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Professional Development Obstacles Facing Primary English Language Teachers in Northern Gaza

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to

The sake of Allah, my Creator and my Master.

My parents, my wife and my daughter Dana.

All teachers and knowledge seekers.

Acknowledgments

Abstract
Professional Development Obstacles Facing Primary English Language Teachers in Northern Gaza

This study meant at identifying the professional development obstacles facing primary English language teachers in northern Gaza. The researcher, therefore, applied a valid and reliable questionnaire, which was filled out by eighty randomly selected teachers. In addition, the researcher interviewed five teachers who were purposively selected.

In summary, the following findings were reached:

1. Most participants agreed that the sudden and rare visits of supervisors are the greatest institutional professional development obstacles.

2. Most participants agreed that money and financial issues are the main self-directed professional development obstacles.

3. The majority believed the unbearable heavy teaching load, lack of time, overcrowded classes, and absence of promotion are the most important professional development obstacles from the nature of the work.

4. There were statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) due to gender in favor to males, experience in favor to those who have less experience, and age in favor to those who are younger in perceptions about professional development obstacles, yet there were not any differences due to academic qualification variable.

5. From the interviews, there were no differences in interviewees' responses due to gender or academic qualification variables, but there were differences due to experience and age.

6. Teachers suggested decentralizing professional development programs, appreciating teachers' good work, and associating professional development with career development, and they proposed increasing the number of periods allocated for each class in a week and publishing a domestic journal.

Finally, the researcher recommends carrying out further researches on the obstacles facing EFL teachers in one specific development. The researcher also recommends conducting evaluation studies for already existing EFL teachers' professional development programs.

ملخص البحث

معوقات التطوير المهني لدى معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الذين يدرّسون المرحلة الابتدائية في شمال غزة

هدفت الدراسة إلى تحديد معوقات التطوير المهني لدى معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الذين يدرّسون المرحلة الابتدائية في شمال غزة، استخدم الباحث استبانه محكّمة و مجرّبة ، كذلك استخدم الباحث مقابلات مع المعلمين ليحصل عل معلومات نوعية لتكمّل و تضيف على المعلومات الكميّة التي جُمِعَت من الإستبانه.

كانت عينة الإستبانه ثمانون معلماً تم اختيارهم عشوائياً و ذلك يعادل 71% من مجتمع الدراسة، و كانت عينة المقابلة خمسة معلمين تم اختيارهم قصدياً ليشتملوا على كل متغيرات العمر، المؤهل الأكاديمي، الجنس و الخبرة ، البيانات و المعلومات التي جُمِعَت عولجت عن طريق برنامج SPSS و تم تحليلها إحصائيا باستخدام اختبار T و معامل ارتباط بيرسون و اختبار One Way ANOVA بالإضافة إلى اختبار شيفيه بوست هوك لتحديد اتجاه الاختلافات.

بعد الدراسة و التحليل توصلت الدراسة إلى:

1. اعتبر معظم المعلمين الزيارات الصفية المفاجئة و القليلة من قبل المشرفين هي عائق أمام التطوير المهني.

2. اجتمع المعلمين على أن عدم توفر الموارد وعدم اعتبارها حافزاً هو أكثر معوقات التطوير الذاتي أهمية.

3. أظهرت النتائج أنّ العبء التدريسي الكبير للمعلم و كثافة الطلاب في الفصول إضافة إلى عدم تقدير عمل المعلمين يعيق تطوير المعلمين.

4. أظهرت نتائج الإستبانه عدم و جود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين أراء المعلمين تعزى لمتغير المؤهل الأكاديمي، في حين تبين وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية تعزى لمتغير الجنس لصالح الذكور، و أخرى تعزى لمتغير الخبرة لصالح الأقل خبرة، و أخرى تعزى لمتغير العمر لصالح الأصغر سناً.

5. اتفقت آراء المعلمين خلال المقابلات على الرغم من اختلاف الجنس و المؤهل الأكاديمي في حين اختلفت آراء المعلمين الذين تمت مقابلتهم باختلاف خبراتهم و أعمارهم.

6. إن معلمي اللغة الانجليزية لديهم الاستعداد للبحث و التطور لكنهم بحاجة إلى جهة توجههم و توفر لهم الإمكانيات.

7. اقترح المعلمون اللامركزية في التطوير المهني، إضافة إلى ربط التطوير المهني بالتطوير الوظيفي.

8. زيادة حصص اللغة الإنجليزية لكل فصل و تقليل عدد حصص المعلم أسبوعيا يمكن أن يساعد في التطوير المهني.

9. كذلك اقترح المعلمون إعداد مجلة دورية ينشر فيها أعمال و أبحاث المعلمين لتساهم في نشر الأفكار و الآراء.

و في النهاية، أوصى الباحث القيام بدراسات تكشف معوقات كل طريقة من طرق التطوير المهني على حده، كما أوصى بإجراء دراسات تقويمية لبرامج التطوير المهني الموجودة.

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List of Abbreviations

	Abbreviation	Long Form
1.	EFL	English as a Foreign Language
2.	ELT	English Language Teaching
3.	IUG	Islamic University of Gaza
4.	INSET	In-service teacher training
5.	MOEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
6.	P1	Interviewee number one
7.	P2	Interviewee number two
8.	P3	Interviewee number three
9.	P4	Interviewee number four
10.	P5	Interviewee number five
11.	PNA	Palestinian National Authority
12.	SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
13.	TEFL	Teaching English as Foreign Language
14.	TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
15.	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
16.	UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Work Agency

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Chapter I
Introduction

1.1 . Introduction

English language has become a widespread international language since early 1980s because of its worldwide political and business importance. English is the formal means of communication in several different parts of the world from the North America to East Asia, and it is the language of modern technology and internet. Teaching English, as a result, has become a global industry.

Consequently, companies and publishing houses have been working hard to enrich the field of English language teaching through printing and producing teaching aids to facilitate learning. Different types of dictionaries have been published, and all latest technologies have been dedicated to help learners master language with minimum effort and within the shortest time. For example, the smart board has made teaching much easier, and language labs help students master listening and speaking.

However, it has also been proved that all learning resources can never be effective unless directed by a reliable English language teacher as a main input component in the learning process (Panwar et al., 2007; Whitehead, 1989; Korthagen, 2004), for teaching English is a multi-dimensional process that requires intensive, continuous care from all affecting and affected factors: teachers, learners, parents, curriculum designers, teaching aids producers, and even the school administrators (Nunan, 1989).

The effective English language teacher, then, should at least have the following three characteristics. Being a person, first of all, forces him/her to have the personality factors that qualify him/her to be a teacher such as patience, perseverance, punctuality, and generosity. Secondly, Mann (2005) states the valuable English language teacher needs to be aware of the teaching methods and techniques needed

for successful teaching such as presentation techniques, the different types of practice, and how to evaluate students learning. Knowledge of classroom management tactics, discipline and behavior control ideas, and annual and daily planning methods are also included. A good teacher of English is also supposed to be very competent in English and very fluent as a language user because it is the subject matter of the teaching and learning processes.

More precisely, Roberts (1998) notes teaching English to young learners in the primary stage requires knowledgeable teachers who are able to deal with children. Here, sufficient exposure in psychology is considered necessary since young learners have special learning styles and, accordingly, special teaching methods that evoke their mentalities by turning abstracts into tangibles and ideas into actions. The primary stage is the foundation that supports the higher grades. Very critical and creative primary English language teachers are strongly looked-for to be responsible for the future leaders.

Such an interdisciplinary complicated job makes teaching English language to primary school students a challenging profession that needs lifelong learning through well-planned formal and informal procedures. English language teachers face several different professional difficulties such as classroom management problem, students with learning disabilities, and lack of technological teaching aids (Ahmed, 2003). They may also face subject matter difficulty because the new English for Palestine curriculum is demanding and requires teachers to be very good users of language (Dajani and Mclaughlin, 2009).

As they always face in-field problems, Edge (1992) notes English teachers need practical solutions for the daily problems they encounter in classrooms. They, therefore, should always be abreast with up to date teaching methods and techniques.

Therefore, professional development of primary English language teachers needs to be the first priority for classroom teachers, school principals, and governments since good teaching methods positively affect students' learning, which is the ultimate educational goal (Underhill, 2004). When English teachers think and study their classroom performance, they can then deeply understand the language learning theories they studied during pre-service education and practically apply those theories on their field teaching experience (Kalnin, 2000; McCormack et al, 2006).

Korthagen (2004) argues pre-service training for English language teacher is very demanding; however, keeping a teacher up to date and skilled is much more difficult. More surprisingly, professional development is more vital than teachers college training since in-service professional development helps teachers find practical solutions for problems they actually face (Kagen, 1992). Since English teachers always encounter classroom troubles, they need to have opportunities of on-going professional development. In addition, Richards and Farrell (2005) state that providing professional development opportunities is a crucial factor for long-term success of teaching programs.

Wallace, (1998); Richards, (1998); Moon,(2004), Burns, (1999), and Bell, (1991) point out that professional development can be achieved through high quality in-service training courses. Besides, extensive reading contributes in developing teachers especially reading specialized periodicals. Other opportunities of EFL teachers' professional development might be open discussions, teachers' diaries, peer observation, collaborative action research and self-evaluation methods.

In spite of being a valid process and can be achieved through a variety of activities, English teachers professional development faces several different obstacles such as the number and the quality of in-service training courses, lack of specialized

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periodicals and books, heavy teaching load, lack of confidence, working in isolation, and uncooperative colleagues. Moreover, the absence of intrinsic motivation and the authoritative nature of educational supervision are central English teachers' professional development hindrances. The researcher believes that general training courses are insignificant since they do not help teachers find what they actually need. Such obstacles need to be listed and discussed.

1.2. Need for the study

Few studies, based on the researcher's knowledge, were carried out to show what prevent effective primary English language teachers' professional development. Some studies discussed the professional difficulties facing teachers of English with surface reference to professional development such as the study of Ahmed (2003). Other studies discussed teachers' professional development in general with no special reference to English teachers. Therefore, studies on primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles are needed since such studies would serve as needs analysis for persons in authorities.

Additionally, the direct positive impact of good English teachers on the success of the English language teaching programs is a key answer for why to work on English teachers' professional development obstacles. Reliable primary English language teachers can be made through continuous in-service education. As a pre-step, what frustrate effective professional development should be exposed so that teachers and interested personnel can then remove or treat the professional development obstacles they face.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Having taught English for around three years, the researcher has noticed English language teachers face in-class problems on a daily basis since some young

learners of English suffer from language learning difficulties and so require a professional teacher who is able to overcome such problems. The researcher has also noticed primary English teachers do not have effective solutions for the problems they face, or they do not even consult others or search books to find practical ideas. They do not either have the needed skills to search and conduct action researches, or they might not have sufficient time to think of professional development due to the heavy teaching load. This means there are several different obstacles primary English language teachers face preventing them from receiving or practicing effective professional development.

1.4. Research questions

The main question of the study is the following:

1. What are the professional development obstacles facing primary English language teachers in northern Gaza?

The sub-questions are the followings:

2. Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in perceptions about primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles due to the gender variable?

3. Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in perceptions about primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles due to the academic qualification variable?

4. Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in perceptions about primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles due to the number of working experience years variable?

5. Are there statistically significant differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in perceptions about primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles due to the age variable?

1.5. Purpose of the study

The study aimed at investigate primary English language teachers professional development obstacles form their point of view in order to:

1. Determine the professional development obstacles primary English language teachers face.

2. Measure if there are significant differences in teachers' perceptions due to gender, the academic qualification, experience, and the age variables.

3. Suggest solutions for primary EFL teachers' professional development obstacles.

1.6. Significance of the study

The study may be significant for the following:

1. English language teachers because they are in the field, and they need to be professionally developed to be able to cope with the current challenges they face with textbooks, students, behavior, administration, and even time.

2. School principals and principal deputies because they care about improving students' achievement throughout in-school teachers' professional development.

3. English supervisors because educational supervision is supposed to be a crucial part of English teachers' professional development.

1.7. Definition of terms

1. Professional development: It includes all formal and informal activities teachers do or receive for the sake of in-service professional growth. It refers to the continuous learning of teachers that focuses on improving classroom practice and increasing students learning. Problem solving and practice monitoring are the

two most approaches of professional development since they deal with practical field problems rather than theoretical case studies (Bailey, 2004; Finocchiaro, 1988; Roberts, 1998; Wigglesworth, 2000).

2. Obstacles: the hindrances that prevent something to happen effectively.

3. Primary English language teachers: they are teachers of English who teach young learners form the first grade to the sixth grade.

1.8. Limitations of the study

The study has been applied to primary English language teachers who teach grades 1 to 6 at UNRWA schools in northern Gaza in the second semester of the scholastic year 2010 – 2011.

Chapter II
Section: "A"
The Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Introduction

This section is a review of the theoretical literature related to EFL teachers' professional development. First, it presents historical background of EFL teachers' professional development in Palestine and Gaza, and then the definitions and the broad perspectives of EFL teachers' professional development. After that, elaborated justifications why EFL teachers' professional development is of great importance are listed. The several different activities of teachers' professional development are also included. Finally, the possible EFL teachers' professional development obstacles teachers might face are reviewed.

2.1.2. Historical background

In Palestine, there are three types of schools: public schools run by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), Refugees schools run by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and private schools run by individuals or organizations. All had English language teaching programs that did not start from the first grade. Dajani and Mclaughlin (2009: 27) say:

> A new Palestinian curriculum has been developed and introduced progressively since 2000. For the first time English language became a core subject starting from the first grade (age 6 years) in an educational system which traditionally introduced English as a curriculum subject only in grade five (age 11 years).

Such a dramatic change should have been prepared carefully. Teachers should have been trained to deal with the new English language system especially that for the primary stage since no teacher in Gaza had ever taught primary stage before. Therefore, primary English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' professional

development is really crucial since teachers had not been trained before the implementation of the new English for Palestine series. They started teaching without any prior knowledge about the series or about teaching English to young learners. Dajani and Mclaughlin (2009: 34) say:

> After looking closely at the textbook, it became apparent that effective implementation of the texts would require a teacher-training program focusing on ESL methodologies as well as on the specific learning styles and needs of the very young learner. Such a training program was designed by the textbook series editors; but, only two weeks into the start of the 2000 school year, the second Palestinian uprising for independence (the Intifada) erupted, halting all planned activities. Subsequent years saw the introduction of other textbooks as planned, but without the teacher-training program originally intended.

Thus, the eruption of the second Palestinian uprising for independence (the Intifada) had negatively affected the implementation of the new English for Palestine series. In fact, consequences of the second Intifada in 2000 have deeply damaged the whole Palestinian educational system in Gaza. In 2008, The Israeli occupation damaged and destroyed 280 schools in Gaza. "In Gaza, in the occupied Palestinian territory, Israeli military attacks in 2008 and 2009 left 350 children dead and 1,815 injured, and damaged 280 schools" (UNESCO, 2011: 15).

The siege on Gaza has worsened the situation. Schools could not be reconstructed because of "restrictions on movements of building materials as a result of a military blockade" (UNESCO, 2011: 143). This has forced thousands of students to study in overcrowded and insecure learning environments. Teachers also have been forced to deal with the challenge of the new English for Palestine series together with the challenge of overcrowded classes.

Ahmed (2003), as a result, noted teachers of English have to cope with extremely demanding teaching conditions. For instance, teachers may face rebellious students or traumatized as a result of the violence the students experienced during the

last war on Gaza in 2009. Dealing with such pressure without professional support and special training had left teachers deeply discouraged. There is an urgent need to upgrade EFL teachers' professional development programs.

2.1.3. EFL teachers' professional development

In some professions, professional development may end when the personnel achieve a satisfactory level of skills mastery such as secretaries and drivers who deal with machines. However, some other professions require higher levels of skills mastery and, therefore, require continuous professional development such as teachers who deal with human beings (Wallace, 1998). Sometimes, teachers of English are forced to develop themselves on a daily basis when encountering an instructional problem or when having trouble-maker students. Professional development is, sometimes, a need rather than an improvement tool.   In other words, primary English language teachers should almost always be abreast to the new teaching techniques and technologies so as to be able to cope with the changing teaching atmosphere.

Unlike teachers' training, teachers' professional involves context-based awareness that helps teachers decide which technique or strategy is more appropriate for a particular learner or a particular class (Freeman, 1989). Despite being distinct, teachers' professional development should start from teachers training. Tomlinson (2003: 2) argues that one aim of teachers' training programs should be to gain teachers "the ability to apply [the learned skills] to their actual contexts of teaching".

In the past, professional development for teachers used to focus on workshops on the most recent teaching approach, and attending teachers were encouraged to apply the new method in their classrooms (DuFour, 1997). Moreover, teachers were rarely provided with follow-up opportunities (Joyce and Showers, 2002). Nowadays, however, teachers are actively involved in their own development, and they are

equally responsible for their professional development side by side with the institutes they work for; therefore, the strategies and techniques of teachers' professional development programs have fanatically changed too. For example, internet English teaching forums and professional networks have been largely used by novice and experienced, local and international teachers. Richards and Farrell (2005) and Bubb (2005) point out self-assessment tools have been widely encouraged as a professional development approach in modern professional development programs. Training and workshops are now seen as being traditional professional development activities.

According to Bailey (2004), Finocchiaro (1988), Roberts (1998), Wigglesworth (2000), and Head and Taylor (1997), English language teachers' professional development includes all formal and informal activities teachers do or receive for the sake of in-service professional growth. It refers to the continuous learning of teachers that focuses on improving classroom practices and thus increasing students learning output. Problem solving and practice monitoring are the two most common approaches of English language teachers' professional development. Odden et al. (2002) points out effective professional development makes changes in teachers' practices that accordingly lead to improvements in students' achievement. Therefore, maintaining the quality of the EFL teacher means as a result a high quality English learner.

Richards and Farrell (2005), Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) and Richards (1998), mention teachers professional development activities include practicing teaching as a core activity, reflecting on own and others' teaching practices, doing action researches, attending lectures and workshops, participating in professional conferences and developing communication skills. However varied, all professional

development activities seek achieving one want that is to help teachers be more competent.

Roberts (1998) points out that effective in-service teacher development programs should have the following standards:

1. Focus on practical knowledge

They should provide teachers with practical solutions for daily classroom problems. In-service teachers' development programs should not pay much attention on theories since teachers have already read about theories in previous stages, and now they need to know more about classroom techniques and strategies.

2. Teachers' education can be changed and adapted

There is no one technique or strategy that suits all teachers, but different teachers learn differently. Thus, teachers' education programs can be changed and adapted in order to suit the target group of teachers.

3. Teachers learn through participation, not from theories

In-service teachers need practice and in-class strategies that help them survive. Therefore, participation through microteaching and demonstrative lessons is much more effective than reading and commenting on theories.

Here, the three standards Roberts (1998) lists can be considered as general guidelines for teachers professional development. In the first and the third standards, he emphasizes the importance of the practical side over the theoretical one for in-service professional development. In the second standard, Roberts (1998) discusses the point of individual learning and that each teacher learns differently. Roberts' standards, however, do not provide hints for different professional development activities.

Wallace (1991) argues teachers develop their teaching by reflecting on their teaching experience. He differentiates between three different models of teacher education:

1. The Applied Science Model

The Applied Science Model is the traditional and the most common model. The model assumes teaching is a science and can be examined objectively, and thus teachers learn to be teachers by studying research-based theories. Accordingly, teachers are judged to be educated when they become able to apply the studied theories in practice. Positively, the Applied Science Model does not neglect the experimental research literature done by scalars so far, yet it depends on external knowledge rather than teachers own experiences.

2. The Craft Model

Often called cooperating teachers, the Craft Model assumes teachers learn by imitation, and that teaching knowledge and skills can be acquired as a result of observation, instruction, and practice. This model allows teachers to develop experiential knowledge. Nevertheless, the model does not help teachers develop creativity since it does not include suggesting new ideas.

3. The Reflective Model

The Reflective Model assumes that teachers develop their teaching by reflecting on their own teaching practice. It is based on recalling the teaching situation and evaluating it critically seeking improvement in future teaching. Wallace (1991) identifies two kinds of knowledge to be taken into considerations in professional development programs. One is "Received knowledge" that is all the theories, skills, and principles that teachers studied during collage English teaching methods courses.

The second is "Experiential knowledge" that is the knowledge and concepts teachers developed and conceptualized throughout their teaching experience.

Wallace's (1991) models of teachers development seem to be an elaboration for Roberts' (1998) second standard that teachers learn differently as the former lists three different models of teachers professional development that appear as three different learning styles. The Applied Science Model suits new teachers who are not experienced enough sine it totally depends on research-based knowledge rather than experience. The Craft Model helps teachers learn for each others at it fosters cooperation between teachers when imitating one another. The Reflective Model promotes self-learning through self-appraisal activities. The most advantageous element about the Reflective Model is that it helps newly hired teachers be aware of decision-making processes because it allows teachers to critically investigate their own classroom performance and thus providing opportunities for teachers to think of solutions for their classroom problems. It also help teachers be autonomous through finding solutions for their own problems.

Richards and Farrell (2005) state teacher development is a comprehensive long-term teacher education. They conceptualize English language teachers professional development in four different approaches:

1. Teacher learning as skill learning

Effective English language teaching is identified and broken down into skills. The approach seeks teachers to master a known and predetermined list of teaching skills such as: the skill of presenting new language items, the skill of warming students up, and the skill of identifying student's English language learning disabilities. When a teacher masters that list of skills, he/she is believed to be developed.

2. Teacher learning as a cognitive process

English language teaching is thought of as a complex cognitive activity that primarily spotlights values and beliefs of teaching. It involves the exploration of teachers thinking processes and the impact of teachers' beliefs on the classroom teaching performance.

3. Teacher learning as personal construction

Professional development is more self-directed than received. English language teachers become responsible for their development by self-awareness activities such as self-monitoring and journal writing. Action research can be a self-directed activity if managed by teachers themselves.

4. Teacher learning as a reflective practice

Experience is a learning activity, and reflective practice is the critical examination of one's own teaching practice. Such reflective teaching can be achieved through careful observation and case studies.

The attempt of Richards and Farrell (2005) to come up with four different approaches for EFL teachers professional development appear similar to Wallace's (1991) models. However, Richards and Farrell (2005) have tackled professional development more comprehensively since they link EFL teachers professional development to skills mastery, cognitive processing, personal construction and reflection. They, in fact, restate and summarize Wallace's (1991) models and Roberts' (1998) standards.

To compromise all the above-mentioned models, approaches and standards of English language teachers professional development, English language teachers are in real need to develop themselves using any of the above models and approaches though Wallace's (1991) Reflective Model and Richards and Farrell's (2005) teacher

learning as a reflective practice are the most recommended because reflective teaching encourages individualized learning. That is because it offers one to see himself/herself more clearly and then develop his/her own practice. One can best learn from his errors.

Qing (2009) says reflective practice help teachers learn form themselves, and she believes reflective teaching is an effective professional development means. She says (2009:39):

> Through reflection EFL professionals can .. examine and evaluate their teaching to make decisions on .. changes to improve … teaching practices. …. If instructors are willing to invest time, effort and resources in this type of training, reflective practice can indeed be an effective means for professional growth. ... If teachers remain at a stage where practice is mechanical, without learning from their experiences in class and relating them to theory, their practice will never be considered professional.

The researcher agrees with Qing (2009), Richards and Farrell (2005), and Wallace (1991) ideas in regard to the role of reflection in teachers development. A teacher who is able to think of his teaching practices is more able to change his teaching styles into better ones. This is very logical in fact because one can not think of treatment unless the problems are uncovered and identified.

2.1.4. The importance of EFL teachers' professional development

Developing teachers professionally is indispensable for several different reasons. First of all, teachers of English need to be continuously developed because everything around them is changing (Richards and Farrell, 2005; Bailey, 2004). Technology has been more complicated as one may not be able to cope unless he/she develops. For instance, online recourses such as English teaching forums require considerable knowledge of computer and internet. The rebellious Arab countries which can no more accept dictatorships in Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen force the

teachers to learn more about the new generation who is able to change governments through some entries on the Facebook or Twitter.

Being Palestinians from Gaza, as previously mentioned, forces teachers to look for development since Gaza is experiencing an unjust siege, which turns Gaza into a challenging place, for the siege has negatively affected the medical, economic, and the educational sectors. The latest offensive against Gaza also forces teachers to learn how to deal with traumatic cases and post-traumatic symptoms students suffer from. Such a situation requires a strategy of lifelong learning to be set and carried out by governments as well as individuals.

As another change, teaching of English used to start from a later school stage, yet English is taught from the first grade now (Dajani and Mclaughlin, 2009). Teachers, then, need to know more about the new English curriculum that is English for Palestine series. Teaching English from early stages, moreover, is a hard work since students are not fully grown (Roberts, 1998), and none of the teachers who are teaching English to primary learners is specialized in teaching English to young learners. They have been trained in universities by highly qualified professors in order to be general English language teachers like the general practitioners of medicine.

Moreover, effective teachers' professional development programs have positive effects on learning outcomes. The quality of learning is exactly the same as the quality of the teachers. Richards and Farrell (2005) state professional development of teachers is directly reflected to their teaching and thus to the learning of the students. As a result, the students will get better education if EFL teachers' get effective professional development.

Concurrently, teachers' professional development programs may help teachers change attitudes. Bubb (2005: 7) says:

How people feel about teaching will probably change daily at first. One day will be great and leave them feeling positive and idealistic, but the next day will be diabolical. As time goes on good days outnumber the bad ones, and eventually people realize that they are actually enjoying the job.

Besides, teacher of English can never depend on what they have learned in universities and teacher training collages since the teachers training programs do not give the student-teachers all the practical experience they need. Barzaq (2007) conducted an evaluation study for all English language teachers training and education programs. She focused on everything in the programs like the subject matter, the cultural content, the educational content, and the practicum. As an overall, she stated student-teachers were "moderately well prepared". As a result, teachers need to work hard after collage to narrow the information gap of the collage and to explore the real working environment of EFL teaching.

2.1.5. The different approaches for EFL teachers' professional development

Teachers may be involved in institutional professional development activities that are managed by the organization they work with. Such activities are like educational supervision, in-service training peer coaching and action research. Self-directed professional development activities are managed by teachers themselves such as the use of self-appraisal activities and online professional development sites. Both types may occur concurrently.

2.1.5.1. Institutional professional development

Teaching institutes like schools and universities care about the quality of the educational services they provide, and thus they always monitor the quality of their teachers. Generally, institutional professional development activities target large number of teachers and are mandatory most of the times. Some institutes manage pre-service programs for newly appointed teachers.

2.1.5.1.1. Educational Supervision

All EFL teachers have for sure experienced educational supervision either as a development or evaluation activity. Supervisors usually aim at guiding the teaching practice and offering a variety of teaching models and styles. Assessment is also an aim of educational supervision as school principals usually practice educational supervision to evaluate teachers. However, it is mentioned here as professional development healthy practice that helps teachers maximize learning output. Daloglu (2004) and Sullivan and Glanz (2000) state supervision can get more effective outcomes if each supervisor work with small number of teachers.

Gebhard (1984) lists several different choices of educational supervision for EFL teachers. First, the directive supervision that focuses on directing and informing teachers. In this style, the teacher follows the suggestions and the directions of the supervisor. However advantageous, directive supervision makes teachers feel inferior to supervisors (Gebhard, 1984). Therefore, teachers constitute a negative attitude towards supervision and supervisors.

Collaborative supervision is another choice. It is also called clinical supervision, and it assumes supervision is a problem-solving activity and therefore needs to be dealt with clinically and collaboratively. From its name, it is like a clinic when the supervisor diagnoses the problems a teacher faces and providing suggested solutions. "One of the characteristics of this model is conferencing. Feedback obtained is constructive and leads to development." (Alwan, 2000: 27)

Third, alternative supervision promotes free decisions making. It intends giving teachers the chance to choose from alternatives. For example, Gebhard (1984: 158) says it helps "widen the scope of what a teacher will consider doing". Therefore, the supervisor is an advisor that provides a variety of suggestions. The alternative

supervision means teachers think of alternative teaching styles. This style of supervision gives the teachers the freedom of choice form a large variety of teaching styles.

2.1.5.1.2. In-service training

Educational institutes manage in-service training courses for teachers to maintain teaching programs quality. Such training courses are supposed to meet teachers' professional needs. Teachers' needs analyses should be conducted prior to training so that training leaves an impact on teachers' practices.

Alwan (2000) defines in-service training (INSET) as "a formal means through which teachers are constantly updated with the new findings in the field". She adds INSET can be beneficial when planned carefully and then evaluated. She says: "To develop teachers, it is necessary to assess performance, define the areas that can be improved, plan and carry out training programs and evaluate training to test the results if there is any improvement" (Alwan, 2000: 11).

The nature of EFL teachers' professional practice is subjective by their beliefs and experiences. EFL teachers' training programs should go beyond the level of training in order to be more comprehensive. EFL teachers' training needs, therefore, to engage teachers not only in teaching techniques, but also it should explore the beliefs and attitudes that inspire their teaching practices (Richards, 1998).

In case of Palestine, (Sabri, 1997 cited in Dajani and Mclaughlin, 2009) states Palestinian teacher training programs require improvements to be more related to the practical issues of classrooms. He says training should emphasize on classroom applications rather than theories of learning.

2.1.5.1.3. Peer coaching

One can best learn from his peer. A baby learns speaking and walking faster when watching other babies walking and speaking. The child who cannot walk or speak properly resembles the novice teachers who cannot master a lot of teaching practices. For instance, Bubb (1995: 35) says peer coaching helps "[new teachers] learn a great deal about their job from watching others doing it… The newly qualified teachers find it the most useful of all induction activities".

When teachers are supported by peers, they become willing to take greater responsibilities and exert much efforts to improve their teaching and show more interest in professional development activities (Hoy, Hannum and Moran ,1998).

Dalton and Moir (1991) define peer coaching as a professional development technique teachers practice to improve teaching. Teachers share experiences and issues like teaching strategies, presenting vocabulary ideas, warming up games, and solving classroom problems. Galbraith and Anstrom (1995) state peer coaching reduces teachers' isolation through professional dialogue. Peer coaching promotes problem solving when sharing and generating ideas.

Through sharing, teachers widen their intellectual and teaching resources. The collaboration of teachers is very important to help teachers be familiar with a wide variety of teaching techniques and strategies (Garmston, 1987).

To get the maximum of peer coaching, Alwan (2000:40) says:

> The most essential factors in successful observations are having a clear, specific purpose, together with objective recording, followed by an open discussion. Making the observation more systematic and productive includes the use of observation instruments for collecting data….Feedback is very important in the observation process. Successful feedback is more effective when it is given right after the observation, or within two hours.

Here, Alwan (2000) puts conditions for successful peer coaching. They are the following:

1. There should be clear purpose prior to observation.

2. The use of objective observation instrument is necessary.

3. Peer coaching should be followed by open discussions.

4. The feedback is more effective when it is right after the observation.

2.1.5.1.4. Action research

Researching is a professional development activity which can be led by teachers themselves or by institutes. Ferrance (2000) notes action researches aim at checking the effectiveness of already used or newly adopted teaching techniques. Solving practical classroom problems is another aim for educational action research since it is practical rather than theoretical. Johnson (2011:1) states "Action research is an effective tool that school administrators can use to solve educational problems that do not have easy answers."

Action research assumes teachers work better when thinking of a problem and it seeks a change in teachers' teaching practices based on the research results. Action research includes questioning, gathering data, examining and investigating, and then changing results into actions changing the classroom environment and teaching practices. Therefore, action research usually appears to solve a particular problem, and it is not about investigating why teachers use that particular strategy, but rather how they can improve and use that way better (Stringer, 1999).

Teachers can conduct action research alone based on their classroom observation, or teachers may work collaboratively. Collaborative action research includes at least two teachers or a group of teachers who have a classroom problem in common.

Hewitt and Little (2005) list a list of guidelines that a school should put into consideration before leading an action research. These are the following:

1. Build knowledge of the action research process among teachers.

2. Understand the benefits of action research on learning output.

3. Identify implementation steps.

4. Develop strategic goals that include action research for development.

5. Establish a support system for teachers.

6. Provide action research professional development opportunities.

7. Provide opportunities for collaboration.

They also mention three types of action research: Individual, collaborative, and school-wide that they put in the following table.

(2.1)

Different Approaches to Action Research

Approaches	Level of Focus	Level of Participation	Example of Research Question
Individual	Single classroom	Individual teacher	1. What impact can daily phonemic awareness activities have on my kindergarten students' oral language development?
Collaborative	One or more classrooms	Teams, departments, teachers within a district.	1. How can students with disabilities experiencing deficits in phonemic awareness show improvement in those skills by participating in additional and intensive instruction in phonemic awareness activities at least four times per week? How will it affect their overall reading ability?
School-Wide	School-Improvement	Whole staff	1. How can we teach our students to organize, analyze, synthesize, and interpret what they read? (*school-wide question*) • How can modeling through read aloud improve students' abilities to organize, analyze, synthesize, and interpret what they read?

Hewitt and Little (2005:5)

2.1.5.2. Self-directed professional development

In psychology, intrinsic motivation has longer and stronger impact than extrinsic. Accordingly, Alwan (2000) assumes self-directed professional development activities are more effective than institutional because they are derived from an internal feeling of need. Reflection on one own teaching or on others' teaching practices is the most common self-directed EFL teachers' professional development. Using online recourses, keeping journals, and using self-assessment checklist are also self-directed professional development activities.

2.1.5.2.1. Online professional development

A computer and an access to the internet may be sufficient for an EFL teacher to self-develop himself/herself. There are online forums and websites that care about EFL teachers' professional development. In addition, one may use the internet to find out about professional development programs in other countries. Little and King (2006) state teachers can use on-line modules for professional development in action research. In addition, Kocoglu (2008) believes electronic portfolios can be a way of teachers professional development.

Brady and Schuck (2005) state teachers of the twenty-first century should be good users of internet, and they can use the online forums to share experiences with international EFL teachers. For example, the British Council has a special site for English teaching and EFL teachers' professional development.

Taken from http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/
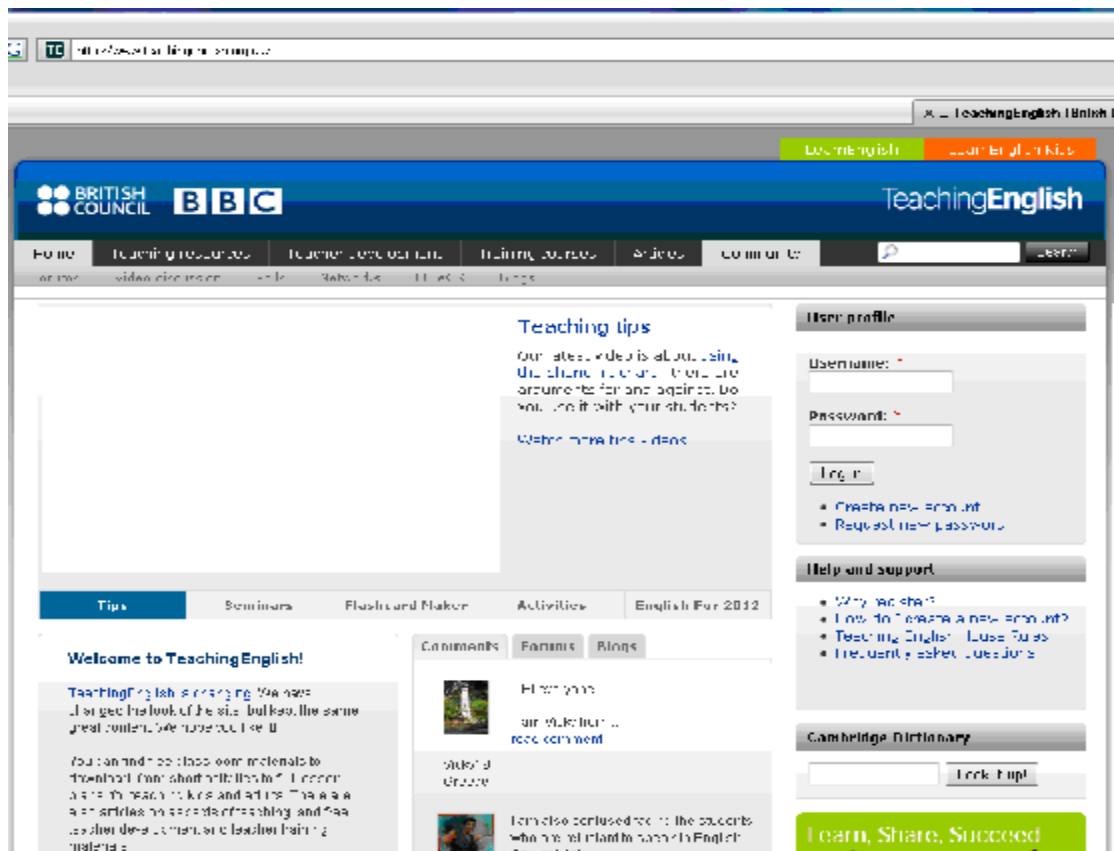
In the line at the top of the page, five subcategories can be seen: teaching recourses, teacher development, training courses, articles, and community. Teacher development section helps teachers read recent researches on ELT and know about ELT conferences. In the community section, teachers can share their experience with international EFL teachers. They can share videos, articles, questions, and think together to find a solution for classroom problems.

In addition, EFL teachers should always read in order to be exposed to the latest English language teaching methodologies and learn from other teachers' experiences. Sometimes, EFL teachers can read methodology books when facing a technical teaching problem related to teaching methodologies. In the internet, there are thousands of books and journals. EFL teachers are strongly advised to focus on

reading journals since periodicals are full of experimental classroom-based action researches.

Famous EFL publications that have electronic versions and online memberships are English Now, Teacher's Edition, TESOL Journal, TESOL Quarterly, ELT Journal, and English Teaching Forum. In the same journals or in any other local and electronic journals, EFL teachers can write and share their experiences.

2.1.5.2.2. Self-appraisal activities

Self-appraisal activities are reflective activities aim at increasing teachers' awareness about their own teaching practices. "The teacher assesses her/his own performance by writing filling in a form or completing a checklist of required criteria" (Alawn, 2000: 136). In accordance to Wallace's (1991) Reflective Model and Richards and Farrell's (2005) theory of teacher learning as a reflective practice, self-appraisal or self-assessment helps teachers discover their weaknesses and thus think about possible solutions.

Journal writing is a good style for reflection and self-appraisal (Sparkes, 1991). Adler (1991) supports this and states reflection is an important teacher development practice because changing behavior comes through assessing one's own practice. Teaching journals are, thus, written reflection of teaching experiences. A teaching journal may contain the teacher's personal reaction to classroom or school events as to state whether he/she was sad, angry, or relaxed in a particular situation . A journal also may refer to ideas that the teacher needs to remember to react upon them in the future (Sparkes, 1991). It is recommended that a teacher attempts to make entries on a regular basis and review the entries regularly. It involves asking questions

of oneself in order to clarify certain points and develop an understanding of their profession (Sparkes, 1991).

Johnson and Golombek (2002:6) explain teachers' journals are very beneficial in professional development because they are "conducted by teachers and for teachers through their own stories and language". Bailey et al. (2001:48) says "the act of writing begins a reflective, analytic process", and therefore teachers can easily discover their own teaching practices through their own journals.

Alawn (2000: 135) defines journal writing as "The teacher writes his/her reaction to teaching events. Recording events and ideas make teachers analyze their work and help for later reflection. It also makes the teacher aware of anything wrong in his/her performance." Bailey et al. (2001) suggest teachers set aside each day immediately after the class to write in his/her diary. He also suggests teachers write their diary entries in a comfortable place.

To sum up, keeping journals helps teachers remember what happened inside their classes and provides sufficient time for thinking about the action. It also records progress, for teachers can compare between their teaching a year ago and theirs at the present time.

Another self-appraisal tool is using a self-appraisal checklist. A checklist may be in form of questions asked by oneself like the following questions:

Do I provide my students with different models language (written and oral)?

Do I encourage students to participate?

Do I arouse my students' curiosity towards to topic?

Do I provide sufficient opportunity and time for students to think?

Do I expose my students to a variety of language learning experiences?

Do I provide a variety of resources to meet the needs of all students?

Do I support students to take part in the lesson?

Do I assess my students through fair and reliable language assessment tools?

A checklist can also be in a form of a questionnaire designed in a table. Mirici (2006) develops a self-assessment checklist for EFL teachers. It contains three domains: education environment, the individuals, and the activity. It is a comprehensive assessment tool that deals with the teacher, the students, the teaching material, and the physical environment.

2.1.6. Possible primary EFL teachers' professional development obstacles

Primary EFL teachers, as listed above, have a wide variety of professional development choices. However, each choice has its obstacles that prevent effective professional learning.

Educational supervision, for instance, does not always help EFL teachers develop because supervisors' visits may be rare. Some supervisors, in addition, may intend to hunt teachers' errors, and they do not respect teachers' views. Some other supervisors are not experienced in primary English language teaching. Some supervision models have drawbacks such as the directive supervision that gives superiority to the supervisor and inferiority to the teacher (Gebhard, 1984). Such a relationship does not allow effective learning since teachers would deal with the supervisor very formally to avoid committing mistakes.

As a second institutional and self-directed professional development activity, peer coaching is sometimes not a good way of teachers' development since teachers themselves may not be interested in peer coaching. Peer coaching, in some institutes, is a one shot visit rather than an on going process that may not be preceded and followed by discussions, and thus peer coaching can not be a valuable tool of

development. Dalton and Moir (1991) see peer coaching is a healthy development activity if had a predetermined plan and intentions.

That in-service training may not be specialized in primary English teaching and discusses general topics is also another obstacle towards professional development because attending teachers will not feel interested. An obstacle also is that in-service training may lack strategic plan. In other words, the topics of the in-service training are not well connected, and they do not seek long term goals. Training sometimes ignores teachers' individual teaching needs, and that makes some teachers attend courses that they do not need. In addition, training lacking follow-up activities during the year is an obstacle, too. Training may not adopt experimental action research as a training method rather than lecturing. (Sabri, 1997 cited in Dajani and Mclaughlin, 2009) states training programs require to be more related to the practical issues of classrooms rather than theories of learning. These obstacles prevent effective training.

In some institutes, professional development is a career development tool. Teachers who work hard in action researches and peer coaching, for example, are praised through developing their career status either through financial or positional development. All teachers, as a result, would like to exert much effort because that helps them improve their career and get higher rank. However, this is not the case in other institutes, and this creates a sense of indifference as teachers' works will not be appreciated. The lack of promotion is considered a great obstacle towards development.

The feeling of indifference from some teachers may also prevent useful development. Teachers should have the feeling of belonging for the profession and the school in order to be willing to research, collaborate with peers, and develop.

When an EFL teacher living in the twenty-first century can not use the computer or the internet, he/she adds another obstacle towards effective professional development. Some teachers, in addition, have poor relations with other school workers, the principal, the counselor, and other EFL teachers. Richards and Farrell's (2005) believe this deepens isolation and kills professional dialogue that is an indispensable professional development activity.

Johnson (2011) sees the negative role of the school administration towards EFL teachers' professional development does not help teachers develop. Discussions with administration should not be formal and rough. Moreover, school administration efforts to encourage action research are supposed to be unlimited, and it should exploit all available resources to secure up to date ELT journals because researches and ELT journals help teachers share their works and know about others' works. One obstacle also might by the lack of appropriate technological teaching aids in the school. For example, a teacher may not find the cassettes of a book to use the listening tasks. This does not encourage teachers to think of professional development. DuFour (1997) argues that the availability of a wide variety of teaching aids in a school promotes teachers' professional development.

Attending TESOL conferences is a vital professional development activity for EFL teachers, but traveling to attend professional conferences is difficult due to the strict restrictions on movement to Gaza and from Gaza. Besides, the hard financial condition Gaza suffers from makes some teachers unable to afford pursuing postgraduate studies.

Additionally, the nature of the teaching profession sometimes is an obstacle. In fact, teaching young learners is exhausting. Too often, also, the working environment inside the school is uncomfortable and discouraging. What worsens the

situation is that primary teachers get heavier teaching load and that the number of English periods assigned to primary classes are only three a week. This heavy teaching load makes teachers very busy during the working day knowing that primary classes are more crowded than preparatory ones. There are around forty five students a class.

The school system sometimes may be an obstacle too. For instance, the two-shift school timing makes teachers unable to complete postgraduate studies because they cannot leave the school for long hours to attend lectures. As a time matter too, the scholastic year might be too short to cover the assigned curricula, and the working day is too short to conduct professional development activities.

As a summary, all those possible obstacles might hinder effective EFL teachers professional development. Therefore, the researcher built the research tool in accordance with the above motioned list of obstacles in order to investigate the teachers' perceptions about what prevent effective professional development.

2.2.1. Introduction

This section surveys some related previous studies and relates them to this study. First, studies related to the concept and theory of teacher' professional development are listed and elaborated. Then, studies concerned with teachers' professional development activities are added. In addition, three studies related to professional obstacles are also mentioned.

2.2.2. Studies on the concept of teachers' professional development

Raza (2010) explored the perceptions of experienced English as a Foreign Language teachers who were employed in the United Arab Emirates universities about continuing professional. The study explored teachers' choices of professional development initiatives and the reasons which impacted on their choice. It also explored teachers suggestions for improving continuing professional development.

Face to face individual and focus group interviews were used to obtain data form the participants who were teachers with a minimum of five years teaching experience. Results revealed that participants valued continuing professional development as lifelong professional. Participants showed interest in learning through activities that provided opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.

Soproni (2007) examined the perceptions of teachers about their professional development. The research questions were the following: How do EFL teachers perceive their own professional development? How the perceptions of experience teachers differ from novice ones? The tools of the study were a Likert-type questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The participants were teachers of English from Budapest, Hungary. The interview was conducted with six teachers, and

thirty four teachers were questionnaire respondents. The study came to a conclusion that teachers' professional development comes from teachers' own teaching experience. Professional conferences, TESOL journals, and training courses were considered less important than other professional development activities. Finally, the research presented some contradicted results from both tools. For example, the participants of the interview valued the importance of the context on professional learning such as the educational system as key factor in EFL teachers' professional development more than the questionnaire respondents did.

Atay (2006) conducted a to study describe the effect of collaborative research into the professional development of pre- and in-service EFL teachers. Six in-service teachers and six pre-service teachers participated in the study. All participants were native speakers of Turkish. They collaborated and conducted their research in in-service teachers' classes. Data was gathered from three tools: informal talks with teachers, journals kept by the teachers, and the researcher's field notes.

It was found that participating in collaborative action research gave teachers a framework for systematically observing, evaluating, and reflecting on their teaching practices. They also realized the importance of collaboration. Yet, it has been observed that neither pre- nor in-service EFL teachers can do much research in Turkey because pre-service teachers cannot get permission from schools for research, and in-service teachers do not have sufficient time and training to conduct research. The study concluded that if teachers are encouraged to collaborate for research, they can produce great work.

Ali (2002) examined the effect of using a model of reflective practice on the professional performance of EFL teaching advisors. The sample was five teaching advisors working in the College of Education, University of Qatar. They used

reflective practice and ongoing performance-based assessment over two semesters using a variety of performance-based assessment types: self and peer assessment. The professional performance was tested before and after using the assessment checklists of teaching practice. The findings showed there was a significant difference between the means of scores obtained by the subjects of the study in the pre- and post-testing of their professional performance. The researcher recommended this model to be used to improve EFL teachers.

2.2.3. Commentary on the studies on the concept of teachers' professional development

Raza (2010) explored EFL teachers perceptions regarding professional development choices. This study is very crucial since it serves as teachers learning styles exploratory. It helps exploring how teachers prefer to learn. The use of individual and focus group interviews, in deed, strengthen the research, because the nature of the study is personal and needs to be investigated through qualitative tool. Raza's study appear very general in comparison to Atay's (2006) study that examined the effect of collaborative research into the professional development of six EFL teachers. Atay (2006) used informal talks and the researcher's field notes. The tools seem strange but convincing as informal talks usually help gathering personal and viewpoint data.

Soproni (2007) explored teachers' view about their professional development. A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were used as tools. That is a good combination since the questionnaire provided quantitative data, and the interview provided qualitative data. The study had only one independent variable that is the difference between new and experienced teachers. The very limited number of variables is not advantageous since other variables can be easily discussed. However,

the sample size was appropriate to the study type and harmonious with study variables number. Thirty four participants for the questionnaire is really good because it is larger than the standard minimum number of respondents that is thirty, and that allowed Soproni to use different sophisticated statistical styles. Ali (2002), on the other hand, worked on a very small sample, five persons. However, Ali's study seems to provide more concrete outcomes than Soproni's because the former used self-observatory checklists to examine performance as research tools and the latter used interviews and questionnaires to explore perceptions. Thus, Ali (2002) examined performance, but Soproni (2007) examined perceptions. Ali's study took a long time to be examined; it lasted for two academic semesters. That, in fact, supported reliability as results gained after participants got their chance studying and applying the suggested reflective model. What might be a disadvantage to Ali's study is that the participants were university teachers like Raza's (2010) study. In other words, they were expert and can easily interfere to have role in the results and that was a threat to reliability. Such a study could have been more effective if had been applied on classroom teachers who experience the real EFL classes' conditions.

2.2.4. Studies on teachers' professional development activities

Hişmanoğlu (2010) investigated English language teachers' perceptions of educational supervision as a professional development tool. The study was a small case study carried out in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Forty two non-native speakers of English and eight native speakers of English were the participants. The data collection tools were a pre-questionnaire, a post-questionnaire, and interviews. The post-questionnaire consisted of seven domains: teachers' experience, educational leadership and humane relations, the curriculum and teaching methods / techniques, the students, teaching materials and activities, classroom management,

and assessment. The study concluded there is a big difference between language teachers' beliefs concerning educational supervision and the real realization of educational supervision by supervisors. The researches suggested supervision adopt alternative models that maintain good relationship between supervisors and teachers.

Abdel Halim (2008) conducted a research to determine the effect of using a training program based on three professional development strategies: action learning, peer coaching and study groups, on improving teaching performance of EFL student teachers as pre-service training at the Faculty of Education, Helwan University. The researcher used an observation checklist to determine the weak teaching performances that need to be improved. In addition, four other tools were used: scoring rubric, achievement test, a portfolio assessment checklist for continual evaluation and program satisfaction questionnaire. The researcher, then, designed a training program based on the three above-mentioned professional development strategies. The program was implemented for two months and a half. The sample consisted of twenty four EFL student teachers as one group. The results showed there were differences between the mean scores of the EFL student teachers in favor of the post test mean scores. The program proved effectiveness on improving of teaching performance. Finally, the researcher recommended that professional development strategies should be used in EFL teachers' professional development programs.

Barócsi (2007) meant to find out the role of observation in EFL classrooms as a professional development activity. It examined whether observation can develop the teaching practices of two pairs of EFL student teachers in teacher education program. The research was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, the student teachers had observation sheets with no specific observation tasks for sixteen lessons. They observed without any predetermined focus. In the second phase, which lasted for

twenty-four lessons, the student teachers were given observation tasks to observe specific teaching strategies. At the end, the participants had the chance to compare unstructured observations in the first phase with structured observations in the second phase. Observations in all cases were preceded and followed by discussions in order to make the teachers reflect on what they observed in the classroom. Data collection tools were observational notes taken in the first phase and the observation task sheets in the second phase. The study showed it was practical to begin with general and unstructured observation to help student teachers get holistic view. The study also revealed structured observation helped teachers focus on specific teaching practices.

Yaman (2005) aimed at investigating an ELT teacher's development through an in-service program in which repertory grid is used as a research tool. The results revealed change in the content, structure and organization of the participant's construct system at the end of the study, which lasted a full academic year long. The study emphasized the high potential of the Repgrid as a tool for reflection and provided useful insights for the personal and professional development of teachers. The findings revealed that the Repgrid promotes reflective process and teachers' self-awareness, and serves a professional development activity for teachers.

Alwan (2000) investigated the effectiveness of the in-service teacher training programs in the UAE and checked the possibility of introducing self-directed but school-based teacher development activities to EFL teachers. The researcher investigated the perceptions of related educationists: EFL teachers, school principals, supervisors and other administrators. Two research instruments were used to collect data: a questionnaire for teachers and interviews with administrators. The sample was of 172 respondents. The findings revealed in-service teachers training programs in the UAE were unsystematic, and EFL teachers' practice of self-directed activities was

limited. Finally, the research recommended specifying training needs depending on surveys and studies before designing training programs. The researcher also suggested decentralizing professional development activities in a school and providing more self-directed professional development opportunities in the school.

2.2.5. Commentary on the studies on teachers' professional development activities

The study of Hişmanoğlu (2010) discussed educational supervision as a professional development way from the perceptions of English teachers in Cyprus. The study used a questionnaire and interviews for data collection. In fact, that is a good combination, for the questionnaire helps collect quantitative data while the interviews help collect qualitative data. What makes the study a unique one is the combination of native and non-native sparkers among the participants; however, there were no differences among their perceptions. Barócsi (2007) was more general as it tackled the role of observation in general without mentioning supervisors or peers. That is because the participants were EFL student teachers in teacher education program. Barócsi's (2007) results, yet, seem more concrete than the study of Hişmanoğlu (2010) because Barócsi (2007) who used observational notes and observation task sheets for data collection, but the latter depended on teachers' perceptions.

Yaman (2005) designed a professional development program for EFL teachers professional development. The program based on repertory grid as a research tool. Yaman's (2005) idea is derived from the theory of reflective teaching. The study long implementation time, an academic years, supports the research's reliability. However, Alwan (2000) and Abdel Halim (2008) dealt with more than one specific type of professional development activities. The former evaluated the in-service training and

suggested introducing self-directed activities such as self-appraisal and writing action researches while the latter discussed action learning, peer coaching and study groups. The difference between the both studies is that Alwan's (2000) collected data form teachers and supervisors perceptions, yet Abdel Halim's (2008) checked the effective of a training program based on the some professional development activities through observation checklist, scoring rubric, achievement test, a portfolio assessment checklist, and satisfaction questionnaire. This combination of five different tools makes the study of Abdel Halim (2008) much more reliable and accurate than any other study.

All in all, none of the five studies in this section studied the primary EFL teachers who in fact have special features because they work with young learners. None also talked about what could prevent effective professional development. Although Alwan (2000) joined in-service training and self-directed professional development, none of the rest were comprehensive. Each only discussed either institutional or self-directed professional development.

2.2.6. Studies on the obstacles of teachers' professional development

Alkhawaldeh (2010) surveyed the challenges EFL teachers encountered in Amman 1st and 2nd Directorates of Education through a questionnaire and three open questions attached to the questionnaire. The sample of the study was 125 EFL randomly chosen teachers. The questionnaire covered items such as the difficulty of securing recorders and computers to teach computerized material in English, overloading the teacher with responsibilities and duties, the overcrowded classroom; the general weakness of students in English; the lack of permission of some school principles to speak aloud during co-operative learning lessons; difficulty of accepting to use computer in the English lesson by some teachers; the securing of an

environment to effective EFL instruction and necessity of using the language in real life situation. To ensure validity of the instrument, the research questionnaire was validated by specialists. To ensure reliability, twenty five EFL teachers out of the sample of the study were given the questionnaire as a pilot study. The study revealed teachers faced massive challenges as a result of various factors. Arousing students' interest to learn English, big classroom size, low achievement in English by students, and covering the EFL curriculum within the limited span of time were among these challenges. Findings of the open questions were similar as teachers stated they faced challenges such as students' negative attitudes towards English, classroom size, variation in students' achievement in English, inability of students to communicate in English, lack of training teachers on modern technology and the lack of parental follow up of their children's English language learning. EFL teachers suggested solutions like cooperating with the teacher to use modern teaching methods and consulting teachers when changing curricula and taking their opinions with respect to that.

Cheng and Wang (2004) reported a survey study among 47 in-service secondary EFL teachers of English (Grades 7-12) who were attending a six-week summer professional development program in a teacher college in China in 2002. The tool was a questionnaire of three parts in a mixed format of Likert Scale, choices and open-ended questions. The main aim was to explored teachers' professional development beliefs and activities. The study reveled that group of secondary school teachers of English is less prepared in their subject matter. The teaching context challenges were the very large classes, more than 50 students, and the standardized testing system. To solve the challenges, computer-based and computer-assisted teaching and learning technology was the highest ranked professional development

need. In addition, the research raveled teachers need time in order to get effective professional development. Teachers need time to make professional development a continuous part of their work. Lack of time, as revealed, was one of the greatest challenges to implementing effective professional development.

Ahmed (2003) investigated the professional difficulties facing secondary school English language teachers in Northern Governorates of Palestine. The population consisted of all English language teachers in the Northern Governorates of Palestine (1132) teachers; however, the sample was 25.6% of the whole population. A questionnaire of fifty items divided into nine domains was the only tool of the study. The findings showed most of secondary school English language teachers suffered from several professional difficulties including the professional development domain. One of the difficulties also was the lack of sufficient financial resources for development activities. Finally, the researcher recommended that teachers should be provided with suitable working conditions, sufficient salary, quality professional development and specialized in-service training courses.

2.2.7. Commentary on the studies on professional development obstacles

The three studies Alkhawaldeh (2010), Cheng and Wang (2004), and Ahmed (2003) appear similar in type and methodology because they are descriptive and used a questionnaire as the main tool. Each one, whereas, has its own characteristics. Alkhawaldeh (2010) focused deeply on the classroom difficulties and students based difficulties that made the study more practical. In their study, Cheng and Wang (2004) also discussed school based difficulties and linked that to the teachers' professional development. Ahmed's (2003) was different because it surveyed a large number of teachers in a large geographical area which makes the study the most reliable and

accurate. Alkhawaldeh (2010) added three open questions to his questionnaire, and he then compared the data colleted from the questionnaire with the open questions.

Similarly, none of the studies dealt with EFL teachers who teach young learners in particular. Ahmed (2003) only surveyed secondary school teachers, and Cheng and Wang (2004) explored the perceptions of EFL teachers who teach grades (7-12). Alkhawaldeh (2010) examined teachers of all grades.

2.2.8. Commentary on all the studies

All the above listed studies tackled EFL teachers professional development. However, they did not used similar methodologies or similar tools. For example, Soproni (2007) gathered wide and deep data through a questionnaire and interviews and worked on teachers' perceptions. Using the same tools, Hişmanoğlu (2010) discussed educational supervision as a professional development way from the perceptions teachers. Both Soproni (2007) and Hişmanoğlu (2010) explored perception; however, the former was general and the latter dealt with educational supervision. Raza's (2010) study also surveyed teachers perceptions about their professional development choices and preferences, but it focused on university teachers rather than school teachers.

Ali (2002) examined the effect of using reflective practice on professional development, and Yaman (2005) designed a reflective professional development program. Both Ali (2002) and Yaman (2005) built their studies in accordance with the reflective teaching principals. They considered reflective teaching a way for teachers development. They seem similar in term of topic. However, they also appear different since Ali (2002) examined the effect of already exiting method while Yaman (2005) designed a new program for professional development.

This use of five investigating tools makes the study of Abdel Halim (2008) more reliable and accurate than Ahmed (2003) surveyed secondary school teachers perceptions about professional development through one questionnaire. When results are gained from more than a source, they appear more reliable and accurate. However, Ahmed (2003) was the most comprehensive study because it discussed all professional difficulties EFL teachers face including professional development. In addition, Ahmed (2003) surveyed a large geographical area and a large number of participants. Similarly, in term of comprehensiveness, Alwan (2000) joined in-service training and self-directed professional development and found suggestions for improving EFL teachers professional development.

Alkhawaldeh (2010) and Cheng and Wang (2004) focused on classroom and students based difficulties that made the study more practical than those studies that worked on university teachers such as Raza (2010) and Ali (2002).

All in all, all the above studies did not focused on primary English language teachers. In addition, they did not discuss the obstacles of professional development. This study, therefore, meant at working on this gap.

Chapter III
Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In the attempt to identify the professional development obstacles facing primary English language teachers in northern Gaza, the researcher developed two investigating tools. The first one was a questionnaire that was administered on 80 primary English language teachers in northern Gaza. The second method was interviews with the same population. They were designed to explore the professional development obstacles from the teachers' point of view.

This chapter describes the type of the research design and the research variables. Besides, the chapter describes the population and the sample for the study. In addition, it describes the research instruments in details. The chapter, further, provides information about the research procedures.

3.2. Type of research methodology

The descriptive analytical methodology was adopted to describe and analyze the information taken from the questionnaires and the interviews to explore the teachers' perceptions. The descriptive research is defined as "A research that describes group of characteristics or behaviors in numerical terms" (Brown and Rodgers, 2002:117). Descriptive research also interprets data in words in case of qualitative data (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). In this study, the researcher used both quantitative data that is taken from the questionnaires and described numerically in addition to qualitative data that was taken from the interviews.

3.2.1. Research variables

A) Independent variables: age, gender, academic qualification, and experience.

B) Dependant variables: Professional development obstacles.

3.3. The population

The population of the study consisted of all UNRWA primary English language teachers who worked in northern Gaza. during the second term of the scholastic year (2010 – 2011). The population of the study was (112) teachers (23) males and (89) females. This number was taken from the secretary of the Education department in UNRWA after having the permission to get data (Appendix no 4).

Table (3.1)

The distribution of UNRWA primary EFL teachers in northern Gaza

Classification	Number	Percentage
Male	23	20.53
Female	89	79.47
Total	112	100

3.3.1. The sample of the study:

First, the sample of the study consisted of (80) teachers with percent (71.42%) who were randomly chosen as a simple random sample from UNRWA primary English language teachers who work in the northern Gaza. Tables (3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5) show the distribution of the sample according to gender, academic qualification, number of working experience years, and age respectively. Those eighty teachers were questionnaire respondents.

Table (3.2)

The distribution of the sample according to gender

Classification	Number	Percentage
Male	13	16.25
Female	67	83.75
Total	80	100

Table (3.3)

The distribution of the sample according to academic qualification

Classification	Number	Percentage
Diploma	9	11.25
B.A	68	85
M.A or higher	3	3.75
Total	80	100

Table (3.4)

The distribution of the sample according to number of working experience years

Classification	Number	Percentage
1-2 years	14	17.5
3-5 years	34	42.5
6-15 years	22	27.5
Above 15	10	12.5
Total	80	100

Table (3.5)

The distribution of the sample according to age

Classification	Number	Percentage
Less than 25	12	15
25-35	50	62.5
35-45	8	10
Above 45	10	12.5
Total	80	100

Second, the sample of the study for the interview consisted of (5) teachers with percent (4.5%) who were purposively chosen from UNRWA primary English

language teachers who work in northern Gaza to cover different age ranges, different academic qualifications, different experience, and both sexes.

Table (3.6)

The distribution of the interview sample according to age, gender, qualification, and number of working experience years

Participant	Age	Gender	Qualification	Experience years
P1	41	M	Bachelor	12
P2	25	F	Bachelor	1
P3	52	F	Diploma	25
P4	29	M	Master	6
P5	27	F	Bachelor	3

3.4. The instrumentation

The nature of the research questions requires the collection of two types of data. First, quantitative data that have been collected through a questionnaire since it shows the sum and frequencies of responses. To clarify and supplement the quantitative data, the researcher collected qualitative data which was restricted to explaining certain ideas related to views and suggestions. The qualitative data was collected through interviews. In general, the researcher built both tools from reading previous studies related to the study topic.

3.4.1. The questionnaire

A Likert-scale questionnaire was used as the main tool to gather data about professional development obstacles. A Likert scale gives a range of responses to a question (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2010). Here, the scale is of five choices: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Each choice has a code like

the following: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly

agree.

When a respondent chooses " strongly disagree", the item is calculated as one

point, and when a respondent chooses "strongly agree", the item is calculated as five

points. Therefore, the highest sum an item can get is when all participants choose

"strongly agree". For example, the first item in the questionnaire is (Supervisors' visits

are rare), and the total number of the questionnaire respondents were 80. As a result,

the highest sum this item can get is the outcome of eighty times five that is 400. The

lowest sum the same item can get is when all participants choose "strongly disagree".

Then, the sum is the outcome of eighty times one that is 80.

The questionnaire included three different domains of professional

development obstacles:

A. Institutional professional development obstacles.

B. Self-directed professional development obstacles.

C. Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work.

The value of each domain is calculated out of the summation of the value of

all the items in that domain. For example, the first domain consist of 30 items. Then,

the first domain can have a value up to (30*5*80 = 12000) but not less than (30*1*80

= 2400).

A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire in order to explain the purpose

of the study and encourage honest participation.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was designed to collect

information about the sample's gender, age, academic qualification, and the number of

working years. The second part was allocated for the three above mentioned

professional development obstacles domains.

3.4.1.1. Validity of the questionnaire:

A valid questionnaire measures what it is designed to measure (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2010). The researcher used the referee validity and the internal consistency validity to ensure the questionnaire is valid.

3.4.1.1.1. The referee validity:

The questionnaire was refereed by a panel of referees (see appendix 1). Some are university professors and others are school teachers in addition to a school principal. The referees were asked to check the clarity and relevance of the questionnaire items. Some items were deleted, and some others were modified according to the referees' comments. Table (3.7) shows the number of each domain after modification.

Table (3.7)

Number of items in each domain

Domains		Number of items
A.	Institutional professional development obstacles	30
B.	Self-directed professional development obstacles	20
C.	Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work	15
Total		65

3.4.1.1.2. Internal consistency validity:

McMillan (2004) notes that internal consistency indicates the correlation of the degree of each item with the total of the questionnaire. The internal consistency coefficient was computed using Pearson formula. The following tables (3.8, 3.9, and 3.10) show the data analysis of the correlation coefficient of each item with the domain it belongs in order to compare it with the whole degree of the questionnaire.

Table (3.8)

Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item of the domain (A) with the total degree of this domain

Items	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
Supervisors' visits are rare.	0.701	Sig. at 0.01
Some supervisors hunt teachers' errors.	0.745	Sig. at 0.01
Some supervisors disrespect teachers' views.	0.501	Sig. at 0.05
Some supervisors lack experience in primary English teaching.	0.860	Sig. at 0.01
Supervisors often visit suddenly.	0.740	Sig. at 0.01
Supervision lacks follow-up plan.	0.817	Sig. at 0.01
Colleagues mock most events related to development.	0.692	Sig. at 0.01
Teachers are uninterested in peer coaching.	0.740	Sig. at 0.01
Colleagues detect errors during peer coaching.	0.862	Sig. at 0.01
Peer coaching is one-shot visit rather than ongoing process.	0.575	Sig. at 0.01
Professional conversations with colleagues are limited.	0.801	Sig. at 0.01
Teachers prefer to keep their classroom experiences private.	0.793	Sig. at 0.01
Teachers, administrators, and counselors work individually.	0.788	Sig. at 0.01
In-service training is unspecialized in primary English teaching.	0.860	Sig. at 0.01
In-service training treats general and broad teaching issues.	0.562	Sig. at 0.01
Lecturing is the main instructional method during training.	0.683	Sig. at 0.01
In-service training lacks strategic plan.	0.700	Sig. at 0.01
Some trainers are unqualified to train teachers.	0.782	Sig. at 0.01
Training ignores teachers' individual teaching needs.	0.547	Sig. at 0.05
In-service training lacks follow-up activities during the year.	0.676	Sig. at 0.01
Training rarely adopts experimental action research as a training method.	0.619	Sig. at 0.01
School administration considers English less important than other disciplines.	0.788	Sig. at 0.01
Teachers can hardly get financial aid to pursue their higher education.	0.758	Sig. at 0.01
Discussions with administration are formal and rough.	0.496	Sig. at 0.05

Items	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
School administration efforts to encourage action research are limited.	0.765	Sig. at 0.01
School administration has no interest to secure up to date ELT journals.	0.476	Sig. at 0.05
Administration has never conducted teachers' professional needs analysis.	0.552	Sig. at 0.05
Teachers' professional development efforts are unrewarded.	0.802	Sig. at 0.01
It is difficult to find appropriate technological teaching aids in the school.	0.668	Sig. at 0.01
Professional development is not a career development tool.	0.664	Sig. at 0.01

r table value at df (18) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.444

r table value at df (18) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.561

Table (3.9)

Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item of the domain (B) with the total degree of this domain

Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
Primary English teachers feel bored with their job.	0.748	sig. at 0.01
Some teachers always feel frustrated with most students.	0.681	sig. at 0.01
Some teachers think professional development is unimportant.	0.785	sig. at 0.01
Teachers seldom share experiences with others.	0.568	sig. at 0.01
Some teachers have poor computer skills.	0.712	sig. at 0.01
Some teachers have limited internet access.	0.757	sig. at 0.01
Some teachers have poor relations with other school workers.	0.692	sig. at 0.01
Traveling to attend professional conferences is difficult.	0.461	sig. at 0.05
Traveling to attend professional conferences is costly.	0.612	sig. at 0.01
Some teachers have other jobs/interests.	0.451	sig. at 0.05
Some teachers cannot afford pursuing postgraduate studies.	0.626	sig. at 0.01
Teachers' exchange6 opportunities are limited.	0.723	sig. at 0.01
Teachers' exchange opportunities are very expensive.	0.500	sig. at 0.01
Teachers occasionally write daily notes about their teaching experience.	0.770	sig. at 0.01
Teachers lack the researching skills needed for conducting action research.	0.538	sig. at 0.01

Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
Teachers feel conducting self-assessment tools boring.	0.780	sig. at 0.01
Some teachers have negative attitudes towards lifelong learning.	0.629	sig. at 0.01
Some teachers can hardly determine when to ask for help or consult specialists.	0.509	sig. at 0.05
Some teachers have poor communications with students' parents.	0.642	sig. at 0.01
Teachers lack the managerial skills needed for conducting long-term professional development activities.	0.709	sig. at 0.01

r table value at df (18) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.444

r table value at df (18) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.561

Table (3.10)

Pearson Correlation coefficient for every item of the domain (C) with the total degree of this domain

Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. level
English teachers are assigned to teach other disciplines to complete their load.	0.460	Sig. at 0.05
Teaching young learners is exhausting.	0.730	Sig. at 0.01
There are so many tasks given to English teachers.	0.827	Sig. at 0.01
Primary English teaching conferences in Gaza are rare.	0.453	Sig. at 0.05
The working environment inside the school is uncomfortable.	0.607	Sig. at 0.01
Primary teachers get heavier teaching load.	0.633	Sig. at 0.01
The community undervalues teaching elementary learners.	0.663	Sig. at 0.01
Primary English teaching journals are difficult to find.	0.684	Sig. at 0.01
The two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards completing postgraduate studies.	0.685	Sig. at 0.01
The heavy teaching load makes teachers very busy during the working day.	0.637	Sig. at 0.01
The scholastic year is too short to cover the assigned curricula.	0.637	Sig. at 0.01
The working day is too short to conduct professional development activities.	0.794	Sig. at 0.01
Primary classes are more crowded than preparatory ones.	0.583	Sig. at 0.01
Leaving the school to attend courses or workshops is difficult.	0.641	Sig. at 0.01
Teaching is a type of work that rapidly becomes routine.	0.692	Sig. at 0.01

r table value at df (18) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.444

r table value at df (18) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.561

The results of tables (3.8, 3.9, and 3.10) showed that the values of these items were suitable and consistent and valid for conducting this study. The researcher also made sure of the correlation between the three domains with the total degree of the questionnaire, and the three domains with others as shown in table (3.11).

Table (3.11)

Pearson Correlation coefficient for every domain from the questionnaire with the total degree of the questionnaire and the domains with others domains

Domains	SUMB	A	B	C
A	0.883	1		
B	0.816	0.520	1	
C	0.586	0.421	0.570	1

r table value at df (18) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.444

r table value at df (18) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.561

As shown in the table (3.11), there is a relation correlation between the domains and the total degree and each domain with the other domains at sig. level (0.01) that shows a high internal consistency.

3.4.1.2. Reliability of the questionnaire:

The tool is reliable when it gives the same results if it is reapplied in the same conditions. The researcher used the pilot study to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire which was measured by Alpha Cronbck and split-half methods. A total sample of 20 teachers participated in testing the reliability of the questionnaire.

The pilot sample of the study consisted of (20) teachers with percent (17.85%) from the community of the study who were excluded from the survey to eliminate biased responses. The pilot study aims at checking the reliability of the instruments. The pilot study revealed some teachers novice and experienced faced difficulty understanding technical terms such as peer-coaching and action research. Therefore, the researcher added a list of definitions at the end of the questionnaire.

The researcher calculated the correlation between the first and the second half of each domain of the questionnaire and the whole of the questionnaire. Then, the researcher used Spearman Brown Formula to modify the length of the questionnaire to find out the reliability coefficient as shown in table (3.12).

(Table 3.12)

Correlation coefficient between the two halves of each domain before modification and the reliability after modification

	Domain	Number of items	Correlation between two parts	Reliability after modifying
A.	Institutional professional development obstacles	30	0.936	0.967
B.	Self-directed professional development obstacles	20	0.895	0.945
C.	Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work	*15	0.869	0.873
	Total	*65	0.593	0.631

* The researchers used Gutman coefficient for unequal halves.

The table showed that the reliability coefficient by using split- half after modification is more than (0.631) and this indicates that the questionnaire is reliable to be applied to the sample of the study.

Alpha formula was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire as shown in table (3.13).

Table (3.13)

Alpha Kronbach correlation coefficient of the questionnaire reliability

	Scope	Number of Items	Alpha kronbach
A.	Institutional professional development obstacles	30	0.963
B.	Self-directed professional development obstacles	20	0.923
C.	Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work	15	0.899
	Total	65	0.961

The results of table (3.13) show that the ranges of reliability of the three domains were above 0.961, and this indicates that the questionnaire was suitable for conducting the study. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured by Alpha Cronback and the split-half methods.

3.4.1.3. Statistical treatments used for the questionnaire:

The data were collected and computed using (SPSS) Statistical Package for Social Science.

1. The data was collected and computed by using Pearson correlation, Cronbach Alpha, Gutman coefficient for unequal halves and Split-half techniques to confirm the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

2. Means and percentages were used to determine the main professional development obstacles facing primary English language teachers.

3. T-test independent sample was used to measure the statistical differences in means due to teachers' genders.

4. One Way ANOVA was used to measure the statistical differences in means between the teachers' age, experience, and academic qualification.

5. Scheffe Post Hoc test matrix was used to identify the direction of differences among the scopes.

3.4.2. The interview

The researcher interviewed five teachers to re-check teachers' responses to the questionnaire and to find out more information which was not possible in the questionnaire since the latter has some limitations. Compared to the questionnaire, interviews provide deeper answers and help develop ideas. The use of the interview is very advantageous as the researcher believes interviews help in revealing facts that

cannot be obtained in written form as people are more willing to speak than write on a paper.

3.4.2.1. Description of the interview

Questions in the interviews were closed and open-ended. Following is a description of each part of the interview:

Part I: was confined to personal questions.

Part II: Included four sub-sections:

(A): Institutional professional development obstacles

(B): Self-directed professional development obstacles

(C): Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work

(D): Suggestions

3.4.2.2. Validity and reliability of the interview

Since the interview has not been used before, the researcher tested it through a pilot study of two teachers to check its reliability. Two teachers were interviewed as a pilot study. The two teachers were primary English language teachers, and they, therefore, represent the actual sample of the study. Thus, the interviews proved gathering information about the same topic over similar group of respondents and so proved reliable (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2010). The two teachers were excluded from the interview sample to avoid biased responses. Their responses revealed some questions did not promote open answers. They complained the interview was long and somehow boring. Therefore, the researcher modified the interview questions to be open questions except for some questions related to number of training courses and supervisors' visits. In addition, some questions were deleted, and some others were modified so that the interview estimated time became reasonable.

For validity, the interview was proved valid through referee validity as a panel of referees checked the relevance of the questions, and then the interview was modified according the referees' notes. In addition, the results of the interview were compared with the results of the questionnaire. The two results were similar. Since the questionnaire was already proves valid, the interview was, as a result, valid, too. This type of validity is called "convergent validity" that is comparing the interview results to an already proved valid tool (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2010).

3.5. The research procedures

3.5.1. Developing the questionnaire

When developing the questionnaire, the researcher followed the following steps. First, the major domains were identified, and the items under each domain were also generated. Second, the first draft was printed out and was given to a panel of referees to ensure referee validity (see appendix 1). Third, the questionnaire was modified according to the referees' notes. Fourth, the questionnaire was distributed to the pilot study sample and then modified according to the pilot study findings. Fifth, the final draft of the questionnaire was distributed to the sample.

3.5.2. Distributing the questionnaires

The questionnaires were distributed to teachers during the English language final exams marking groups. There, the researcher gave a questionnaire to each teacher except those who were participants in the pilot study. Only 80 teachers filled out the questionnaires.

3.5.3. Developing the interview

When developing the interview questions, the researcher read several different previous studies related to the topic as a first step. Second, the major domains of the interview questions were identified, and the questions under each domain were also developed. Third, the first draft was printed out and was given to a panel of referees to ensure referee validity. Forth, the interview was modified according to the referees' notes. Fifth, the interview questions were administered on the pilot sample. Finally, the interview questions were administered on the sample of the study.

3.5.4. Conducting the interview

It was not an easy job to conduct the interviews with busy teachers. The researcher had to carry them out amid the many working responsibilities that the researcher had too. After greeting the interviewee and thanking him or her for participating, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and its significance. Interviews were in English. Each interview took around 25 to 40 minutes. The interviews were conducted to teachers during the English language final exams marking time. The researcher conducted an interview a day with a teacher. In a five-day period, the researcher conducted five interviews with five teachers. Each teacher was noted a day before the interview day. The interviews took place during the break time of each day of final exams marking days. The interviews were recorded through note-taking.

Chapter IV
Results: Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

The study aimed at investigating the professional development obstacles facing primary English language teachers. This chapter presents the results of the study according to data collected though the tools. In some parts, analysis of the results is also added.

4.2. The first question

What are the professional development obstacles facing primary English language teachers in northern Gaza?

To answer this question, the researcher used the frequencies, the sum of responses, means, standard deviation, the percent weight and rank of each item of the questionnaire. Tables (4.1, 4.2, and 4.3) show that:

A. Institutional professional development obstacles:

Table (4.1)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the percent weight and rank of each item of the domain (A)

No.	Items	Sum	Weighted Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage	Rank
1	Supervisors' visits are rare.	278	3.475	1.125	69.50	3
2	Some supervisors hunt teachers' errors.	251	3.138	1.319	62.75	12
3	Some supervisors disrespect teachers' views.	211	2.638	1.094	52.75	28
4	Some supervisors lack experience in primary English teaching.	202	2.525	1.018	50.50	29
5	Supervisors often visit suddenly.	296	3.700	1.335	74.00	1
6	Supervision lacks follow-up plan.	240	3.000	1.222	60.00	17
7	Colleagues mock most events related to development.	231	2.888	0.941	57.75	20

No.	Items	Sum	Weighted Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage	Rank
8	Teachers are uninterested in peer coaching.	212	2.650	1.080	53.00	26
9	Colleagues detect errors during peer coaching.	273	3.413	1.099	68.25	5
10	Peer coaching is one-shot visit rather than ongoing process.	261	3.263	1.016	65.25	7
11	Professional conversations with colleagues are limited.	277	3.463	1.179	69.25	4
12	Teachers prefer to keep their classroom experiences private.	265	3.313	1.132	66.25	6
13	Teachers, administrators, and counselors work individually.	238	2.975	1.232	59.50	19
14	In-service training is unspecialized in primary English teaching.	229	2.863	1.088	57.25	21
15	In-service training treats general and broad teaching issues.	252	3.150	1.126	63.00	11
16	Lecturing is the main instructional method during training.	228	2.850	1.213	57.00	22
17	In-service training lacks strategic plan.	212	2.650	0.995	53.00	27
18	Some trainers are unqualified to train teachers.	260	3.250	1.049	65.00	9
19	Training ignores teachers' individual teaching needs.	241	3.013	1.268	60.25	16
20	In-service training lacks follow-up activities during the year.	261	3.263	0.964	65.25	8
21	Training rarely adopts experimental action research as a training method.	242	3.025	1.147	60.50	15
22	School administration considers English less important than other disciplines.	187	2.338	1.090	46.75	30
23	Teachers can hardly get financial aid to pursue their higher education.	284	3.550	1.301	71.00	2
24	Discussions with administration are formal and rough.	216	2.700	1.316	54.00	25
25	School administration efforts to encourage action research are limited.	226	2.825	1.077	56.50	23

No.	Items	Sum	Weighted Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage	Rank
26	School administration has no interest to secure up to date ELT journals.	249	3.113	1.102	62.25	13
27	Administration has never conducted teachers' professional needs analysis.	239	2.988	1.119	59.75	18
28	Teachers' professional development efforts are unrewarded.	253	3.163	1.163	63.25	10
29	It is difficult to find appropriate technological teaching aids in the school.	248	3.100	1.298	62.00	14
30	Professional development is not a career development tool.	225	2.813	1.068	56.25	24

From table (4.1), the most two institutional professional development obstacles are number (5) " Supervisors often visit suddenly." that occupied the first rank with percent weight (74.00%) and number (23) "Teachers can hardly get financial aid to pursue their higher education" that occupied the second rank with percent weight (71.00%).

This indicates that teachers suffer a lot from the sudden visits of supervisors, and thus the majority of the respondents agreed that such a behavior hinders effective professional development. Money has also proved importance as 71.00% of the respondents agreed that financial aid is a crucial element to teachers to think about higher education, and that lack of financial aid is considered a major professional development obstacle.

And the least two institutional professional development obstacles are number (4) "Some supervisors lack experience in primary English teaching" that occupied the twenty ninth rank with percent weight (50.50%) and number (22) "School administration considers English less important than other disciplines" that occupied the thirtieth rank with percent weight (46.75%).

This means teachers believe supervisors are experienced in primary English language teaching, and that the inexperienced ones are not considered obstacles towards professional development. In addition, around fifty percent of respondents do not think school administration considers English as an unimportant school subject. The researcher believes the united examination system the UNRWA adopts for all subjects puts English in an equal level of importance with other school subjects. Therefore, administration does care about English achievement.

B. Self-directed professional development obstacles:

Table (4.2)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the percent weight and rank of each item of the domain (B)

No.	Items	Sum	Weighted Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage	Rank
1	Primary English teachers feel bored with their job.	208	2.600	1.289	52.00	19
2	Some teachers always feel frustrated with most students.	255	3.188	1.264	63.75	15
3	Some teachers think professional development is unimportant.	193	2.413	1.144	48.25	20
4	Teachers seldom share experiences with others.	241	3.013	1.258	60.25	18
5	Some teachers have poor computer skills.	299	3.738	1.064	74.75	4
6	Some teachers have limited internet access.	300	3.750	0.921	75.00	3
7	Some teachers have poor relations with other school workers.	279	3.488	1.019	69.75	8
8	Traveling to attend professional conferences is difficult.	326	4.075	1.100	81.50	2
9	Traveling to attend professional conferences is costly.	335	4.188	0.969	83.75	1
10	Some teachers have other jobs/interests.	252	3.150	1.092	63.00	17
11	Some teachers cannot afford pursuing	280	3.500	0.900	70.00	6

No.	Items	Sum	Weighted Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage	Rank
	postgraduate studies.					
12	Teachers' exchange opportunities are limited.	288	3.600	0.936	72.00	5
13	Teachers' exchange opportunities are very expensive.	261	3.263	0.978	65.25	9
14	Teachers occasionally write daily notes about their teaching experience.	258	3.225	1.190	64.50	12
15	Teachers lack the researching skills needed for conducting action research.	260	3.250	0.974	65.00	10
16	Teachers feel conducting self-assessment tools boring.	254	3.175	1.111	63.50	16
17	Some teachers have negative attitudes towards lifelong learning.	280	3.500	1.043	70.00	7
18	Some teachers can hardly determine when to ask for help or consult specialists.	256	3.200	0.933	64.00	14
19	Some teachers have poor communications with students' parents.	259	3.238	1.139	64.75	11
20	Teachers lack the managerial skills needed for conducting long-term professional development activities.	257	3.213	0.990	64.25	13

From table (4.2), the most three self-directed professional development obstacles are number (9) "Traveling to attend professional conferences is costly." that occupied the first rank with percent weight (83.75%), number (8) "Traveling to attend professional conferences is difficult." that occupied the second rank with percent weight (81.50%), and number (6) "Some teachers have limited internet access." that occupied the third rank with percent weight (75.00%).

This indicates that teachers are willing to travel and to attend conferences, yet traveling is costly and difficult as a result of the travel restrictions from and to Gaza. Three quarters of teachers do believe internet is very important in professional

development and that the limited internet access is an obstacle towards effective self-directed professional development.

And the least are two self-directed professional development obstacles are number (1) "I Primary English teachers feel bored with their job" that occupied the nineteenth rank with percent weight (52.00%) and number (3) "Some teachers think professional development is unimportant" that occupied the twentieth rank with percent weight (48.25%).

This can give a good indication that around fifty percent love their job, but also around fifty feel bored with their job, which is considered as an obstacle. This might be as a result of the routine nature of the job. Forty eight percent of the respondents think that some teachers believe professional development is unimportant. Therefore, some teachers are not really interested to participate in a course or have part in peer coaching.

C. Professional development obstacles form the nature of the work:

Table (4.3)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the percent weight and rank of
each item of the domain (C)

No.	Items	Sum	Weighted Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage	Rank
1	English teachers are assigned to teach other disciplines to complete their load.	262	3.275	1.125	65.50	12
2	Teaching young learners is exhausting.	279	3.488	1.222	69.75	9
3	There are so many tasks given to English teachers.	307	3.838	0.878	76.75	5
4	Primary English teaching conferences in Gaza are rare.	316	3.950	1.042	79.00	4
5	The working environment inside the school is uncomfortable.	247	3.088	1.361	61.75	13
6	Primary teachers get heavier teaching load.	290	3.625	1.129	72.50	8
7	The community undervalues teaching elementary learners.	247	3.088	1.070	61.75	14
8	Primary English teaching journals are difficult to find.	273	3.413	1.144	68.25	11
9	The two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards completing postgraduate studies.	329	4.113	1.031	82.25	2
10	The heavy teaching load makes teachers very busy during the working day.	342	4.275	0.871	85.50	1
11	The scholastic year is too short to cover the assigned curricula.	246	3.075	1.310	61.50	15
12	The working day is too short to conduct professional development activities.	276	3.450	1.146	69.00	10
13	Primary classes are more crowded than preparatory ones.	326	4.075	0.897	81.50	3
14	Leaving the school to attend courses or workshops is difficult.	301	3.763	0.889	75.25	6
15	Teaching is a type of work that rapidly becomes routine.	301	3.763	1.009	75.25	7

From table (4.3), the most two professional development obstacles form the nature of the work are number (10) "The heavy teaching load makes teachers very busy during the working day." that occupied the first rank with percent weight (85.50%) and number (9) "The two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards completing postgraduate studies." that occupied the second rank with percent weight (82.25%).

Most of the teachers agreed the heavy teaching load prevents effective professional development. Besides, eighty two percent of the respondents believed the two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards completing postgraduate studies

And the least two professional development obstacles form the nature of the work are number (7) "The community undervalues teaching elementary learners" that occupied the fourteenth rank with percent weight (61.75%) and number (11) "The scholastic year is too short to cover the assigned curricula" occupied the fifteenth rank with percent weight (61.50%).

In fact, sixty one percent is not an insignificant indicator because it is more than the half. However, it means teachers believed the community's inferior view towards primary English language teachers is not a great obstacle towards professional development as other items. The community view, as revealed, plays an important role in teachers' development. When teachers feel nobody appreciates their work, they would not be enthusiastic to work hard to improve their teaching practice. In the contrary, if teachers knew their work is appreciated, they would think seriously about their professional development.

Around sixty percent of the respondents thought the scholastic year is too short to cover the assigned curricula, and therefore they also think time is limited to conducted professional development activities. In fact, the scholastic year my not be

too short, but the number of English classes allocated to primary teachers who teach grades 1 to 4 is insufficient to cover a long curriculum for young learners. Three periods a week is not enough to provide language practice activities for young learners who are slow learners naturally.

D. All domains (A, B, C):

Table (4.4)

The sum of responses, means, std. deviation and the percent weight and rank of each domain from and whole questionnaire

No.	Domains	No. of items	Weighted Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage	Rank
1.	Institutional professional development obstacles	30	3.036	17.528	60.73	3
2.	Self-directed professional development obstacles	20	3.338	11.578	66.76	2
3.	Professional development obstacles form the nature of the work	15	3.618	6.890	72.37	1
	SUMB	65	212.125	29.856	65.27	

From table (4.4), the most professional development obstacle is number (3) "Professional development obstacles form the nature of the work" that occupied the first rank with percent weight (72.37%).

Around three quarters of the respondents do believe the nature of the work is the greatest obstacle facing primary EFL teachers. This indicates the working environment of EFL teachers is discouraging. In fact, this may be as a result of the unbearable teaching load for primary EFL teachers mentioned earlier in this section. The two-shift school timing is another reason. Not only because it does not allow teachers to attend university lectures at different times, but also it makes the working

day shorter than supposed. Therefore, many activities may not be achieved because of the lack of time such as the collaborative action reach.

Number (2) "Self-directed professional development obstacles" occupied the second rank with percent weight (66.76 %), and that indicates teachers may not be familiar with self-directed professional development activities. It seems they were reluctant when deciding to rank the items. This might be a result of inexperience. However, it also reflects they are willing to lean by themselves as they blame themselves more than the institutes since the last domain was the institutional professional development. They believe professional development is more self-directed than institutional.

Number (1) "Institutional professional development obstacles" occupied the fifth rank with percent weight (60.73%). The researcher relates this to the routine system of UNRWA in education. That is because the united examination system and the teachers' success rates system that forces school administrations to seek teachers' professional development to raise students' success rates.

Answer of the first question of the interviews:

The researcher interviewed five teachers to explore their views about the professional development obstacles they face. Each teacher is called a Participant hereinafter. Thus, there are five Participants: P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 as mentioned and elaborated in chapter three. P1 refers to the Participant number (1) as in chapter three.

Institutional professional development obstacles

Interview participants answered differently. Each teacher spoke about his/her own experience. Interviewees were asked about four types of institutional professional development: Educational supervision, In-service training, peer-

coaching, and the role of school administration in EFL teachers' professional development.

1. Educational supervision

P1 said the educational supervision is a way for evaluation and he saw the supervisor as an inspector. He also said his supervisor repeats the comments every time. However, he did not deny the supervisor has helped him though the help was general rather than specialized in EFL teaching to young learners.

> *"He [the supervisor] usually focuses on teaching methodologies in general. He has certain suggestions he always repeats"*

> *"In fact, I only see the supervisor as an inspector. I also believe supervisors judge in advance, and I do think they don't respect teachers. However, my supervisor this year has help me when he suggested using a poster when writing evaluation tasks"*

> *"Although supervision is sometimes helpful especially for newly appointed teachers, it is more authoritative than supporting in my case. I feel my supervisor is indifferent, and he only wants to record a visit"*

P2 answered she did not see the supervisor focuses on something derived from a strategic plan, and he commented on what comes in his mind. P2 also thought educational supervision is an ineffective way for EFL teachers' professional development. She returned this to the sudden and rare visits of supervisors.

> *"He [supervisor] didn't focus on certain points but commented in everything in general"*

> *"I don't think he is practicing supervisor in the right way. I think educational supervision in its current view in useless. It could neither be a way of improving teachers nor evaluating them."*

> *"He comes suddenly and my only goal at that time is to show him something special and unique because he usually visits a teacher once or twice during a year."*

P3 said the supervisor visited her once in the class and three in-school visits during this year. She said the supervisor discussed different topics such as constructing good objectives, correction of books and notes, students' marks in the

mid exam, and application of a revision material. She believed educational supervision is an important activity and plays a crucial role.

> *"I think yes [supervisor helps me]. He guides me to a better teaching methods."*

> *"I think it [educational supervision] plays an important role in developing teachers. However, my supervisor lacks the use of technology in teaching."*

P4 thought educational supervision is worthless because of the bad relationship between teachers and supervisors. He also believed that his supervisor has never added something new for him.

> *"He [the supervisor] has never added something new for me. I think he is doing routine work."*

> *"Teachers hate to see the supervisor because he mocks teachers and doesn't respect teachers"*

P5 had a bright view for supervision. Although her supervisor visited her only once during this year, she believes the supervisor helped her a lot and that supervision is a learning activity. She, on the other hand, did not like the sudden visits.

> *"I was doing things wrongly. He helped me a lot in regard of lesson planning. In, fact, I wanted somebody to observe me and direct me"*

> *"I feel my supervisor helps me develop my teaching."*

> *"However, I didn't like his sudden visit. I wasn't ready at that time, and I felt confused and tensed."*

In general, interviewees' responses were varied. Some believed that educational supervision is an important and effective professional development activity, and other saw educational supervision is useless because supervisors visit rarely, and they are not practicing supervision properly. Most interviewees believed educational supervisors are not specialized in EFL teaching to young learners, and thus their comments are general rather than specialized, and educational supervision system needs improvement.

2. In-service training

P1 said that although training cover important topics, trainers are unqualified and the training strategy is unsuccessful. He said trainers are not specialized in teaching English to primary learners, and they do not adopt the right way of training.

> *"Trainers are either supervisors or psychological experts. None is specialized in teaching English to primary learners"*

> *"I can say trainers are inexperienced and unqualified to train teachers of English. All trainers I have met till now only speak about the problem and never provide practical solutions."*

P2 had attended two training courses during her one-year career. She believed the training was interesting but not very helpful. She also believed trainers are qualified, but they use traditional training methods.

> *"[Training was] not very helpful. I wanted something about teaching vocabs for children."*

> *"[Trainers] are qualified I think, but they use traditional lecturing methods."*

P3 stated trainers are qualified, but the training topics are not very interesting. He believed that training is helpful if teachers really in need for training. For him, he said training did not add any thing new for his knowledge.

> *"[Trainers] are qualified. I think they are reliable to train teachers"*

> *"[Training topics are] not very helpful. I already know everything covered."*

> *"I think training is good for teachers who really need it, but I didn't feel I got any thing new."*

P4 thought training is a good way for teachers' professional development. He also said the training topics are valuable but general. He suffered from trainers saying they focus on theories not practice.

> *"I think training topics are somehow appropriate"*

"The problem is that they are addressed to all teachers regardless subject matter and students' age."

"[Trainers are] qualified in their subject matter but not in training. They teach theories."

"I think training is a good development way because teachers sometimes need training in some areas such as ... new teaching trends that one cannot master unless involve in training."

P5 did not think training is a good professional development way because trainers and topics are repetitive. She said she usually did not feel interested.

"In general, I don't usually feel interested."

"I think we usually see the same faces and listen to the same topics and that is boring."

"I don't feel training helps me develop me teaching."

To sum up, interviewees' responses were different. P1 and P5 said in-service training is ineffective, whereas P3 and P4 said in-service training is a valuable activity for EFL teachers professional development. P2 suffered from the traditional training methods, and that agreed with P4 as he said trainers focus on theories. Almost all interviewees suffered from the general treatment of training topics as they all never attended a course that is specialized in EFL teaching for young learners.

3. Peer coaching

P1 attended a lesson for one of his peers once, but his peers never attended for him during the scholastic year 2010-2011. He did not show interest in peer coaching and said he did not see peer coaching is a professional development activity. That is because teachers show off and undervalue what they see when attending for a teacher. Attending teachers, he added, focus on errors and leave good points.

"I personally don't like teachers come to my class. Colleagues focus on errors and leave all good things."

"I don't think peer coaching is a professional development activity. Each teacher can feel his problems alone"

P2 is a newly appointed teacher who has never attended any a class and no teacher had attended a class for her. However, she said she wishes to attend classes for experienced teachers.

> "I am a new teacher and I have never attended for any teacher and no one has ever attended my classes. However, I am really in need to attend to experienced teachers. I really want to know how do they manage their classes"

P3 never had colleagues attended her class, but she attended three lessons for peers. She thought peer coaching is a helpful and comfortable professional development activity. She believed some teachers do not practice peer coaching because they might be jealous or they might not have enough time.

> "Some teachers don't practice peer coaching because they are jealous of them, they don't have enough time, or they don't think peer coaching is important."

P4 appreciated peer coaching as a development activity. He said some teachers do not practice peer coaching because some other teachers mock what they see.

> "I think peer coaching is a healthy activity"

> "[Some teachers] are, I think, interested in peer coaching, but they might be afraid of some teachers who mock everything and then don't accept any one to attend for them."

P5 saw peer coaching is very helpful and helps teachers develop. She said some teachers do not practice peer coaching because of the criticizing comments.

> "[Peer coaching] is very useful. It helps teachers learn from each others.

> "[Some teachers do not practice peer coaching] because they don't like criticizing comments or they don't want others to see the way of teaching she uses."

It is obvious from the responses peer coaching is not utilized properly. P2 is a new teacher and supposed to attend to other teachers to learn from them, but she said she did not. P3 never had colleagues attended a lesson for her, yet she attended three lessons for three peers. P1, P4, and P5 believed the mocking and criticizing comments

form attending peers is the greatest obstacles of peer coaching. All interviewees except P1 agreed that peer coaching is a valuable professional development activity if managed properly.

4. The school administration role

P1 stated his school role to improve EFL teachers is unsatisfying. That is because his school principal does not allow teachers to go outside school to attend university lectures. P1 said his school never participated in an action research to improve EFL teaching. He was asked about his professional needs two years ago, and the survey was general and not EFL oriented.

> *"I remember I was asked about my professional needs two years ago. It was the only time. … However, that was general and not English oriented or primary education oriented."*

> *"My school administration has never conducted an action research or even participated in an action research to find solution faced by English teachers."*

> *"I don't think [administrators] care about teachers' professional development for English teachers. ... My school principal is very strict and doesn't' allow any teacher to go out of the school to attend lecture. There is no special computer for teachers to use and look for development. I am not satisfied."*

P2 said she has never been asked about her professional needs. She added there are some teaching aids available such as computers and cassette recorder but the cassettes are not available. The school administration, she believed, did nothing to her as a new teacher to let her be familiar with the school system.

> *"[The administration role is] unsuccessful. I personally can feel that because I am a new teacher and the administration did nothing to let me know at least the school system. Every time they require me to do something…. but I still face difficulty doing this."*

P3 said she has been asked about her professional needs once. However, the school administration role in EFL teachers' professional development is "below

average". That is because, she justified, teachers' good work is not rewarded. She personally did not feel any support from the administration.

> *"[The administration role is] below average. I mean they are supposed to exert much effort to improve EFL teachers. Teachers' good work is not appreciated, and I can feel no support from the administration."*

P4 criticized the administration's professional development role. He said they only use supervision as a professional development tool. He added they try to push teachers through threatening them. In other words, they use the annual assessment as a pushing paper. English is rated too low in comparison with Arabic and Math, and action research has never been conducted, he said.

> *"They depend on supervision as the main tool of professional development. They also threat teachers using the annual evaluation to push teachers to improve teaching. …. I can say my school administration is doing the wrong thing to improve teachers. And they pay extra attention to Arabic and Maths and don't really care about English language. … They have never conducted action researches to find possible solutions for problems EFL teachers face inside classes."*

P5 said she has been asked about her professional needs through a questionnaire. She evaluated the school administration role in EFL teachers' professional development as "very poor". One reason she said is that the school library is very poor, and she cannot find any book or periodical specialized in ELT.

> *"[The administration role is] very poor and needs to be improved. At least, the administration should buy some good books and ELT journals. The library is extremely poor and I can't find any ELT specialized book."*

As a summary, all participants were not satisfied with the role their school administrations do for the sake of their professional development. P1 believed the role his school plays to improve EFL teachers is unsatisfying. P2 believed her school did nothing to develop her. P3 evaluated her school administration role in EFL teachers' professional development as "below average". So did P4 and P5 as the

former criticized his school administration, and the latter said her school administration role is "very poor" in term of teachers' development. P3 highlighted the importance of support and believed the lack of teachers' support is an obstacles towards professional development. P5 said it is the responsibility of the school administration to secure up-to-date, specialized books and periodicals for EFL teachers to read and develop.

Self-directed professional development obstacles

Interviewees were asked about three types of self-directed professional development activities: self-appraisal, reading and writing, and pursuing formal education.

1. Self-appraisal

P1 said he evaluates his performance every class, but he did use certain self-evaluation tools. He depends on feelings. He said some teachers do not think of self-evaluation because it does not matter for them.

> *"When I feel that a class was great, I try to think why to repeat my success. And when I feel a class was a hell, I try to think why to avoid another hell."*

> *"[Some teachers do not practice self-evaluation] because they are careless and it doesn't matter for them."*

P2 said she has never thought of self-assessment because she has no time and she does not know how to do that.

> *"I do not have time to think of my teaching practice and I do not know how to evaluate myself."*

P3 practiced self-assessment twice that year. One time she used a checklist, and the other time she used students' mark analysis. She thought some teachers do not practice self-assessment because they do not believe in self-assessment.

> *"Once through a checklist I got form the internet. The second time through an analysis I did for my students marks in the mid exams."*

"[Some teachers do not practice self-evaluation because] they don't believe in self evaluation."

P4 rarely assesses his performance, and he used to use a self-assessment checklist. Some teachers do not practice self-assessment because they believe self-assessment is useless, he added.

"I used to use a checklist of self-assessment I took from a book."

"[Some teachers do not practice self-evaluation because] they think that is crazy and there is no need for self-assessment."

P5 evaluates her teaching performance every day, she said. She determines whether the day was good or not at the end of the working day. She thought some teachers are indifferent, and these matters are unimportant for them.

"Every day, I say either the day was good or bad and I think why."

2. Reading and writing

P1 reads very rarely and never thought of writing a paper for professional development. He said he had no time or reason to read or write. More particularly, he said good books are not available.

"There is no time and no reason to read. Teachers don't read because they don't know what to read, and because good books are not available."

"Again there is no time and no reason to write."

P2 stated she reads her university books when necessary. Some teachers do not read, she believed, because they think reading is useless and because there is no good books in the school library. She did not think of doing research because that is difficult.

"I usually read books especially my university books to remember what I forgot about something."

"They believe they are experienced and there is no need for reading. Then, there are no good books or articles in the school. If the school brought good books, I would read for sure."

"[She did not do research] because doing researchers is difficult."

P3 said she always reads. She believed some teachers do not read because of the lack of time. She never did an action research, for she is not familiar with that.

"[Some teachers do not conduct researches because] They don't know what action research is and what the importance of action research is."

P4 said he reads a lot. He also said some teachers do not read because they are not acquainted with reading. He believed in researching though he did a kind of informal research. Teachers do not research because there is no motivation and because researching is difficult.

"Reading needs concentration and the working day is too busy. Besides, we are not costumed to read."

"In fact, yes, but not a formal research. I think of different methods and I try them."

"There is no motivation[to do researches]. And it is a long complex process."

P5 said she reads sometimes, and she participated in an action research once. Teachers do not read because they are busy, she added. She also said teachers lack the computer skills needed for researching.

"May be [teachers] are busy and don't have enough time. Anyway, reading is a culture and we do not have the culture of reading."

"I have once participated in an action research done by Al Qattan center for educational research."

"They [teachers] do not know what action research is, or they may not be good at computer and computer skills."

3. Pursuing formal education

P1 said he does not think of pursuing higher studies because a higher degree will not help him get higher position or more money.

"Because I will not get higher position or more money when having a master degree."

P2 said she wants to complete higher studies, but time and money and the school system prevent her.

> *"University will take most of my money and time. Then it is not easy to manage to my university time with my school time especially when working afternoon shift."*

P3 believed she is experienced enough and has no time to study.

> *"I think I get enough experience and I have no time to think formal education."*

P4 stated money and time prevents him to think of higher studies. In addition, he said he faced difficulties leaving the school to attend lectures and ding his master research. He also said higher degrees do not change a teacher position in UNRWA.

> *"Time, money, and that degree doesn't matter in UNRWA. I suffered a lot when I did my master. I faced difficulties leaving the school frequently to attend lectures and do my experiment."*

P5 said she wishes she could study a master degree, but she can not because of the lack of time and the difficulty of managing the time between the university, the work and her private life.

> *"Time. I don't have time to attend lectures and I work afternoon shift. I also have two babies and my husband comes late from his job. I wish I could."*

Generally, most participants showed interest towards professional development though they all seem to need a leading person or institute or even a motive. P1, P3, P4, P5 have once experienced self-assessment either formally or not. That indicates teachers' interest towards development. Such an activity would be more fruitful if led by the supervisor, the school principal, an interested institute to manage and give teachers enough instruction about self-assessment and its types. All the participants have experienced reading for development, but they read unsystematically. For example, P2 reads her university books when she feel she wants to remember something. That is good, yet a teacher needs to be led to read a

wide variety of readings types such as articles, action researches, theses, journals, book reviews, and even newspapers topics related to education. All interviewees expect P3 hope to have an opportunity to complete higher studies. Most of them suffered from financial issues as a resource and as a promotion. In other words, if higher studies help teachers get better financial and positional status, many teachers will think seriously of completing studies. This is another indication that teachers are interested in professional development but need to be led.

Professional development obstacles form the nature of the work

Interviewees were asked about how the nature of EFL teaching to young learners could be a professional development obstacle, and what they suggest to improve the working conditions to facilitate professional development.

P1 complained about teaching in general because it is a routine work. He said teachers are assigned too many written tasks, and EFL teacher are given extra periods to teach other subjects to complete load.

> *"Teaching is a habitual work everyday I repeat the same process and too many time I feel bored. And teachers are assigned too many administrative work related to students' attendance and others. EFL teachers, more particularly, are usually given other disciplines to teach such as drawing and physical education to complete their already heavy loads."*

P2 again said teaching is a routine work that makes teachers bored. In addition, she said teaching English to young learners in particular is extremely exhausting. She also stated the busy working day for the primary EFL teachers prevent teachers from thinking about development.

> *"Teaching in general is a repetitive work and that is boring and teaching English to elementary boys in particular is very very tiring … I can't think of any professional development activities during the work day because I am always busy."*

P3 spoke about the lack of time and financial appreciation for teachers professional development activities.

> "Time is very limited because the year, the period, and the number of periods allocated are not enough to finish the long …. Also teacher do not have any extra time because of their heavy loads 27 periods a week. Secondly, whatever a teacher do, there is not any promotion. … the hardworking teacher is equally dealt with as the careless one."

P4 suffered from the community view towards teachers of young learners. He also complained about the rigid career ladder and the strategic plan of UNRWA that ignores English and pays extra attention on other disciplines.

> "All persons around you think teaching children is the job of bad teacher ... because they cannot teacher teenagers. This frustrates me. The system of the career ladder also frustrates me. I mean teachers do not get extra grades for the master or doctorate degrees. ..EFL teachers professional development is not a strategic goal for the institution.."

P5 said the two-shifts system bothers her, and she also complained about the large number of students and heavy teaching load.

> "When I work afternoon, I feel I lost the whole day and I cannot do any other activities before or after the school….Also, classes in the primary stages are more crowded than in the preparatory stages. ....That is in fact become worse with the very huge teaching load."

Briefly, the majority complained about the heavy teaching load, the overcrowded class, the rigid financial appreciation and career ladder. P4 suffered from the community view for the EFL teacher who teaches young learner, and P5 spoke about the disadvantages of the two-shifts school system.

4.3. The second question

Are there statistically significant differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in perceptions about primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles due to the gender variable?

To answer this question, the researcher used T.Test. Table (4.5) shows this:

Table (4.5)

Means, std. div, t value, sig. value and sig. level to examine the statistical differences between the two sexes

No.	Domain	SEX	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. value	sig. level
1.	Institutional professional development obstacles	male	13	106.231	12.716	3.661	0.000	Sig. at 0.01
		female	67	88.149	16.864			
2.	Self-directed professional development obstacles	male	13	72.538	16.107	2.003	0.049	Sig. at 0.05
		female	67	65.642	10.269			
3.	Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work	male	13	58.615	8.846	2.568	0.012	Sig. at 0.05
		female	67	53.433	6.177			
	SUMB	male	13	237.385	31.245	3.573	0.001	Sig. at 0.01
		female	67	207.224	27.192			

t table value at df (78) and sig. level (0.05) = 2.00

t table value at df (78) and sig. level (0.01) = 2.66

From table (4.5) there are statistically significant differences between male and female in professional development obstacles in favor of males in all domains. That is because the computed T value is more than the critical in all domains and that proves that there are statistically significant differences due to gender. That means the males did believe they face more obstacles than the females.

From the interviews, however, there could not be seen any differences between male and female perceptions about professional development obstacles. All participants from both sexes agreed on several common ideas in all domains.

P1 and P4 are males while P2, P3, and P5 are females. Both groups agreed in several occasions. First, P1 who is male and P2 who is female agreed that supervision is ineffective because supervisors play the role of inspectors when visit suddenly and rarely. The second evidence is that all participants believed in-service training needs improvements. Both sexes also agreed that their school administrations do not exert enough efforts to empower EFL teachers professionally. The heavy teaching load and the lack of financial appreciation are seen to be the common professional development obstacles from the nature of the work among males and females.

4.4. The third question

Are there statistically significant differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in perceptions about primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles due to the academic qualification variable?

The researcher used One Way ANOVA to measure the statistical differences between the groups: diploma, BA, and M.A or higher degree. Table (4.6) shows that.

Table (4.6)

One Way ANOVA results to examine the statistical differences between the three academic qualification groups

No.	Domain	Source of variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Sig. level
1.	Institutional professional development obstacles	Between Groups	1077.832	2	538.916	1.789	0.174	Not sig.
		Within Groups	23192.556	77	301.202			
		Total	24270.388	79				
2.	Self-directed professional development obstacles	Between Groups	778.679	2	389.339	3.055	0.053	Not sig.
		Within Groups	9811.809	77	127.426			
		Total	10590.488	79				
3.	Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work	Between Groups	39.082	2	19.541	0.405	0.668	Not sig.
		Within Groups	3710.868	77	48.193			
		Total	3749.950	79				
	Total	Between Groups	4461.057	2	2230.529	2.604	0.080	Not sig.
		Within Groups	65957.693	77	856.593			
		Total	70418.750	79				

"F" table value at (2, 79) d f. at (0.05) sig. level equal 3.11
"F" table value at (2, 79) d f. at (0.01) sig. level equal 4.88

From table (4.6), there are no statistically significant differences between diploma, BA, and higher degree holders in professional development obstacles in all

domains. That is because the computed F value is less than the critical in all domains. That means the academic qualification does not play a significant role in teachers' perceptions about the obstacles they face in professional development.

From the interviews, similarly, there could not be seen any differences between those who have higher degrees and those who are less. P3 has a diploma, P1, P2 and P5 have bachelor, and P4 has a master degree.

P3 appreciated supervision and training and peer coaching as a development methods. She said she reads a lot. So did P4 who said peer coaching is an important professional development way. P1,P2, and P5 who have bachelor degrees provided distinct responses regarding supervision, training, and researching. P1 said supervision is ineffective while P5 believed supervisors play an important role. P2 argued training is interesting and trainers are qualified, but P5 disagreed. P1 rarely read for development and never participated in an action research, yet P5 read sometimes and experienced action research once.

4.5. The fourth question

Are there statistically significant differences at ($α ≤ 0.05$) in perceptions about primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles due to the number of working experience years variable?

The researcher used One Way ANOVA to measure the statistical differences between the groups: 1-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-15 years, and above 15. Table (4.7) show that:

Table (4.7)

One Way ANOVA results to examine the statistical differences

between the four experience groups

No.	Domain	Source of variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Sig. level
1.	Institutional professional development obstacles	Between Groups	3848.410	3	1282.803	4.774	0.004	Sig. at 0.01
		Within Groups	20421.978	76	268.710			
		Total	24270.388	79				
2.	Self-directed professional development obstacles	Between Groups	1707.871	3	569.290	4.871	0.004	Sig. at 0.01
		Within Groups	8882.616	76	116.877			
		Total	10590.488	79				
3.	Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work	Between Groups	225.467	3	75.156	1.621	0.192	Not sig
		Within Groups	3524.483	76	46.375			
		Total	3749.950	79				
	Total	Between Groups	13611.273	3	4537.091	6.070	0.001	Sig. at 0.01
		Within Groups	56807.477	76	747.467			
		Total	70418.750	79				

"F" table value at (3, 79) d f. at (0.05) sig. level equal 2.72
"F" table value at (3, 79) d f. at (0.01) sig. level equal 4.04

From table (4.7), there are no statistically significant differences between the four experience groups in perceptions about professional development obstacles in the third domain. That is because the computed F value is less than the critical. However, there are statistically significant differences between the four experience groups in perceptions about professional development obstacles in the first, the second, and the overall degree. That is because the computed F value is more than the critical. That means the responses of the questionnaire participants were different affected by their experience.

To determine direction of the differences, the researcher used Scheffe test.

Table (4.8)

Scheffe post Hoc Matrix to identify the direction of differences between the four experience groups in the first domain

		1-2 years	3-5 years	6-15 years	Above 15
	M	**90.643**	**91.500**	**98.227**	**74.600**
1-2 years	**90.643**	0			
3-5 years	**91.500**	0.857	0		
6-15 years	**98.227**	7.584	6.727	0	
Above 15	**74.600**	16.043	*16.900	*23.627	0

* sig. at (0.05)

Table (4.8) shows that there are statistically significant differences between those who have 3-5 years of experience and those who have more than 15 years of experience in favor to those who have 3-5 years of experience. The table also shows there are statistically significant differences between those who have 6-15 years of experience and those who have more than 15 years of experience in favor to those who have 6-15 years of experience. There are no differences between other experience groups.

Table (4.9)

Scheffe post Hoc Matrix to identify the direction of differences between the four experience groups in the second domain

		1-2 years	3-5 years	6-15 years	Above 15
	M	**68.643**	**66.382**	**71.182**	**55.700**
1-2 years	**68.643**	0			
3-5 years	**66.382**	2.261	0		
6-15 years	**71.182**	2.539	4.799	0	
Above 15	**55.700**	*12.943	10.682	*15.482	0

* sig. at (0.05)

Table (4.9) shows that there are statistically significant differences between those who have 1-2 years of experience and those who have more than 15 years of experience in favor to those who have 1-2 years of experience. The table also shows there are statistically significant differences between those who have 6-15 years of experience and those who have more than 15 years of experience in favor to those who have 6-15 years of experience. Meanwhile, there are no differences between other experience groups.

Table (4.10)

Scheffe post Hoc Matrix to identify the direction of differences between the four experience groups in all domains

		1-2 years	3-5 years	6-15 years	Above 15
	M	**214.214**	**211.382**	**225.864**	**181.500**
1-2 years	**214.214**	0			
3-5 years	**211.382**	2.832	0		
6-15 years	**225.864**	11.649	14.481	0	
Above 15	**181.500**	*32.714	*29.882	*44.364	0

* sig. at (0.05)

Table (4.10) shows that there are statistically significant differences between those who have 1-2 years of experience and those who have more than 15 years of experience in favor to those who have 1-2 years of experience. The table also shows there are statistically significant differences between those who have 3-5 years of experience and those who have more than 15 years of experience in favor to those who have 3-5 years of experience. There are also statistically significant differences between those who have 6-15 years of experience and those who have more than 15 years of experience in favor to those who have 6-15 years of experience. There are no differences with other experience groups.

From the interviews too, there can be noticed some differences in opinions due to experience. P2 who is a new teacher and P3 who has 25 years of experience had distinct opinion concerning educational supervision. P2 believed supervision is not an effective way for teachers' professional development, yet P3 said supervision is important. In addition, P1 has 12 years of experience but had negative view towards peer coaching. He said he does not like anybody to attend a lesson for him. P1, P4, and P5 who are relatively considered not very experienced had positive view towards peer coaching and believe peer coaching is an importance learning activity.

4.6. The fifth question

Are there statistically significant differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in perceptions about primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles due to the age variable?

The researcher used One Way ANOVA to measure the statistical differences between the groups: less than 25, 25-35, 35-45, and above 45. Table (4.11) show that:

Table (4.11)

One Way ANOVA results to examine the statistical differences

between the four age groups

No.	Domain	Source of variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Sig. level
1.	Institutional professional development obstacles	Between Groups	2710.113	3	903.371	3.184	0.029	Sig. at 0.05
		Within Groups	21560.275	76	283.688			
		Total	24270.388	79				
2.	Self-directed professional development obstacles	Between Groups	683.541	3	227.847	1.748	0.164	Not sig.
		Within Groups	9906.947	76	130.355			
		Total	10590.488	79				
3.	Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work	Between Groups	416.670	3	138.890	3.167	0.029	Sig. at 0.05
		Within Groups	3333.280	76	43.859			
		Total	3749.950	79				
	Total	Between Groups	7491.388	3	2497.129	3.016	0.035	Sig. at 0.05
		Within Groups	62927.362	76	827.992			
		Total	70418.750	79				

"F" table value at (3, 79) d f. at (0.05) sig. level equal 2.72
"F" table value at (3, 79) d f. at (0.01) sig. level equal 4.04

From table (4.11), there are no statistically significant differences between the four age groups in perceptions about professional development obstacles in the second domain. That is because the computed F value is less than the critical. However, there are statistically significant differences between the four age groups in perceptions about professional development obstacles in the first, the third, and the overall degree. That is because the computed F value is more than the critical. That means the responses of the questionnaire participants were different due to age variable.

To determine direction of the differences the researcher used Scheffe test.

Table (4.12)

Scheffe post Hoc Matrix to identify the direction of differences between four age groups in the first domain

		Less than 25	25-35	35-45	Above 45
	M	**84.500**	**94.700**	**93.625**	**78.900**
Less than 25	**84.500**	0			
25-35	**94.700**	10.200	0		
35-45	**93.625**	9.125	1.075	0	
Above 45	**78.900**	5.600	15.800	*14.725	0

* sig. at (0.05)

With reference to table (4.12), there are statistically significant differences between those who are 35-45 years old and those who are more than 45 years old in favor of those who are 35-45 years old. The table does not show any other differences between other age groups.

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Table (4.13)

Scheffe post Hoc Matrix to identify the direction of differences between four age
groups in the third domain

		Less than 25	25-35	35-45	Above 45
	M	**55.000**	**53.680**	**60.500**	**51.400**
Less than 25	**55.000**	0			
25-35	**53.680**	1.320	0		
35-45	**60.500**	5.500	6.820	0	
Above 45	**51.400**	3.600	2.280	*9.100	0

* sig. at (0.05)

As shown in table (4.13), there are statistically significant differences between
those who are 35-45 years old and those who are more than 45 years old of in favor to
those who are 35-45 years old. The table does not show any other differences between
other age groups.

Table (4.14)

Scheffe post Hoc Matrix to identify the direction of differences between four age
groups in all domains

		Less than 25	25-35	35-45	Above 45
	M	**205.667**	**215.960**	**225.375**	**190.100**
Less than 25	**205.667**	0			
25-35	**215.960**	10.293	0		
35-45	**225.375**	19.708	9.415	0	
Above 45	**190.100**	15.567	25.860	*35.275	0

* sig. at (0.05)

Table (4.14) shows that there are statistically significant differences between
those who are 35-45 years old and those who are more than 45 years old of in favor to

those who are 35-45 years old. The results did not show any other differences between other age groups.

From the interviews, some differences can be noticed among the participants' view related to age variable. Those who are younger had positive views in some occasions. P2, P4, and P5 who are all less than thirty saw peer coaching as an interesting way for development, yet P1 who is 41 did not. Besides, P1 and P3 who are over forty did not suffer form young students, but P2 who is 25 said teaching young learners is extremely exhausting. P2, P4, and P5 who are all less than thirty showed interest in completing higher studies. However, P1 who is 41 and P3 who is 52 did not.

Chapter V
Findings, Results, Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction:

This study consists of five chapters aiming at investigating the professional development obstacles facing primary English language teachers .It investigates EFL teachers' perceptions concerning what prevent effective professional development .In accordance with the literature reviewed and discussed earlier the study ,in addition to the practical and statistical investigation of the study ,this chapter aimed at discussing the results of the study and providing recommendations for further researches.

5.2. Discussions:

The main goal of the study was to find out the professional development obstacles facing EFL teachers who teach primary stage. Therefore, the aim of the study is to know what prevents effective EFL teachers' professional development, and then it presents possible solutions. It investigates EFL teachers' perceptions concerning the obstacles they face and prevent effective development through a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire has 65 items. Each item is accompanied by a five–point Likert scale. It included three domains which represent main obstacles. Accordingly the findings showed the following results:

5.2.1. The first question:

The first question focused on analyzing and discovering the professional development obstacles in three domains: institutional, self-directed, and from the nature of the work.

5.2.1.1. Institutional professional development obstacles

According to the questionnaire results, primary EFL teachers do not receive effective institutional professional development as a result of (Supervisors often visit suddenly) 74.00%, (Teachers can hardly get financial aid to pursue their higher education) 71.00%, (Supervisors' visits are rare) 69.50%, and (Professional conversations with colleagues are limited) 69.25% as main factors that weigh the highest from the domain.

The sudden visits of supervisors are unhelpful because they may confuse EFL teachers who feel stressed when someone suddenly attends the class. This might be as a result of the psychological effects of the sudden visit. That matches with the beliefs of Hişmanoğlu (2010); Gebhard (1984); and Alwan (2000). The rare visits cannot be successful because the supervisor cannot have enough time to analyze the teacher's practice and then provide suggestions and try them. As Galbraith and Anstrom (1995) state, the results revealed one obstacle towards professional development is the rare discussions between colleagues on their classroom problems.

Particularly, the interviewees all criticized the sudden visits of supervisors and that agrees with the questionnaire results as 74.00% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that the sudden visits of supervisors is a professional development obstacle, and that item was ranked the first among the institutional professional development obstacles. The interview results regarding the in-service training also match with the results gathered through the questionnaire as 63.00% of the questionnaire respondents agreed the general treatment of training topics is an obstacle towards effective EFL teachers' professional development. That trainers are not specialized in primary EFL teaching and that trainers adopt lecturing and

traditional training methods are common points between both tools respondents. The same results were reached by Alwan (2000). Around 50% percent of the questionnaire respondents believed "In-service training lacks strategic plan." and that was clear when P5 said training topics are repetitive saying "we usually see the same faces and listen to the same topics and that is boring."

Peer coaching also had same perceptions from both tools. From the questionnaire, the fifth ranked institutional development obstacle is "Colleagues detect errors during peer coaching" with percent weight 68.25%. That matches with P1 view that attending teachers undervalue good work and focus on errors. Similar to Garmston (1987), P4 also said teachers may not practice peer coaching because other teachers mock the lessons they attend, and P5 thought some teachers do not practice peer coaching because "because they don't like criticizing comments." Another matching point between the two tools results is that both tools' participants showed interest in peer coaching as a professional development activity. 47.00% did not see "Teachers are uninterested in peer coaching". From the interviews, P2, P3, P4, and P5 all saw peer coaching as an effective EFL teachers' professional development activity. This typically matches with the views of Richards and Farrell (2005) and Bubb (2005). The interviewees' responses have also shown the same results of the questionnaire concerning the school administration role in EFL teachers professional development. Most participants of both tools were not satisfied with the role their school administrations do for the sake of their professional development.

P1, P2, P3. P4 and P5 said their school never conducted action research to help EFL teachers find solutions, and 56.50% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that "School administration efforts to encourage action research are limited." Johnson (2011) and Hewitt and Little (2005) also believed limited school efforts towards

action research is an obstacle towards professional development. 62.25% believed that "School administration has no interest to secure up to date ELT journals.", and that is similar to what P5 said "The library is extremely poor and I can't find any ELT specialized book." In addition, P3 said "Teachers' good work is not appreciated, and I can feel no support from the administration.", and that matches with the questionnaire item "Teachers' professional development efforts are unrewarded." that had a percent weight of 63.25. Ahmed (2003) also agreed that the lack of support discourages teachers.

5.2.1.2. Self-directed professional development obstacles

According to the study, primary EFL teachers do not practice self-directed professional development effectively as a result of:

1. (Traveling to attend professional conferences is costly) that weighed 83.75%,

2. (Traveling to attend professional conferences is difficult) that weighed 81.50%,

3. (Some teachers have limited internet access) that weighed 75.00%, and

4. (Some teachers have poor computer skills) that weighed 74.75%.

as main factors that weigh the highest from the domain. This is a clue that teachers may think of traveling and attending conferences, but they stop because that traveling from Gaza is not easy and costly as well. The results also show that some teachers would have thought of professional development if they had computer skills and internet access.

The interviewees' perceptions towards what prevents effective self-directed professional development were similar to the questionnaire respondents' perceptions. The first ranked item from the self-directed professional development obstacles was item number nine that is "Traveling to attend professional conferences is costly."

None of the interviewees spoke about traveling to attend conferences, yet most of them talked about financial difficulties when discussing what prevent them form completing higher studies. P1, P2, and P2 would think seriously about higher studies if they had enough money. Therefore, money and financial issues have proven important for professional development, and that goes with the results Ahmed (2003) reached. That is reassured in the item number eleven from the same domain "Some teachers cannot afford pursuing postgraduate studies" that had a percent weight of 70.00. Besides, the item that was ranked the seventh was (Some teachers have negative attitudes towards lifelong learning.) From the interview, around three fourth of the interviewees stated they rarely read never think of action research. Alwan (2000) stated some teachers have negative attitudes because they have other interests. Another similarity was concerning teachers' other interests. P5 said she has "two babies and my husband comes late from his job. I wish I could [do higher studies].", and item number ten from the questionnaire that is "Some teachers have other jobs/interests" had a percent weight of 63.00.

5.2.1.3. Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work

According to the study, the nature of the English language teaching to young learners may also prevent effective professional development as a result of (The heavy teaching load makes teachers very busy during the working day.) 85.50%, (The two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards completing postgraduate studies.) 82.25%, and (Primary classes are more crowded than preparatory ones.) 81.50% as main factors that weigh the highest from the domain.

Teachers had an agreement that heavy teaching load hinders effective professional development. EFL teachers who teach primary stages (1-4) teach 27 periods a week. They correct notebooks, mark exams, solve problems, and other

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assigned duties in 27 classes a week. They are responsible to teach English to 360 young learners who are in most cases suffering from language learning difficulties. In other words, they teach five periods a day in three days and four periods in the other three days. During the rest periods (if any), they correct notebooks, mark exams, solve problems, and other assigned duties. Knowing that primary classes have three English periods a week, a primary EFL teacher teaches nine classes and meet around forty students in each class. Such an exhausting working day does not allow teachers to think about professional development activities such as conducting collaborative action research. 82.00% of the respondents believed the two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards completing postgraduate studies since the universities offer lectures in different day periods from early morning to late noon. Accordingly, the teachers who work in the morning shift may have more flexible time to attend lectures at 10:00 or 11:00 and later, but those who work afternoon shift do not have the same flexibility as school time starts at 11:50. Each group suffers for a complete semester, and thus many teachers are hesitant to join a master program.

The responses from both tools were the same regarding professional development obstacles from the nature of the work. From the questionnaire, the first ranked professional development obstacle from the nature of the work is (The heavy teaching load makes teachers very busy during the working day.) P5, P3, and P2 also suffered from the unbearable teaching load that is 27 periods a week which makes teachers busy and exhausted during the working day. In addition, around 70% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that one obstacle could be the reality that (Teaching young learners is exhausting.) P2 and P5 supported this as P2 said " teaching English to elementary boys in particular is very very tiring". Another matching point is that both tools participants had the same opinion concerning the two-shift school timing.

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P5 said "When I work afternoon, I feel I lost the whole day and I cannot do any other activities before or after the school.", and the second ranked professional development from the nature of the work is (The two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards completing postgraduate studies.) 65.50% of the questionnaire respondents believed (English teachers are assigned to teach other disciplines to complete their load), and 76.75% believed (There are so many tasks given to English teachers.). So did P1 as he saw teachers are assigned many tasks, and he also thought EFL teacher are given more periods to teach other school subjects to get full teaching load. Bailey, (2004); Wallace, (1998); and Richards, (1998) believe teachers need sufficient time to conduct effective professional development activities.

5.2.2. The second question:

The second question focused on deciding whether the perceptions of EFL teachers on professional development differ in accordance to sex. The results of the second questions showed there are statistically significant differences between male and female in professional development obstacles in favor to males in all domains. That means the males believed they face more obstacles than the females. The researcher return that to nature of males as thought that females are more hardworking. From the interviews, however, there could not be seen any differences between male and female perceptions about professional development obstacles. All participants from both sexes agreed on several common ideas in all domains. Both sexes agreed supervision is ineffective. All participants, too, believed in-service training needs improvements. Both sexes agreed that their school administrations role towards professional development is very poor. The heavy teaching load and the lack of financial appreciation are common professional development obstacles the males

and females. Alwan (2000) and Barzaq (2007) examined the effect of gender on EFL teachers perceptions. Both did not find out differences related to sex variable.

5.2.3. The third question:

The third question focused on deciding whether the perceptions of EFL teachers on professional development differ in accordance with academic qualification. The results revealed there are no statistically significant differences between diploma, BA, and higher degree holders in professional development obstacles due to the academic qualification variable in all domains. The researcher returns that to the same working environment that all teachers share, and thus, their perceptions are derived from experience rather than formal degrees. Equally, there could not be seen any differences between those who have higher degrees and those who are less from the interviewees. The diploma holder, P3 appreciated supervision and training and peer coaching as a development method. The master holder, P4 said peer coaching is an important professional development way. P1,P2, and P5 who have bachelor degrees provided distinct responses regarding supervision, training, and researching, and thus academic qualification does not prove significance.

5.2.4. The fourth question:

The fourth question focused on deciding whether the perceptions of EFL teachers on professional development differ in accordance with experience. Results exposed there were no statistically significant differences between the four experience groups (1-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-15 years, and above 15) in perceptions about professional development obstacles in the third domain that concerns with the nature of the work, and that is because all teachers work in the same conditions. However, as the study of Soproni (2007) also revealed, there were statistically significant differences between the four experience groups in perceptions about professional

development obstacles in the first (institutional), the second (self-directed), and the overall degree. To determine direction of the differences, the researcher used Scheffe test that shows there were statistically significant differences between those who are experienced and those who have less experience in favor to those who have less experience. The interviewees' perceptions also varied according to experience. The researcher returns this to logic as less experienced teachers need more assistance and support than more experienced ones.

5.2.5. The fifth question:

The fifth question focused on deciding whether the perceptions of EFL teachers on professional development differ with regard to age. Results revealed there were no statistically significant differences between the four experience groups (Less than 25, 25-35, 35-45, above 45) in perceptions about professional development obstacles in the second domain. However, there were statistically significant differences between the four age groups in perceptions about professional development obstacles in the first, the third, and the overall degree. That means the responses of the questionnaire participants were different due to age variable. To determine direction of the differences the researcher used Scheffe test that showed that there were statistically significant differences between teachers' perceptions due to age in favor of those who are younger. Similarly, the interviewees' perceptions were different according to age. This may be a cause of psychology. Elder teachers are grown enough, and that is why they can manage their classroom problems with less efforts that younger teachers do. No study, based on the researcher's knowledge, discussed the effect of age on perceptions on professional development.

5.3. Implications:

Teachers, through the interviews, suggested ideas for improving primary English language teachers processional development. Regarding institutional professional development, teachers suggested supervisors have an appointment and study teachers needs before attending classes. They also believed teachers should know the criteria of supervision in advance, and, as Gebhard (1984) believes, the relationship between teachers and supervisors should be better. The idea of having in-school supervisor was also proposed. In-service training, as revealed, should be curriculum oriented, meet teachers individual professional needs, decentralized, and specialized. This meets with the results of Alwan (2000) who emphasized the importance of in-service training that is constructed in accordance with elaborated needs analyses. Teachers also suggested utilizing internet and technological rescores in training.

Having pre-observing checklist for peer coaching was thought to be helpful, and that agrees with Barócsi's study (2007) that supported structured observation stating it helps teachers see specific points they could not see unless being notified about. Peer coaching, teachers thought, should be friendly activity among colleagues. That is, in fact, exactly what Hoy, Hannum and Moran (1998) mean when saying teachers become more interested in professional development activities if supported by peers.

Most participants agreed school administration should enrich school libraries, consults experts when necessary, increase the number of weekly English language periods allocated for a class to give teachers enough time to finish the curriculum and try different teaching methods, secure all needed teaching aids and praise teachers

work, and, as Johnson (2011) states, manage activities such as peer coaching and action research.

Regarding self-directed professional development, and as Bubb, and Hewitt and Little (2005) believe, the different choices of self-assessment, as teachers believed, should be explicitly exposed to teachers at fist stages that is because teachers need more information about self-assessment. Teachers also suggested the school administration give teachers different ready-made templates of self-assessment. Some teachers said enriching school libraries training teachers about action explicitly and then motivating teachers can encourage self-directed professional development. Publishing and sharing teachers' researches in a specialized domestic ELT journal motivates teachers to read and research, an interviewee thought. Besides, three fifths of the interviewees believed educational loans for higher studies and financial appreciation for higher degrees holders help teachers manage pursuing higher formal education.

Some interviewees proposed replace the position of the educational supervisor with the position of the "lead instructor" who work in the school and is responsible for his peers' professional development. Decentralizing professional development is thought to be the best alternative. Comparing with the traditional supervisor, the "lead instructor" may be more helpful because the supervisor visits suddenly and rarely and has too many other administrative work. An interviewee proposed having a link between institutional and self-directed reforms through decreasing the teaching load and financially promoting teachers. Although Daloglu (2004) and Sullivan and Glanz (2000) did provide details about decentralizing professional development, they state supervision can be more effective if supervisors work with small number of teachers.

The following are the summary of the implications:

5.3.1. Institutional Professional development

1. Sudden and rare visits of educational supervision do not help teachers improve, yet sufficient and pre-determined ones can be helpful.

2. In-school expert is thought to be more effective than the traditional supervisor.

3. In-service training needs to be derived from careful teachers' needs analyses, and it is more valuable if discusses specific classroom issues related to EFL teaching for young learners in particular.

4. Peer coaching is an on-going friendly activity that should be preceded by pre-observing checklist.

5. Open discussions and constructive criticism is the way of sharing ideas in peer coaching, for peer coaching in not errors detection activity.

6. Rich school libraries promote EFL teachers' professional development.

7. Modern language teaching aids help developing teachers professionally.

8. Decentralizing professional development provides more opportunities for teachers' individual learning.

9. Teachers are more motivated to search and conduct professional development activities when professional development is directly linked to career development.

5.3.2. Self-directed professional development

1. Availability of financial loans help teachers pursue their higher studies.

2. Teachers are willing to work for development, yet a sponsoring body is necessary.

3. A computer and an access to the internet is the shortest way of EFL teachers' self-directed professional development.

4. Administration has a role in self-directed professional development through securing valuable periodicals and appreciating teachers' good work.

5. Explicit action research training is necessary as the first step.

6. Publishing a domestic ELT journal motivates teachers to read and research.

7. Financial or positional promotion for higher degrees holders encourages teachers pursue higher education.

5.3.3. The nature of the work

1. Twenty seven periods a week is an unbearable teaching load for EFL teachers and does not encourage teachers to develop themselves.

2. Three periods of English a week are considered insufficient for primary classes and do not give teachers the needed time to try new teaching methods in classrooms.

3. Fixing the school timing to be only morning shift encourages teachers to think seriously to pursue higher studies.

4. The large number of students in a class hinders teachers' efforts of trying new teaching aids and methods.

5.4. Conclusion

This study identified the professional development obstacles facing primary English language teachers in northern Gaza. In the light of the findings, most participants agreed that the sudden and rare visits of supervisors are the greatest institutional professional development obstacle. There also was an agreement that that

money and financial issues are the main self-directed professional development obstacles. The majority believed the unbearable heavy teaching load, lack of time, overcrowded classes, and absence of promotion are the most important professional development obstacles from the nature of the work. The study revealed there were no statistically significant differences due academic qualification variable, yet there were differences due to gender in favor of males, experience in favor to those who have less experience, and age in favor of those who are younger. Teachers suggested decentralizing professional development programs, appreciating teachers' good work, and associating professional development with career development. They also proposed increasing the number of periods allocated for each class in a week and publishing a domestic journal for sharing teachers' experiences and ideas. The results of the questionnaire were almost similar to the interviewees' responses in all domains. In conclusion, the researcher recommended carrying out further researches on the obstacles facing EFL teachers in one specific professional development activity because this would focus on the characteristics of that activity and thus provide specific guidelines. The researcher also recommended doing evaluation studies for already existing professional development programs.

5.5. Recommendations

In the light of the conclusion, the researcher recommends the followings:

A) Recommendations for EFL teachers:

1. Teachers need to read specialized ELT journals.

2. EFL teachers can get great benefit from the internet recourses.

3. Teachers should set together to share experiences.

4. EFL teachers should utilize action research in professional development.

5. Teachers should use self-appraisal tools such as checklists and journal writing.

B) Recommendations for policy makers:

1. Teachers' good works and higher degrees ought to be financially appreciated.

2. The two-shift school timing should be canceled.

3. Primary EFL teachers should have less teaching load.

4. The number of students in a class should be less.

5. The number of allocated weekly periods for each class should be increased to reach five at least.

C) Recommendations for universities:

1. Professional development should start from teachers training.

2. There should be higher studies programs in flexible time for EFL teachers.

3. There should be specialized teachers training programs in teaching English for young learners.

D) Recommendations for school administrators:

1. Supervision should not be the only way of professional development.

2. Teachers' professional needs should be carefully investigated using a variety of ways such as interviews and questionnaires.

3. In-service training should be specialized in EFL teaching for young learners.

4. Action research should be used in professional development.

5. School administrators should secure specialized journals for teachers to read.

5.6. Recommendations for further studies

In order to extend the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Educational institutions play a crucial role in EFL teachers' professional development. Therefore, elaborated studies on institutional professional development for EFL teachers are needed.

2. In addition, evaluation of already existing EFL teachers professional development programs help discover the weakness points and the effectiveness of these programs.

3. Further research is vital in the areas of EFL professional development program, EFL teachers' needs analysis, the impact of the nature of the educational system on the development of EFL teachers.

4. It is very important to check the effectiveness of each professional development activity separately.

5. More studies are needed in the area of using internet-based programs for EFL teachers' professional development.

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Appendix no. 1 The names of the referees panel

List of Referees

1.	Dr. Sadeq Ferwana	PhD in TEFL, Islamic University of Gaza.
2.	Dr. Deborah Healey	PhD in TEFL, University of Oregon, USA.
3.	Mr. Islam Abu Sharbien	PhD in TESOL candidate, University, Malaysia.
4.	Mr. Hassan Ramadan	English language teacher, UNRWA.
5.	Mrs. Maha Barzaq	English teaching expert and researcher, Al-Qattan Center for Educational Research.
6.	Dr. Mohammad Abu Mallouh	PhD in TESOL and the manager of Al-Qattan Center for Educational Research.
7.	Mr. Alla' Alodieny	English language teacher, UNRWA.
8.	Mr. Mahmmod Al-Najjar	English language teacher, UNRWA.
9.	Mr. Basil Madi	School assistant, UNRWA.
10.	Mr. Mohammed Zaqqot	School principal, UNRWA.

The Islamic University-Gaza

Postgraduate Studies

Faculty of Education

Department of Curriculum and Teaching Methods

Professional Development Obstacles

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the professional development obstacles that primary English teachers face. The study is titled:

Professional Development Obstacles Facing Primary English Language Teachers in Northern Gaza

The study, then, aims to investigate primary English language teachers' professional development obstacles from their point of view.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. In part one; some personal information is required while the second part investigates the professional development obstacles.

You may encounter some educational technical terms, so a glossary of theses terms is attached at the end of the questionnaire.

Your responses are to be used for research purposes, and they are confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Researcher,

Ahmed Akram Herzallah

ahmed_6_66@hotmail.com , 0599606010

Part one:

Please choose the appropriate option:

1. Gender:	a) Male	b) Female	
2. Academic qualification:	a) Diploma	b) B.A	c) M.A or higher
3. Working experience:	a) 1-2 years	b) 3-5 years	c) 6-15 years	d) Above 15
4. Age:	a) Less than 25	b) 25-35	c) 35-45	d) Above 45

Part two:

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
	A. Institutional Professional Development Obstacles					
1.	Supervisors' visits are rare.					
2.	Some supervisors hunt teachers' errors.					
3.	Some supervisors disrespect teachers' views.					
4.	Some supervisors lack experience in primary English teaching.					
5.	Supervisors often visit suddenly.					
6.	Supervision lacks follow-up plan.					
7.	Colleagues mock most events related to development.					
8.	Teachers are uninterested in peer coaching 1.					
9.	Colleagues detect errors during peer coaching.					
10.	Peer coaching is one-shot visit rather than ongoing process.					
11.	Professional conversations with colleagues are limited.					
12.	Teachers prefer to keep their classroom experiences private.					
13.	Teachers, administrators, and counselors work individually.					
14.	In-service training is unspecialized in primary English teaching.					
15.	In-service training treats general and broad teaching issues.					
16.	Lecturing is the main instructional method during training.					
17.	In-service training lacks strategic plan2.					
18.	Some trainers are unqualified to train teachers.					
19.	Training ignores teachers' individual teaching needs.					
20.	In-service training lacks follow-up activities during the year.					
21.	Training rarely adopts experimental action research3 as a training method.					
22.	School administration considers English less important than					

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
	other disciplines.					
23.	Teachers can hardly get financial aid to pursue their higher education.					
24.	Discussions with administration are formal and rough.					
25.	School administration efforts to encourage action research are limited.					
26.	School administration has no interest to secure up to date ELT4 journals.					
27.	Administration has never conducted teachers' professional needs analysis.					
28.	Teachers' professional development efforts are unrewarded.					
39.	It is difficult to find appropriate technological teaching aids in the school.					
30.	Professional development is not a career development5 tool.					
	B. Self-Directed Professional Development Obstacles					
1.	Primary English teachers feel bored with their job.					
2.	Some teachers always feel frustrated with most students.					
3.	Some teachers think professional development is unimportant.					
4.	Teachers seldom share experiences with others.					
5.	Some teachers have poor computer skills.					
6.	Some teachers have limited internet access.					
7.	Some teachers have poor relations with other school workers.					
8.	Traveling to attend professional conferences is difficult.					
9.	Traveling to attend professional conferences is costly.					
10.	Some teachers have other jobs/interests.					
11.	Some teachers cannot afford pursuing postgraduate studies.					

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
12.	Teachers' exchange6 opportunities are limited.					
13.	Teachers' exchange opportunities are very expensive.					
14.	Teachers occasionally write daily notes about their teaching experience.					
15.	Teachers lack the researching skills needed for conducting action research.					
16.	Teachers feel conducting self-assessment tools boring.					
17.	Some teachers have negative attitudes towards lifelong learning.					
18.	Some teachers can hardly determine when to ask for help or consult specialists.					
19.	Some teachers have poor communications with students' parents.					
20.	Teachers lack the managerial skills needed for conducting long-term professional development activities.					
	C. Professional Development Obstacles from the Nature of the Work					
1.	English teachers are assigned to teach other disciplines to complete their load.					
2.	Teaching young learners is exhausting.					
3.	There are so many tasks given to English teachers.					
4.	Primary English teaching conferences in Gaza are rare.					
5.	The working environment inside the school is uncomfortable.					
6.	Primary teachers get heavier teaching load.					
7.	The community undervalues teaching elementary learners.					
8.	Primary English teaching journals are difficult to find.					
9.	The two-shift school timing stands as an obstacle towards completing postgraduate studies.					
10.	The heavy teaching load makes teachers very busy during the working day.					

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
11.	The scholastic year is too short to cover the assigned curricula.					
12.	The working day is too short to conduct professional development activities.					
13.	Primary classes are more crowded than preparatory ones.					
14.	Leaving the school to attend courses or workshops is difficult.					
15.	Teaching is a type of work that rapidly becomes routine.					

Glossary of technical terms available in the questionnaire:

1. **Peer coaching:** It is professional development strategy when teachers attend and consult one another to share teaching experience through observing classrooms.

2. **Strategic plan:** When training programs are derived form a strategic plan, their topics are well connected to each other, and they seek long-term goals.

3. **Action research:** It is an experimental activity looking for solutions to everyday, real problems teachers face in classrooms.

4. **ELT:** English Language Teaching.

5. **Career development:** It is the progress on the job ladder either by gaining extra financial steps or occupying a more influential position.

6. **Teacher exchange:** It is a professional learning opportunity for teachers to develop their teaching skills by teaching in another school for a limited period. Teacher exchange programs can be local or international.

Appendix no. 3 The final interview

Interview questions for primary English language teachers:

Section one:

Age: ………….….

Gender: …………..…..

Qualification: …………..….

Number of working experience years: ………..……

Section two:

A. Institutional Professional Development Obstacles

1. Educational Supervision.

- **How many times did the supervisor visit you in school during the scholastic year?**
- **How many times did the supervisor visit you in class during the scholastic year?**
- **What are the issues/things the supervisor focus on when he/she visits you?**
- **Do you think the supervisor helps you improve your teaching performance? How? Or Why?**
- **How do you evaluate the role of the educational supervision as an essential professional development way?**
- **What do you suggest to improve educational supervision to be an effective professional development activity?**

2.In-service Training

- **How many in-service training courses have you attended?**
- **What are their topics?**
- **How long did each one last?**
- **How do you evaluate the training topics?**
- **How do you evaluate the trainers?**
- **How do you evaluate the training strategy as an essential professional development way?**

- **What do you suggest to improve in-service training to be an effective professional development activity?**

3.Peer Coaching

- **How many times have your colleagues attended a lesson you taught during this scholastic year?**
- **How many times have you attended a lesson for one of your colleagues?**
- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice peer coaching?**
- **How do you evaluate peer coaching strategy as an essential professional development way?**
- **What do you suggest to improve peer-coaching to be an effective professional development activity?**

2. School Administration

- **Have you ever been asked about your professional needs?**
- **How many times have the school administration led an action research to improve English language teaching?**
- **What are the technological teaching aids available in the school?**
- **How do you evaluate the role of the school administration in promoting professional development?**
- **What do you suggest to improve the role of the school administration to be active player in English teachers' professional development?**

B. Self-directed Professional Development Obstacles

1.Self-appraisal

- **How many times do you assess your teaching performance?**
- **How do you assess your performance?**
- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice self-assessment tools?**
- **What do you suggest to improve self-evaluation to be an effective professional development activity?**

2.Reading and writing

- **How often do you read books and articles during your career?**
- **Why do you think some teachers do not read?**
- **How often do you write action researches?**
- **Why do you think some teachers do not write action researches?**
- **What do you suggest to improve action research to be an effective professional development activity?**

3.Pursuing Formal Education

- **Would you like to purse your formal education?**
- **What prevent you?**
- **What do you suggest to help teachers purse their formal education as an effective professional development activity?**

C. Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work:

- **How could the nature of the teaching profession be an obstacle towards primary EFL teachers' professional development?**

D. Suggestions:

- **What do you suggest to improve primary English language teachers' professional development?**

Appendix no. 4 The Authorization Letter Addressed to UNWRA

Appendix no. 5 Interviewees' responses

Participant (1)

Section one:

Age: 41

Gender: M

Qualification: B.A

Number of working experience years: 12

Section two:

B. Institutional Professional Development Obstacles
  1. Educational Supervision.
    - **How many times did the supervisor visit you in school during the scholastic year?**
       Two school visits.

    - **How many times did the supervisor visit you in class during the scholastic year?**
       One class visit.

    - **What are the issues/things the supervisor focus on when he/she visits you?**
    He usually focuses on teaching methodologies in general. He has certain suggestions he always repeats such as the questioning way and the vocabulary presenting techniques. He wants me to use more contexts such as pictures and explanatory sorties when presenting a new word. In addition, he comments on my way of pronouncing words.

    - **Do you think the supervisor helps you improve your teaching performance? How? Or Why?**
    In fact, I only see the supervisor as an inspector. I also believe supervisors judge in advance, and I do think they don't respect teachers. However, my supervisor this year has help me when he suggested using a poster when writing evaluation tasks. I write the task once and use the poster in every class. That's more comfortable. I don't remember he helped me in language matters or even commented on linguistic issues nor he spoke about the special features o young learners.

- **How do you evaluate the role of the educational supervision as an essential professional development way?**

I think educational supervision in my case is a way of teachers' evaluation rather than a way of teachers' professional development. Although supervision is sometimes helpful especially for newly appointed teachers, it is more authoritative than supporting in my case. I feel my supervisor is indifferent, and he only wants to record a visit.

- **What do you suggest to improve educational supervision to be an effective professional development activity?**

First of all, there should be an appointment. Supervisors visit suddenly, and that is impolite and increases teachers anxiety. I suggest supervisors study teachers' needs through interviews then watching them in classes.

2. In-service Training
- **How many in-service training courses have you attended?**
Two training courses.

- **What are their topics?**
One course was on teaching vocabulary, and one about teaching over-aged students.

- **How long did each one last?**
Teaching vocabulary – one month

Teaching over-aged students – two semesters (a session a week)

- **How do you evaluate the training topics?**
I think they cover important topics for some teachers.

- **How do you evaluate the trainers?**
Here is the problem. Trainers are either supervisors or psychological experts. None is specialized in teaching English to primary learners, and none also has experienced teaching in our over-aged classes. They all speak theoretically. In general, I can say trainers are inexperienced and unqualified to train teachers of English. All trainers I have met till now only speak about the problem and never provide practical solutions. I hate attending courses because I feel I waste my time.

- **How do you evaluate the training strategy as an essential professional development way?**
Simply ineffective. I am sure all teachers prefer reading the course content rather than attending. I get benefit from my peers' experiences more than all training courses. In many cases, I feel I don't need to know more about a certain topic and I need help in other fields.

- **What do you suggest to improve in-service training to be an effective professional development activity?**

I suggest training should be based on a strategy that meets teachers individual learning needs. I also suggest the training should be related to the curriculum.

3. Peer Coaching
- **How many times have your colleagues attended a lesson you taught during this scholastic year?**

They didn't.

- **How many times have you attended a lesson for one of your colleagues?**

Once.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice peer coaching?**

I personally don't like teachers come to my class. Colleagues focus on errors and leave all good things. Each teacher thinks he knows more and he comes to evaluate. That is ridiculous.

- **How do you evaluate peer coaching strategy as an essential professional development way?**

I don't think peer coaching is a professional development activity. Each teacher can feel his problems alone and look for solutions. Teachers don't need to watch other teachers. In my school, we just have fun and teachers show off when they attend to other teachers.

- **What do you suggest to improve peer-coaching to be an effective professional development activity?**

I suggest having pre observing criteria. I mean we don't need to observe everything. One skill is enough to be observed. Teachers may attend another teacher's class to watch how he maintains correct pronunciation among young learners. All other class aspects shouldn't be highlighted. I suggest new teachers attend for old ones not vise versa. Peer coaching should be voluntary not obligatory.

4. School Administration
- **Have you ever been asked about your professional needs?**

Yes. I remember I was asked about my professional needs two years ago. It was the only time. The principal at that time wanted to survey needs and then conduct a professional development strategy. He then managed a session about classroom management. However, that was general and not English oriented or primary education oriented.

- **How many times have the school administration led an action research to improve English language teaching?**

Based on my knowledge, my school administration has never conducted an action research or even participated in an action research to find solution faced by English teachers.

- **What are the technological teaching aids available in the school?**

We have cassette recorder, LCD, and posters, but the cassettes are not available. A computer table with LCD is also available, but there are no curtains in classrooms. Therefore, I cannot use the LCD. Then, the school is very noisy because the classes are next to and opposite each others. In addition, some classes don't have windows and the sounds of cars, motorbikes outside can be clearly heard and the recorder voice is difficult to be heard then.

- **How do you evaluate the role of the school administration in promoting professional development?**

Weak. Very unsatisfying. I don't think they care about teachers' professional development for English teachers. I think they only do care about Arabic and Maths teachers. More importantly, my school principal is very strict and doesn't' allow any teacher to go out of the school to attend lectures, as an example. In addition, my school library is very poor. I can't find any book related to English teaching. There is no special computer for teachers to use and look for development. I am not satisfied.

- **What do you suggest to improve the role of the school administration to be active player in English teachers' professional development?**

I suggest school libraries be enriched. Teachers of English should have a variety of reading resources such as books, theses, ELT journals, action researches and etc.

B. Self-directed Professional Development Obstacles

1. Self-appraisal

- **How many times do you assess your teaching performance?**

Every day, or lets' say every class.

- **How do you assess your performance?**

When I feel that a class was great, I try to think why to repeat my success. And when I feel a class was a hell, I try to think why to avoid another hell.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice self-assessment tools?**

Because they are careless and it doesn't matter for them.

- **What do you suggest to improve self-evaluation to be an effective professional development activity?**

Actually, I do believe routine is important. A teacher may create a kind of routine to ask himself about what was good or bad about my teaching.

2. Reading and writing

- **How often do you read books and articles during your career?**

Rarely in fact. I can say I read a paper a year.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not read?**

There is no time and no reason to read. Teachers don't read because they don't know what to read, and because good books are not available.

- **How often do you write action researches?**

I have never thought of writing a paper.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not write action researches?**

Again there is no time and no reason to write.

- **What do you suggest to improve action research to be an effective professional development activity?**

School libraries should be enriched. Administration should bring valuable books. ELT books.

3.Pursuing Formal Education

- **Would you like to purse your formal education?**

No.

- **What prevent you?**

Because I will not get higher position or more money when having a master degree.

- **What do you suggest to help teachers purse their formal education as an effective professional development activity?**

There should be financial aids for ambitious teachers, and higher degrees should be appreciated financially.

C. Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work:

- **How could the nature of the teaching profession be an obstacle towards primary EFL teachers' professional development?**

In fact, the nature of teaching profession in general and the nature of primary EFL teaching both can prevent teachers from

thinking about professional development. Teaching is a habitual work everyday I repeat the same process and too many time I feel bored. And teachers are assigned too many administrative work related to students' attendance and others. EFL teachers, more particularly, are usually given other disciplines to teach such as drawing and physical education to complete their already heavy loads.

D. Suggestions:

- **What do you suggest to improve primary English language teachers' professional development?**

This, in fact, needs to be done by special persons who are specialized in teachers' professional development. These persons should be responsible for certain specific teachers and know everything about those teachers. I mean one expert to be responsible for professionally develop five or seven teachers only. That expert should work with each teacher individually in order to help that teacher over come the problems he faces in class. If possible, also, the expert follow the experimental approach. In other words, the needs of each teacher should be specified and identified in advance through different methods, and then each need is studied carefully and a possible solution is then suggested and tried. In that way, EFL teacher can be developed.

Participant (2)

Section one:

Age: 25

Gender: F

Qualification: B.A

Number of working experience years: 1

Section two:

C. Institutional Professional Development Obstacles
   1. <u>Educational Supervision.</u>
      - **How many times did the supervisor visit you in school during the scholastic year?**

      Once.

      - **How many times did the supervisor visit you in class during the scholastic year?**

      Once.

      - **What are the issues/things the supervisor focus on when he/she visits you?**

      He didn't focus on certain points but commented in everything in general. He told me to write neatly on the board, to distribute questions fairly to students, to provide special attention and extra care to students who have language learning difficulties, and to use more teaching aids.

      - **Do you think the supervisor helps you improve your teaching performance? How? Or Why?**

      Frankly speaking, no. He comes suddenly and I my only goal at that time is to show him something special and unique because he usually visits a teacher once or twice during a year. Then, his one or two visits are not enough to help me improve my teaching.

      - **How do you evaluate the role of the educational supervision as an essential professional development way?**

      My supervisor is very gentile and kind as a person, but I don't think he is practicing supervisor in the right way. I think educational supervision in its current view in useless. It could neither be a way of improving teachers nor evaluating them.

      - **What do you suggest to improve educational supervision to be an effective professional development activity?**

      Teachers should be notified about the supervision criteria before the visit. I mean teachers should know what exactly the supervisor what to observe. I also suggest having in-school

specialized supervisor who helps teachers in the daily teaching problems they face. The school principal is never a good alternative because he is not an English language teaching specialist. We need someone who is an EFL expert inside the school to watch and comment on our teaching everyday.

2.In-service Training

- **How many in-service training courses have you attended?**
Two during my whole career.

- **What are their topics?**
One for the new teachers and the second for over-aged learners.

- **How long did each one last?**
Both took one year.

- **How do you evaluate the training topics?**
Not very helpful. I wanted something about teaching vocabs for children. But they were interesting.

- **How do you evaluate the trainers?**
They are qualified I think, but they use traditional lecturing methods.

- **How do you evaluate the training strategy as an essential professional development way?**
I don't know if they follow a strategy because the training seems to be an isolated activity. I don't know but I didn't get something special from the courses.

- **What do you suggest to improve in-service training to be an effective professional development activity?**
I suggest decentralizing training. I mean training shouldn't be for the whole area because not all teachers suffer fro the same problems and not all teaching areas have the same problems. For example, I teach in Bait Hanoun, I have reached to a conclusion that all learners in Bait Hanoun suffer fro m language learning difficulties as a serious wide-spread problem. I wish I could attend a course about how to examine the language learning difficulties and then how treat them if possible.

3.Peer Coaching

- **How many times have your colleagues attended a lesson you taught during this scholastic year?**
Never.

- **How many times have you attended a lesson for one of your colleagues?**
Never.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice peer coaching?**

I don't know, but I personally wish to attend to other experienced teachers.

- **How do you evaluate peer coaching strategy as an essential professional development way?**

I am a new teacher and I have never attended for any teacher and no one has ever attended my classes. However, I am really in need to attend to experienced teachers. I really want to know how do they manage their classes and what type of homework they give to their students.

- **What do you suggest to improve peer-coaching to be an effective professional development activity?**

Teachers should get less classes to teach in a weak, so that they can have time to think about development a attending lessons for others or preparing a lesson for other teachers to attend.

4.School Administration

- **Have you ever been asked about your professional needs?**
Never.

- **How many times have the school administration led an action research to improve English language teaching?**
Never.

- **What are the technological teaching aids available in the school?**
A cassette recorder, posters, computers.but we don't have the cassette or educational CDs.

- **How do you evaluate the role of the school administration in promoting professional development?**
Unsuccessful. I personally can feel that because I am a new teacher and the administration did nothing to let me know at least the school system. Every time they require me to do something, the lesson planning, but I still face difficulty doing this.

- **What do you suggest to improve the role of the school administration to be active player in English teachers' professional development?**
School administration should consult experts about EFL teachers professional development because most school principals and assistants are not specialized in EFL teaching and lack the experience of developing EFL teachers. I also suggest administration increase the number of English periods for each class because three lessons a week is really insufficient.

B. Self-directed Professional Development Obstacles

1.Self-appraisal

- **How many times do you assess your teaching performance?**

Never.

- **How do you assess your performance? --**
- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice self-assessment tools?**

I do not have time to think of my teaching practice and I do not know how to evaluate myself.

- **What do you suggest to improve self-evaluation to be an effective professional development activity?**

I think one first of all should know what is self-evaluation and how one can do this.

2.Reading and writing

- **How often do you read books and articles during your career?**

I usually read books especially my university books to remember what I forgot about something.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not read?**

They believe they are experienced and there is no need for reading. Then, there are no good books or articles in the school. If the school brought good books, I would read for sure.

- **How often do you write action researches?**

Never.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not write action researches?**

Because doing researchers is difficult.

- **What do you suggest to improve action research to be an effective professional development activity?**

Teachers should be trained about writing action researches, then there must be a motive to push teachers.

3.Pursuing Formal Education

- **Would you like to purse your formal education?**

Yes of course.

- **What prevent you?**

University will take most of my money and time. Then it is not easy to manage to my university time with my school time especially when working afternoon shift.

- **What do you suggest to help teachers purse their formal education as an effective professional development activity?**

Providing financial loans for teachers who indents to study and facilitating teachers time in the working day.

C. Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work:
- **How could the nature of the teaching profession be an obstacle towards primary EFL teachers' professional development?**

Teaching in general is a repetitive work and that is boring and teaching English to elementary boys in particular is very very tiring because the classes are very crowded and students are hyperactive . I can't think of any professional development activities during the work day because I am always busy, and I can't do that at home because I leave the school unable to anything.

D. Suggestions:
- **What do you suggest to improve primary English language teachers' professional development?**

It is the job of the school administration to develop teachers. Teachers are busy, and they usually think of having a rest. But the administration should set strategic plans to guarantee continuous professional development.

Participant (3)

Section one:

Age: 52

Gender: F

Qualification: Diploma

Number of working experience years: 25

Section two:

A. Institutional Professional Development Obstacles

    1.Educational Supervision.

-   **How many times did the supervisor visit you in school during the scholastic year?**
Three times.

-   **How many times did the supervisor visit you in class during the scholastic year?**
Once.

-   **What are the issues/things the supervisor focus on when he/she visits you?**
Constructing good objectives, correction f books and notes, students marks in the mid exam, and application of a revision material.

-   **Do you think the supervisor helps you improve your teaching performance? How? Or Why?**
I think yes. He guides me to a better teaching methods.

-   **How do you evaluate the role of the educational supervision as an essential professional development way?**
I think it plays an important role in developing teachers. However, my supervisor lacks the use of technology in teaching.

-   **What do you suggest to improve educational supervision to be an effective professional development activity?**
    1. Improve the contact between supervisors and teachers.
    2. Give teachers more curriculum plans and papers.

    2. In-service Training

-   **How many in-service training courses have you attended?**
One course.

-   **What are their topics?**
Over-aged students.

- **How long did each one last?**
A year.

- **How do you evaluate the training topics?**
Not very helpful. I already know everything covered.

- **How do you evaluate the trainers?**
They are qualified. I think they are reliable to train teachers.

- **How do you evaluate the training strategy as an essential professional development way?**
I think training is good for teachers who really need it, but I didn't feel I got any thing new.

- **What do you suggest to improve in-service training to be an effective professional development activity?**
I suggest teachers should be interviewed and asked about their needs. A course will be very beneficial if the teacher needs it.

3. Peer Coaching
- **How many times have your colleagues attended a lesson you taught during this scholastic year?**
Never.

- **How many times have you attended a lesson for one of your colleagues?**
Three times.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice peer coaching?**
Some teachers don't practice peer coaching because they are jealous of them, they don't have enough time, or they don't think peer coaching is important.

- **How do you evaluate peer coaching strategy as an essential professional development way?**
Helpful and comfortable.

- **What do you suggest to improve peer-coaching to be an effective professional development activity?**
This activity should be guided by the headmaster, but he shouldn't be part of it. I mean he shouldn't attend the lesson with the teachers in order to keep it friendly activity rather than formal.

4. School Administration
- **Have you ever been asked about your professional needs?**
Yes, I have.

- **How many times have the school administration led an action research to improve English language teaching?**

Never.

- **What are the technological teaching aids available in the school?**

Computer lab, OHP, cassette player, cards, books' posters.

- **How do you evaluate the role of the school administration in promoting professional development?**

Below average. I mean they are supposed to exert much effort to improve EFL teachers. Teachers' good work is not appreciated, and I can feel no support from the administration.

- **What do you suggest to improve the role of the school administration to be active player in English teachers' professional development?**

I suggest the school secure more types of teaching aids. And I also suggest administration praise teachers who work hard to feel that our work is not nonsense.

B. **Self-directed Professional Development Obstacles**
   1.Self-appraisal
- **How many times do you assess your teaching performance?**

Two times during this year.

- **How do you assess your performance?**

Once through a checklist I got form the internet. The second time through an analysis I did for my students marks in the mid exams.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice self-assessment tools?**

They don't believe in self evaluation.

- **What do you suggest to improve self-evaluation to be an effective professional development activity?**

I suggest the school administration lead a workshop about the importance of self evaluation and the different activities of self evaluation.

   2.Reading and writing
- **How often do you read books and articles during your career?**

Always.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not read?**

They don't like reading or they might have no enough time.

- **How often do you write action researches?**

I have never.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not write action researches?**

They don't know what action research is and what the importance of action research is.

- **What do you suggest to improve action research to be an effective professional development activity?**

Administration should have a role. Teachers who conduct action researches, for example, should upgraded. All teachers, then, will be excellent researchers.

3.Pursuing Formal Education
- **Would you like to purse your formal education?**

No.

- **What prevent you?**

I think I get enough experience and I have no time to think formal education.

- **What do you suggest to help teachers purse their formal education as an effective professional development activity?**

I suggest teachers think seriously about formal education at earlier stages of their age.

C. **Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work:**
- **How could the nature of the teaching profession be an obstacle towards primary EFL teachers' professional development?**

The problem I believe is a matter of time and money. Time is very limited because the year, the period, and the number of periods allocated are not enough to finish the long book and to cover the assigned grammar and vocabulary. Also teacher do not have any extra time because of their heavy loads 27 periods a week. Secondly, whatever a teacher do, there is not any promotion. This is I think the biggest catastrophe that the hardworking teacher is equally dealt with as the careless one.

D. **Suggestions:**
- **What do you suggest to improve primary English language teachers' professional development?**

I suggest increasing the number of assigned periods for each class so that a teacher may have some time to cover the book and decreasing the total number of periods allocated for each teacher to be for example 24. Teacher need to be financially promoted for their hard work and distinguished work. I also suggest teachers use the internet to read and find information because I can see my sons get a lot of valuable information from the internet.

Participant (4)

Section one:

Age: 29

Gender: M

Qualification: M.A

Number of working experience years: 6

Section two:

A. Institutional Professional Development Obstacles

   1.   Educational Supervision.

   - **How many times did the supervisor visit you in school during the scholastic year?**
   Twice.

   - **How many times did the supervisor visit you in class during the scholastic year?**
   Twice.

   - **What are the issues/things the supervisor focus on when he/she visits you?**
   The use of Arabic and English and which is preferred.

   - **Do you think the supervisor helps you improve your teaching performance? How? Or Why?**
   Never. He has never added something new for me. I think he is doing routine work.

   - **How do you evaluate the role of the educational supervision as an essential professional development way?**
   Ineffective. Teachers hate to see the supervisor because he mocks teachers and doesn't respect teachers. He thinks all teachers are lazy and he looks inferiority to teachers.

   - **What do you suggest to improve educational supervision to be an effective professional development activity?**
   All supervisors should be changed to more serous and dedicated ones.

   2.In-service Training

   - **How many in-service training courses have you attended?**
   None in this year. Two the past three years.

   - **What are their topics?**
   One was about teaching pronunciation and the other one was about classroom management.

- **How long did each one last?**

The pronunciation course was one long day. The classroom management one was for seven weeks, a session per week.

- **How do you evaluate the training topics?**

I think training topics are somehow appropriate because all teachers suffer from classroom management problems. The problem is that they are addressed to all teachers regardless subject matter and students age. I wish at that time training to be specifically about classroom management for young English learners. I suffer from the young boys. They are hyperactive and weak in English.

- **How do you evaluate the trainers?**

Qualified in their subject matter but not in training. They teach theories. They think they are university professors. Training should involve practical that is based on theoretical framework.

- **How do you evaluate the training strategy as an essential professional development way?**

I think training is a good development way because teachers sometimes need training in some areas such as teaching reading through drama and new teaching trends that one cannot master unless involve in training.

- **What do you suggest to improve in-service training to be an effective professional development activity?**

Training is very important way of teachers professional development. I suggest training to be online at a specific time. And teachers interact with assignments, comments, etc. That would be very helpful. And then teachers can apply new methods in their actual classrooms.

3.Peer Coaching

- **How many times have your colleagues attended a lesson you taught during this scholastic year?**

Once.

- **How many times have you attended a lesson for one of your colleagues?**

Three times.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice peer coaching?**

They are, I think, interested in peer coaching, but they might be afraid of some teachers who mock everything and then don't accept ant one to attend for them.

- **How do you evaluate peer coaching strategy as an essential professional development way?**

I think peer coaching is a healthy activity and encourage teachers to practice it not only within the same subject matter teachers, but also among all teachers inside the school. It helps teachers see a wide variety of teaching practices.

- **What do you suggest to improve peer-coaching to be an effective professional development activity?**

Peer coaching should be friendly rather than formal activity because it will be like educational supervision then. Teachers should praise good teaching and constructively criticize bad teaching. There shouldn't be unacceptable mocking. Teachers should respect all teachers' views. We should never underestimate any teacher because each teacher is excellent in a certain area and has something bright.

4.School Administration

- **Have you ever been asked about your professional needs?**
Yes, at the beginning of the year.

- **How many times have the school administration led an action research to improve English language teaching?**
Never. I think this is out of their concern.

- **What are the technological teaching aids available in the school?**
Everything. There are computers, posters, LCDs, markers, and others.

- **How do you evaluate the role of the school administration in promoting professional development?**
I think they work hard, very hard indeed. But they work according to their views. They depend on supervision as the main tool of professional development. They also threat teachers using the annual evaluation to push teachers to improve teaching. They also focus on students' success rates as teachers' failure rates. They use loud voices and too much effort to proof how bad teachers are and how hard they work to maintain teaching quality. I can say my school administration is doing the wrong thing to improve teachers. And they pay extra attention to Arabic and Maths and don't really care about English language. The good professional development tools are neglected such as action researches. They have never conducted action researches to find possible solutions for problems EFL teachers face inside classes

- **What do you suggest to improve the role of the school administration to be active player in English teachers' professional development?**

School administration in the real key factor in teachers' professional development. They have the responsibility of developing teachers and they should do all what they can do to develop teachers. If they cannot, they should consult experts.

B. Self-directed Professional Development Obstacles

1. Self-appraisal

- **How many times do you assess your teaching performance?**

Rarely in fact.

- **How do you assess your performance?**

I used to use a checklist of self-assessment I took from a book.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice self-assessment tools?**

They think that is crazy and there is no need for self-assessment.

- **What do you suggest to improve self-evaluation to be an effective professional development activity?**

I suggest teachers read about self-assessment tools and decide what suit them.

2. Reading and writing
- **How often do you read books and articles during your career?**

Too many.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not read?**

Reading needs concentration and the working day is too busy. Besides, we are not costumed to read.

- **How often do you write action researches?**

In fact, yes, but not a formal research. I think of different methods and I try them.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not write action researches?**

There is no motivation. And it is a long complex process.

- **What do you suggest to improve action research to be an effective professional development activity?**

That is very easy. Teachers action researches need to be published, shared, praised, and appreciated.

3. Pursuing Formal Education
- **Would you like to purse your formal education?**
Yes.

- **What prevent you?**
Time, money, and that degree doesn't matter in UNRWA. I suffered a lot when I did my master. I faced difficulties leaving the school frequently to attend lectures and do my experiment.

- **What do you suggest to help teachers purse their formal education as an effective professional development activity?**
I think the UNRWA should help teachers get financial assistance to pursue their study. I also suggest having one fixed working period (morning). This will help me and other teachers manage their time and thus be able to attend university lectures at different times.

C. Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work:
- **How could the nature of the teaching profession be an obstacle towards primary EFL teachers' professional development?**
All persons around you think teaching children is the job of bad teachers, and they teach in fifth graders, for example, because they cannot teacher teenagers. This frustrates me. The system of the career ladder also frustrates me. I mean teachers do not get extra grades for the master or doctorate degrees. I have worked hard to get a master degree, but my position did not change. EFL teachers professional development is not a strategic goal for the institution, for they have their own agenda. UNRWA nowadays does focus on other subjects like Human Rights.

D. Suggestions:
- **What do you suggest to improve primary English language teachers' professional development?**
I suggest teachers work collaboratively. Cooperation between colleagues in the same school is in my opinion the source of professional development because their relationship is friendly not authoritative. They can set together once a week to discuss the classroom problems they face with English, with students, with classroom management, and even with the curriculum. They also can list the most common classroom they face, and think of a possible solution. Then, the possible solution is tried and documented in an action research. This in fact can be more effective if led by an expert teacher who the most experienced and the most qualified and who familiar with researching and professional needs surveys. That leader teacher should have less

teaching load. A half at least, for he needs time to think, manage, and conduct professional development activities. I think this is the best alternative. The supervisor comes once or twice a year and can't, therefore, manage, long-term professional development program. In addition, he doesn't practice teaching in that particular school, and thus can't build attitudes on teachers and can't understand some of their reactions. The school principal is no specialized in English language teaching. Even if he was an EFL teacher, the principal has enough administrative work to do during all the working day starting from the morning assembly to the leaving bell. The teacher who is responsible for his colleagues development should have all the needed facilities such as a computer, a printer, and an access to the internet.

Participant (5)

Section one:

Age: 27

Gender: F

Qualification: B.A

Number of working experience years: 3

Section two:

A. Institutional Professional Development Obstacles
  1. Educational Supervision.
  - **How many times did the supervisor visit you in school during the scholastic year?**
  Once.

  - **How many times did the supervisor visit you in class during the scholastic year?**
  Once.

  - **What are the issues/things the supervisor focus on when he/she visits you?**
  He focused on lesson planning and on the way I deal with students errors. He emphasized the use of correct behavioral objectives. He didn't like the over correction. He said overcorrection discourage students. I think he is right.

  - **Do you think the supervisor helps you improve your teaching performance? How? Or Why?**
  Yes. I think yes. I was doing things wrongly. He helped me a lot in regard of lesson planning. In, fact, I wanted somebody to observe me and direct me. However, I didn't like his sudden visit. I wasn't ready at that time, and I felt confused and tensed.

  - **How do you evaluate the role of the educational supervision as an essential professional development way?**
  It is a learning and healthy activity I think. I feel my supervisor helps me develop my teaching.

  - **What do you suggest to improve educational supervision to be an effective professional development activity?**
  I think educational supervision shouldn't be sudden. I really hate when I feel myself always under the monitoring. Every time I see a UN car inside the school, I ask whether it is the English supervisor. Teachers should be notified in advance especially new teachers.

2.In-service Training

- **How many in-service training courses have you attended?**

None in this year.

- **What are their topics?**   --
- **How long did each one last?** --
- **How do you evaluate the training topics?**

In general, I don't usually feel interested.

- **How do you evaluate the trainers?**

In general too, I think we usually see the same faces and listen to the same topics and that is boring.

- **How do you evaluate the training strategy as an essential professional development way?**

I don't think I get benefit from training. I don't feel training helps me develop me teaching.

- **What do you suggest to improve in-service training to be an effective professional development activity?**

First of all, the development department should conduct a survey to investigate teachers' needs. Then, they should design a package of training courses led by experts and specialized educationalists. I hope to attend a course that is purely specialized in young EFL learners.

3.Peer Coaching

- **How many times have your colleagues attended a lesson you taught during this scholastic year?**

Two times.

- **How many times have you attended a lesson for one of your colleagues?**

Two times.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice peer coaching?**

Because they don't like criticizing comments or they don't want others to see the way of teaching she uses.

- **How do you evaluate peer coaching strategy as an essential professional development way?**

It is very useful. It helps teachers learn from each others.

- **What do you suggest to improve peer-coaching to be an effective professional development activity?**

I think there should be an annual schedule for peer coaching. Each teacher should be notified before the day of the attendance so that she will be ready. Teachers who are always initiative should be praised to encourage lazy teachers.

4.School Administration
- **Have you ever been asked about your professional needs?**
Yes. Every year, at the beginning the year, they distribute a paper like a questionnaire to survey the teachers' professional needs.

- **How many times have the school administration led an action research to improve English language teaching?**
I don't know, but I don't think so.

- **What are the technological teaching aids available in the school?**
LCD, projector, computers, posters, and colored chalks.

- **How do you evaluate the role of the school administration in promoting professional development?**
Very poor and needs to be improved. At least, the administration should buy some good books and ELT journals. The library is extremely poor and I can't find any ELT specialized book.

- **What do you suggest to improve the role of the school administration to be active player in English teachers' professional development?**
Administration should follow up the peer coaching process. It should bring modern teaching aids and technologies such as the LCD.

B. Self-directed Professional Development Obstacles
1.Self-appraisal
- **How many times do you assess your teaching performance?**
I do this every day.

- **How do you assess your performance?**
Every day, I say either the day was good or bad and I think why.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not practice self-assessment tools?**
They are indifferent.

- **What do you suggest to improve self-evaluation to be an effective professional development activity?**
I suggest the administration provides ready made self-assessment formats for teachers.

2.Reading and writing
- **How often do you read books and articles during your career?**
In fact, I read sometimes.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not read?**

May be they are busy and don't have enough time. Anyway, reading is a culture and we do not have the culture of reading.

- **How often do you write action researches?**

I have once participated in an action research done by Al Qattan center for educational research.

- **Why do you think some teachers do not write action researches?**

They do not know what action research is, or they may not be good at computer and computer skills.

- **What do you suggest to improve action research to be an effective professional development activity?**

I suggest, first of all, the school administration held a session about the action research. Then, teachers may start doing an action research together.

3.Pursuing Formal Education
- **Would you like to purse your formal education?**

Sure.

- **What prevent you?**

Time. I don't have time to attend lectures and I work afternoon shift. I also have two babies and my husband comes late from his job. I wish I could.

- **What do you suggest to help teachers purse their formal education as an effective professional development activity?**

I suggest universities manage a flexible research-based master programs. Teachers, then, will not be required to leave schools and attend lectures.

C. **Professional development obstacles from the nature of the work:**
- **How could the nature of the teaching profession be an obstacle towards primary EFL teachers' professional development?**

I really suffer from the two-shifting. When I work afternoon, I feel I lost the whole day and I cannot do any other activities before or after the school. That is an obstacle towards studying a master degree, for example. Also, classes in the primary stages are more crowded than in the preparatory stages. I cannot understand why. Young learners need much more extra attention, and therefore they should be less in number. That is in fact become worse with the very huge teaching load.

D. Suggestions:

- **What do you suggest to improve primary English language teachers' professional development?**

This is huge work I think. There should be cooperation between the institution that is UNRWA in my case and the government and NGOs like Al-Qattan center for educational research. Universities also can have a role. The institution is supposed to have a person or a group of persons who work only in the field of teachers professional development. These persons are supposed to read all up to date publications related or teachers professional development. Such persons need to have experience in classroom so that they think realistically rather than idealistically. Then, there should be continuous evaluation of professional development programs like the in-service training. I also suggest teachers work separately and think of their own development by themselves. The internet is a huge hard disc. But they need to be selective and choose good journals even though some of them need payment.