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2.9. Summary
2.1. Introduction

Teacher educators continually attempt to find effective ways to train pre-service and in-service teachers. Reflective teaching is one of the approaches to teacher development which has been widely used by educators to prepare prospective teachers. In 1990, Feiman-Nemser referred to the fact by saying, “one can hardly pick up a professional journal or attend a professional meeting without encountering the terms reflective teaching and teacher education” (qtd. in Singh et al. 74). Although the recent hey day of reflective teaching has begun from 80s, it is not a novel concept. Singh et al. state, “Socrates emphasized the inquiry and reflective practice in his teaching. Piaget believed that learning depends on integrating experience with reflection” (74). However, most of the literature on reflective teaching dates back to 1909, when Dewey described the notions of reflection, reflective thinking and teaching. In 1933, Dewey restated his ideas and published the second edition of the book entitled, How We Think. The subtitle that he added to the second edition emphasized on his effort to restate the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process.

In 1980s, in an attempt to present alternative approaches to teacher development, some scholars and educators revived Dewey’s ideas. Schon’s studies published in 1983 and 1987 played the major role in reviving these ideas by relating “the concept of reflection with professional practices and education and . . . [he] also presented a new insight into the concept of reflective teaching and professional education” (Singh et al. 46). According to Hillier, “Schon’s work is immensely popular and has influenced a generation of teacher educators among many other professional disciplines” (18). Fendler refers to the studies recently done from 1998 to 2003 and concludes that reflection has proved to be a suitable practice for teachers.

2.2. What is Reflection?

There are different definitions for reflection and reflective thought. Dewey is truly the pioneer of reflective thinking in the field of education and according to Fendler, “He promoted reflective thinking as a way of exercising the imagination
toward future possibilities” (18). Dewey in How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process writes, “Active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the lights of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends constitutes reflective thought” (9). Garman defines reflection “as a formal way of generating knowledge by using stable versions of the experience with more than one round of written interpretations” (qtd. in Poblete, A Reflective Teaching Model). Farrell cites Pennington’s definition for reflective teaching as “deliberating on experience and that of mirroring experience.” In addition, in an interview with Farrell, Richards refers to critical thinking as “an activity or process in which experience is recalled, considered and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose.” Richards also considers critical reflection as a reaction to a previous incident which “involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action” (Reflective Teaching10). The common factor emerging from all these views is the evaluation of experience by thinking reflectively about what happens, let’s say, in the teaching and learning process in order to develop teaching skills.

Elaborating on compatibility of reflective teaching and academic skills instruction, Pickett states that “reflection compels teachers to look at the reasons and theories behind their practices and forces them to examine factors such as beliefs and assumptions about learning, students’ needs and the teachers’ relationship with the larger community” (5). Pickett also considers reflection as one of students’ needs which should be included in academic skills instruction. she believes that “it is especially important here because students are developing skills that they will need to use throughout their lifetime” (6).

Farrell in Teachers Talking about Teaching simply states that “reflective teaching refers to teachers subjecting their beliefs and practices of teaching to a critical analysis” (1). And Gimenez asserts that when educators in the field of English language teaching talk about reflective teaching they mean, “A systematic way of looking at . . . [teachers’] own actions in the classroom and what effects these actions are bringing about in terms of language learning” (137). In addition,
Cunningham Florez refers to reflective teaching as “ongoing self-assessment” (Current Concepts). Finally, Bailey in Reflective Teaching: Situating Our Stories mentions that “one reason why reflective teaching is worth doing is that it creates a context which promotes professional dialog” (11). It provides teachers with an opportunity to talk to their colleagues about their teaching experiences. She believes that reflective teaching has the potentiality to make clear teachers’ thoughts.

Vieira and Marques refer to Kemmis’s suggestions about the nature of reflection which support the idea that reflective teaching approach can not be practiced easily. The five propositions are as follows:

1. Reflection is not biologically or psychologically determined; nor is it ‘pure thought’; reflection expresses an orientation towards action and is about the relation between thought and action in real historical situations.

2. Reflection is not the individualistic working of the mind as a kind of mechanism or speculation; it presupposes and shapes social relations.

3. Reflection is not value-free or neutral as regards values; it expresses and serves concrete human, social, cultural and political interests.

4. Reflection is not indifferent or passive towards social order, nor does it extend socially accepted values; it either reproduces actively or transforms the practical ideologies that support social order.

5. Reflection is not a mechanical process or a purely creative exercise to construct new ideas; it is a practice that expresses our power to reconstitute social life through participation in communication, decision making, and social action. (2)

The Kemmis’s suggestions have different implications for reflective thinking. One of them is that the nature of reflection requires teachers to form reflective groups and consider the process as a social activity rather than an individualistic one; the idea that has considerable number of proponents among the educators. However, Vieira and Marques believe that “these propositions highlight the transformatory, potential and empowering role of reflection, both at individual and social levels” (2).
Finally, two concise definitions for reflection have been suggested by Gore and Miller. Gore says, “Reflection frees us from routine and allows us to create” (qtd. in Pavlovic and Friedland 292). Miller asserts, “Reflection is an act of humility. It opens up possibility because it provides a way into that which is often out of our awareness, and we are humbled as we learn more about ourselves” (389-90).

2.2.1. Types of Reflection

When teachers are finished with their daily teaching, they think about it. As Kyriacou emphasizes, “It is difficult to conceive how it would be possible to teach without continually monitoring and reflecting on one’s practice”. Nevertheless, since the early 1980s, researchers in the field of education have paid special attention to the concept of reflection and reflective teaching. Kyriacou defines reflective teaching as “an approach to teaching in which teachers regularly think about and evaluate their own practice in a systematic way with a view to developing and further improving their classroom practice” (3). In this section, different types of reflection applied by reflective teachers are discussed.

Technical Rationality (Schulman; VanMannen)

According to Farrell, this type of reflection inspects the teachers’ “behaviors and skills” when they finish teaching a class. He cites VanMannen who believes that “the focus of reflection [technical rationality] is on effective application of skills and technical knowledge in the classroom.” Schulman is also cited as he broadens the scope of this kind of reflection to “cognitive aspects of teaching”. The technical rationality type of reflection is mostly used by student teachers to check their teaching skills in the context of a real class while the teacher educators provide them with “immediate feedback” (Reflective Teaching 10).

Reflection–in–action (Schon)

In his presentation, Educating the Reflective Practitioner to the 1987 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Schon elaborated on what he called “knowing in action” and “reflection-in-action”. Schon’s work was basically
affected by “Dewey’s theory of inquiry” (Pakman 1). According to Schon, if people are asked to explain the way that they do something like “riding a bicycle”, some of them may give us wrong explanations while they do it correctly in action. It shows that individuals know more than they can verbalize. By knowing-in-action, Schon means, “Exhibiting the more that we know in what we do by the way in which we do it.” And by reflection-in-action, he means, “. . . [The] capacity to respond to surprise through improvisation on the spot”. In another part of his presentation, Schon mentions that reflection-in-action begins with facing something in the process of teaching which surprises us as reflective teachers. Our response to this surprising event is “thinking what we’re doing as we do it, setting the problem of the situation anew, conducting an action experiment on the spot by which we seek to solve the new problems we have set, an experiment in which we test both our new way of seeing the situation, and also try to change that situation for the better” (1).

Elaborating on Schon’s reflection-in-action, Smith states that Reflection-in-action includes “looking to our experiences, connecting with our feelings, and attending to our theories in use. It entails building new understandings to inform our actions in the situation that is unfolding” (Donald Schon 1). Farrell notes that knowing-in-action is considered as a prerequisite which a teacher should possess in order to have reflection-in-action in his teaching. “Knowing-in-action is analogous to seeing and recognizing a face in a crowd without ‘listing’ and piecing together separate features; the knowledge that we reveal in our intelligent action is publicly observable, but we are unable to make it verbally explicit” (Reflective Teaching 10).

Farrell also refers to Schon’s two publications The reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action and Educating the reflective practitioner: Towards a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Profession, in which he mentions that:

There is a sequence of "moments" in a process of reflection-in-action: (a) A situation or action occurs to which we bring spontaneous routinized responses, as in knowing-in-action; (b) Routine responses produce a surprise, an unexpected outcome for the teacher that does not fit into categories of knowing-in-action. This then gets our attention; (c) This surprise leads to reflection within an action. This
reflection is to some level conscious but need not occur in the medium of words; (d) Reflection-in-action has a critical function. It questions the structure of knowing-in-action. Now we think critically about the thinking that got us there in the first place; (e) Reflection gives rise to on-the-spot experimentation. We think up and try out new actions intended to explore newly observed situations or happenings. (Reflective Teaching 10)

Schon’s reflection-in-action has attracted many educators since it has been presented in 1983, and they have elaborated it or tried to put it into practice by writing an article or devoting from one chapter to an entire book to the subject (i.e. Redmond, Harvard and Hodkinson, Zeichner and Liston, Sylvester and Farrell, McGill and Brockbank).

**Reflection-on-action (Schon)**

Schon asserts that “reflection can be seen in two time frames. . . . [It] can occur before and after an action – this is what he calls reflection-on-action. In teaching, reflection-on-action occurs before a lesson when we plan and think about our lesson and after instruction when we consider what occurred” (Donald Schon and Reflective teaching 1). In his presentation, Educating the Reflective Practitioner, Schon states that reflection-on-action is “an intellectual business, and it does require verbalization and symbolization.” In Farrell’s words, restating Schon’s definition, “Reflection-on-action deals with thinking back on what we have done to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected action. . . . This includes reflecting on our reflecting-in-action, or thinking about the way we think, but it is different from reflecting-in-action” (Reflective Teaching 10).

Smith in Local Education, elaborates on the importance of Schon’s reflection-on-action. He states that we should look at our daily activities and review our feelings and thoughts. “As we think and act, questions arise that cannot be answered in the present. The space afforded by recording, supervision and conversation with our peers allows us to approach these. Reflection requires space in the present and the promise of space in the future” (150). Ashcroft and Foreman-
Peck state that “reflecting on action involves verbalizing a professional activity and is key to professional development” (18).

**Reflection-for-Action (Killon and Todnew)**

Reflection-for-action is the fourth concept or kind of reflection. According to Farrell, it is different from the two aforementioned concepts of reflection (i.e. reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action) because its nature is “provocative”. Farrell cites Killon and Todnew who consider reflection-for-action as the “desired outcome” of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Though, they emphasize that in this type of reflection, the aim is not to focus on reviewing what has happened up to that point, “but to guide future action” which is “the more practical purpose” (Reflective Teaching 10).

**Action Research (McFee; Carr and Kemmis)**

Action research is the fifth and the last type which Farrell considers as a notion of reflection. To define action research, he cites McFee who states that “action research is the investigation of those craft-knowledge values of teaching that hold in place our habits when we are teaching.” Action research aims at converting “research into action” (10). Carr and Kemmis regard action research as “a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants (teachers, or principals, for example) in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations (and institutions) in which these practices are carried out” (qtd. in Farrell, Reflective Teaching 10).

Bassoff states that ESL teachers keenly look for new methods to increase their information about their students. Moreover, we expect that knowing students shows us “a set of actions that will increase our student’s knowledge of English and their feelings of acceptance in the classroom”. According to Bassoff, ESL teachers can attain these aims by including action research in the process of teaching. Action research uses “a cyclic or spiral process which alternates between action and critical reflection.” In other words, action research adds “a reflective piece” to what
teachers normally do in the classroom. “This reflective piece is essential to making conscientious decisions about what steps we need to take next in the process of educating children who are learning a second language” (Bassoff Action Research in the ESL Classroom). Finally, Nunan considers reflective practice as a supportive concept for action research. In order to elaborate on the role of reflective teaching practices, he quotes Wallace who asserts that “reflective teaching provides a way of developing professional competence by integrating two sources of knowledge, received knowledge and experiential knowledge, with practice” (Action Research 198).

2.3. The Process of Reflection

Sparks-Langer and Colton, in Pickett, mention that there are three main elements noticeable in the process of reflective thinking. They refer to these factors as “the cognitive elements of reflective thinking, the critical element of reflective thinking and teacher narrative” (3).

The cognitive element of reflective thinking explains the process that teachers analyze the given information and decide accordingly. Elaborating on the cognitive element of reflective thinking, Schulman, in Sparks-Langer and Colton, defines six types of knowledge: “(1) content/subject-matter knowledge; (2) pedagogical methods and theory; (3) Curriculum; (4) characteristics of learners; (5) teaching contests; and (6) educational purposes, ends and aims” (qtd. in Pickett 3). The first four types of knowledge are those which cognitive researchers are interested in when they do research into teachers’ ways of thinking. Pickett believes that overlooking the last two elements of knowledge (i.e. teaching contests and educational purposes, ends and aims), restricts “the amount of information gathered on the ethical and moral purposes of education” (3). Goker considers the cognitive element as a kind of personal reflective practice; a dialog that a teacher has with herself or himself. And the narrative element of reflection provides a context for teachers to understand what is happening in the classroom; hence it is an effective way for persuading teachers to develop appropriate reflective practice.

Elaborating on the critical element of reflective thinking, Pickett asserts that
the critical element concentrates on the factors which make an individual think. These factors consist of “experiences, goals, values and social implications” (3). In the critical aspect of reflection, “the moral and ethical aspects of social compassion and justice are considered along with the means and ends” (Sparks-Linger and Colton 39, qtd. in Pickett 3).

The third element of reflective thinking, teacher narrative, is defined as “teachers’ interpretations of events as they occur within particular contexts”. This aspect of reflection can contain the first two elements of reflective thinking. It means that the cognitive and critical elements of reflective thinking can also be studied through teacher narrative, though, “the main emphasis is on the teacher’s own voice and interpretations of the context where professional decisions are made” (Sparks-Langer and Colton, qtd. in Pickett 3-4).

Smyth, also in Pickett, suggests four phases present in the process of reflection. Each of these four phases of “describing, informing, confronting and reconstructing” poses a question which should be answered by a reflective teacher. The related questions are as follows:

■ What do I do? [Description]
■ What does this mean? [Informing]
■ How did I become this way? [Confronting]
■ How might I do things differently? [Reconstructing] (4)

Answering the first question, the reflective teacher is supposed to describe the practices that he has had in the teaching session. The second question asks the reflective teacher to explain the “principles of theories-in-use”. In other words, in this phase, the teacher tries to justify the class activities by mentioning the teaching principles which recommend them. In the confronting phase, the teacher broadens his view by looking beyond the classroom scope and thinks of the reasons which made him teach in this way. As the label suggests, in the reconstructing phase, the teacher tries to think of other teaching alternatives which can be applied in the class. As Pickett reasonably concludes, “these questions are intended to raise consciousness among educators, to challenge complacent attitudes and beliefs, and to engender a high degree of professional practice” (4).
Ross, in Obara, mentions the major purposes of the reflective process:

1. Recognizing an educational dilemma;
2. Responding to a dilemma by recognizing both the similarities to other situations and the special qualities of the particular situation;
3. Framing and reframing the dilemma;
4. Experimenting with the dilemma to discover the consequences and implications of various solutions;
5. Examining the intended and unintended consequences of an implemented solution and evaluating the solution by determining whether the consequences are desirable or not. (23)

Pickett also cites the aforementioned major purposes of the reflective process. She refers to these five items as “components of reflective thinking”. Comparing the components proposed by Ross with Dewey’s, Pickett states that Ross pays no attention to “the importance of the educator’s ownership of the problem advocated by Dewey, [instead, he] includes the examination of consequences and implications in reflecting upon teaching practices.” The other point which Pickett refers to is that “Ross challenges educators to look not only at the intended consequences of teaching practices but also on the unintended consequences.” Pickett admires the idea by saying, “This type of critical awareness is essential to reflective practices because it forces educators to look at their own goals and beliefs as well as the goals and beliefs of their students, other educators and the community” (3).

2.3.1. The Reflective Process: Bartlett’s View

According to Bartlett, there are a lot of suggested processes of investigation that each of them is based on “its own theoretical understanding of reflection” (207). Unlike the apparent differences among the proposed processes, they often follow the ideas asserted by Dewey in 1933. In order to pursue the process of reflection, first, the student should be provided with “a genuine situation of experience” where he can do the activities which he is interested in; second, “as a stimulus to thought,” there should be an authentic problem which arises in this situation; third, the student should have the information and make an observation to gather data related to the
problem; fourth, as different solutions come to his mind, he has to manage them based on their applicability; the last step is that the student should have the chance to test possible solutions “by application to make the meaning clear and to discover for himself their validity” (Dewey How We Think: A Restatement 174; Bartlett 207).

In 1990, inspired by Dewey’s suggested steps for reflection, Bartlett developed some principles which, he believed, were necessary for reflective teachers to observe:

1. The issue upon which the teacher reflects must occur in the social context where teaching occurs.
2. The teacher must be interested in the problem to be resolved.
3. The issue must be ‘owned’ by the teacher -- that is, derived from his or her own practice.
4. Reflection on the issue involves problem solving from the teaching situation in which the teacher is located.
5. Ownership of the identified issue and its solution is vested in the teacher.
6. Systematic procedures are necessary.
7. Information (observations) about the issues must be derived from the teacher’s experience of teaching.
8. The teacher’s ideas need to be tested through the practice of teaching.
9. Ideas about teaching, once tested through practice, must lead to some course of action. There is a tension between idea and action which is reflexive; once it is tested the action rebounds back on the idea which informed it.
10. Hence, reflective action may be transformed into new understandings and refined practice in teaching. (207-8)

The abovementioned statements show that reflective teaching has to be “reflexive” and the fact that “there is a cycle of activity in the process” (Bartlett 208). Bartlett cites Gore and Bartlett who tabulate the summary of three reflective programs suggested by Cruickshank, Zeichner and Gore. It has been done for ease of comparing the cycles of reflection in three different reflective teaching processes. As it is shown in Table 2.1, all these programs have “cycle of reflection before,
during and after lessons in which the teacher engages in reflective teaching” (208).

**Table 2.1**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Reflective teaching program</th>
<th>Before lesson</th>
<th>Immediately after lesson</th>
<th>Later after lesson</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cruickshank</strong></td>
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<td>REFLECT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any stage of teacher education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>group-shared: verbal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Zeichner</strong></td>
<td>PLAN&lt;-&gt;PREPARE&lt;-&gt;REFLECT</td>
<td>REFLECT</td>
<td>REFLECT</td>
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<tr>
<td>School teaching</td>
<td>self or supervisor: verbal</td>
<td></td>
<td>group verbal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final year of teacher education</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gore</strong></td>
<td>PLAN&lt;-&gt;PREPARE&lt;-&gt;REFLECT</td>
<td>REFLECT&lt;-&gt;REFLECT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer teaching</td>
<td>group-shared: verbal</td>
<td>self or</td>
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<td>First semester of teacher education</td>
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<td>group:</td>
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Bartlett extracts five elements from the reflective programs. As Figure 2.1 shows, these elements are: mapping, informing, contesting, appraising and acting. “It is important to understand that all elements constitute the process of reflective
teaching, but the elements are not linear or sequential.” It means that when teachers reflect on their teaching, they may move to all the elements which are present in the cycle many times and that is the reason why the process is considered as “reflexive.” Nevertheless, in the process of reflection, “one element is not always or necessarily followed by the next element in the cycle; and an element may be omitted in moving through the cycle, especially when different courses of action are adopted” (208-9).

Bartlett elaborates on the five elements of reflective process in the form of answering some posed questions: the question which refers to the element of mapping is: “What do I do as a teacher?” (209); the two questions which refer to the element of informing are: “What is the meaning of my teaching?” and “What did I intend?” (210); the two questions which refer to contesting element of reflective

teaching process are: “How did I come to be this way?” and “How was it possible for my present view of teaching (with reasons) to have emerged?” (211); the single question which embeds the elements of appraisal is: “How might I teach differently?” (212) and; the last question which refers to the element of acting is: “What and how shall I now teach?” (213).

Mapping

In order to deal with the question, “What do I do as a Teacher?”, first, Bartlett gives a brief definition of mapping as “observation and the collection of evidence about our own teaching”. The observation should be done by the teacher himself. The means of observation can be audio or visual aids as well as diary or journal writing. Among different events which may happen to teachers in and out of the classroom, Bartlett recommends to record “our routine and conscious actions in the classroom; conversations with pupils; critical incidents in a lesson; our personal life as teachers; our beliefs about teaching; events outside the classroom that we think influence our teaching; our views about language teaching and learning” (209-10).

There are some important points that teachers should keep in mind when they want to note down their teaching experiences for later reflection. Reflective teachers should “focus on a specific teaching problem which can be improved.” The teaching problem which is under observation should be “small”. It means that the observer should focus “on a particular aspect of teaching”. The teaching experiences are written in the teachers’ “own language”. They should feel free to express their concern about what they observe. The length of writing depends on the available time and the teachers’ interest in writing. The point is that writing should be done right away after teaching every lesson or a series of related lessons. Therefore, the purpose of mapping is to increase the reflective teachers’ “consciousness” of the way that they teach by recording their observation (Bartlett 210).

Informing

The second step of reflective teaching process is informing. According to
Bartlett, in this step two questions are answered. The given questions are: “What is the meaning of my teaching?” and “What did I intend?” Gathering all data related to the process of teaching and learning in the mapping step, now the reflective teacher is supposed “to look for meaning behind the maps”. To do this, the teacher reviews his own records and attaches other related data and extracts the significant points from this primary observation. In other words, he analyzes the obtained data to see what they mean to him. Unlike the mapping phase in which Bartlett emphasizes that the teacher should gather the data individually, in informing phase he asserts, “It may be accomplished by the individual teacher or in discussion with others.” Therefore, Bartlett concludes that “the element of mapping may be meant to be as much the basis for shared discussion and understanding of the meaning of teaching for our colleagues and students as much as it is for the individual itself” (210).

In informing step, the reflective teacher starts exploring principles and theories which form the basis for his teaching. Here the teacher can pinpoint those activities that he has inserted into his routine teaching while he is not able to justify including those “taken-for-granted” points (Bartlett 211). Pickett sums up the informing element by writing, “here, the focus is on the meaning of the teaching. This stage asks educators to look at their mapping and dig deeper into what they want to accomplish in their teaching” (4).

Contesting

The third step of the reflective teaching process is contesting. The purpose of including this element is to answer the following two questions: “How did I come to be this way?” and “How was it possible for my present view of teaching (with reasons) to have emerged?” In this phase, the teacher should challenge the assumptions that he has made in his teaching. Bartlett believes that the teacher can do this by sharing what he thinks and the reasons that he teaches in that special way with other teachers, his pupils and their parents as well as the members of school association. He adds, “Contesting ideas and reasons for teaching is meant to uncover our assumptive worlds. As we become experienced teachers we make our histories, which contain assumptions about best ways of teaching.” For example,
what assumptions does the teacher make when he considers the individual student more important than the whole class? What is the preferable way to evaluate students’ learning? By questioning assumptions, teachers look closely to their ideas about teaching which have remained “unquestioned” up to now. Bartlett explains that in the mapping and informing steps, reflective teachers focus on the supportive theories of teaching, while in contestation, they deal with “the complex system of reasons (theory)” for their teaching activities (211). In sum, in the contestation stage, reflective teachers should “uncover the assumptions behind the actions...and share their ideas and thoughts with colleagues in order to understand how the teacher came to be where they are” (Pickett 4).

**Appraisal**

In this step of reflective teaching process, the teacher should decide on the alternative ways of teaching. In other words he should answer to the question which asks: “How might I teach differently?” As Bartlett puts, “Appraisal begins to link the thinking dimension of reflection with the search for teaching in ways consistent with our new understanding.” Here, the teacher tries to guess the outcomes of possible changes in his teaching. For instance, regarding the students’ proficiency, the teacher should see “whose interests are being served in assessment of student learning” if he often evaluates the degree of learning. The other possible change can be in the process of students’ assessment. If students do not know about the criteria which are used for their learning assessment, the teacher can think of the possible consequences of letting them know about that. Will it facilitate or hinder the learning process? Bartlett sums up, “When we search for more participatory styles of goal-based or democratic assessment procedures, we are appraising possible courses of action” (212-3).

**Acting**

The last question that teachers deal with in the process of reflective teaching is: “What and how shall I now teach?” Bartlett emphasizes on “acting” as an important element of reflection by paraphrasing Freire who suggests that “reflection
without action is verbalism: action without reflection is activism—doing things for their own sake.” Although acting has been mentioned as the last element of reflective teaching, it does not mean that it is considered as the concluding step. The relationship among this phase and the previous ones is not unidirectional. Bartlett elaborates on the relationship noting, “We ‘rearrange’ our teaching practice after mapping what we do, unearthing the reasons and assumptions for these actions, subjecting these reasons to critical scrutiny, appraising alternative courses of action and then acting.” While the author does not consider the suggested cycle of reflection as an obligatory process to be followed by reflective teachers, he believes that “it offers a systematic approach to the process of making committed choices as the basis of ‘good’ teaching” (213).

2.3.2. The Reflective Process: Cunningham Florez’s View

Cunningham Florez in Reflective Teaching Practice in Adult ESL Settings states that the purpose of reflective practice is not to identify a particular problem or answer a given question but the aim is “to observe and refine practice in general on an ongoing basis”. She quotes Brookfield and Thiel who separately refer to reflective practice as a process in which “practitioners engage in a continuous cycle of self-observation and self-evaluation in order to understand their own actions and the reactions they prompt in themselves and in learners” (1). According to her, there are four steps which should be taken in the reflective process. They are as follows:

1. Collect descriptive data;
2. Analyze data;
3. Consider how the situation or activity could have been different;
4. Create a plan that incorporates new insights.

1. Collect Descriptive Data

Reflective teachers should gather data about the classroom events and broaden their view on teaching learning process. Brookfield suggest the reflective practitioners to use “four possible ‘lenses’ to create a balanced picture of practice: practitioners’ own writings about their experiences as learners and teachers (autobiographies); learners’ eyes; colleagues’ eyes and experiences; and existing
2. Analyze Data

When reflective practitioners collect the desired data, they should analyze them “in terms of the attitudes, assumptions beliefs, goals, power relations and consequences” which the obtained data disclose. Reflective teachers can divide the data into those which were expected and those which were unexpected and worthy of noticing. The practitioners can also analyze the obtained data to see whether there is a relationship between the observed behaviors and the existing theories of teaching and learning. In other words, some questions can be posed like: “How do these theories relate to the practitioner’s stated beliefs and attitudes? What is revealed about the relationship among the participants? What are the consequences of the practitioner’s actions?” (Crandall, Gebhard, Stanley, qtd. in Cunningham Florez 2).

3. Consider How the Situation or Activity Could Have Been Different

In this step of reflective process, practitioners are supposed to look at the obtained data to “examine alternatives to the choices they have made as well as the beliefs behind them” (Stanley, qtd in Cunningham Florez 2). The author also cites Gebhard who believes that each practitioner can consider the way that other practitioners deal with identical circumstances and think of other techniques to approach the teaching/learning issues. By asking related questions, practitioners can widen their reflection and go outside the scope of their classroom. Cunningham Florez gives an example to clarify this step: “Practitioner A discusses her analyses with her colleague who prompts her to think of ways to facilitate and foster learner input rather than ways to change her practice to accommodate the learners’ reluctance to speak” (Reflective Teaching 2).

4. Create a Plan That Incorporates New Insights

To elaborate on this step of reflective process, Farrell is cited who believes that reflection is not considered as an end, but a means to an end which is “to improve instructional practice”. According to him, “practitioners must link
information and insights gained from the reflective process to changes they are making in the classroom.” Regarding the changes which are made in the class, Gebhard is also cited who states that practitioners are not obliged to dramatically change the classroom atmosphere, little changes can affect the teaching and learning condition. The important point, according to the author, is that “practitioners incorporate their new insights in their ongoing planning and decision making, observe the impact and continue the reflective cycle” (Cunningham Florez, Reflective Teaching 2).

Valderrama and Larenas refer to reflective process as a “characteristic cycle” which has four stages of planning, teaching, experimenting and reflecting. Regarding the psychological approach of reflective teaching, they put, “Reflective teaching is a cognitive process of reconstruction of new meanings through experience” (6).

2.4. Reflective Teaching: Purposes and Benefits

The effectiveness of reflective teaching approach has been proven through applying its procedures to wide-ranging populations and it has been emphasized as an academic approach in recent years (Weybright). There are some purposes and benefits to implementing reflective teaching in ESL/EFL contexts. In the first part of this section, a summary of the reflective teaching purposes mentioned by educators such as Murphy, Richards and Farrell is provided. In the second part, the benefits to implementing reflective practice mentioned by different educators and summarized by Cunningham Florez and Wells are presented.

2.4.1. Purposes of Reflective Teaching:

Murphy mentions three purposes of reflective teaching, “(1) to expand one’s understanding of the teaching-learning process; (2) to expand one’s repertoire of strategic options as a language teacher; (3) to enhance the quality of learning opportunities one is able to provide in language classrooms” (Reflective Teaching 499-500).

From the teacher development point of view, there are some goals of:
studying various aspects of teachers’ practices. The outcomes of these kinds of studies can be considered “as a basis for reflective review” (Richards and Farrell 4).

Richards and Farrell give examples of goals from a development Perspective:

- Understanding how the process of second language development occurs during lessons;
- Understanding how our roles change according to the kind of learners we are teaching;
- Understanding the kinds of decision making that occur during lesson;
- Reviewing our own theories and principles of language teaching;
- Developing an understanding of different styles of teaching;
- Determining learners’ perceptions of classroom activities. (4)

Comparing the list of goals for teacher development proposed by Richards and Farrell with the list of topics explored by reflective teachers proposed by Murphy, it can be concluded that one of the main concerns of both is “decision making”. Murphy lists the following topics explored by reflective teachers: “(1) communication patterns in the classroom; (2) teacher decision making; (3) ways in which learners apply knowledge; (4) the affective climate of the classroom; (5) the instructional environment and; (6) a teacher’s self-assessment of growth and development as a professional” (Reflective Teaching 500-1).

2.4.2. Benefits of Reflective Teaching

Cunningham Florez who has worked in the field of teaching English as a second language to adults states the benefits to implementing reflective teaching in English classes. Flexibility, practicality, professionalism and sustainability are subtitles that she has chosen to label four categorized benefits of reflective practice discussed by educators such as: Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, Crandall, Farrell, Stanley and Thiel.

Flexibility

According to Cunningham Florez, the instructional environment, learners’ characteristics, syllabi, resources at hand and “type of teacher preparation” are
different in the teaching of English to adult learners. This variation can be pinpointed by reflective practitioners. Through reflective process, “new teachers examine successes and failures in a constructive environment; seasoned teachers further self-awareness and knowledge through personal experience” (Reflective Teaching 3).

**Practicality**

Those who teach English to adult learners usually suffer lack of time and resources in order to allocate to both “teaching and professional development”. Reflective practice is one of the efficient ways for adult ESL teachers. “Because it asks practitioner to make connections between what is happening in a specific context and their broader belief, it can be useful to those who move from site to site and teach in varied contexts.” The process of reflection provides practitioners with the chance “to explore and reflect on new techniques, ideas and approaches”. The other advantage of applying reflective practice is that theory and practice are connected with each other (Cunningham Florez, Reflective Teaching 3).

**Professionalism**

Reflective practitioners continually experience “exercise of intellect, responsibility and professionalism”. They develop their professional skills by instructional planning, implementation and constant involvement with theory. “Teachers improve their ability to react and respond as they are teaching- to assess, revise and implement approaches and activities on the spot (Cunningham Florez, Reflective Teaching 3).

**Sustainability**

The last benefit to apply reflective practice in ESL contexts is sustainability of the practitioner’s development. Cunningham Florez cites Crandall, Burt and Keenan who believe that “there is a need for sustained development for adult ESL practitioners, rather than discrete workshops and conferences.” Reflective teaching constructs “a cyclical process” which provides practitioners with opportunity for
reflecting on what they do in the class, applying the necessary changes and “follow-up” activities to evaluate the effects of the changes which are decided to be put into action (Reflective Teaching 3).

Wells believes that reflection on practice has some benefits. The first reward of reflection is that it gives the teacher “the sense of satisfaction and self-confidence which are won through achievement.” The second benefit of reflection on practice is the motivation, and liveliness which the teacher acquires while following the process. The third benefit is that reflection enables teachers to provide students with their utmost “effort and knowledge.” The last reward of reflection on practice is “the overall preservation of the teacher’s state of sanity, when as researcher and student he or she enjoys a sense of fulfillment, maximizes the effort put in and compensates for any disappointments encountered” (12).

Cruickshank et al. state that “reflective teaching enhances the ability of students [trainees] to express themselves in a more analytical manner on matters concerning teaching” (26). Freese reports that applying reflective model in teacher educational programs has made student teachers “evaluate their practical experiences and develop habits of mind or dispositions, which influence them to consciously and deliberately think about their teaching” (8). Elaborating on the benefits of reflection, singer refers to her teaching experience and states that “through a process of questioning, examining, and revisiting ongoing challenges, I became a more thoughtful and deliberate teacher and my teaching became more responsive to the learning needs of individual students in my classes” (153-4).

2.5. Tools for Reflective Teaching

In this section, the tools which are normally used in the process of reflection are discussed. Murphy, Bailey, Day, Gebhard, White and Wilkes are the scholars who have elaborated the given tools or procedures as referred to by different educators.

2.5.1. A Collection of Tools Proposed by Murphy

In Reflective Teaching in ELT, Murphy suggests many ways of gathering
information that reflective teachers can use to obtain different kinds of information that they need. He refers to these ways as tools that reflective teachers can rely on to investigate the process of teaching and learning. Murphy believes that “by combining two or more tools over the span of an entire course, a teacher gains access to alternative vantage points” (502). He elaborates five tools that he feels are more useful for teachers who want to enjoy engaging more in teaching reflectively. The tools are as follows: five minute papers, formative teacher assessment surveys, student focus groups, retrospective field notes and formative feedback from peers.

**Five-minute paper**

As Murphy explains, if a teacher uses this tool regularly, he can obtain feedback on his teaching from students. A few minutes before the end of the session, the teacher asks students to answer to one or two of the following questions:

1. What is the one thing that you are likely to remember from today’s class?
2. What was the most confusing concept we covered?
3. Is there anything you would like to know more about?
4. Is there anything you think I should be doing differently?” (Reflective Teaching 502).

If the teacher tells students that he needs the responses to these questions to know the strengths and weaknesses of the course and not for any other purposes, the obtained feedback will be useful and to the point. Answers to these questions can be written in both English and learners’ native language. Although it takes a part of the class time, five-minute papers, when they are administered at the end of the session, are a good tool for informing teachers about their evaluative decisions. According to Murphy, when the teacher wants to use this tool for the first time he should tell students that they should not write their names on the papers; that he focuses on students’ ideas not their accuracy of language; that his purpose of reading the papers is to develop his own teaching capabilities and not to test students. In the end, Murphy warns reflective teachers not to use the five-minute tool too often. He recommends them to use it one time every two or three weeks when they have a course that is held two or three times a week for example. “If students are asked to compose them too often, they lose interest and they may even begin to resent being asked to do so. . . . Using them
wisely can serve as vivid reminders to students that their responses to the course are valued and given serious attention” (Reflective Teaching 504).

**Formative Teacher Assessment Survey**

This tool is considered by Murphy as a compliment to five-minute papers. It consists of “several surveys of students’ perceptions of how well the course is going.” According to Murphy, it can be included in the syllabus of the course from the very beginning; therefore, students will be aware of the procedure of obtaining feedback and the fact that their ideas about the teaching and learning process will be appreciated by the teacher. Some merits of formative teacher assessment survey as a tool for reflective teaching are that: teachers can design them before the course begins; students’ ideas can easily be gathered anonymously; in a single session, the teacher can accumulate a lot of information and; the last advantage of applying this tool is “the procedure may be carried out at intervals” (Reflective Teaching 504).

One of the options is to apply the survey three times during a course that is, near the beginning, in the middle and near the end of the course. The first implementation of the tool can obtain data about the first students’ impressions of the course. The tool can extract data about the course and the role of the teacher when it is administered in the middle of the course. The feedback obtained from the implementation of the tool near the end of the course can help the teacher with his decisions on the course revisions in future.

There are two options, regarding the way that students are supposed to provide feedback. The first option is that they are given one or two open-ended questions. The second option is to answer some close-ended questions that need less writing than the first option. Murphy’s sample items of this sort are presented in Table 2.2.

**Student Focus Groups**

Murphy believes that this tool needs more planning than five-minute papers and formative teacher assessment surveys. Student focus groups can consist of all students of the class or a part of the class whose task is to discuss the course in
which they have participated. The teacher or his colleague can be the leader of the discussion group.

If a colleague is invited to lead the group, he will prepare a written report “that provides synopsis for the teacher of the students’ suggestions for the course” (Murphy, Reflective Teaching 506). Here again, the students’ ideas should be recorded anonymously. When the report is ready, it is given to the class teacher and the points are discussed by him and the visiting teacher who has made the report.

Table 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Feedback: Sample Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, the textbooks, materials and assignments in this course:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ are interesting and useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ are at the right level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ help me to practice and improve my language skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ require the right amount of homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, the teacher of this course:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ presents well-organized lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ speaks in a way that is clear and easy to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ is knowledgeable about the subjects we cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ answers my questions well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ grades assignments and tests fairly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ makes good use of class time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ returns work (that I hand in) on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ gives me individual help when I need (or when I ask for it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ encourages me to do my best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ relates well to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ provide appropriate opportunities for me to participate in class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Retrospective Field Notes

The fourth tool elaborated by Murphy is retrospective field notes. Since this tool is applied when the teaching session has finished, as the word “retrospective” signals, it is “less intrusive”. Preparing field notes is done in no time after the lesson, in order not to miss important points. Within half an hour or so, the teacher
tries to write down whatever he can remember from the teaching session. Reflective teachers keep a record of their notes and review them while keeping an eye for those events that are repeated in their notes. These “recurring patterns” are the reflective teachers’ concern which can be discussed with a colleague later on (Reflective Teaching 506).

**Formative Feedback from Peers**

Cruickshank and Applegate believe that teachers’ colleagues can give them “insight into their teaching strategies” (553). Therefore, peers’ feedback is an important source of teacher development. According to Murphy, to gain feedback from teaching/learning process, a colleague can be invited to visit one, two or more times. The students should be informed of his visit in advance. Students should know that the teacher’s visit is different from formal observations which supervisors do. “A starting point to prepare for a classroom visit from a peer is for both parties [the class teacher and the visiting teacher] to be aware of the importance of staying attentive, interested in the lesson and open minded” (Reflective Teaching 506). Although some visiting teachers can record information in their mind just by observing, a better way is not to rely on just memory and write some notes from the beginning. The class teacher can explain the goal of observing the class to the visiting teacher and emphasize on the points that he is interested in focusing as a reflective teacher.

**2.5.2. The Use of Diary Studies in Teacher Education Programs**

As Bailey defines in her introduction to *Diary Studies in Teacher Education Programs*, “a diary is a first-person account of language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analyzed for recurring patterns or salient events.” The writer who uses the terms “diary” and “journal” interchangeably, asserts that she considers diary study as a tool which can be potentially used for teacher education. Based on her classification, the diary studies have been mainly used in three wide-ranging areas of language learning. Diaries have been used as data gathering tools in various studies
“to document (1) language learning experiences, (2) student teachers’ reactions to academic courses and (3) language teaching experiences” (215).

1. Language Learning Diaries

Diaries can be used to record teaching experiences as some of the educators as well as student teachers record their observation and later gain knowledge and skill about language learning by reviewing them. As Bailey declares, most of these lengthy diaries are not qualified for publication and only some of them have already been chosen to be published in psychology or applied linguistics volumes. In spite of this fact “the actual topics of these first-person accounts of language learning may vary, but each has sought to investigate issues not normally accessible through outside observation” (Diary Studies 216). To support this, Bailey cites the study done by Schmidt who tried to find the gap between the utterances of his own and those of his students who were native speakers of Portuguese language. This study can just be done by a participant observer (i.e. the teacher) who is involved in that cognitive process—something which is undetectable to another researcher.

The other way that diaries can be used as a tool for language learning is gathering and analyzing the diaries which are prepared by students. Bailey believes that when different diaries which have been written about the same phenomenon are compared by a researcher, the results are more informative. She cites Asher who analyzed diaries prepared by eight French students; Brown who compared and contrasted sixty-one diaries of the adult learners of Spanish language, and; her own study in which eleven diaries were kept by adult students and the researcher examined the role of competitiveness and anxiety in language learning. Stating these instances, Bailey concludes, “These second-person analyses of first-person language learning journals have yielded interesting insights that were not always obvious to the original diarists” (Diary Studies 216).

2. Student Teachers’ Reactions to Academic Courses

Bailey refers to the diaries which are prepared by student teachers to state their opinions about teacher education courses as “academic journals” (216). Porter,
Goldstein, Leatherman and Conrad state that as a tool for obtaining data, diaries can be used by student teachers through which they react to academic courses. Using diaries, student teachers give their feedback on the materials they read, the lectures and seminars they attend, the projects they do to develop materials, the classrooms they observe and on the experiences they gain through teaching exercises in teacher training programs. The writers conclude, “The journal encourages students to go beyond learning course content in isolation and to strive to link this information to theories and knowledge beyond the particular assignment and the particular course.” Therefore, as Porter et al. add, writing journals make student teachers “develop a professional approach toward learning” and feel that they “write as members of the larger language teaching community” (Diary Studies 240).

3. Language Teaching Experiences

The third use of diaries is in the field of language teaching. Bailey cites some studies in which diary keeping has been considered as a tool to get feedback about language teaching. One of these diary studies was done by Butler-Wall who kept a diary of her teaching English as a second language in upper-intermediate level in the university. Some of the “themes that emerged in Butler-Wall’s diary study were feedback, harmony and community, as they relate to classroom language teaching.” Another cited diary study was done by Ho. She kept a diary of her observation on “the use of English and/or Chinese to teach remedial English classes in secondary schools in Hong Kong” in order to explore the feelings and annoyances which teachers had when they wanted to choose the appropriate language for as a medium of instruction (Diary Studies 217).

Bailey reports that she has used the diary study as one of her graduate students’ options to do their teaching tasks. Explaining the outcomes of using diary studies, she asserts, “Over the years, the resulting journals have focused on issues related to lesson planning, creativity, time management, problems faced by nonnative teachers of English, classroom control, group work and difficult student-teacher relations.” The educator believes that the diaries kept by the student teachers during the teacher preparation courses were totally helpful for them “both in generating behavioral
Keeping a language Learning or Teaching Diary

As Bailey states, the procedure which pre-service and in-service teachers should follow to conduct diary studies is not complicated; however, the researcher should be patient enough to get through it. The procedure of keeping a diary study is divided into two interdependent stages: “1) making the (daily) diary entries and 2) analyzing the raw qualitative data provided by these entries”. Bailey mentions that although it may be suitable for an individual to cover the first stage and do not go further, that is, just keeping a diary of his/her experiences, “the finished document does not constitute a diary study per se unless analysis has been taken” (Diary Studies 218). The different phases of conducting a diary study are described in Figure 2.2.

Suggestions about Conducting a Diary Study

Suggestions which Bailey makes for starting a diary study are based on the helpful ideas that she has gathered from the diaries kept by both in-service and pre-service teachers. She hopes that the suggestions may show the reflective teachers the common procedure which diarists usually follow to keep a diary study.

Firstly, diarists who teach regular language classes should allocate some time after each teaching session to record their experiences in the diary while they are fresh in their minds. They should choose a quiet location for writing the diary where there is no disruption. Some may prefer to use computer software and some other may find it more comfortable to use audio recorder to keep a diary. In any case, the diarist should keep in mind those problems which he may face in data analysis stage. “Will it be necessary to transcribe the tape in order to analyze the data? If so, many hours will be added to the analysis. Thus, a diarist must decide on a balance between overwhelming quantity and the possible depth of quality added by electronic recordings” (Bailey, Diary Studies 220).

Secondly, the diarists should devote at least the same amount of time which each teaching session takes to write their experiences in the diary. In addition to
1. The diarist provides an account of personal language learning or teaching history.

2. The diarist systematically records events, details, and feelings about the current language experience in the diary.

3. The diarist revises the journal entries for the public version of the diary, clarifying meaning in the process.

4. The diarist studies the journal, looking for patterns and significant events. (Also, other researchers may analyze the diary entry.)

5. The factors identified as being important to the language learning or teaching experience are interpreted and discussed in the final diary study. Ideas from the pedagogy literature may be added at this stage.

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**Fig. 2.2. Conducting a Language Learning or Teaching Diary Study.** Adapted from Bailey and Ochsner, by Bailey, Kathleen M. “Diary Studies in Teacher Education Programs.” Second language Teacher Education. Eds. Jack C. Richards and David Nunan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 219.

This, a teacher or learner who experiences second or foreign language and culture “will probably find it impossible to record everything that happens in a day, so it may be helpful to focus the diary entries on some particular aspects of interest.” Many people find it difficult to start writing a diary, since “focusing on one’s own
behavior can be an uncomfortable process.” To support her claim, Bailey cites Telantik who reports, “At first it was very slow work. For almost two weeks I used only ten or twenty minutes of my hour. It was difficult both to write and to know what to write. Without realizing it, I was editing my thoughts before I put them down on paper” (Diary Studies 220). At last, it took around five weeks for the diarist to succeed and write the diary satisfactorily.

Regarding this relatively cumbersome phase of diary writing, Bailey concludes, “It is important to set up the conditions of writing so that the actual process of writing is (or can become) relatively free—not a chore to dread, or one that interferes with learning, teaching, or preparation time.” Finally, the diarists and especially those who write in a second language should not be worried about the grammatical mistakes, style, or organization of their writing. “The goal is to get complete and accurate data while the recollections are still fresh. For this reason, the original diary entries often read like ‘stream of consciousness’ writing” (Diary Studies 220).

2.5.3. Teacher Observation in Second Language Teacher Education

The fourth chapter of the book, Second Language Teacher Education, edited by Richards and Nunan, focuses on one of the elements which can exist in any program of teacher education. As Day, the author of the chapter, mentions this element is “observation by the student teacher of experienced teachers”. The first thing that the author tries to rationalize is including the abovementioned element in teacher education program. To do so, he refers to Leinhardt and Smith who made the distinction between “subject-matter knowledge” and “action-system knowledge”. Subject-matter knowledge is the information a teacher needs to teach the content of the given lesson. “Action-system knowledge refers to the information dealing with teaching and learning in general, regardless of the subject matter. Included in action system knowledge are such issues as classroom management and teacher expectations” (43).

Day believes that one of the ways through which student teachers can gain the action-system knowledge is observing in-service second language teachers.
Provided that, the process of observation is directed, systematic and focused and the observed classes are taught by experienced teachers. The observation of the experienced teachers enables student teachers to make a perfect image of what happens in a second language classroom. According to Day, a disciplined observation course can help teacher trainees with:

1. developing a terminology for understanding and discussing the teaching process;
2. developing an awareness of the principles and decision making that underlie effective teaching;
3. distinguishing between effective and ineffective classroom practices;
4. identifying techniques and practices student teachers can apply to their own teaching. (43)

**Techniques and Instruments for Observation**

The approaches to the observation of language learning classrooms are divided into two broad categories of “qualitative” and “quantitative”. Day emphasizes that the categorization of the techniques and tools used in observation process as qualitative and quantitative approaches does not mean that one category is superior to the other. It does not even show that the instruments of one category should be used separately in a study at a time. “Indeed, a combination of both approaches is important in second language teacher education” (44).

**1. Qualitative Approaches**

The common purpose of qualitative approaches is to obtain data related to the events which occur in the second language classroom. In other words, using the techniques of a qualitative approach, the observer tries to record what goes on in the classroom during his presence. Day asserts that this approach “is especially useful when the observer wants to capture a broad picture of the lesson rather than focus on a particular aspect of it.” One of the techniques which are broadly used in second language teacher training courses is “written ethnography.” The technique can provide the student teachers with an opportunity to experience “the complexity of
the second language classroom.” Day emphasizes the importance of this experience saying, “Student teachers are often not aware of what complex environment their future classes are until they attempt to describe what actually happens in one.” Another advantage of using written ethnography is to observe the various roles that a teacher takes in a second language classroom. Finally, the technique lets the trainee who observes a real second language class “compare and contrast a teacher’s use of both subject-matter knowledge and action-system knowledge during a lesson” (44).

The main problem of applying qualitative approaches is that the observer should be trained to know how to gather valid and reliable data. Those student teachers who are not qualified for the job may become confused by facing numerous aspects of teaching and learning process and can not manage to concentrate on significant affairs.

The other type of technique which is used in qualitative approaches is audio and video recordings. This technique is classified as an ethnographic observation, and has some similarities as well as differences with written ethnography as another technique in the same category. “They are alike in that the focus may be a rather wide lens. All are capable of allowing observation, or attempted, of events taking place in the classroom as a whole” (Day 46). The main difference between written ethnographic technique and audio and video recordings is the means which is used for recording the events. Furthermore, the audio and video recordings let the student teacher review the recorded lesson as many times as s/he wishes (Farrell, Reflective Practice). Audio and video recordings are considered as the most unbiased and objective techniques of observation. According to Day, “one of the drawbacks to the use of both audio and video recordings, however, is the fact that they are intrusive, with the latter much more so than the former.” To reduce the negative effect of the presence of the instrument in the classroom, Day advises teachers “to set the equipment before the students arrive and allow the students to examine the equipment before class begins” (46).

2. Quantitative Approaches

The second group of techniques includes those instruments which are used in
quantitative approaches. It is easier for student teachers to apply a quantitative approach for observing a second language classroom, because as Day explains, the instrument generally consists of a checklist or form and the observer’s task is to complete it. “There are almost as many instruments as there are observers, for they are easily devised and easily employed in the classroom” (48). The instruments are divided into checklists which are used to count the frequency of some behaviors under investigation and scales for classroom observation. The purpose of developing such instruments is to record the teacher’s observable behavior, pupils’ apparent behavior and their interaction whether it occurs between the teacher and his pupils or among pupils.

Techniques which are used in quantitative approaches have some advantages. It is easy to design, modify and apply them in second language classrooms. “Unlike qualitative approaches, the observer who uses these instruments does not have to be highly trained in their use and interpretation” (48). Furthermore, when the obtained data resulting from applying these instruments are in the form of figures, it is possible to compare the behaviors of students in a class or different classes.

In addition, the quantitative approaches to observation of second language classrooms have some disadvantages. According to Day, the observers may record the unimportant features of teaching/learning process and fail to include the main aspects of instruction. “They may not be crucially involved with or related to the concerns or purpose of the observation. Further, the actual behavior observed may not explain all the facts of the focus of the observation or the problem.” The last drawback of using quantitative approaches is that “aside from the behaviors being recorded by the observer, the teacher will most likely not know what else the students did during the observation period” (48). This may create an incomplete image of teaching/learning process and can not be considered as a valid and reliable source of data for further analysis and interpretation.

One of the techniques of quantitative approaches to second language classroom is called “Seating Chart Observation Record (SCORE)” (Acheson and Gall, qtd. in Day 49). As the name suggests, the observer is supposed to draw the
seating chart of the classroom and record what he observes during the teaching session. Each box in the seating chart is to represent a student in the class and the student’s activities are recorded in that box. The student teacher can use some symbols to record all the related data in the student box. These symbols may show the student’s number and gender, as well as the number of times that s/he has interaction with the teacher or other students.

Another technique of quantitative observation is “Teacher and Student Talk.” Day defines it as “a technique to record who is talking to whom and how frequently. Student teachers use it to record teachers’ questioning behavior and how they praise students; in addition, a verbal flow can also be used to code students questions and responses” (51). Using this technique, student teachers can observe the way that the teacher addresses the students, the number of times that he asks them to answer a question individually or when he asks the whole class to answer a question. Still, the other use of the technique is to investigate whether the teacher has a special “action zone”, as it is labeled by Adams and Biddle (qtd. in Day 51). Action zone refers to a special area in the class which the teacher pays more attention to. Normally, the students who are seated in front of the class are located in the teacher’s action zone; therefore, they are granted more chance to have interaction with the teacher.

The other two techniques of quantitative approaches to second language classroom are “at-task” and “movement patterns.” Day mentions that “coding at-task behavior of students is helpful in that it gives the teacher knowledge about what students are doing in the classroom.” The student teacher can quickly observe the students at intervals to see what they are doing while they are asked to do a task. Movement patterns technique is used to “chart the movements of the teacher or students, or both, during a lesson.” It is supposed that there is a relationship between the teacher’s movement patterns and the class management as he moves around the classroom to make students pay attention or deal with interruptions. “The coding of a teacher’s moves during a lesson might also indicate biases toward certain students, much in the same way a verbal flow can. The coding of student [’s] moves has the potential of revealing whether they are at-task” (52). Student teachers’
who observe second language classrooms can record the teacher’s movements in the activities which are done as group work. The analysis of the gathered data can reveal the role of the teacher’s movements in the process of students’ learning.

2.5.4. Self-Observation, Observing Other Teachers and Talking with Other Teachers about Observations

There are different ways that teachers can apply to develop their teaching skills. Reading related professional books and journals; learning another language which makes the teacher familiar with problems that students face; and keeping a teacher diary are among the ways that Gebhard suggests for exploring language teaching process. Furthermore, he refers to self-observation, observation of other teachers and talking with other teachers about observation as effective ways for reflecting on one’s teaching. In this section, these three tools of reflective teaching are discussed.

Self-Observation

Gebhard believes that if teachers want to provide journals or discuss their teaching with others, they can gather data through self observation. Besides, he emphasizes on self-observation as a tool for teachers to investigate their own teaching in order to see it differently. In this section, Gebhard’s suggestions about self-observation are discussed.

1. Teaching While Collecting Samples of Classroom Interaction

The first suggestion, regarding self-observation, is collecting teaching samples through tape recording. Gebhard states that he favors a tape recorder because it is simple to bring into play and the teacher can take it with himself wherever he goes around the class. However, he adds that, “some teachers prefer to videotape because it is easy to recognize who is talking and possible to study nonverbal behaviors” (7).

Using tape recorder or camera may make some students change their behavior, but this is temporary. Gebhard’s experience shows that after a short
period, students get accustomed to being tape and/or video recorded and “it is
amazing how fast students accept the recorder, especially if it is treated as a natural
part of the classroom setting” (7).

The purpose of investigation can often suggest the manner that the teacher
can tape the teaching process. If the goal of taping is to explore the students’
reactions to teaching, the tape recorder or camera can focus on students as the center
of attention. “The idea is to think about the objective of the exploration and to
consider how to tape the class to obtain useful samples for further analysis. Of
course, it is also possible not to have an objective, and to simply collect random
samples of teaching” (7). Gebhard believes that recording random parts of teaching
sometimes helps the teacher discover some less obvious aspects of his teaching.

2. Analyzing the Samples of Teaching

According to Gebhard, the analysis of the sample also depends on the purpose
of investigation. If the teacher is interested in knowing about the number of times
that he asks questions, or corrects students’ mistakes, or students’ use of English or
their mother tongue as well as the time that he remains silent after posing a question
and before student’s answer, he can check the occurrences of these events. Another
way for analyzing the recorded teaching samples is to shortly “transcribe from the
audio- or videotapes” (Gebhard 7). Here again, the teacher should decide what to
transcribe and it mainly depends on the purpose of his investigation. If he is
interested to know about his method of error treatment, for example, he has to
transcribe the errors which he has corrected during the teaching session.

3. Interpreting and Reflecting

After analyzing the gathered data in the form of transcriptions, the next step is
to interpret and reflect on them as “descriptions of classroom interaction”. To do
this, Gebhard suggests focusing on the following questions:

■ How does the interaction in this class provide chances for students to learn
the language?

■ How does the interaction possibly block students from learning the
How does my way of treating students language errors possibly provide chances for the students to be more accurate in their use of English? Possibly hamper their accuracy? (8)

Another question which can be asked by the teacher to reflect more on his/her teaching is: “Do I do what I think I do in the classroom?” As an example, Gebhard refers to a teacher “who thought that she was motivating the students through lots of praise, while in reality the students were not paying attention to the praise” (8).

Observing Other Teachers

The other way through which teachers can explore their teaching is the observation of other teachers. To prove the fruitfulness of this method, Gebhard quotes Fanselow who believes that teachers can observe their own teaching in the teaching of other teachers. When a teacher enters others’ classes in order to observe their teaching and examine his own method of teaching, he can gain and build his knowledge. “I came to your class not only with a magnifying glass to look carefully at what was being done, but with a mirror so that I could see that what you were doing is a reflection of much of what I do” (Fanselow, qtd. in Gebhard 10).

The suggested tools for collecting data while observing other teachers’ classes are varied. The observer can take fast notes, draw sketches, tally behaviors, write down samples of interactions, tape record or videotape the teaching session and take photos of interaction. The gathered data can be reviewed in order to analyze the interactions. Gebhard recommends both the observer and the observed teacher to meet and watch the video, listen to the audio recording, look at the photos and read the report about the class. He believes that in this way, the teachers will benefit from the exploration of the teaching session.

Talking with Other Teachers about Observations

The third and the last way of exploring teaching, as Gebhard suggests, is talking with other teachers about observations. Talking about teaching provides an opportunity for the teachers to examine their teaching from different angles.
“Unfortunately, talking about teaching is not something that normally goes on among EFL/ESL teachers, and when it does, it seems to take on a face-saving nature.” The author of the article states that the traditional way of talking about teaching is not effective, because in this way, colleagues usually give some prescriptions for the observed problem. The preferred alternative is to “take the time and effort to prepare for the discussions and follow agreed on rules that aim at nonjudgmental and nonprescriptive discussion” (13).

2.5.5. Peer Observation

White considers peer observation as an important tool in the process of presenting “effective teaching” in all academic institutions. The purpose of his article, as he puts it, is reviewing “the basic principles underlying peer observation and its value to institutions and to individual teachers” (1). Following this objective, he poses the following five questions which are addressed throughout his article:

- What is peer observation?
- Quality control or professional development?
- How should peer observation be organized?
- What are the advantages of peer observation for teachers?
- What are the advantages of peer observation for institutions? (1)

What is Peer Observation?

White defines peer observation as “the observation of teachers by teachers, usually, though not always, on a reciprocal basis.” There can be two kinds of pairing. In the first kind of pairing, an experienced teacher (a trainer) and an inexperienced teacher (a trainee) are paired. In this case, “the focus will be more clearly on helping the novice to develop their teaching skills both by observing and being observed by an experienced colleague.” In the second kind of paring, two experienced teachers are paired. In this case, the goal of peer observation is “to provide opportunities for experienced teachers to reflect on their teaching in a calm and private environment” (1).
Peer observation tool can be applied by academic institutions either to control the quality of teaching-learning process or to focus on “the professional development of the observing and observed teachers” (White 2).

1. Quality Control

Academic institutions can use peer observation to check the quality of teaching-learning process. White explains that in this kind of model, “teachers are asked to assess and report formally on the performance of their colleagues according to criteria set out by the institution” (1). Then, the collected reports are used to evaluate the teachers’ productivity and may also be considered as an effective criterion for the teachers’ future promotion.

This kind of peer observation has some merits. According to the writer of the article, a qualified and experienced teacher is the reliable person who can be appointed by the academic institution to observe his/her colleagues’ teaching. “Such a teacher is familiar with the subject, the materials, the methods and may be able to offer both practical help to a fellow teacher, at the same time demonstrating good practice for the fellow teacher to observe and incorporate into his or her own teaching” (1).

Nevertheless, the quality control model suffers from some weaknesses. According to White, “a good teacher is not necessarily a good appraiser. Unless there are very clear guidelines for the observations, supported by appropriate training for all involved, observers may record subjective and unsubstantiated judgments on their peers.” The unsupported judgments made by the observing teacher could make the institution take an unfair decision against the observed teacher. Secondly, this kind of “quality assurance procedure” results in spoiling the relationship among colleagues (2).

2. Professional Development

The aim of the second model, as the name suggests, is to concentrate on “the professional development of the observing and observed teachers, while at the same
time ensuring that the institution remains uninvolved and uninformed about the outcome of the observation and the issues discussed” (White 2).

White asserts that in this model, the institution outlines the observation program, manages the process and makes sure that everything is done based on the agreed framework. “The framework and objectives will vary according to whether the observations involve a novice working with an experienced teacher, or whether two experienced teachers are paired” (2).

**How Should Peer Observation Be Organized?**

The writer of the article lists six provisions which should be taken into consideration, while peer observation is organized: choosing partner, agreeing the format of the observation, background, the observation, follow-up and confidentiality.

1. **Choosing Partner**

Teachers should be free to choose their partners whenever it is possible. White believes that “if there is trust and respect on both sides, the outcome is likely to be more useful for both participants” (2).

2. **Agreeing the Format of the Observations**

Both observing and observed teachers should agree on the limited area of observation before they start the observation process. White believes that the institution and the observed teacher can determine the focus of the observation. “The observed teacher may request feedback on a specific area of their teaching which they are finding particularly challenging or they would value input on from a trusted colleague.” Similarly, the institution may wish to determine an area to be studied by peer observation. As white exemplifies, the areas which the institutions may be interested in doing observations are: “The introduction of a new curriculum area or a specific area which external quality control mechanisms have revealed as needing attention, for example error correction, the teaching of pronunciation or learner training” (2).
3. Background

The observing teacher should know the background of the observed teacher’s class. The observed teacher can normally provide the observer with needed information. According to White, the observer should know “about the students of the class, the content of the lesson and how the lesson fits into the overall structure of the course” (2).

4. The Observation

The observer usually is present in the teaching session without taking any role in teaching or managing the class. S/he is not supposed to participate in the class activities “unless an element of team teaching is agreed in advance” (2). Therefore, as a non-participant observer, s/he just takes notes of what s/he observes which is to be used for further reflection.

5. Follow-up

Without delay after the class, the observing and observed teacher should hold a meeting. White emphasizes that “the focus should be on identifying the strengths of the teaching observed as well as the sharing of practical ideas as to how the teaching might be improved.” The discussed issues should be chosen based on the earlier agreed framework. When the paired teachers are both experienced, White suggests, they had better to “reflect on the underlying rationale of their teaching,” instead of focusing on “superficial issues” like the stages of teaching or the used techniques (3).

6. Confidentiality

The last provision made for peer observation is the confidentiality of the obtained data and the resulted information. In White’s words, “both parties need to be sure that their post-observation discussion and any notes on the observations will remain confidential” (3).
What Are the Advantages of Peer Observation for Teachers?

Teachers who are paired to observe each other’s classes have “an opportunity to learn from each other in a non-threatening environment.” When teachers are ensured that their teaching is not supposed to be judged and in “an atmosphere of trust” among those who participate in discussion sessions, they will have the benefits of posing their ideas freely and fruitfully (White 3).

What Are the Advantages of Peer observation for Institutions?

White states that the important point for academic institutions is that they want to be sure about the efficiency of teaching and the students’ constant learning. In order to satisfy this need, peer observation can be considered as “a powerful tool for disseminating good practice throughout an experienced staff.” In addition, peer observation is an effective tool for assisting inexperienced teachers to promote their teaching skills and get familiar with “the shared values of the institution” (3).

2.5.6. Strategies for Reflection

While Wilkes admits that there are different approaches to reflective teaching, she asserts that regardless of the approach, “reflective teachers generally accept that their teaching practices, and the motives for those practices, should be critically questioned and continually improved” (1). She adds that teaching techniques are not the only things which lie in the scope of critical reflection. The characteristics of reflective teachers such as: their attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and perceptions can be the subject of reflection. Wilkes suggests some strategies to reflective teachers for self analysis as well as shared analysis. The term “strategy” used by Wilkes here is synonymous to “tool” and “procedure” suggested by Tice and Richards respectively.

1. Teaching Portfolios

This strategy is used to review and bring up to date the content of the course and its delivery. While the author refers to focusing on teaching portfolios as a strategy which can be applied by reflective teachers, she does not fully elaborate its
application. Since teaching portfolios are usually assigned by the institutional administration, reflecting on its content apparently needs the administration’s cooperation. Otherwise, updating the content of the course will not be possible.

2. Audio and Video Recordings

Wilkes believes that “viewing a video recording of one’s own teaching can be an eye-opening experience” (1).

Stimulated recall is a term used by Murphy to refer to a process in which two or more reflective teachers agree to “(a) produce separate video-recordings of their own language lessons, (b) set aside time to view the recordings together, and (c) provide opportunities for the videotaped teacher to talk about the events being revealed via the recording as it is being presented” (Principles of Second Language Teacher Education).

To elaborate on the importance of audio recording as an effective tool for reflective teaching, Norrish refers to a situation where the problem is that the students are reluctant to listen to the teacher’s explanations. The useful method here is to record the teachers’ explanations and analyze them. “Are they long? Are they complex? Are they above the language level of the class, and above the level of what is being explained?” (8). A simple tape recorder can be a good device to gather data for reflection in these occasions.

3. Self-assessment Forms

Self assessment forms can be provided by the University Teaching Center (UTC), or it can be designed by the reflective teacher based on his/her specific interests and needs.

4. Student Questionnaire

As another strategy for teachers’ self assessment, students can be asked to fill out the designed questionnaire to give their feedback at the end of each semester. Regarding student feedback, Ur in A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and theory expresses her sorrow about some teachers’ belief which makes them refuse
“to ask their students for feedback on their teaching because of fear of undermining their (the teachers’) authority or losing face” (323). Ur believes that students are a great source to provide teachers with first-hand feedback on their teaching.

5. Reflective Partnership

To define reflective partnership, Wilkes cites Killen who describes this strategy as making “a cooperative effort between two faculty members who observe each other, teach and discuss their interpretations of each other’s actions and intentions” (1). Diaz-Maggioli refers to this strategy as “peer coaching” and defines it as “a voluntary process of observing teaching then sharing perspectives and advice based on that observation” (1).

6. Collegial Coaching

Keig and Waggoner define this strategy as “participating in a process of collegial [i.e. uncompetitive and friendly] coaching which centers on the two primary activities of observation of classroom teaching and instructional consultation” (qtd. in Wilkes 1).

7. Department Chair

The last strategy suggested by Wilkes is considering department chair as a resource. She states that applying the process of “annual review” which is done by the department can provide reflective teachers with invaluable feedback on their whole teaching tasks. Department chairs can design and implement plans for helping those faculty members who have not been fully successful in teaching during the academic year.

2.6. Teacher Training, Teacher Development, Teacher Evaluation and Reflective Teaching

Ur in Teacher Training and Teacher Development: A Useful Dichotomy? asserts, “Teacher training may be defined as preparation for professional practice usually through formal courses at colleges or universities.” The result can be a
certificate given to the individuals who have passed the course. Teacher development, as Ur puts, “usually refers to professional learning by teachers already engaged in professional practice, usually through reflective discussion sessions based on current classroom experience.” According to these two definitions, the main difference between teacher training and teacher development may be that the former is applied to pre-service teachers and the latter is applied to in-service teachers.

In her further elaboration on teacher training and teacher development, Ur points out that the main important source of learning is “the teacher’s reflection on their own experience, whether as learner, as trainee on teaching practice or as professional teacher.” While she stresses on the main role of reflection in learning, she adds, “But to learn only from oneself is limited: one needs also to take advantage of the enormous amount of professional knowledge and expertise ‘out there’ waiting to be tapped.” Reflective teachers can learn many things by observing others’ performance. They can read other studies or listen to the related lectures in the field to know more about what they do in the class. Meanwhile, Ur reminds reflective teachers of the fact that “not all external input will necessarily be accepted, and that which is accepted may not be extensively adapted.” Therefore, the teacher’s duty is to “filter out” those things which may not be useful or understandable, and adapt those which match his own “thought and action” (6-7).

To show the differences between teacher training and teacher development, Ur has tabulated the related features suggested by authors like: Bolitho, Edge, Freeman, McGrath, Tangalos and Underhill as represented in Table 2.3.

Ur’s answer to the question that the title of her article poses is “yes”, “but with reservation”. She believes that it is good to make a distinction between teacher training and teacher development because “it has given rise to some useful and productive thinking about the nature of professional learning.” On the other hand, she considers the distinction harmful when the two concepts of teacher training and teacher development are treated as two separate subjects. In sum, Ur believes that while the distinction between the two is useful, teacher training and teacher development “are of optimal value when they come together” (Teacher Training 4).
Table 2.3
The Differences between Teacher Training and Teacher Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imposed from “above”</td>
<td>Initiated by “self”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-determined course structure</td>
<td>Structure determined through process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not based on personal experience</td>
<td>Based on personal experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externally determined syllabus</td>
<td>Syllabus determined by participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External evaluation</td>
<td>Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input from “experts”</td>
<td>Input from participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unthinking acceptance of information</td>
<td>Personal construction of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive, cerebral [intellectual]</td>
<td>Cognitive and affective, “whole person”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stresses professional skills</td>
<td>Stresses personal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disempowers individual teacher</td>
<td>Empowers individual teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Elaborating on the terms “teacher development” and “teacher training” and their relationship with reflection, McGillick notes that “literally, teacher development requires teachers to look again at what they are teaching, how and why they are doing it and at the context in which they are doing it.” Then he accepts that a process like this is referred to as reflection. “In fact, both teacher training and teacher development can be reflective or involve reflective activities.” He also asserts that on the whole, teacher education courses are involved in reflection in the following conditions: when teachers “reflect back on their personal and professional experiences which might be relevant to their future practice” and when they “reflect on the course activities themselves- that is, on their current experience” (1).

In the introduction of his review on Apple’s book, Diary of a Language Teacher, Poole states that English language teachers are suffering “a heavy burden” these days. Implementing communicative approach makes it necessary for them to...
improve their linguistic, organizational and interpersonal as well as educational skills. Furthermore, the learners who attend language classes have increasing expectations of great success in the mastery of language skills. In order to satisfy the teachers’ needs in the new situation, “there has been a shift of overall paradigm from training to development, with an accompanying emphasis on awareness and reflection as key states or activities” (332).

2.6.1. Teacher Evaluation and Reflective Teaching

Elaborating on teacher evaluation system, Murdoch states that institutes should promote the reflective model of teacher development. He quotes Bardett, who categorizes the teachers following this model as “reflective practitioners” (2). This model of teacher development needs a kind of environment in which teachers are encouraged to initiate different classroom activities. Then, teachers evaluate the consequences of the application of these self initiated activities and “reflect on the relationship between their own work and wider educational goals and issues” (2).

A traditional approach to teacher evaluation, as Murdoch puts it, consists of a formal assessment that should be done at certain intervals during the course. The only tool that is used in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher is observation. Although observation can be used to analyze the data obtained from the classroom, “it should be sensitive to the teacher’s frame of reference and stage of development as a practicing teacher” (2). One of the demerits of applying observation traditionally in different institutes, is that instead of reflecting on the teacher’s ideas, experience, needs and interest, it focuses on the observer’s or the institution frame of reference. More often, observation is used to check the teachers’ behavior in the classroom, their methodology, the way that they interact with students to see whether they follow the institute’s prescribed rules and regulations of teaching.

Murdoch also criticizes the traditional approach to teacher evaluation by considering the issue from the teachers’ point of view by saying, “It is a sad fact that procedures for observation of classroom teaching are all too often viewed by teachers as having more to do with enforcing accepted practice and the authority of
supervisors rather than encouraging teachers . . . at different career stages to develop professionally as reflective practitioners” (2). Teachers see classroom observation as an exam that they participate in. If they present the lesson successfully while being observed, they will have the opportunity to have their contraction renewed. Otherwise, they will lose the job.

Table 2.4 represents teacher qualities that can be investigated during any supervision:

Table 2.4

Teacher Qualities Investigated by Supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Teacher Qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ providing a varied set of learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ presenting language points clearly &amp; interestingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ maintaining a balance between accuracy-focused &amp; content-focused work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ establishing a good rapport with class/individual students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ relating language study to appropriate cultural and academic contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ eliciting students’ background knowledge of course texts/topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ appropriate teacher talk time for activity &amp; course level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ giving students sufficient time to respond to teacher questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ teaching encouraging students to ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ recognizing student effort/achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ taking account of different ability levels in the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ good classroom organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ using varied error correction strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ use of information gap and other communicative activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ making clear the pedagogic purpose of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ promoting communication between students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ varying the pace according to different lesson stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ involving students in decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ grouping students appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ giving feedback to students on their progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ good use of whiteboard/audio-visual aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ flexibility in implementation of planned activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ explaining activities clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ attention to classroom language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instead of using a single tool, Murdoch suggests different tools for obtaining the required data: student questionnaires; teacher questionnaires; interviews with teachers; samples of students’ work; teacher diaries; learner diaries; audio recordings of lessons; video recordings of lessons; classroom observation reports; interviews with coordinators; interviews with program administrators; careful analysis of teaching materials and curriculum/syllabus documents; reports of testing experts, etc.

2.6.2. An Exploratory Approach to Teacher Development

Gebhard recommends teachers three ways to explore their teaching: self observation, observation of other teachers’ classes and talk with them about what they observe in a nonjudgmental and descriptive way (see 2.5.4). Furthermore, over a 25-year period, he has gathered his experience on teaching and the ideas of others and based on that he has suggested some principles for “An Exploratory Approach to Teacher Development” (2).

The first principle states that the goal of exploration is to see teaching differently. To do this, Gebhard believes that teachers should be interested in making small changes to their teaching. “When we try new things, we can compare them with what we usually do, and based on this comparison we can see our teaching differently.” Gebhard considers the aim of “exploring to see teaching differently” dissimilar to the general aim of teacher development that is “improving our teaching.” According to Gebhard, the general goal of teacher development is “to discover better ways to teach.” But the aim of exploring to see teaching differently is “to discover new things about ourselves and consider our teaching beliefs and practices” (2). Gebhard believes that when the goal of teachers is to explore their teaching they go beyond the mere concept of improvement because they gather more data about their own teaching when they want to discover their teaching.

The second principle of an exploratory approach to teacher development states that to explore teaching, we need to accept responsibility for our own teaching, but we also know that we need others’ help to investigate our teaching. Elaborating on this principle, Gebhard says that teachers should be responsible of
what they want to happen in their class. He also quotes Edge who explains that, “as
an individual with or without official training and education [and] as a teacher, only
I can really understand what I am trying to do in class, how it works out for me, and
what I learn from it” (2). However, Gebhard accepts that a teacher can not do exploration by himself. In order to investigate one’s teaching, the teacher needs to understand it, and he needs his colleagues and students to help him understand his own teaching experience and ideas about teaching. Gebhard quotes Fanselow who believes that exploring teaching by the teacher without others’ help “is like trying to use a pair of scissors with only one blade” (3).

Principle three considers prescriptions as a factor which limits exploration. Teachers normally face some colleagues who claim that “they know the best way to teach,” or some journal articles have prescriptive suggestions about teaching. Gebhard believes that prescriptions posed by supervisors, or colleagues should be considered as hindrance to exploration. Prescriptions create three problems. “First, research on the relationship between teaching and learning offers some interesting ideas that we can try out in our teaching, but research has not, and likely never will, produce the methodology we should follow to be effective teachers” (Kumaravadivelu, qtd. in Gebhard 3). The second problem is that prescriptions can make teachers inactive. When there is a prescribed way of teaching, teachers do not try to explore other ways of teaching to see the results, because they feel that prescribed ways are the best way to teach. The third problem with prescriptions is that teachers feel that they need to depend on some authorities for what they do in the class. This feeling prevents teachers from finding answers to their own teaching problems. “A result of others making decisions for us is that we can also lose the chance to discover awareness of our own teaching practices and related beliefs” (3).

Principle four states that exploration is enhanced through description. Gebhard believes that teachers can gather a lot of data about their own teaching by using tools like: audio or video recording interactions, making short transcriptions, taking snap shots, or writing down descriptions from their memory. By reviewing the gathered data, teachers can think about their own teaching and find other ways to teach. “Descriptions [, as the opposite of prescriptions,] allow us to do this [i.e.
finding other ways to teach] because they provide a mirror image that we can use to reflect on teaching. In short, it is through descriptions, more than prescriptions, that we can gain deeper awareness of our teaching and to see our teaching differently” (3).

Principle five states that exploration is enhanced when teachers take a nonjudgmental stance. Based on exploratory approach to teacher development, teachers should avoid making judgments about their own or others’ teaching. To elaborate this principle, Gebhard quotes Simon and Boyer who believe that, “judgments, whether positive or negative, our own or others’, can raise emotions which can interfere with a focus on descriptions” (3).

Principle six considers reflection as a part of exploration. Gebhard quotes the educators in the field of reflective teaching (Bartlett, Dewey, Farrell, Greene, Murphy, Richards & Lockhart, Stanley, and Zeichner & Liston) who “point out that reflection includes thoughtful persistent consideration of beliefs or practices” (4). Regarding this definition, Gebhard concludes that reflection can be considered as a part of exploration. As teachers explore more they can see their teaching differently and they learn how to reflect on their teaching.

Principle seven considers problem solving as an insufficient technique in teaching. “To see teaching differently, we need to go beyond trying to solve problems in our teaching; we can do this by taking different avenues to awareness.” One of these avenues is to explore simply to see what happens. To do this, Fanselow (1987, 1988, 1992a, 1992b, 1997) suggests we try the opposite to our usual classroom behavior. For example, if we are aware that we say “very good” after most student responses, we can be silent, and then describe what happened. . . . If students read aloud in every class, we can ask them to read silently. The idea is to discover what we normally do, and to try the opposite to see what happens. (Gebhard 4)

However, Quirke who has done a detailed research on unseen observations, believes that “teacher development can only be assured if backed by a continuous program of in-service support. . . . The starting point for any such support must be
those issues, both theoretical and practical, which the teacher finds problematic” (3).

2.6.3. Supervised Participation

Buena Vista University holds a course entitled, “EDCO 290: Supervised Participation”. This teacher preparation program has been designed for those students who want to get Iowa teaching licensure. As the university handbook elaborates, the Supervised Participation program has six basic goals presented in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six Basic Goals of Supervised Participation Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To provide students seeking licensure with a preview of the teaching profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To connect education theory to actual classroom settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To familiarize students seeking licensure with their own abilities, especially as they relate to working with students and fellow teachers, in classrooms and in school settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To acquaint students seeking licensure with a variety of instructional strategies, materials, methods of instruction and media currently used in schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To familiarize students seeking licensure with the duties, responsibilities, organizational roles and professional interactions of educators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To provide students seeking licensure with opportunities to observe and to begin developing skills in reflective teaching.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


According to the last goal, The School of Education at Buena Vista University has put into practice the philosophy which considers teachers as reflective practitioners. A reflective practitioner is “a teacher who makes rational, ethical, objective choices about what and how to teach, and who assumes the responsibility for those choices.” A reflective practitioner constantly asks himself questions like: “What am I teaching and why? How am I teaching and why? Are my students learning, why or why not? How can I improve my teaching?” (1).

All courses in education at the University of Buena Vista have adopted a reflective model (see Fig. 2.3). Students who participate in these courses get
familiar with the philosophy of “The Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner” and attain the skills that they require for reflective teaching. The university handbook notes that “the supervised participation experiences provide great opportunities for students seeking Iowa teaching licensure to observe classroom teachers as reflective practitioners” (2).

Fig. 2.3. The Reflection Cycle. “EDCO 290: Supervised Participation Handbook.” Buena Vista University Oct. 2006.

2.6.4. Providing Opportunities for ESL/EFL Teachers to Reflect

Under this title, Farrell in Reflective Teaching: the Principles and Practices presents five elements of a teacher development model. The development model is based on the result of conducting an experiment in Korea. As the author of the
article explains, in 1994, three experienced EFL teachers formed “an EFL teacher development group” (5), and agreed to reflect on their teaching. In order to teach reflectively and share their experiences with the members of the group, they had group meeting held once a week, individual meetings, class observation and regular diary writing. The given five components are briefly explained in the following paragraphs.

1. Providing Different Opportunities

   Teachers should have opportunities to do different activities through which they reflect on their teaching tasks. They can participate in individual, pair, or group activities. It is up to the teacher to select one or two or all these activities to attend to. According to Farrell, activities which provide teachers with opportunities to reflect on their work are: group discussions, observation, journal writing and critical friends.

   **Group Discussions:** It refers to an activity in which a group of teachers gather together to hold meetings on a regular basis to reflect on what they have done in the teaching sessions. Farrell believes that “a teacher trainer (or moderator) should provide encouragement and support for the group” (Reflective Teaching 10).

   **Observation:** It can be self-observation which is done by the teacher himself, or peer observation in which two teachers observe each other’s teaching.

   **Journal Writing:** Journal writing can be done by the reflective teacher as a diary which keeps the teaching and learning events as well as the teacher’s feeling towards them.

   **Critical Friends:** Reflective teachers can form “critical friendships” while observing others’ classes. Farrell believes that “in this way the critical friends can have an open dialogue which is grounded in their observations and experiences. Colleagues can engage each other in systematic reflection and thus direct each other’s professional self-development.” He also cites Francis who says that teachers who have formed a critical friendship are able to “stimulate, clarify and extend thinking . . . and feel accountable for their own growth and their peers’ growth” (Reflective Teaching 10).
2. Negotiated Ground Rules

The second component of a language teacher development model is “negotiated ground rules”. Farrell feels that there should be a “set of built-in-rules or guidelines that each group or pair should follow” in order to stick to the aims when participating in different activities (Reflective Teaching 10). There can be some ground rules for each activity. For instance, some rules can be built in for choosing a person who wants to manage the meetings.

3. Four Distinct Types of Time

According to Farrell, time is a very important factor to be taken into consideration when teachers want to reflect on their teaching. Farrell’s teaching group thought about four kinds of time: individual, activity, development and period of reflection.

**Individual Time:** The amount of time that teachers devote to reflect on their job may be different from one teacher to another. This might negatively affect the productivity of the study; “if all participants do not attend all the group meetings or participate fully in the activities... Therefore, a certain level of commitment by individual participants in terms of time availability should be negotiated by the group at the start of the process” (Farrell, Reflective Teaching 10).

**Activity Time:** The time given to each reflective activity should be fixed in advance. If there is no time limitation for doing each activity, the group members become tired and unwilling to continue the process of reflection.

**Development Time:** This type of time refers to the period that is necessary for each member of the reflective group to develop. Farrell cites Golby and Appleby who state that “teachers do not readily confront their problems with a reflective approach.” Therefore, he concludes that the process of analytical reflection “takes time and only progresses at a rate which individual teachers are ready to reflect critically” (Reflective Teaching 10).

**Period of Reflection:** It refers to the amount of time considered for conducting the study, that is, “the time frame for the project as a whole.” Farrell gives two reasons which support the idea that the devoted time for an individual, a
pair or a group to reflect should be enough and specific. “First, reflection takes time, so the reflective period should be correspondingly long rather than short; otherwise, it will be time wasted. Secondly, having a fixed period in which to reflect allows the participants to know what period during the semester they can devote wholly to reflection” (Reflective Teaching 10).

4. External Input

Farrell considers the three abovementioned suggestions as those that “utilize the idea of probing and articulating personal theories, which is at the center of teacher professional self-development” (Reflective Teaching 10). However, he states that reflection at this level only includes reflective teachers’ own experiences. External input which refers to other sources of data from outside the teaching-learning environment is useful for reflective teachers. External input can be provided by other reflections, experiments, experiences and “theories learned from research and the literature” (Ur, qtd. in Farrell, Reflective Teaching 10).

5. A Low Affective State

When teachers participate in a study in which they practice reflection on their teaching, they may suffer from anxiety. As a member of a reflective group, when a teacher’s practice is judged by other members, s/he may feel nervous. Farrell believes that “a non-threatening environment should be fostered in the group by the individuals themselves. Ways of establishing low anxiety can be incorporated, such as emphasizing description and observation over judgment” (Reflective Teaching 10).

2.7. Reflective Teachers

Reflective teaching is defined as “inquiry about teaching and the contexts in which the teaching is embedded.” In this situation, the teacher plays the role of a mediator and manager. He is not “a mere instrument of change” (Liston and Zeichner, Reflective Teaching). Instead, he is the cause of change, and unlike some other educational studies in which the teacher just does what has been scheduled, the
reflective teacher is the planner as well as the performer.

Murphy mentions that one of the characteristics which differentiate adult people from children is that adults benefit from thinking reflectively more than children. The point is to use capacities like this in a more productive way. This characteristic can be used and developed by teachers in the field of reflective teaching. Teachers who are interested in reflective teaching should fully understand the teaching and learning process. To do this, Murphy suggests teachers to improve some abilities which are presented in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6
Reflective Teachers' Required Abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ gather information on whatever is taking place within a language course;</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ examine such information closely in an effort to better understand what they collect;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ identify everything puzzling about the teaching-learning process;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ build awareness and deeper understanding and current teaching and learning behaviors;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ locate and collaborate with others interested in processes of reflective teaching;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ pose and refine questions tied to one’s teaching that are worth further exploration;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ locate resources that may help to clarify whatever questions are being posed;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ make informed changes in teaching, even if only modest changes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ document changes in teaching-learning behaviors and responses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ continue such efforts over time and share emerging insights with others.</td>
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Pickett cites Robertson and Yiamouyiannis who depict “the process of becoming a reflective instructor as expanding the depth and range of questions you ask about your own teaching, undertaking a more systematic approach to practices and collaborating with others who have similar interests and questions” (1).

In her paper, Learning from First Year Teachers: Characteristics of the Effective Practitioner, Norton mentions the fact that the education programs in
which student teachers participate in order to develop their teaching skills “can not address every student and every situation a prospective teacher will encounter” (4). Instead, student teachers who participate in education programs should learn the principles of efficient teaching and how to apply them practically in appropriate situations. In order to achieve this goal, Norton cites Hillkirk and Dupuis, Smith, Zeichner and Liston as authors who have suggested adapting Dewey’s model of reflective practice. She defines reflective practice as “a disciplined inquiry into the contexts, goals, motives, methods, materials and consequences of educational practice. . . . [which] enables practitioners to thoughtfully examine conditions and attitudes which may impede or enhance student achievement” (5). The author also summarizes the common characteristics of reflective teachers which have been emphasized by scholars like Dewey, Pollard, Tann, Schon, Zeichner and Liston. According to her, reflective teachers should possess some characteristics which are presented in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some Characteristics of Reflective Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective teachers should:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) respond to the unique educational and emotional needs of individual students;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) question personal aims and actions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) constantly review instructional goals, methods and materials;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) augment technical expertise with personal insights and artistry;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) consider the consequences of any proposed plan, the short-term and long-term effects of suggested behaviors;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) regularly discuss the educational problems, situations and issues with colleagues;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) generate new knowledge about teaching and learning; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) participate in appropriate curriculum and school reform movements.</td>
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In sum, considering the abilities that Murphy believes reflective teachers should improve and the characteristics of reflective teachers quoted by Norton, it can be concluded that teachers should apply reflective techniques in the scope of the class and beyond it. The two suggested lists are complementary, while Murphy’s suggested abilities allow teachers to deal with the teaching and learning problems that they encounter in the class, Norton’s suggested list shows reflective teachers how to broaden their view and reflect on general subjects which dominate and affect the teaching and learning process. As it is mentioned, reflective teachers can also be effective in reviewing instructional goals, modifying teaching methods and materials, and developing an appropriate curriculum based on the students’ needs.

In Reflection as the Foundation for E-Portfolios, Levin and Camp state that “without the disposition to reflect on performance, teachers are less likely to improve their practice or to be able to see the links between theory and practice.” Although, they quote LaBoskey whose research shows that only 20% of teachers are naturally reflective, they believe that all prospective teachers should be taught in order to reflect on their performance. The reflective tools that they use in teacher education program at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro include response journals, electronic discussions, self-assessments and peer coaching. “The reflection cycle” is a guide that Levin and Camp suggest to their students for reflective writing. They hope their trainees, following the suggested process for reflective writing, will be able to reflect on their students’ learning, the program of study as well as their own teaching. The reflection cycle proposed by Levin and Camp is presented in Figure 2.4.

According to Levin and Camp, evaluation of pre-service teachers’ success mainly depends on their success in using the figure which represents the reflective cycle. In order to show their ability in thinking reflectively, pre-service teachers should select and develop a teaching practice (e.g., a power point presentation for parents and teachers). Then, they should describe each entry and give evidence to convince the audience to follow what they suggest. The next step is analyzing their own practice and focusing on their strengths and weaknesses.
Appraising is the next step in which pre-service teachers try to figure out the feedback obtained from their audience and highlight eminent points of their performance. Finally, they decide on different parts of their performance whether they want to keep them as they are or to change them for future performances.

Shin in The Reflective L2 Writing Teacher states that “reflective approach enables prospective teachers to integrate theory and practice and to plan their personal and professional development.” She further explains that this is done by providing reflective teachers with an environment in which they can apply their educational background to understand and evaluate their own “philosophy of teaching” (4).

Kelsay in A qualitative Study of Reflective Teaching cites Macrorie who depicts the features of “exceptional” or “expert” teachers. Macrorie labels these teachers as “enablers” because they have the capability “to enable their students to produce good works.” These good works, according to the author, refer to all those
things that “learners write, speak, or construct that counts for them, their fellow learners, their teachers and persons outside the classroom.” Kelsay characterizes the “enablers” as teachers who have the attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and whole-heartedness as well as “the technical skills for inquiry and problem solving” (5). Having both positive attitudes (see section 1.1) and technical skills is something that Dewey considers in his book How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process as perfect characteristics of a reflective teacher.

2.8. Other Studies Done in the Field

One of the purposes of reflective teaching is to revive the concept of “teacher-researcher”. According to Freire, the teacher-researcher term does not imply that we should find “a quality or a way of being or acting” in the teachers and merge it with their teaching. “What is needed is that the teacher should regard himself, in his permanent education, as a teacher, as well as a researcher” (qtd. in Estrela 242). In this section, a selection of studies done by the educators and reflective teachers are presented.

2.8.1. Two Studies Reported by Black

Black in Thinking about Teaching, starts writing her article by Socrates’ famous reminder that “the unexamined life is not worth living,” the idea which may be applicable to reflective activities around the classroom.

The first study, quoted by Black, was done in Ohio State University in which two groups of teachers in the graduate school of education participated. The subjects of the first group were asked to reflect on what they were learning once in a week and record the outcome of their reflection in the form of journal. The subjects in the second group were asked to keep journals of their reflection and they were also taught a planned way of reflection. In addition, the teachers in the second group were persuaded to share their thoughts with their peers. The results of the study showed that, regarding the content and styles of journals prepared by both groups, teachers of the second group had a deeper understanding of reflective activities and
were able to think more of new ways to practice in the classroom.

The second study mentioned by Black, is a case study done by Jay. The subjects were three experienced high school teachers. The results of the study showed that the subjects had two kinds of reflection: “spontaneous” and “structured”. Teachers used spontaneous reflection when they encountered a problem during teaching a lesson. That is what experts call reflection in action. They were able to analyze the circumstances and find alternatives while teaching. “Outside the classroom, teachers used structured reflection to analyze, modify and write about their practice, using standards from an external source. . . . Jay recommends teachers to learn both types of reflection in order to make teaching and learning ‘less of a puzzle’” (Black Thinking about Teaching).

### 2.8.2. Pultorak and Stone’s Study

Pultorak and Stone report their longitudinal investigation which lasted for three years. In this qualitative research, they studied “developmental process of the presence and character of teacher reflectivity in elementary and secondary novice teachers.” The teachers who participated in the study reflected over four procedures: bi-daily journals, bi-weekly journals, visitation journals and reflective interviews. In each series of conducting the study, the researchers divided the procedure into three stages to find out “the dynamics of reflective growth” (4).

In stage one, the teachers as research subjects were asked to observe their cooperating teachers, participate in team teaching, work with small groups of students and take more responsibility in teaching a new subject. The first stage lasted for five weeks, from the second week to the sixth week.

In stage two, the novice teachers were supposed to take the whole responsibility of teaching the subject matter to students. Most teachers were involved in entire control of all their teaching responsibilities. This stage lasted for five weeks, from the seventh week to the eleventh week.

In the final stage, the researchers reduced the novice teachers’ responsibility. It provided the teachers with a chance to think of “their experienced cooperating teacher back in action” (5). This stage lasted for five weeks, from the twelfth week
92 Fatemipour
to the sixteenth week.

The results of the research showed that, “first, as each stage advanced, autonomy and structure in deliberation regarding moral and ethical imperatives increased. This was more apparent during reflective interviews which included structured guidance.” Second, this three-stage study got novice teachers to grow their reflective skills “regarding events critical to the dynamics of teaching, themes of patterns in their teaching competency, comparisons in testable techniques for deficient instructional skills and decisive self-evaluation of specific lessons.” In the end, researchers concluded that teacher reflectivity has that capacity to depict “how individuals transform from novice thinking to expert understanding” (5).

2.8.3. Richards, Ho and Giblin’s Study

In a study, Richards, Ho and Giblin examined the decision making used by the teachers who were participating in a training course to get their “Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults”. When the researchers asked the trainees who had participated in a ten-week course to evaluate their own practice-teaching sessions, they found “a movement from an initial concern with the effectiveness of teaching techniques to a more holistic evaluation of teaching, one in which the trainees focused less on the mechanics of their lessons and more on such dimensions as structuring and cohesion and student participations in lessons” (qtd. in Richards and Lockhart 88)

The researchers found that “as teachers gain experience in teaching and develop a deeper conceptualization of teaching, the criteria they use for evaluating teaching change to reflect their new assumptions, beliefs and levels of awareness.” They also observed that teachers who participated in the study as subjects were able to use the feedback that they had gained in evaluative decisions in their subsequent planning decisions. So, the researchers concluded that planning, interactive and evaluative decisions were interrelated, (qtd. in Richards and Lockhart 89).

2.8.4. Towndrow’s Study

Towndrow studied “the relatively unexplored field of reflective journal”.
His subjects were Chinese students of English who participated in a communication skills program at an institution in Singapore. As the title of his work “Reflections of an on-line tutor” suggests, he worked with Chinese students who wanted to pass the course online. He used “teacher reflective diary writing” as the main tool for his investigation (174). The researcher used a laptop computer to record a “diary of his purposes, reactions and observations of the students’ learning behavior throughout the course (175). He also asked the students to write their own reflective diary. But a few students followed his advice to benefit from the advantages of reflecting on their own learning experience, “most others did not favor the approach” (177). Some students claimed that they did not have time to write their diaries or found it difficult to do. One of the students who had completed one part of her homework successfully stated, “I think it is not necessary to write learning journal because . . . you improve. I think you can feel . . . you improve. No need to write down” (178). The study showed that some students were able to reflect on their learning, but most others could not do the task.

Towndrow mentions that in numerous occasions during the research he had to reflect on the events while teaching the on-line course. The researcher adds that he “benefited from writing things down before deciding on the best course of action to take.” He concludes that “reflective journal writing, especially as it relates to on-line learning, definitely repays the time and effort involved.” He further states that, all English language teachers should consider reflective journal writing as an option “whether they are involved in a formal research study, or simply interested in personal professional development” (181).

2.8.5. A Study Reported by Gebhard

In Japan, a high school teacher of English language, as Gebhard reports it, observed her own teaching following an exploratory procedure. She audio and video taped her performance to explore her teaching “with an open mind toward discovery”. When she reviewed the videotape, she noticed that she had used lots of “praise behaviors” in her interaction with students. Therefore, she took into consideration the times that she had used praising expressions like “very good” in
dealing with students’ responses. The result of focusing on praise behaviors showed, “She praised them even when they did not get a correct answer or understood her.” Then, the researcher concluded that the overuse of praising expressions served to confuse the students. “She also reflected on why she praised students and decided that praise can be an important motivating force. She also realized that if the students can not distinguish when and why she is praising them, it is useless” (7).

Based on the reflection on what the researcher observed, she changed her praising techniques. She praised students when their responses were really impressive. After two months, she taped her class again and noticed that the number of times that she had used praising expressions decreased remarkably. She had praised students when they had showed appropriate behavior, e.g., producing a correct response. The researcher found that the manipulation of her praising techniques caused students to improve their use of English language.

2.8.6. Curtis and Szesztay’s Study

The paper, The Impact of Teacher Knowledge Seminars: Unpacking Reflective Practice, prepared by Curtis and Szesztay, reports the results of attending a program whose aim was to involve teachers in “professional development through structured and systematic reflective practice” (1). In 1998, the School for International Training (SIT) in Vermont, USA established The Teacher Knowledge Project (TKP). According to SIT website, the purpose of the project is “to offer teachers a disciplined way to examine their teaching in relation to student learning. In so doing, the project supports the development, delivery, documentation and dissemination of reflective professional development” (SIT Website). Curtis and Szesztay quote the SIT website which mentions three goals for The Teacher Knowledge Project. Firstly, TKP would go on holding seminars in the subject of reflective professional development. Secondly, TKP would have some studies to find the relationship between reflective professional development and the practices done by teachers and the degree of students’ learning. Lastly, TKP would hold meetings for discussion and publicize the results to create a set of connections
among the educators, researchers and those who are decision makers in the field of reflective professional development.

The researchers’ purpose was to examine the effect of participating in TKP seminars on teachers who attended in one or more seminars from 1997 to 2002. They also wanted to assess the indirect effect of the project on the teachers’ pupils and school societies. The tools used for collecting data consisted of interviews and surveys. The interviews were semi-structured and interviewee-led. It provided the seven teachers who participated in these interviews with opportunity to state their point of view about the effect of participating in seminars on their teaching methods, and their students.

The questionnaires which were sent to 87 past participants consisted of either statements made by interviewees or earlier project documentations. Out of 87 sent questionnaires, 35 were completed and returned to the researchers. The researchers believed that this number of completed questionnaires was significant. “It is possible that this many teachers took time to read through, complete and return the questionnaire because the seminar that they attended played an important role in their professional development.” The purpose of sending the questionnaires was to see whether the quotations made by interviewees were shared by other participants. In other words the researchers wished to “get a more accurate picture of the extent to which these outcomes were seen as relevant by all participating teachers” (4).

Analyzing the data, the researchers followed “a grounded theory approach”. Based on this approach, the researchers “did not have a preconceived list of outcomes” which were supposed to be found. Instead, they desired to extract the effect of seminars on the quality of teaching from the data themselves. The primary data analysis showed the following six categories which were the effects of seminar participation:

1. renewed enthusiasm for teaching;
2. looking at teaching with “fresh eyes”;
3. becoming more reflective and aware as teachers;
4. shifts in understanding teaching;
5. enhancing the quality of student learning;
2.8.7. Norton’s Study

In her study, Learning from First Year Teachers: Characteristics of the Effective Practitioner, Norton investigated the relationship between the personality characteristics of teachers who taught effectively and reflective thinking. The subjects who participated in her study were 42 first year elementary school teachers. At the end of their first year of teaching, the participants were interviewed. Soon after the interview, the participants completed the questionnaires. The questions of the interview and the questionnaire focused on topics like effective teaching, personal efficiency and professional development. The results of study showed that effective teaching was highly related with many of the teachers’ personality characteristics. “Curiously, none of the participants mentioned any instructional techniques essential for effective teaching. When asked about instructional techniques, each participant dismissed them as irrelevant to effective teaching.” From the subjects’ point of view, as the researcher stated, “The effective practitioner was a caring, committed, highly creative, proficient reflective thinker with a strong internal locus of control” (10).

The analysis of the qualitative data of Norton’s study indicated six activities which may be suitable to be included in pre-service teachers’ activities for increasing prospective teachers’ skill as well as their capability of reflective thinking. These activities are: “(a) clinical field experiences during methods and foundations courses; (b) microteaching lessons; (c) video analysis of student teaching performances; (d) weekly seminars for pre-service teachers during full-time student teaching; (e) reflective journals; and (f) professor-modeled reflective thinking” (11).

2.8.8. Whitson and Bodycott’s Study

The purpose of Whitson and Bodycott’s study was to describe the Postgraduate Diploma Course in education focusing on the English language training package. Narrowing the scope of the study, they considered those elements
which were effective in making the most use of feedback and reflection. The collected data were in audio, video and written forms.

The researchers believe that “developing the ability to critically reflect encompasses the provision and attainment of appropriate constructive feedback.” According to them, feedback gives the trainee teachers “an outsider’s perspective of observable teaching behavior.” Feedback can be obtained from three different sources: learners, experienced colleagues or other trainee teachers. No judgment should be included in feedback provided by observers or participants. Feedback should not include labeling teachers’ activities as right or wrong. Feedback can be provided in any part of teaching-learning process. “Constructive feedback” is provided by observing the teaching/learning process and the obtained data can be used for further discussion and exploration (130).

The researchers explain that based on the data obtained from the students’ responses and a related literature examination, the structure of the English language postgraduate teacher preparation program at the National Institute of Education, Singapore, was mostly modified. The focus of their study was on the developments of the revised program and aimed at “bridging the gap between trainee teacher preparation and actual teaching studies.” The subjects were graduate students who applied for placement in the “twenty-week Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Primary (P) course”. According to the study report, the program purpose was to develop “their content knowledge base through demonstration and reflective feedback” (130). In addition to the existing course structure, the researchers included two “tutorial strategies” in order to provide “a firm foundation of language theory and practice, which engaged students in the processes of constructive reflection and feedback” (131). The tutorial strategies were as follows:

1. Demonstration Lessons by Tutors
2. Student Demonstration Lesson, Video Reteaching and Written Critique

In the discussion section of their paper, Whitson and Bodycott state, “The changes made to the course content and components are by no means finished. The restructuring process must be ongoing, if we are to continue and to try and meet the needs of our training teachers and the demands of the school and educational-
community” (136). They believe that the course participants should have the opportunity to give their feedback on the course. Furthermore, teacher trainers should welcome the feedback on the course content and make the required changes which are applicable.

The analysis of the data showed that:

1. Trainees found the teach/reteach [experience], lesson demonstrations and writing project most helpful. They gained most in the areas of the planning, communication and technical instructional procedures. These course components gave students the opportunity to put theory into practice.

2. Trainees expressed more confidence in the methods advocated for the lower primary classroom. . . . Teacher trainees feel this could be the result of more procedurally directed methods in the lower primary, which use specific teaching resources such as pointers, big books . . .

3. Trainees desired more opportunities to experience the teach/reteach microteaching experience. (Whitson and Bodycott 137)

Based on the obtained data, the researchers conclude that it is worthy of noticing why trainees seem “more confident in lower primary methodology” and regarding the allotted time to different activities, how they can provide students with more opportunity to “experience the video reteaching and written critique procedure” (137).

2.8.9. Posteguillo and Palmer’s Study

These two scholars in Reflective teaching in EFL: Integrating Theory and Practice, report their study whose aim was to fill the gap between the “theoretical input and pedagogical teacher training by means of a thorough reflective process on language teaching” (1).

In their study report, they conclude, “Linguistics as a source discipline should be integrated with language teacher education. This integration process should be reflective: prospective teachers should be informed as to how to incorporate their own linguistic background knowledge into their specific teaching
contexts.” Based on their findings, Posteguillo and Palmer also conclude that if teachers do not merge their linguistic experience with their teaching through reflective process, the gap between theory and practice will remain and “language teaching in general will suffer of this unfortunate dichotomy” (12).

2.9. Summary

Zeichner and Liston in *Reflective Teaching: an Introduction* clarify that reflective teachers are not better teachers unless they learn from their reflection and attempt to put their findings into practice to develop their teaching. The authors emphasize that “teacher reflection does not automatically lead to improved practice. . . . The notion that teachers improve simply by examining their actions and considering their effects on students oversimplifies a ‘complex reality’.” Zeichner and Liston give some examples of bad reflective teaching where teachers follow the reflection process, but they do not take the responsibility of their teaching weaknesses. In these cases, the teachers try to blame the students’ background or the educational planning of the institution for their weak teaching. The authors recommend, “Teacher reflection stands a better chance of improving teaching and learning if teachers critically examine their actions according to democratic principles, such as giving students equal opportunities to learn and respecting students' different ways of learning” (qtd. in Black 1).

In the present chapter, the researcher has attempted to gather a body of knowledge which portrays the concepts of reflection, reflective thinking and reflective teaching. The purpose has also been to review the research findings as well as the viewpoints of the educators who have been involved in the process of reflective teaching and their contribution to its development. The second section of the chapter has been devoted to the tools which are used in reflective teaching, and their basic concepts, procedures and advantages and disadvantages have thoroughly been discussed. The role of reflective teaching in teacher training, teacher development and teacher evaluation was another topic which occupied a significant part of the present study. In that section, the need for integration of the two apparently separate concepts (i.e. teacher training and teacher development) was
discussed and different comments related to applying reflective teaching techniques to pre-service and in-service teachers’ practices were presented. The characteristics of reflective teachers formed another section in the present chapter. The last section focused on the studies done in the field of reflective teaching. Citing each study, an account of the setting, subjects, procedure, results and its contribution to reflective teaching was discussed. Other studies worthy of noticing are those done by: Bain et al., Burton, Liaw, O’Brien, Pedro and Suzuki.

The researcher admits that an overview of the complete background of reflective teaching in education or even in language teaching is not possible in such a study whose main focus is on the application of reflective teaching tools in ESL and EFL contexts. Regarding this fact, the researcher tried to portray the past and present condition of reflective teaching in education in general and English language teaching in particular. As it was mentioned in chapter one (subsection 1.2), there is a missing ring in the chain of reflective teaching which makes it difficult for novice teachers to apply its techniques in their teaching, (i.e. the lack of a hierarchy of reflective tools which guides teachers to choose the appropriate tool based on their own needs). Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness of the tools used in reflective teaching. The main focus of the study is to provide the novice reflective teachers with some hierarchies of reflective tools. Referring to these hierarchies, teachers will be able to decide on choosing the tool which will satisfy their needs for reflection.

Following the set layout of the thesis, the next chapter elaborates the data collection methodology and research design of the study. The main components of conducting of the study which comprise the research subjects, setting and instruments and the procedures followed to choose or prepare them are explained in details there.