of motivation, poor academic performance, indiscipline, etc. However, instead of trying easy solutions such as sending troublemakers outside the classroom, successful reflective teachers would rather ponder the reasons behind disruptiveness or whatever the dilemma is, and try their best to solve the issue in hand by carefully analyzing the situation and attempting alternative solutions.

2. A teacher "is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching" (ibid, p. 6). Unfortunately, some teachers tend to believe that they have learned everything and that they have already acquired all the needed skills for teaching. , Teachers, on the other hand, who have successfully reflected on their practice should know that they have much more to learn on a continuous basis and that each student and each situation could lead to thinking of new situations and solutions.

3. A teacher "is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teaches" (ibid, p. 6). Each students' background and surroundings are important, and teachers should consider the local culture and act accordingly. For example, if an EFL teacher is developing some curriculum material that involves a given lesson about fashion around the world in an Islamic society, he or she should be aware of the certain sensitive issues regarding the dress codes in that specific region and should avoid any possible misinterpretations or disagreements.

4. A teacher "takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change efforts" (ibid, p. 6). Due to constant changes that may occur in a society, teachers cannot teach the same curriculum every year. These changes may involve cultural, demographical, and political changes. Yearly changes in students' abilities may also affect the efficiency of the taught material and they could decrease the challenge factor that should be present in them.

5. A teacher "takes responsibility for his or her own professional development" (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 6). Reflective teachers should always be aware that they are learning constantly. However, constant learning does not necessarily mean constant development. A teacher who is aware of his students' different capabilities may simply use this knowledge to differentiate the level of his instruction with his students, whereas a developing teacher should incorporate this knowledge to create constant change in curriculum, instruction and assessment that would ensure a frequent level of quality whenever a similar condition is present. Teachers who think 'out of the box' realize that CPD is associated with their willingness to develop as well as their determination to spot errors and try their best to find adequate solutions. Therefore, teachers should also understand that it is their responsibility to pursue development whenever they can, because they are the only ones that can control their attitudes towards developing, and know exactly what is best for them.

There is no doubt that the concepts that were highlighted by Zeichner and Liston have added a new level of consideration towards the designing and implementation of many CPD programmes around the world. The standards of many CPD programmes have been updated to include awareness about cultural contexts, problem-solving skills, curriculum development, open-mindedness, and responsibility. The fact that these concepts were added to the process of CPD have allowed many educators around the globe to consider CPD as a universal goal which involves universal values and standards that would appeal to almost everybody regardless of their background. These innovative notions also added a higher level of practicality that was needed to enhance the process of CPD.

From a sociocultural theoretical perspective, many scholars such as Johnson & Golombek (2011) argue that CPD has to be linked to Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (Vygotsky 1978). These scholars argue that teachers' development is the result of their cognition, which originates in and emerges out of participating in social activities. Many scholars nowadays believe that CPD is shifting from viewing teaching as an attempt were teachers are required to acquire some techniques to employ specific skills and practices to viewing teaching as a cognitive process (Hawkins 2004). This means that current CPD programmes should not merely

consider content and pedagogical knowledge but also the social interactions of the teachers that are involved in these programmes. CPD programmes should consider teachers' education from the perspective of the Sociocultural theory that "takes up issues of the co-relationships between language, culture, context, and identity" (ibid. p. 4). According to Kumaravadivelu (2012) teacher education programmes must help teachers to develop a holistic understanding of what occurs inside their classroom in order to allow them to theorize from practice and practice what they theorize. This holistic understanding of the events that occur inside the teachers' classroom should definitely involve the understanding of the social and cultural factors in these classrooms.

The author of this dissertation acknowledges all the previously mentioned frameworks within this section and is keen to integrate many of the concepts within his investigation in the form of the questions that formed the questionnaire used as the main tool to collect the needed data. The questions that were asked within the interviews of the participants in school management also incorporated a many of the concepts in the theories reviewed in this section.

3.5. Development of study tools

This study involved two tools that were specifically designed to collect the targeted type of data that was required for the study. Questionnaires and interviews were used as primary instruments to collect the necessary data from participants.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire consisted of twenty questions that were intended to investigate certain types of information. The questionnaire starts with a set of fields that gather background information about each participant. These fields were not numbered and they included an optional field which was the one dedicated to the name of the participant (see appendix A). The questionnaire was partly adapted from the questionnaire that Al Neaimi (2007) used as her main tool for her study (see literature review / local research). The researcher realized that many parts of the original questionnaire might serve the aim of his study if adapted for the context of his study. The modified questionnaire ended up with twenty questions that aimed to investigate different areas of CPD conditions as following:

1. Questions that aim to investigate awareness and will.

2. Questions that aim to investigate the schools' involvement level

3. Questions that aim to investigate teachers' motivation and their schools' attempts to sustain it.

4. Questions that aim to investigate the classroom level of utilizing the knowledge that ESL/EFL teachers obtain from their CPD programmes.

Interviews with Coordinators, Supervisors and School Administrators

Six interviews were carried out with a supervisor, a headmaster, and four heads of department who work in five different schools in the U.A.E. The aim of these interviews was to collect qualitative data to investigate the attitudes and opinions of the administrative staff members and compare them with those of the teachers in order to see if there are different points of view between the two parties. Twelve questions were involved in each interview. The same questions were asked in every interview to ensure constancy and reliability (See appendix B). The questions aimed to investigate different areas of CPD conditions as following:

1. Questions that aim to investigate the types, quality and number of CPD programmes that are provided by the schools.

2. Questions that aim to investigate awareness, and will of the administrative staff members in private schools in the U.A.E regarding their CPD programmes.

3. Questions that aim to investigate the schools' involvement level.

4. Questions that aim to investigate the challenges the administrative staff members in private schools in the U.A.E face during the implementation of CPD programmes.

5. Questions that aim to investigate schools' attempts to sustain their teachers' motivation regarding enrollment in CPD programmes.

6. Questions that aim to investigate the classroom level of utilizing the knowledge that is obtained from CPD programmes and how schools ensure that this knowledge is utilized.

7. Questions that aim to investigate future planning that aims to enhance the Continuous Professional Development of ESL/EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E.

Chapter 4

Data analysis and Findings

4.1. The Questionnaire

Background Information about the participants

Nationalities:

The 67 participants in this study, who have participated in the ESL /EFL Questionnaire, come from different backgrounds and belong to different nationalities as shown in figure 4.1.
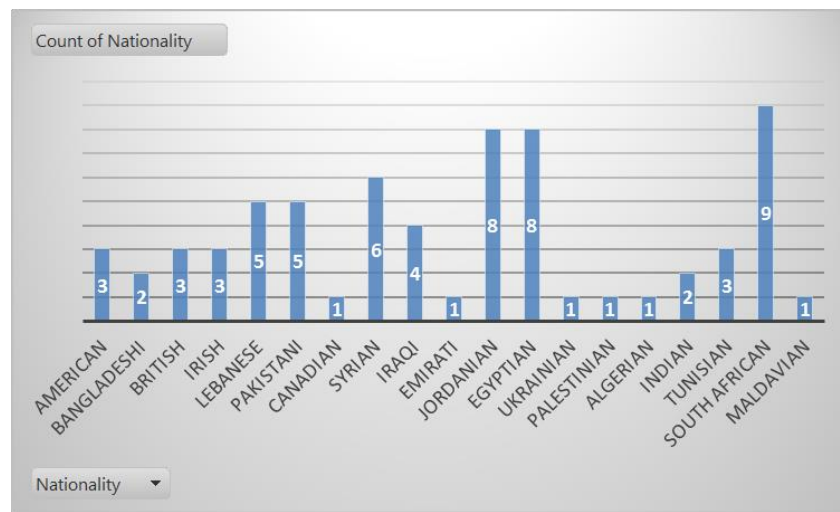

Figure 4.1

Gender:

The participants in the ESL / EFL Questionnaire were of both genders. The total number of the participants was 67. The majority of the participants were females as there were fifty females and seventeen males.
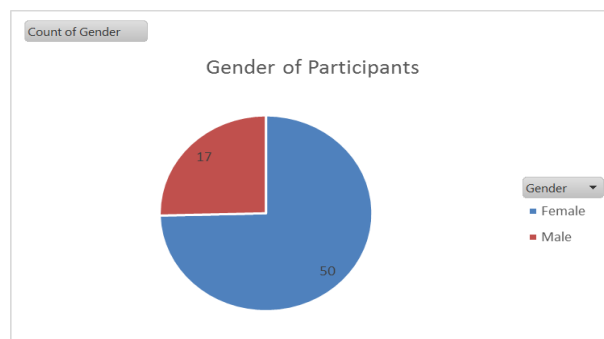

Figure 4.2

Educational Qualifications:

Fifty of the total number of participants in the questionnaire have bachelor degrees, thirteen of them hold master's degrees, three have diplomas, and only one of the participants has a doctorate degree. (See figure 4.3)
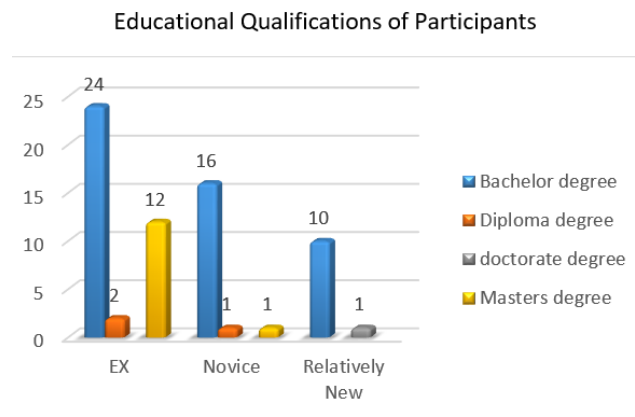
Figure 4.3

The replies to the questions of the questionnaire were analyzed individually. Each of the questions and its findings will be reviewed. The replies will be reviewed in a similar sequence of that in which the questions appeared in the questionnaire:

Q1/ Which of the following do you believe is part of TESOL Continuous Professional Development? (You may tick as many options as you wish). Which of the options that you have ticked is the most important in your opinion? Why?

The aim of this question was to investigate the preferences of ESL/ EFL teachers in terms of which type of CPD programmes they believe is the most important. The first part of the question served as a reminder of the types of CPD programmes that are generally offered within the context of CPD in the U.A.E. All the options to be selectively picked were, in reality, part of TESOL Continuous Professional Development.

Data analysis of the replies showed that the most selected choice was 'Workshops provided by TESOL organizations' since it was chosen 30 times making this choice the most

important according to ESL / EFL teachers. 'Peer to peer observation' and 'studying for a higher TESOL qualification at universities and higher institutions' were the second most preferred option. They were chosen 11 times. The third rank went to (TESOL workshops provided by your workplace) as it was chosen 9 times only.
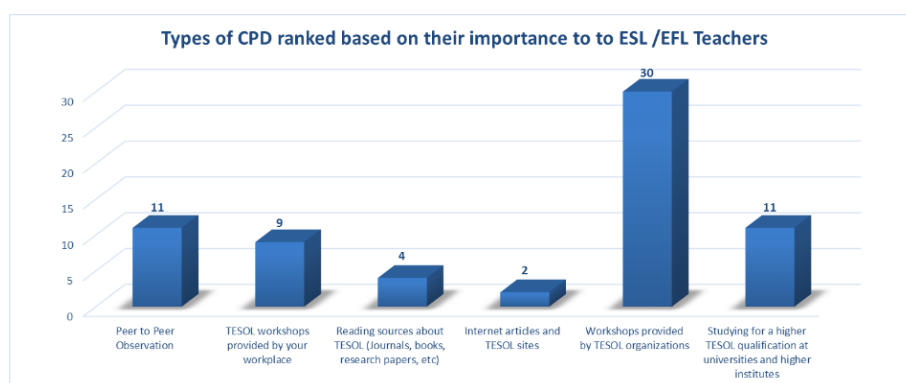

Figure 4.4

	Peer to Peer Observation	TESOL workshops provided by your workplace	Reading sources about TESOL (Journals, books, research papers, etc)	Internet articles and TESOL sites	Workshops provided by TESOL organizations	Studying for a higher TESOL qualification at universities and higher institutes
Novice	2	2	0	2	9	3
Experienced Teacher	6	6	3	0	15	8
Relatively New Teacher	3	1	1	0	6	0
	11	9	4	2	30	11

Table 4.1

Q2/ How many TESOL workshops has your school provided during the last two academic years?

As a response to the second question in the questionnaire, "How many TESOL workshops has your school provided during the last two academic years?" thirty-nine of the participants in the questionnaire stated that their schools have not provided any training at all; while seven of the participants stated that their schools provided only one training workshop. Another seven of the participants indicated that their schools provided only two training workshops. On the other hand, twelve of the participants had between three and six workshops, and only two of the participants were given more than six workshops. The data analysis reflected that almost 60% of all the sixty-seven teachers who participated in the questionnaire did not receive any TESOL workshops that were provided by their schools at all during the two academic years that preceded

the study. This provides a significant answer to the first research question that was raised by this dissertation; do private schools in the U.A.E provide sufficient professional development opportunities for ESL/EFL teachers? The question aimed to investigate the level of involvement that private schools in the U.A.E undergo in terms of providing sufficient professional development opportunities for their ESL/EFL teachers, and the answer to the question is no.
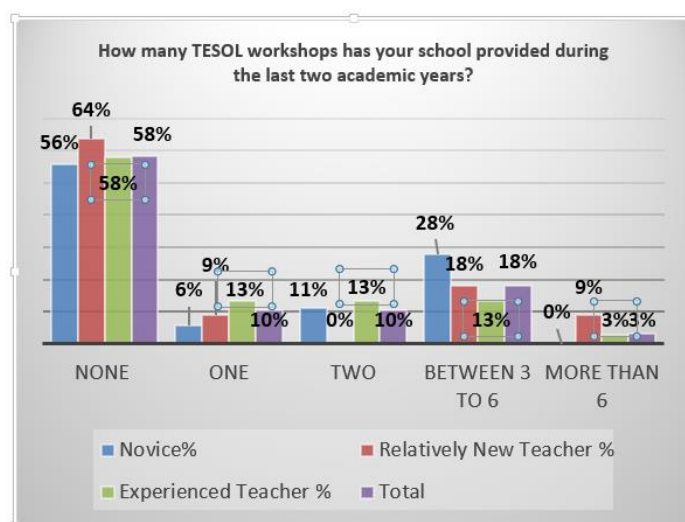

Figure 4.5

How many TESOL workshops has your school provided during the last two academic years?

	Novice	Relatively New Teacher	Experienced Teacher	Total
None	10	7	22	39
One	1	1	5	7
Two	2	0	5	7
Between 3 to 6	5	2	5	12
More than 6	0	1	1	2
Total	18	11	38	67

Table 4.2

Q3/ How many TESOL workshops that were not provided by your school have you attended during the last two academic years?

58% of the total number of participants in the questionnaire stated that they have not attended any external TESOL workshops that were not provided by their school. Unexpectedly, this percentage is identical to the percentage that appeared in the second question from the questionnaire that investigated the number of TESOL workshops that the participants' schools provided within the last two years that preceded this study. This reflects that a high percentage of the participants in this study have not attended any workshops whether internal or external within the last two years that preceded this study. 12% of the participant teachers had only one TESOL workshop, 15% of them had two, and 9% had between 3 and 6 workshops. The percentage of participant teachers who had more than 6 TESOL workshops was only 6%. The data analysis indicates that 70% of the participant teachers had either no external training at all or had only one training workshop in the last couple of years that preceded this study. These results reflect a negative ongoing attitude towards continuous professional development from the part of the teachers that represent the sample for this study; however, the reasoning behind the lack of attendance or participating in external TESOL workshops is not clear and further studies to determine the ins and outs of this case are highly recommended.

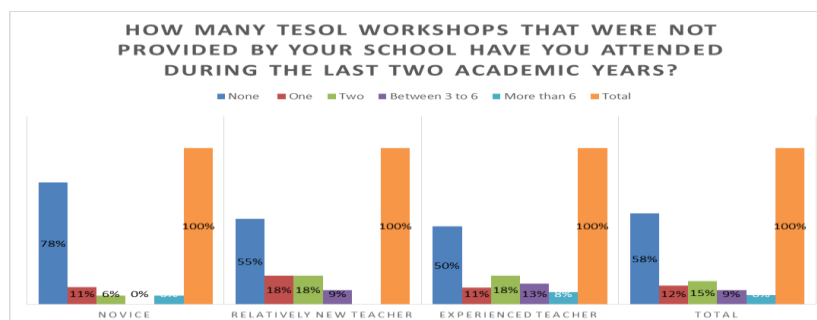| How many TESOL workshops that were not provided by your school have you attended during the last two academic years?				
	Novice	Relatively New Teacher	Experienced Teacher	Total
None	14	6	19	39
One	2	2	4	8
Two	1	2	7	10
Between 3 to 6	0	1	5	6
More than 6	1	0	3	4
Total	18	11	38	67

Table 4.3

Figure 4.6

Q4/Do you think that you need further professional development in the field of TESOL?

The responses to this question showed that most of the participant teachers have a great deal of self-awareness regarding their need of CPD. A majority that consists of fifty-six of the teachers stated that they need further professional development in the field of TESOL. A small number of teachers expressed uncertainty about whether they need further CPD or not, and those represent only nine of the total number of the teachers. Only two teachers stated that they need no further professional development in the field of TESOL.

Do you think that you need further professional development in the field of TESOL?				
	Novice	Relatively New Teacher	Experienced Teacher	Total
Yes	16	9	31	56
No	1	0	1	2
Not sure	1	2	6	9
Total	18	11	38	67

Table 4.4

Figure 4.7

Q5/If you believe that you need further professional development in the field of TESOL, which of the following options represent the area that you need to develop most? (Please choose only one)

Twenty-two of the fifty-six teachers, who stated that they need further professional development in the field of TESOL, believe that they need further development in teaching methodologies and techniques. This represents 39% of the total number of teachers, and it reflects a significant desire for more continuous professional development related to teaching techniques and

methodologies. The second choice in rank was curriculum development; twenty-one of the fifty-six teachers stated that they need more training related to curriculum development. The data shows that forty-three of the fifty-six teachers believe that they need further development in either teaching methodologies or curriculum development. This indicates that an immediate action is required to provide more training that is related to these two types of TESOL training within the United Arab Emirates. Fewer teachers believe that they need more training in assessment and evaluation, material development, and classroom management. Five teachers out of the fifty-six think that they need further development in assessment and evaluation. This is almost 9% of the teachers, who stated that they needed further professional development in the field of TESOL. Two teachers out of fifty-six (3.5%) stated that they need more training related to material development, and two other teachers out of the fifty-six (3.5%) specified that they need more preparation in classroom management. What is notable about the data for this question is that only four teachers out of the fifty-six (7.1%) chose other fields of CPD; three of these teachers specified the need for more training in differentiation, and a teacher who stated that he needs more training about 21st-century curriculum and ICT integration. The small number of teachers who suggested other types of CPD is, in all probability, due to a more urgent need for training in the basic level of teaching. This is why 39% of the participants stressed the need for more training in teaching methodologies and techniques. However, the data analysis has also shown that the teachers' perspective regarding what they needed in terms of CPD were relatively similar among novice, relatively new, and experienced teachers. All categories of teachers had almost parallel preferences that show self-awareness about what they need to develop in their professional career regardless of their years of experience. The differences in choices were not significant and are not sufficient to build a conclusion, which states that teachers with different years of experience have a different perspective regarding what they need in terms of Continuous Professional Development.
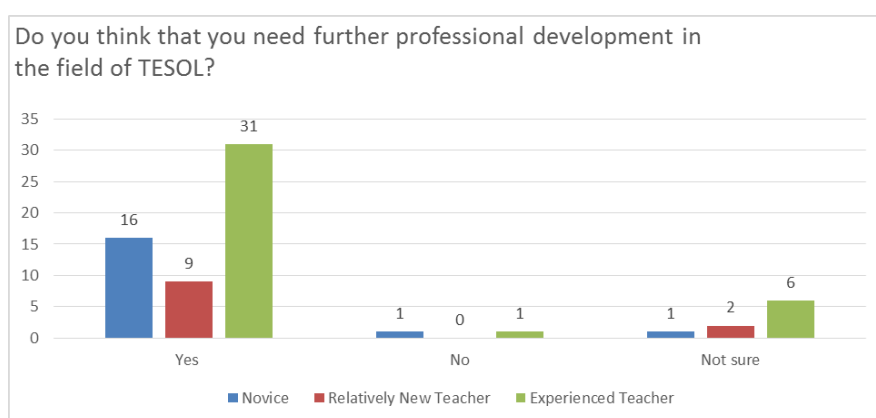
If you believe that you need further professional development in the field of TESOL, which of the following options represent the area that you need to develop most? (Please choose only one)							
	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher%	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher%	Total
Teaching methodologies and techniques	7	44%	2	22%	13	42%	22
Curriculum Development	7	44%	4	44%	10	32%	21
Assessment and Evaluation	1	6%	1	11%	3	10%	5
Material development	0	0%	0	0%	2	6%	2
Classroom Management	1	6%	1	11%	0	0%	2
Other	0	0%	1	11%	3	10%	4
Total	16	100%	9	100%	31	100%	56

Table 4.5

Figure 4.8

Q6/ In your opinion which of the following are good motives for ESL / EFL teachers' Continuous Professional Development?

The aim of this question was to investigate what teachers consider as good motives for ESL / EFL teachers' Continuous Professional Development. The most chosen choice was (self-improvement) as it was chosen fifty-five times. Both (improving students' level) and (academic development) were chosen fifty-two times each. Getting financial benefits was considered a good motive by many teachers since (getting a raise) was chosen thirty-nine times. A good share was also given to (getting promoted to a higher professional level) since it was chosen thirty-eight times.

In your opinion which of the following are good motives for ESL / EFL teachers' Continuous Professional Development?(You may choose as many options as you wish)
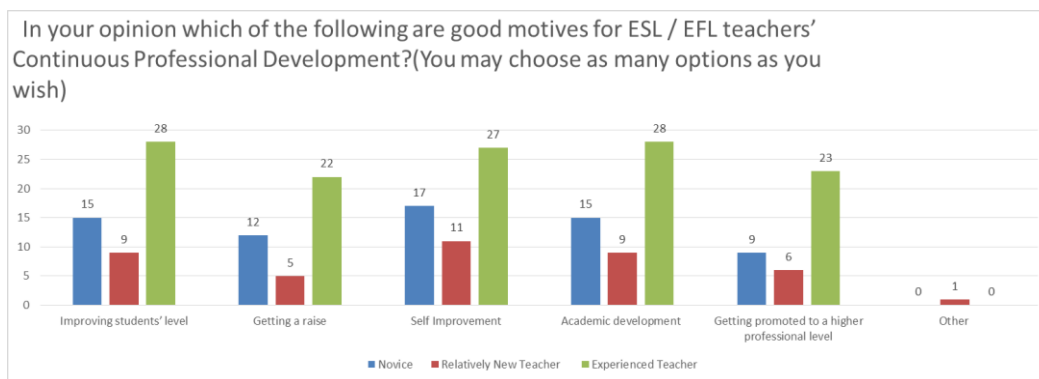
Figure 4.9

Q7/ Now please number in order of importance three of your selections from the above list (the most important selection according to you should come first).

The teachers were asked to rank the choices that they have chosen in question six based on their importance. It was noticed that both novice teachers and relatively new teachers had identical ranking choices. Both groups chose (self-improvement) as their first choice, (improving students' level) as their second choice, and (academic development) as their third. Experienced teachers had different ranking choices. According to the experienced teachers who participated in the questionnaire, (improving students' level) is the most important motive for ESL / EFL teachers' Continuous Professional Development. The second most important motive that was chosen by experienced teachers was (self-improvement) and the third was (getting promoted to a higher professional level). The fact that experienced teachers are the only group that chose (getting promoted to a higher professional level) as one of the most important motives for ESL / EFL teachers' Continuous Professional Development indicates that teachers that obtain more experience expect being in a higher professional level within their educational institutes. The expectations that experienced teachers have regarding their professional level push them towards obtaining more experience and therefore represent a good motive for them to enroll in CPD programmes.
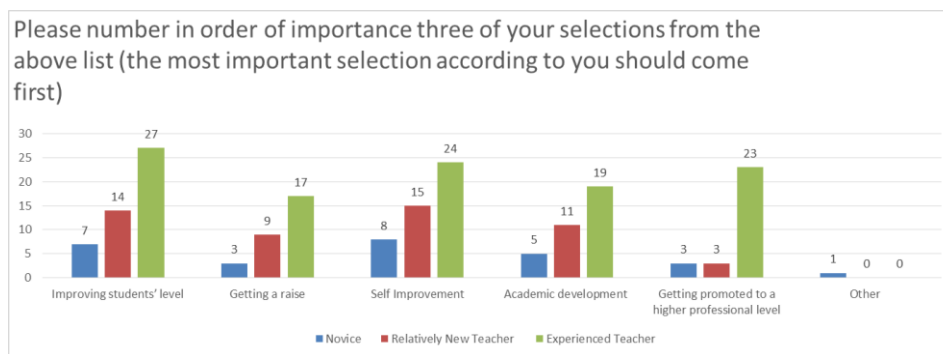
Figure 4.10

	1st	2nd	3rd
Novice	Self Improvement	Improving students' level	Academic development
Experienced Teacher	Improving students' level	Self Improvement	Getting promoted to a higher professional level
Relatively New Teacher	Self Improvement	Improving students' level	Academic development

Table 4.6

Q8/ In your opinion, who would benefit most from ESL / EFL teachers' professional development?

Based on the data analysis, the teachers who participated in the questionnaire believe that the students are the ones who benefit most from ESL/ EFL Continuous Professional Development since this option was chosen fifty-five times. Teachers came second in rank as beneficiaries with forty-two selections, schools came third with thirty-two selections, and the last rank was given to the local society as it was chosen eighteen times.

Figure 4.11

Q9/Do you think that ESL / EFL teachers' professional development in private schools in the U.A.E is generally achieving its goals?

The replies to this question were very interesting since thirty-six of the sixty-seven teachers who participated in the questionnaire stated that they do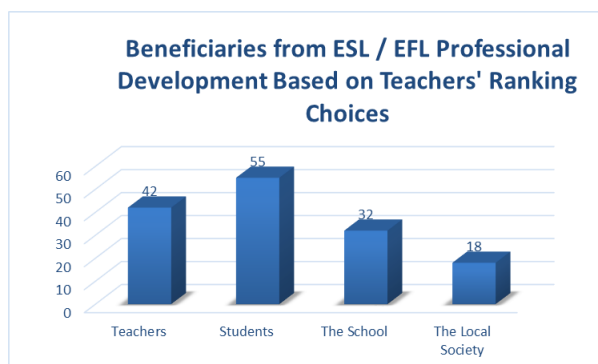 not know the answer to this question. Only sixteen of the total number of teachers stated that they believe that ESL / EFL teachers' professional development in private schools in the U.A.E is generally achieving its goals while fifteen of them think that the goals are not achieved. This is interesting because it reflects a big deal of uncertainty among the teachers themselves about whether private schools in the U.A.E are progressing in terms of attaining the aims of CPD for ESL / EFL teachers. The majority of teachers thought either that the goals are not achieved or simply could not provide an answer to the question. The majority of novice teachers (67%) did not know the answer. 45% of the relatively new teachers selected (yes), yet another 45% of them selected (I don't know). Half of the experienced teachers (exactly 50%) did not know the answer either. This indicates that private schools in the U.A.E need more transparent policies in terms of sharing information about their ESL/ EFL CPD programmes with others, and especially with their teachers.
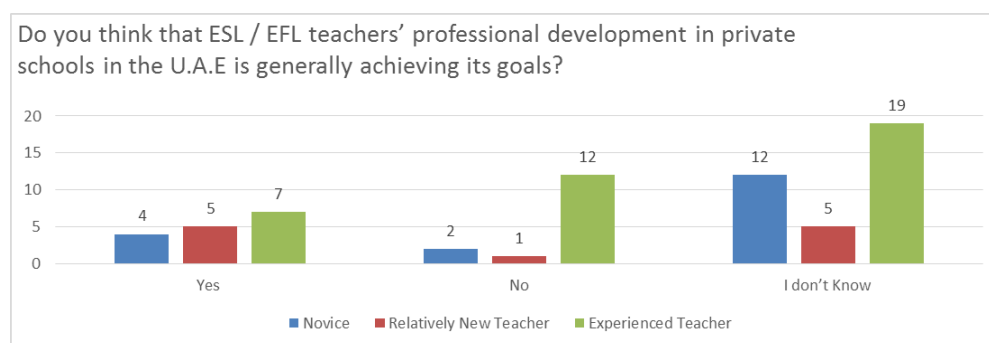
Figure 4.12

Do you think that ESL / EFL teachers' professional development in private schools in the U.A.E is generally achieving its goals?						
	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total
Yes	4	22%	5	45%	7	18%	16
No	2	11%	1	9%	12	32%	15
I don't Know	12	67%	5	45%	19	50%	36
Total	18		11		38		67
	27%		16%		57%		100%

Table 4.7

Q10/If your answer to question 9 is (NO), which of the following factors stand in the way of achieving the goals? (You may choose as many options as you wish)

56

The fifteen teachers who believe that ESL / EFL teachers' professional development in private schools in the U.A.E is not achieving its goals had to choose among six different obstacles that might be standing in the way of achieving the goals. The teachers were asked to tick as many options as they wish. The results show that they ticked forty-five cells in an average of three choices for each teacher among the fifteen. The general lack of awareness about the importance of professional development was chosen as a hindrance that stands in the way achievement eleven times, which represent 24.44% of the total choices. Both (lack of will on the schools' part) and (lack of resources) were each chosen eight times which represent 17.78% of the total choices. Three other factors were each chosen 6 times for each factor. The factors included: (lack of will on the teachers' part), (the elevated cost of developing programs), and (scarcity of ESL teachers' professional development programs). The fact that (general lack of awareness about the importance of professional development) was chosen eleven times makes it the most chosen choice among teachers who believe that ESL / EFL teachers' professional development in private schools in the U.A.E is not achieving its goals.

| If your answer to question 9 is (NO), which of the following factors stand in the way of achieving the goals?				
Factor	Novice	Relatively New Teacher	Experienced Teacher	Total
Lack of will on the teachers' part	1	0	5	6
Lack of resources	0	1	7	8
Lack of will on the schools' part	1	0	7	8
The elevated cost of developing programs	1	0	5	6
General lack of awareness about the importance of professional development	2	1	8	11
Scarcity of ESL teachers' professional development programs	1	1	4	6
Total	6	3	36	45

Table 4.8
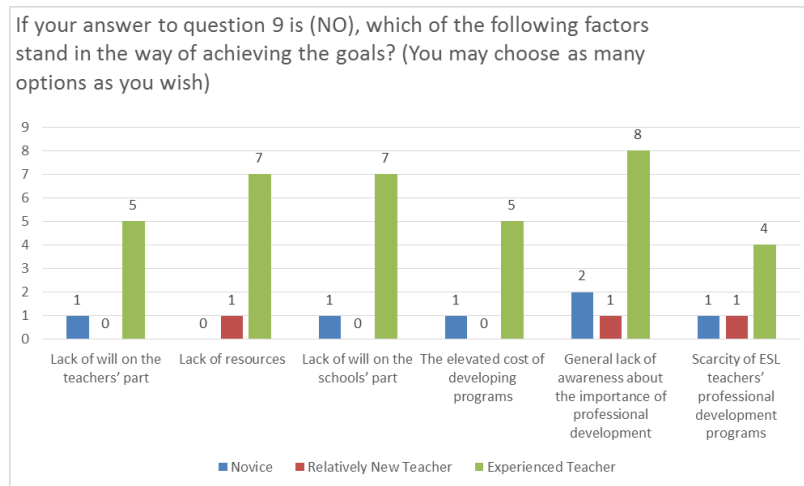
Figure 4.13

Q11/ Now please number in order of importance three of your selections from the above list (the most important selection according to you should come first)

The aim of this question was to rank the obstacles that stand in the way of achieving the goals of CPD in private schools in the U.A.E based on the teachers' views in order to identify the most critical factor that should be addressed first. However, the results showed an agreement in opinions regarding what was the most important factor that hinders the achieving of the goals. Teachers were asked to number three of their selections from the previous question in order of importance where the most important factor should come first. All categories of teachers agreed that (General lack of awareness about the importance of professional development) is the first most important factor that hinders the achieving of CPD goals in private schools in the U.A.E. This is very interesting as it shows that ESL / EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E believe that awareness about the importance of CPD should increasingly be spread in society for it to achieve its goals. The second most important hinder according to experienced teachers was shared by two factors which are (lack of resources and lack of will on the schools' part) and the third factor was (the elevated cost of developing programs). Novice teachers also believed that (lack of will on the schools' part) was second in rank and that (the elevated cost of developing programs) should come in third place while relatively new teachers thought that (lack of resources) is the second hinder in rank, and (scarcity of ESL teachers' professional development programs) was the third.

Q12/ Who chooses the ESL teachers' professional development programs in your school?

During the data analysis of this question, it was noticed that the majority of teachers who participated in the questionnaire were not involved in deciding what sort of ESL /EFL CPD programmes they should undergo. Only three of the sixty-seven teachers stated that they get to choose their CPD programmes while fifty-seven of them stated that their administration or heads of departments are the ones involved in choosing these programmes, and seven of the participants stated that other parties are involved in this activity. The shockingly low number of teachers involved in choosing their own CPD programmes is very alarming as it contradicts the very basic rules of continuous professional development. It is indispensable for teachers to use their self-awareness to perceive the flaws and strengths in their pedagogical practice in order to decide what remedy they need to enhance and enforce such a practice. The fact that a teacher "takes responsibility for his or her own professional development" (Zeichner & Liston 1996, p. 6) should always be acknowledged by educational institutes, and providing chances for a teacher to get enrolled in CPD does not authorize the educational institutes to take over the entire process. Awareness of the role and responsibility of teachers towards their professional development should be spread across private schools in the U.A.E to ensure the effectiveness of the provided CPD programmes as they will be based on reflection that is provided by the teachers themselves. The results of the data analysis for this question have also provided a very clear answer to the third research question in this dissertation; do ESL/EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E get to choose their CPD programmes? The answer is no.

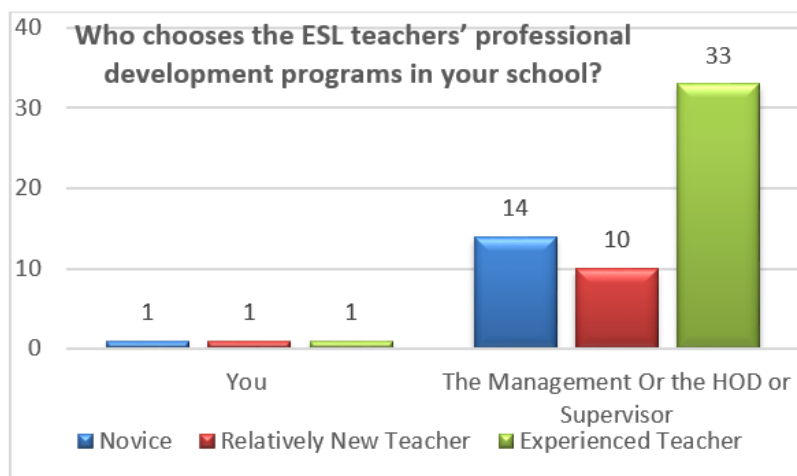| Who chooses the ESL teachers' professional development programs in your school?						
	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total
You	1	6%	1	9%	1	3%	3
The Management Or the HOD or Supervisor	14	78%	10	91%	33	87%	57
Other	3	4%	0	0%	4	6%	7
Total	18		11		38		67
	27%		16%		57%		100%

Table 4.9

Figure 4.14

Q13/ Have you got any plans to enroll yourself in an ESL/EFL teachers' professional development program within the next couple of years?

This question aimed to investigate the teachers' readiness regarding enrolment in futuristic professional development plans in order to have an idea about the level of willingness that ESL/EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E have in terms of developing themselves. Unfortunately, the results showed a low level of willingness since only twenty-seven of the participants stated that they have plans to enroll themselves in ESL/EFL teachers' professional development programmes within the next couple of years. Thirteen of the participants stated that they have no plans to enroll themselves in ESL/EFL teachers' professional development programmes within the next couple of years, and another twenty-seven of the teachers stated that they are not sure whether they are going to do it or not. This definitely shows uncertainty and lack of will from part of many teachers in the field and the reasons behind such a lack of will should certainly be investigated in future studies. Reasons behind this matter may include lack of motivation, lack of financial support, lack of appreciation from employers and many other possible factors; however, without having some reliable data, a study to tackle this matter is highly recommended.

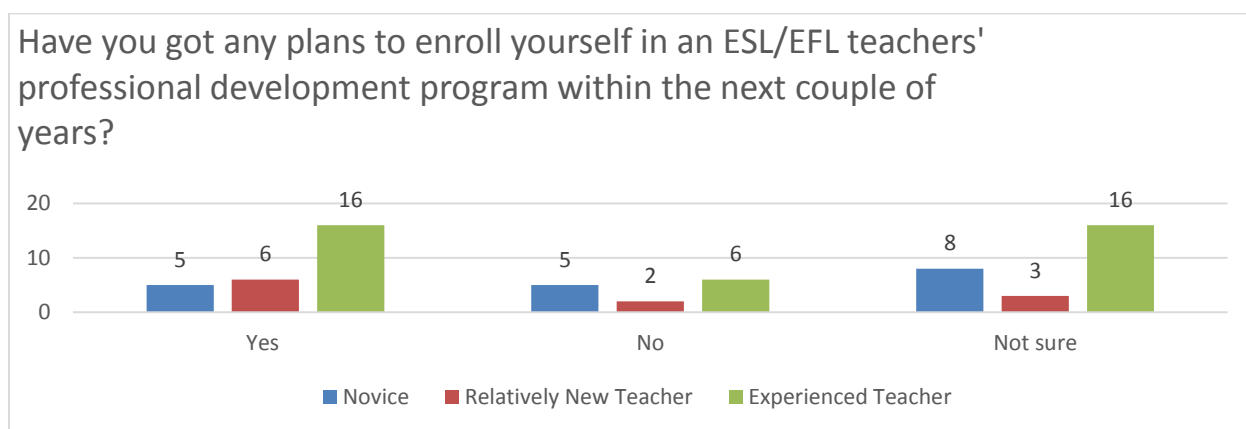| Have you got any plans to enroll yourself in an ESL/EFL teachers' professional development program within the next couple of years?							
	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total
Yes	5	28%	6	55%	16	42%	27
No	5	28%	2	18%	6	16%	13
Not sure	8	44%	3	27%	16	42%	27
Total	18		11		38		67

Tablet 4.10

Figure 4.15

Q14/ Do you consider your previous ESL Continuous Professional Development as something that has enhanced your teaching skills?

The aim of this question was to check if teachers had different perceptions regarding their previous ESL/EFL Continuous Professional Development and its effects on their teaching skills. The data analysis showed diversity in opinions among teachers regarding this matter. 39% of the novice teachers stated that their previous CPD programmes had a positive effect on their teaching skills, and this opinion was shared by 82% of the relatively new teachers besides 36% of the experienced ones. 17% of the novice teachers stated that their previous CPD programmes did not enhance their teaching skills and so did 21% of the experienced teachers; however, none of the relatively new teachers shared this perception. The interesting part of the data was that 44% of the novice teachers were not sure whether their previous CPD had enhanced their teaching skills or not. This is interesting because it shows that many novice teachers were either not sure about the relevance of their CPD programmes with their teaching practice or that they simply could not evaluate their teaching skills correctly. Either way, this means that novice

teachers should be given more practical and specific information about how to apply the knowledge that they acquire during their CPD into their classrooms, and how to specify the needed criteria to evaluate their teaching skills and practices. The level of uncertainty that novice teachers showed within the collected data for this question clearly shows that an urgent action is required to eliminate this vagueness among novice teachers or, at least, inspect the reasons behind it. Some of the relatively new and experienced teachers were also not sure about the effectiveness of their previous CPD programmes over their teaching skills as 18% of the relatively new teachers and 16% of the experienced ones also stated that they were not sure that the programmes had positive effects on their teaching skills.

Do you consider your previous ESL Continuous Professional Development as something that has enhanced your teaching skills?								
	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total	
Yes	7	39%	9	82%	24	63%	40	60%
No	3	17%	0	0%	8	21%	11	16%
Not sure	8	44%	2	18%	6	16%	16	24%
Total	18		11		38		67	100%
	27%		16%		57%		100%	

Tablet 4.11

Figure 4.16

Q15/ In your school is there any material benefit for teachers who take part in ESL Continuous Professional Development programs?

The reasoning behind including this question in the questionnaire was to investigate whether private schools in the U.A.E provide material benefits as an encouragement for those teachers who enroll themselves in internal or external CPD programmes to praise their efforts that aim to develop themselves and the teaching practices in their schools. The results have shown that only ten of participant teachers confirmed that their schools provide these benefits while twenty-eight of the teachers stated that their schools provide no material benefits for attaining professional development. The remaining twenty-nine teachers stated that they were not

sure that their schools provide such benefits. The results clearly show that the financial encouragement that is provided by private schools in the U.A.E for their professionally developing teachers is below expectations since there are not financial rewards in many schools for those teachers who work hard to develop themselves and their institutes and probably spend some of their income in the process.
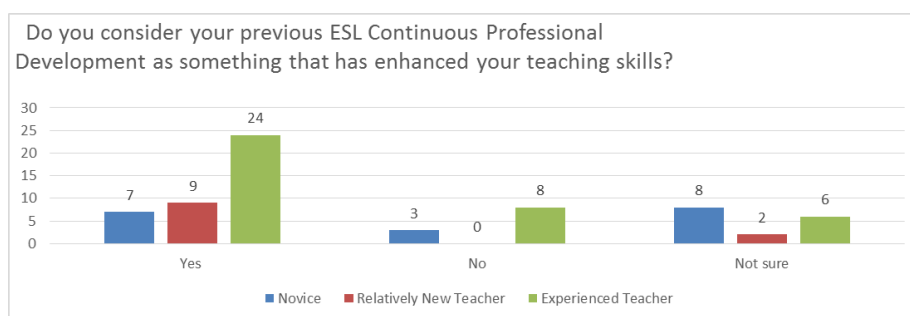
In your school is there any material benefit for teachers who take part in ESL Continuous Professional Development programs?							
	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total	
Yes	2	11%	2	18%	6	16%	10	15%
No	5	28%	6	55%	17	45%	28	42%
Not sure	11	61%	3	27%	15	39%	29	43%
Total	18		11		38		67	100%

Tablet 4.12

Figure 4.17

Q16/ Is there any recognition by your school of ESL / EFL Continuous Professional Development in teachers' yearly evaluation?

This question shares the same aim with question 15 as it was included in the questionnaire to investigate the level of involvement of private schools in the U.A.E in terms of encouraging and supporting their teachers who seek professional development. The results have shown that only 13% of the teachers who participated in the questionnaire confirmed that their schools recognize their efforts to develop themselves and their schools within their yearly evaluations. The remaining percentage of the teachers stated either that their schools do not recognize their efforts (33%) or that they were not sure if such a recognition exists (54%). These results show that schools provide neither enough financial support (as shown in the results of

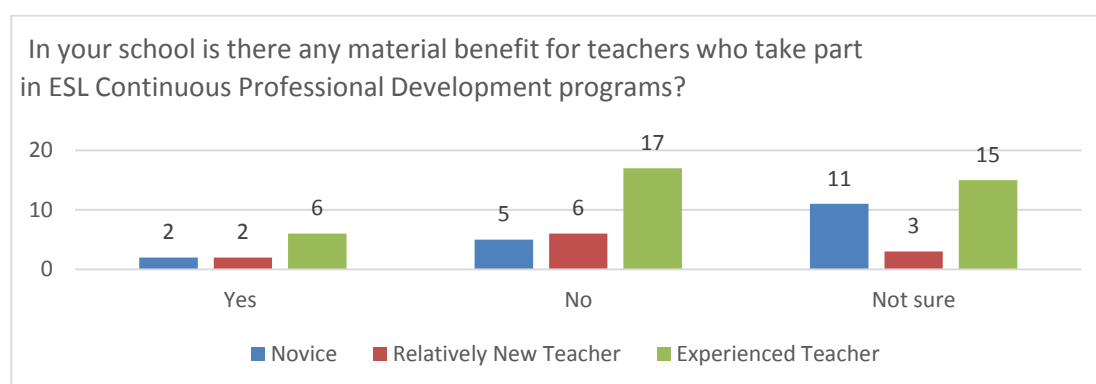question 15) nor emotional and psychological support to staff members who seek professional development.

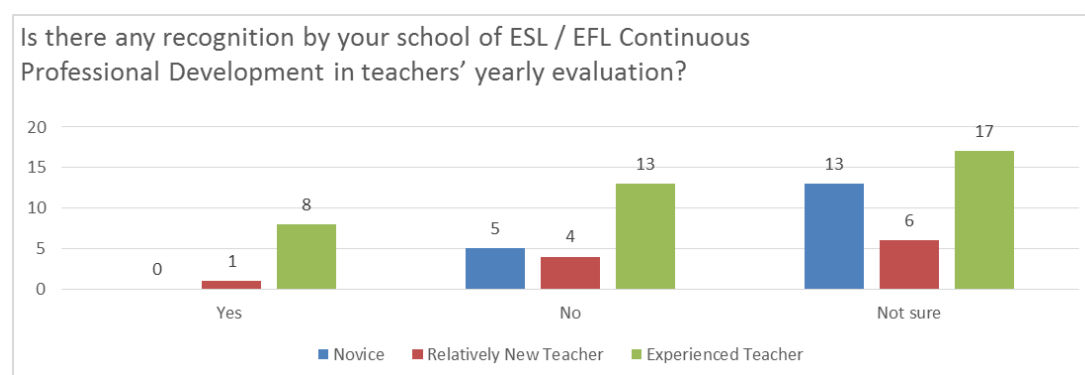| Is there any recognition by your school of ESL / EFL Continuous Professional Development in teachers' yearly evaluation?							
	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total
Yes	0	0%	1	9%	8	21%	9	13%
No	5	28%	4	36%	13	34%	22	33%
Not sure	13	72%	6	55%	17	45%	36	54%
Total	18		11		38		67	100%

Tablet 4.13

Figure 4.18

Q17/ Do you find that you apply in your class the knowledge you obtained in ESL development programs?

This question was designed to investigate the level of utilizing the knowledge that ESL/EFL teachers obtain from their CPD programmes in the classrooms. The results have shown that thirty-eight of the sixty-seven teachers who replied to the questionnaire believe that they are applying the knowledge that they have obtained from ESL / EFL CPD programmes in their classrooms. However, seven teachers stated that they were not doing so, and the remaining twenty-two were not sure whether they are applying the knowledge or not. Having almost 60% of the research sample to apply the CPD knowledge in the classroom might sound encouraging, but this does not reflect a successful outcome from the CPD programmes that the teachers went through. The doubts that 33% of the teachers have expressed indicate that their CPD programmes lacked practicality or that the obtained knowledge from these programmes was not linked directly to the real issues or obstacles that they face on a daily basis within their teaching practices. This could be a result of the lack of involvement that the teachers face when these CPD programmes are chosen (see data analysis of question 12). In order to have a higher percentage of teachers that apply the knowledge they obtain from ESL / EFL professional

development programmes, the relevance of the obtained knowledge for the classroom context should be ascertained.

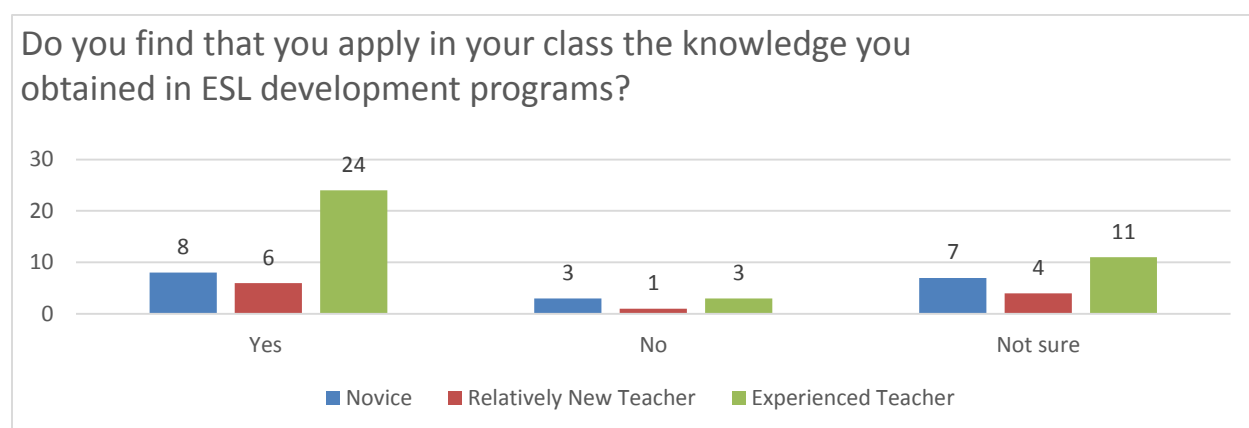| Do you find that you apply in your class the knowledge you obtained in ESL development programs?							
	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total
Yes	8	44%	6	55%	24	63%	38	57%
No	3	17%	1	9%	3	8%	7	10%
Not sure	7	39%	4	36%	11	29%	22	33%
Total	18		11		38		67	100%

Tablet 4.14

Figure 4.19

Q18/ Is there any analysis system at your school that investigates the teachers' needs before providing a Continuous Professional Development session?

The aim of this question was to investigate the standard procedures that private schools in the U.A.E follow before providing professional development sessions. This investigation is important because it could reveal whether schools are merely providing these sessions without recognizing the needs of their teachers or that these sessions are carefully planned to address the teachers actual necessities. The results, however, showed that only seventeen of the sixty-seven participant teachers who filled the questionnaire believe that their schools have an analysis system that investigates the teachers' needs before providing a Continuous Professional Development programme. As can be seen in the following table, twenty-nine teachers were sure that their schools had no such system of analysis, while twenty-one the teachers were not sure that such a system existed. These results reveal that many private schools in the U.A.E are not investing enough time or effort to determine the actual needs of their ESL /EFL teachers leading to poor choices in terms of selecting CPD programmes.

Is there any analysis system at your school that investigates the teachers' needs before providing a Continuous Professional Development session?	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total	
Yes	7	39%	2	18%	8	21%	17	25%
No	4	22%	6	55%	19	50%	29	43%
Not sure	7	39%	3	27%	11	29%	21	31%
Total	18		11		38		67	100%

Tablet 4.15

Q19/ Are teachers at your school asked by the administration about their opinions after a CPD session?

This question was aimed at investigating the standard procedures that private schools in the U.A.E follow when providing professional development sessions. The purpose behind it is to check if these schools require feedback from their teachers to evaluate how successful their CPD programmes were. As can be seen in the following table, twenty-nine of the sixty-seven teachers who filled in the questionnaire stated that teachers at their schools are asked about their opinions after a CPD session. The opposite was stated by twenty other teachers, since they declared that their schools don't ask teachers to provide feedback, and the remaining eighteen teachers were not sure if their schools require feedback after a CPD session.

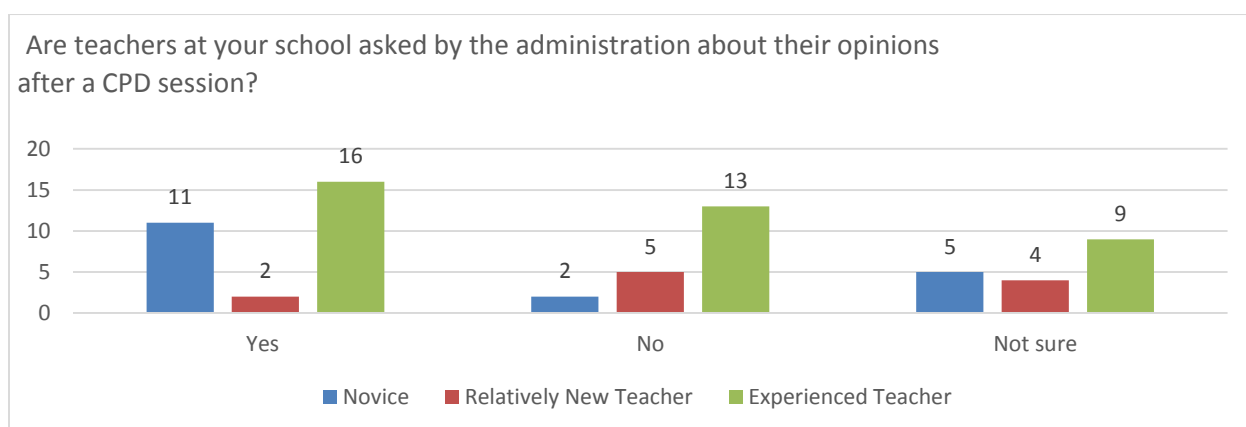| Are teachers at your school asked by the administration about their opinions after a CPD session?	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total	
Yes	11	61%	2	18%	16	42%	29	43%
No	2	11%	5	45%	13	34%	20	30%
Not sure	5	28%	4	36%	9	24%	18	27%
Total	18		11		38		67	100%

Tablet 4.16

Figure 4.20

Q20/ Do you think that Continuous Professional Development sessions should be optional?

This question meant to check the teachers' fondness regarding having the option of accepting or rejecting CPD programmes based on the teachers' judgments. The results have shown that thirty-five of the sixty-seven teachers prefer optional CPD sessions while twenty-one teachers believe that these sessions should be obligatory. The remaining eleven teachers were not sure whether these sessions should be optional or obligatory.

Do you think that Continuous Professional Development sessions should be optional?								
	Novice	Novice%	Relatively New Teacher	Relatively New Teacher %	Experienced Teacher	Experienced Teacher %	Total	
Yes	11	61%	7	64%	17	45%	35	52%
No	3	17%	4	36%	14	37%	21	31%
Not sure	4	22%	0	0%	7	18%	11	16%
Total	18		11		38		67	100%

Tablet 4.17
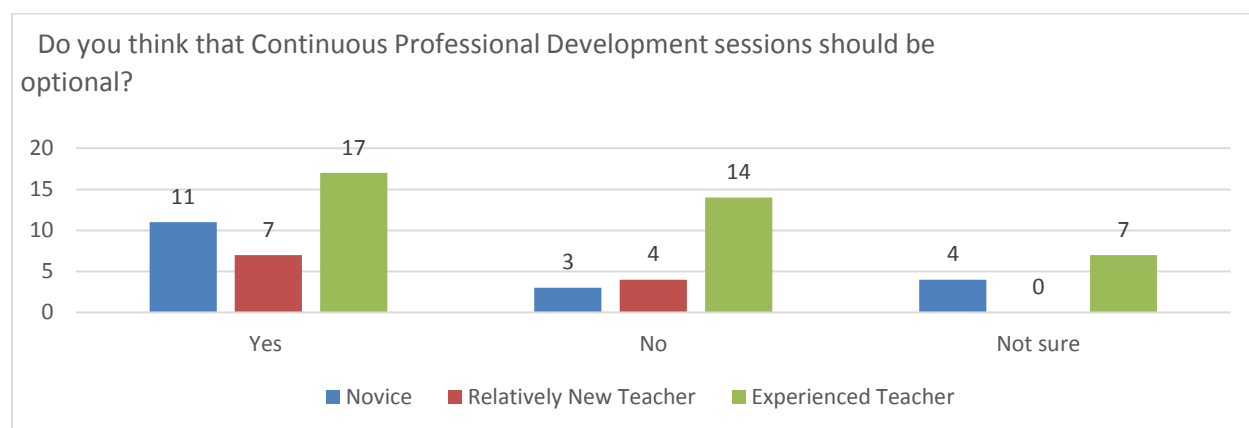
Figure 4.21

4.2. Findings Obtained from the Interviews with ESL/EFL Coordinators, Supervisors, and School Administrators

The qualitative part of this research involved face-to-face interviews with private school administrative members. Twelve questions were asked in each interview (see appendix B). The outcome of the interviews was as follows:

1. Many private schools in the U.A.E have no CPD programmes that are specifically designed for ESL /EFL teachers (see appendix B, P. 1).
2. Many private schools in the U.A.E do not provide an adequate number of CPD sessions every year (see appendix B, P. 1).

3. The providers of CPD training in many private schools in the U.A.E do not consult their teachers about their needs before providing CPD sessions (see appendix B, P. 3).

4. Many private schools in the U.A.E do not provide sufficient material or nonmaterial rewards for teachers who successfully undergo CPD training (see appendix B, P. 5).

5. Many administrators in private schools in the U.A.E believe that a high percentage of their teachers need further CPD training (see appendix B, P. 2).

Chapter 5

Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. What Do the Findings of this Study Reflect?

The aim of this study was to analytically assess the CPD programmes in private schools in the U.A.E in order to recognize the issues that influence the performance and efficiency of these programmes. Once these issues and influences are identified, a list of recommendations that would discourse the inadequacies in these programs is to be generated in an attempt to solve the problem. The findings of this study were very interesting since they revealed that many issues that are currently related to CPD in private schools in the U.A.E and were thought to be solved a long time ago still exist, even though a number of early researchers suggested practical solutions to tackle them. This is alarming because it indicates that many private schools in the U.A.E did not benefit a lot from previous research and they have not successfully implemented the previous recommendations. The findings of this study can be summarized as following:

1- Private schools in the U.A.E are not providing sufficient CPD opportunities for their ESL / EFL teachers. It was found that 58% of the participant teachers in this study did not receive any ESL /EFL CPD training from their schools within the last two years that preceded this study. It was also found that 20% of the total participant teachers got only one or two workshops in two years, which is a very low number that is way below the expectations of many educators in the U.A.E. These results reflect that many private schools in the U.A.E do not realize or acknowledge the importance of ESL /EFL CPD, and this fact is clear since they lack these programmes in the first place. These findings also present a clear disregard to many of the studies that were reviewed within the literature review in chapter two of this dissertation, which highlights the importance of CPD and acknowledges its positive effect on education. As was reviewed in chapter two, many scholars such as Hoyle (1995) considered CPD to be essential and would lead to good professional practice that teachers run through during the course of their career.

2- Teachers' perceptions regarding what they need in terms of CPD were relatively similar among the three types of teachers that this dissertation has classified based on experience (novice, relatively new, and experienced teachers). All groups of teachers

had nearly parallel preferences that show self-awareness about what they need to develop in their professional career regardless of their years of experience; however 44% of the novice teachers were not certain whether their previous CPD had improved their pedagogical skills or not. This is thought provoking because it shows that many novice teachers were either not certain about the applicability of their CPD programmes within their instruction practice or that they merely could not assess their pedagogical skills correctly. Either way, this indicates that novice teachers should be given more concrete and precise information about how to implement the knowledge that they obtain during their CPD into their classrooms, and how to specify the needed criteria to assess their pedagogical skills and practices. Based on the literature that was reviewed in this dissertation, teachers can make sense of their practice settings by making an action and then reflect on that particular action individually, or by collaborating with other teachers (McArdle and Coutts 2010). This means that novice teachers who are uncertain about how to implement the knowledge they obtain from CPD in their classes can use the help of their colleagues in terms of imitating their successful practices and obtaining feedback from shared reflections where they reflect upon actions.

3- It was also found that many ESL /EFL teachers have a great deal of uncertainty in terms of determining whether private schools in the U.A.E are progressing in attaining the aims of CPD for ESL / EFL teachers or not. The majority of ESL /EFL teachers believed either that the goals are not achieved or could not merely provide an answer to the question. The majority of novice teachers (67%) did not know the answer. 45% of the relatively new ESL / EFL teachers stated that they did not know the answer, and 50% of the experienced teachers did not know the answer either. As was mentioned ln chapter three within this dissertation, scholars such as Zeichner & Liston (1996) believe that a successful teacher "takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change efforts", but this can only be achieved when these teachers have an adequate level of awareness regarding what is actually happening in their schools. Teachers cannot contribute effectively to their schools' change efforts when they are uncertain about the goals of CPD and their level of attainment in their schools. Schools have to directly share their goals and information about the progress

of their CPD programmes with their teachers if they expect teachers to be part of this progress.

4- Another interesting finding was that the majority of ESL / EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E do not get to choose their ESL / EFL CPD programmes as it was found that only 4.4% of the participant teachers in this study get to choose their CPD programmes. Unfortunately, these results do not work in harmony with many early research findings and notions that emphasize the role of involving the teachers in choosing their CPD programmes as it represents a successful reflective practice that is needed to identify the precise needs of teachers about their CPD. According to Kolb (1984, p.38), "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience", and teachers cannot learn efficiently if they are not given the chance to transform their experiences. It is also vital that a teacher "takes responsibility for his or her own professional development" (Zeichner & Liston 1996, p. 6), and preventing a teacher from taking this responsibility might cause an unresponsiveness that will definitely have a negative impact on CPD. Many other scholars such as Schön (1983) considered the ability to reflect on action for contributing to the process of continuous learning as one of the central features of professional practice.

5- Many private schools in the U.A.E do not have effective systems to investigate the teachers' needs before providing continuous professional development training. Only 25% of the ESL / EFL teachers who participated in the questionnaire confirmed the existence of such systems. The lack of an effective analysis system will definitely lead to poor choices in terms of selecting CPD programmes that should target the very specific needs of teachers. An effective CPD programme should initially be aware of the specific needs of teachers in order to address them properly (Bredeson, 2003, p.9; Muijs, Day, Harris & Lindsay, 2004, p.291). This means that no matter how much effort and money private schools in the U.A.E put in their CPD programmes, these programmes will not be efficient unless they provide teachers with something that they actually need rather than something that is irrelevant to what they want.

6- Many ESL / EFL teachers who work in private schools in the U.A.E have no plans to enroll themselves in CPD programmes in the near future. Around 60% of the ESL / EFL teachers who participated in the questionnaire had no clear plans regarding their future professional development. This indicates that many of those teachers do not have a strong motive to professionally develop themselves although many of them are already aware of the fact that they need this development. This lack of motivation requires further investigation to unveil the reasons behind it and to determine how to increase the teachers' enthusiasm towards future development.

5.2. Were the research questions answered adequately?

As previously mentioned in chapter three this study was an attempt to find adequate answers to three main research questions that were based on three different hypotheses. These research questions were designed to investigate the status of ESL / EFL Continuous Professional Development in private schools in the U.A.E, the perceptions of ESL /EFL teachers who serve in private schools based on different levels of experience, and the identity of the decision-makers who choose these programmes. The results of the study have provided clear answers to the research questions and can be presented as following:

1.   Do private schools in the U.A.E provide sufficient professional development opportunities for ESL/EFL teachers? The answer to this question is no. Even though the study has found evidence that many private schools provide some CPD programmes for their teachers, these programmes are not specifically designed for ESL /EFL and do not deal properly with the content knowledge that ESL /EFL teachers need to enhance their practices. The level of frequency and availability of these programmes was also insufficient and it does not allow the teachers to benefit efficiently from these programmes.

2.   Do ESL/EFL teachers in private schools who have a longer experience in the U.A.E teaching and learning environment have different perceptions about CPD than those who have a shorter experience? The answer to this question is no in terms of the level of awareness about the teachers' need for CPD and what the specific needs are; however, many novice teachers were not sure if their previous CPD training had improved their pedagogical skills or not.

3.   Do ESL/EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E get to choose their CPD programmes? The answer to this question is no since only 4.4% of the ESL /EFL teachers who participated in this study confirmed that they get to choose their ESL /EFL CPD programmes.

5.3. Implications & Recommendations

The findings in this study have put forward some implications, which can significantly help educators as well as school administrative members to enhance their CPD progress within their educational institutes. The implications could involve a framework or checklists that could be customized according to the needs of these educational institutes or any individual educational group that need to benefit from the results of this dissertation. Understanding the significance of the findings of this study is very vital to educators who wish to comprehend the reasons for the shortcomings of their CPD programmes and the practical solutions that are required to be implemented to overcome these shortcomings. The author of this dissertation prepared a list of recommendations that is based on the results of the data analysis of this study, and which he believes could help many private schools in the U.A.E to improve the quality level of their CPD programmes. The list of recommendations goes as following:

1. Private schools in the U.A.E should provide more professional development opportunities for their ESL / EFL teachers. These opportunities should include CPD programmes that are specifically designed for ESL / EFL teaching and should tackle the very specific needs of the teachers. Targeting the very specific needs of ESL /EFL teachers means less wasted time and effort and more focus on the problematic issues that urgently need solving.

2. Private schools in the U.A.E should increase the level of involvement of their ESL / EFL teachers by allowing them to choose their own courses, and develop effective analysis systems that accurately investigate the teacher's needs based on the teachers reflections upon their practices, before providing CPD sessions.

3. Private schools in the U.A.E need to adopt transparent policies and share information with their own teachers. ESL /EFL teachers in private schools in the U.A.E should be well informed about the aims, objectives, progress, and achievements of the CPD programmes at their schools.

4. Private schools in the U.A.E should provide their novice teachers with more concrete and precise information about how to implement the knowledge that they obtain during their CPD in their classrooms, and how to self-evaluate their pedagogical skills and practices.

5. Private schools in the U.A.E should create further motivation for their in-service teachers by combining material benefits with nonmaterial ones, which would encourage teachers to enroll themselves in additional CPD planning and training since they would be constantly improving their academic and social status.

6. Private schools in the U.A.E should further encourage sense making and engagement among their in-service teachers in order to enhance professional renewal. This can only be achieved if teachers have sufficient time and space during their working hours to meet.

7. Private schools in the U.A.E should constantly exchange information with local universities and institutes to update their knowledge about the latest research in relation with CPD in the U.A.E.

8. Private schools in the U.A.E should depend more on their school-based CPD programmes since they are relatively cheaper than third –party programmes and they should better allow experienced teachers to share their knowledge with novice teachers and develop their training skills as trainers rather than trainees. This does not necessarily mean that third-party programmes should be completely terminated as they usually provide up to date information.

9. Private schools in the U.A.E should promote a positive attitude towards CPD by showing their constantly professionally developing teachers the appreciation that they need.

10. Private schools in the U.A.E need to create effective follow-up systems to check on the implementation of their CPD programmes, and reflect on their accomplishments in order to constantly improve these programmes.

5.4. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This dissertation dealt with the status of CPD in private schools in the U.A.E from the perspective of both ESL /EFL teachers' and administrative members; however, there are still

many aspects that are related to the development of CPD in the U.A.E that this study did not tackle. Aspects such as the level of teachers' motivation and its effects on the implementation of the obtained CPD knowledge in classrooms, reasons behind dedicating relatively limited budgets for CPD in many private schools in the U.A.E, and investigating the follow-up and evaluation system in private schools in the U.A.E are some of the aspects that need further study. The study has also unveiled a certain level of uncertainty and lack of will towards future CPD planning and training from part of many teachers in the field. The reasons behind such a lack of will is another aspect that needs to be investigated in future studies.

5.5 Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to assess the status of CPD programmes in private schools in the U.A.E from the points of view of in-service teachers and administrators in order to identify the factor that hinders or contributes to the competency of these programmes. The results showed several shortcomings that are negatively affecting the performance and efficiency of these programmes in private schools in the U.A.E. The findings of this study also served as a platform to present a set of recommendations and possible practical solutions that could work as a framework for future CPD programme implementation. These recommendations would be useful for anyone who wishes to avoid in the future the shortcomings which were revealed by the study

The results of this study matched many of the researcher's expectations that were based on his long experience as an in-service ESL /EFL teacher. However, some results were not expected by the researcher such as the level of scarcity of CPD programmes that are specifically designed for ESL /EFL teachers in many private schools in the U.A.E, and the extremely low level of involvement of ESL /EFL teachers in terms of choosing their CPD programmes.

The author of this dissertation considers his study important because it deals with a topic that is of great significance for the improvement of education in the U.A.E. The teachers who participated in this study considered that the general lack of awareness about the vital role of CPD was one of the most important impediments to achieving the goals of CPD in private schools in the U.A.E .This study definitely contributes to the teachers' aim of spreading this awareness in society.

The author of this dissertation also believes that the study has achieved its goals. This dissertation has succeeded in pointing out many shortcomings that are associated with the current CPD programmes that are available in private schools in the U.A.E, and it came up with logical solutions and recommendations. The recommendations are based on solid findings and could serve as future reference for those who wish to enhance their CPD programmes within the context of ESL /EFL teaching and learning in the U.A.E.

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Appendix A

ESL / EFL Teachers' Questionnaire

Name (optional): _____.

Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐

Nationality: _____.

Years of experience as an ESL / EFL teacher: _____.

Name of current workplace: _____.

Qualifications: _____.

Major: _____.

Name of Universities or Institutes: _____.

Country: _____.

1- Which of the following do you believe is part of TESOL Continuous Professional Development? (You may tick as many options as you wish)

Peer-to-Peer Observation   ☐

TESOL workshops provided by your workplace   ☐

Reading sources about TESOL (Journals, books, research papers, etc)   ☐

Internet articles and TESOL sites   ☐

Workshops provided by TESOL organizations   ☐

Studying for a higher TESOL qualification at universities and higher institutes   ☐

Which of the options that you have ticked is the most important in your opinion?

_____

Why?

_____

2- How many TESOL workshops has your school provided during the last two academic years?

None	One	Two	Between 3 to 6	More than 6
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3- How many TESOL workshops that were not provided by your school have you attended during the last two academic years?

None	One	Two	Between 3 to 6	More than 6
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4- Do you think that you need further professional development in the field of TESOL". (Please tick your preferred option)

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not Sure ☐

5- If you believe that you need further professional development in the field of TESOL, which of the following options represent the area that you need to develop most? (Please choose only one)

Teaching methodologies and techniques ☐

Curriculum Development ☐   Classroom Management ☐

Assessment and Evaluation ☐   Other ☐   (Please Specify) _____.

Material development ☐

6- In your opinion which of the following are good motives for ESL / EFL teachers' Continuous Professional Development. (You may choose as many options as you wish)

Improving students' level ☐   Getting a raise ☐   Self Improvement ☐

Academic development ☐   Getting promoted to a higher professional level ☐

Other ☐   (Please specify) _____.

7- Now please number in order of importance three of your selections from the above list (the most important selection according to you should come first)

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

8- In your opinion, who would benefit most from ESL / EFL teachers'

professional development? (You may choose as many options as you wish)

Teachers ☐   Students ☐   The School ☐   The Local Society ☐

Other (Please specify) _____.

9- Do you think that ESL / EFL teachers' professional development in private schools in the U.A.E is generally achieving its goals?

Yes ☐   No ☐   I don't Know ☐

10-   If your answer to question 9 is (NO), which of the following factors stand in the way of achieving the goals? (You may choose as many options as you wish)

Lack of will on the teachers' part ☐   Lack of resources ☐   ☐

Lack of will on the schools' part ☐   The elevated cost of developing programs ☐

General lack of awareness about the importance of professional development ☐

Scarcity of ESL teachers' professional development programs ☐

11-   Now please number in order of importance three of your selections from the above list (the most important selection according to you should come first)

I.   _____

II.   _____

III.   _____

12-   Who chooses the ESL teachers' professional development programs in your school? (You may choose more than one option if it is true)

You ☐   The Management ☐   The HOD or Supervisor ☐

Others ☐ (Please specify) _____.

13-   Have you got any plans to enroll yourself in an ESL / EFL teachers' professional development program within the next couple of years?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not Sure ☐

14-	Do you consider your previous ESL Continuous Professional Development as something that has enhanced your teaching skills?

Yes ☐		No ☐		Not Sure ☐

15-	In your school is there any material benefit for teachers who take part in ESL Continuous Professional Development programs?

Yes ☐		No ☐		Not Sure ☐

16-	Is there any recognition by your school of ESL / EFL Continuous Professional Development in teachers' yearly evaluation?

Yes ☐		No ☐		Not Sure ☐

If the answer is yes, please state how?

_____

17-	Do you find that you apply in your class the knowledge you obtained in ESL development programs?

Yes ☐		No ☐		Not Sure ☐

18-	Is there any analysis system at your school that investigates the teachers' needs before providing a Continuous Professional Development session?

Yes ☐		No ☐		Not Sure ☐

19-   Are teachers at your school asked by the administration about their opinions after a CPD session?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐   Not Sure   ☐

20-   Do you think that Continuous Professional Development sessions should be optional?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐   Not Sure   ☐

Appendix B

Interview Questions and Replies of ESL/EFL Coordinators, Supervisors, and School Administrators

Q1/ What kind of Continuous Professional Development does the school provide for its ESL / EFL teachers?

The replies to this question were very interesting since three of interviewees stated that they have no CPD programmes that are specifically designed for ESL/EFL teachers at their schools. The three interviewees explained that all the CPD programmes that are offered in their schools are dealing with teaching and learning in general with no reference to TESOL. This is interesting because it means that these programmes lack the content knowledge that is needed by ESL/EFL teachers to enhance their practices in the classroom. There is no doubt that CPD programmes that generally deal with the concepts of teaching and learning could be useful, but they are surely not as effective as CPD programmes that are specifically designed to deal with a specific subject matter. The three other interviewees stated that they have CPD programmes in their schools that are specifically designed for ESL/EFL teachers.

Q2/ How many professional development programs do you provide for your ESL/EFL teachers every year?

As it is clear from the replies to question one, three interviewees have already stated that they do not provide any CPD programs that are specifically designed for ESL/EFL teachers. Nevertheless, the three other interviewees stated that they provide a range of internal and external CPD sessions that are dedicated to ESL/EFL teachers every year. This sounded so promising. However, one of these replies was particularly unusual since the interviewee stated that her teachers go through a peer-to-peer observation CPD programme that involves forty peer-to-peer observations every week. This was unusual because the researcher checked the timetable of the teachers and he found that it was physically impossible for teachers to meet so many times within that period since teachers have to be elsewhere according to their timetable. This indicates either that the interviewee misexpressed herself or that she exaggerated the merits of her CPD programme. One of the remaining interviewees stated that her school provides 3 external CPD

workshops every year and the other affirmed that her school recently started providing 2 external and 2 internal CPD workshops that are planned to be given every year.

Q3/ Do you believe that the ESL/EFL Professional Development Programs that were provided to your teachers by the school in the past were successful? Why or why not?

The three interviewees, who stated that their schools provided no CPD programmes that are specifically designed for ESL/EFL teachers in the past few years as a reply to question one, were asked to evaluate their CPD programs in general. The replies were very attention grabbing since two of the three interviewees had two different points of view while the third one did not provide any feedback about the topic. The first interviewee considered that the CPD programmes that were given to the ESL/EFL teachers in the past were successful even though they were not designed to deal with TESOL. The reason behind this according to her is that these programmes managed to refresh the knowledge of the old teachers, and provided new information for the new teachers giving all the teachers the same starting point. The second interviewee had a very different point of view since he believes that the CPD programmes that were given to the ESL/EFL teachers in the past in his school were not successful because they lacked practicality and it was very hard for the teachers to apply the obtained knowledge in their classrooms. The three other interviewees who did have CPD programmes that are specifically designed for ESL/EFL teachers also gave three different replies to the question. The one who claimed that her school provided 40 peer-to-peer observations per week as a reply to question two did not provide a clear answer to this question. The interviewee kept talking about how the CPD programmes that were given in the past should have included rather than how they actually were. The two remaining interviewees had two conflicting opinions. One of them considered that the ESL/EFL CPD programmes that were provided by her school in the past were successful because they added valuable pieces of information that the teachers needed to enhance their practices. The other interviewee didn't consider that the previous ESL/EFL CPD programmes were successful because according to her they lacked an evaluation system and follow up procedures that would allow the administration of the school to check how teachers would implement the knowledge they obtained inside their classrooms.

Q4/ What do you think is approximately the percentage of ESL/EFL teachers in your school that need further Continuous Professional Development?

Two of the interviewees believe that 100% of their ESL/EFL teachers need further Continuous Professional Development while another two think that at least 40% of their teachers require that. One of the two remaining interviewees thinks that the majority of her ESL/EFL teachers are in need of CPD, while the third stated that 60% of her teachers needed to be enrolled in CPD programmes.

Q5/ Who chooses the ESL/EFL CPDs in your school, and on what basis?

Despite the fact that only 3 of the 67 ESL/EFL teachers who filled the questionnaire stated that they get to choose their CPD programmes, two of the administrative members who have been interviewed stated that they ask their teachers about their preferences before choosing these programmes. Two of the interviewees claimed that they choose these CPD programmes based on the feedback that they get from their teachers. The rest of the interviewees stated that they are the ones who choose the CPD programmes in cooperation with some other members of the administration based on their observations of the classes. One of the replies also included third party companies that visit her school to observe the teachers then decide what CPD programmes they need. Regardless of how accurate the two interviewees who stated that they required their teachers' feedback before choosing their CPD programmes were, the remaining interviewees did not consult their teachers about their CPD programmes before implementing them. Therefore, the process of choosing these CPD programmes is still considered faulty in many private schools in the U.A.E because it simply lacks the teachers' feedback that is based upon reflection on their practices. According to many researchers, an effective CPD programme should initially be aware of the specific needs of teachers in order to address them properly (Bredeson, 2003:9; Muijs, Day, Harris & Lindsay, 2004:291). Lacking the factor of being aware of the specific needs of teachers due to miscommunication and the absence of teachers' reflection on their own practices could jeopardize any CPD programme. After properly identifying the specific needs of every individual teacher, a further step is to be taken, which is to properly plan the activities that are going to be applied in order to support the teachers and allow them to use the obtained knowledge creatively and confidently (Anderson, 2001:1).

Q6/ What are the challenges that you as a school usually face when implementing ESL/EFL professional development programmes?

The high cost of many external CPD programmes was an obstacle that three of the interviewees face while implementing their programmes because of the limited budgets that they had. The three other interviewees stated that cost was not an issue to them. Other obstacles included negative attitudes of teachers towards CPD and the high load of lessons that the teachers had in their timetables, which would decrease the time that could be dedicated to CPD programmes within the schools' official timings. Private schools in the U.A.E should realize that investing money in CPD programmes is worth doing. The fact that many of these schools have a very tiny budget that is dedicated to CPD programmes is something that should be changed. Other solutions could include cooperating with local universities and educational institutes or simply exchanging the expertise among the schools themselves.   This is often less expensive than hiring third party organizations. It is only natural that teachers have a negative attitude towards CPD when they are overwhelmed with a ridiculous amount of lessons to give within a timeframe giving them no time to do anything else. Bringing teachers from home to attend a CPD session during their weekend, which is the only available time for them to spend some quality time with their families, will definitely not create a positive attitude towards CPD among the teachers either.

Q7/ How do you make sure that your ESL/EFL teachers apply what they learn in their PDs in the classroom?

Class observations were the main tool that the six interviewees used to make sure that their teachers applied what they learn in their PDs in the classroom; however, some of the interviewees mentioned some other indicators that make them sure that the knowledge is applied. These indicators included students' progress, their level of engagement, lesson planning, and feedback from parents.

Q8/ Is there any analysis system at the school that investigates the teacher's needs before providing a CPD session?

Only one of the six interviewees was very confident when she stated that there is an analysis system at her school, which investigates the teacher's needs before providing a CPD session. The rest of the interviewees stated that investigating the needs of the teachers is a task that is mainly done by the head of department or coordinator. One of the interviewees added that they had such

an analysis system in his school but it remained only on paper and it was never practically applied. Another interviewee added that school administrations usually trust the judgment of the heads of departments, therefore, they mainly depend on HODs to decide what the teachers need before providing CPD sessions. The interviewee, who said that her school had an analysis system to investigate the teacher's needs prior to a CPD session, added that their system consisted of steps that involved teachers' self-assessments and recommendations. In addition to this, there are questionnaires to be filled by the teachers and a process of analyzation for the entire intake that involved several administrative members and HODs before deciding what type of CPD programmes the teachers should carry out.

Q9/ Is there any recognition by the school of ESL/EFL Continuous Professional Development in teacher's yearly evaluations?

Two of the interviewees replied positively, another interviewee said that the schools' recognition depends on many variables such as the types of CPD programmes that the teachers carry out and whether they are accredited by the government or not. Two other interviewees stated that there is no recognition by their schools of ESL/EFL Continuous Professional Development in teacher's yearly evaluations and that are no material or nonmaterial rewards for those teachers who professionally develop themselves. The last interviewee stated that there are no records of CPD progress at her school and that teachers sometimes get nonmaterial rewards, but they never get a raise or any other type of material reward. Private schools in the U.A.E should understand the value of encouraging their teachers to create a positive attitude towards CPD. This could be achieved by simply recognizing the teachers' attempts to professionally develop themselves and by showing some gratitude or acknowledgment from the part of the schools. The recognition that is required does not have to be material all the time; a small thank you letter could sometimes be more effective than a raise, and it could encourage a teacher to obtain more and more academic knowledge as long as he or she feels that their social status at school is enhanced. After all, how do we expect a teacher to create a positive attitude towards CPD if we deny him or her the acknowledgment that they deserve?

Q10/ Are teachers at your school asked by the administration about their opinions after a CPD session?

Three of the six interviewees replied positively. One of the interviewees stated that CPD providers usually ask for the feedback, but not his school. One of the remaining two interviewees stated that her school sometimes asks the teachers to provide feedback, but not on regular basis, and the other interviewee said that her school does not usually ask the teachers about their opinions after a CPD session.

Q11/ Have you developed any plans or procedures for the future to enhance the Continuous Professional Development of ESL/EFL teachers at your school? And if the answer is yes, what do these plans involve?

All the interviewees stated that they had developed sophisticated plans for the future to enhance the Continuous Professional Development of ESL/EFL teachers at their schools. The plans involved new budgets for CPD, more differentiated programmes that take the teachers' level into consideration, more cooperation with third party companies that are specialized in teacher training, creating more sources for teachers, and depending more on local teachers. In fact, most of the future plans that the interviewees mentioned sounded so great, and the researcher believes that if these plans are to be truly implemented and not to remain just on paper, then the chances of having better CPD programmes in these schools will increase.

Q12/ Have you got any further comments or opinions to share about the topic?

All the interviewees had interesting comments to add except one who stated that she had no further comments or opinions to share about the topic. One of the interviewees stated that he believed that his school needed to further involve the ESL/EFL teachers when deciding what CPD programmes to choose. He also added that an effective follow-up system should exist to check on the implementation of these CPD programmes. Another interviewee added that teachers should have positive attitudes towards CPD in order to make it effective. Another interviewee shared a very interesting comment as she declared she believed that her school should change its policies, invest more on its existing teachers, and try to build relationships with other educational institutes to share expertise and insights about CPD. Some of the interviewees demanded a copy of this dissertation once it is finished so that they would review its recommendations.