

**QUALIFIED TO TEACH:  
THE INDUCTION EXPERIENCE OF  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE NOVICE TEACHERS  
IN LIBYAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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## Abstract

This study is an investigation of Libyan English language novice teachers' experiences during their first three years after qualifying. Its aim is to inform the development of an induction framework for supporting newcomers to the profession in secondary schools.

In this mixed methods study I employed a two-pronged approach: quantitative methods for mapping the territory and to see the wider picture, and qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of the teachers' experiences and thoughts during their first three years of teaching. Quantitative data were generated by a survey questionnaire, while qualitative data were derived from open-ended questionnaire items and interviews.

The vast majority of novice teachers in this study reported serious shortcomings in the quality of their induction. Two hundred and twenty-seven teachers from Alzawia and Al-Niqat Al-Khams districts were surveyed, including 21 teachers who participated in interviews. One hundred and ten had graduated from Faculties of Arts in universities where the main focus of study was to develop research. One hundred and seventeen had completed a degree at a teacher training institution. Findings from this research indicate that they encountered diverse challenges in relation to curriculum delivery, integration into the school community and communication with students' parents, as well as financial difficulties.

The key issues that emerged from this research were:

- Support for novice teachers is limited, inconsistent and inadequate.
- Teacher professionalism requires further development.
- The concept of mentoring warrants further consideration to be of benefit to novice teachers and their pupils.

This study provided evidence that support at school and district level is essential in order to assist novice teachers of English as a foreign language in their transition from student teacher to professional practitioner. With the aim of enhancing the

quality of teacher induction in Libyan secondary schools, the findings of this study have been used to inform the development of a set of recommendations for novice teachers, school principals, mentors and senior staff in district education departments.

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## Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	vii
List of Tables .....	vii

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

Introduction .....	1
1.1 Significance of the study .....	1
1.2 Background of the researcher .....	2
1.3 Reasons for undertaking the PhD and claim for originality .....	6
1.4 Structure of the thesis .....	6

### **Chapter Two: The Libyan Context**

Introduction .....	8
2.1 Geographical background .....	8
2.2 Historical background .....	9
2.3 The Libyan education system .....	12
2.3.1 Historical background .....	13
2.3.2 Values and structures of mainstream education .....	14
2.3.3 Higher education .....	17
2.3.3.1 Structure .....	18
2.3.3.2 Student population .....	19
2.3.3.3 Academic staff in higher education .....	22
2.4 The English language in Libyan education .....	23
2.5 Teacher education in Libya .....	27
2.6 Teaching English as a profession .....	28

### **Chapter Three: Literature Review**

Introduction .....	30
3.1 Development of professional knowledge base and classroom practice .....	31
3.2 Provision of support and guidance .....	36
3.2.1 Induction programmes for novice teachers .....	40
3.2.2 The mentoring dimension .....	45
3.3 School culture .....	45
3.4 The concept of professionalism .....	51

### **Chapter Four: Methodology**

Introduction .....	55
4.1 Research approach .....	55
4.2 Research design .....	58
4.3 The sample .....	58
4.4 Data collection .....	59
4.4.1 The survey questionnaire .....	59
4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews .....	61
4.5 Data analysis .....	63

4.6 Ethical considerations .....	64
4.7 Limitations of the research .....	65

### **Chapter Five: Data Presentation**

5.1 The survey questionnaire .....	70
5.2 Participants profile .....	70
5.3 Quantitative data– Likert scale questions .....	73
5.3.1 Novice teachers’ pre-service experience .....	74
5.3.2 Novice teachers’ induction experiences .....	75
5.4 Qualitative data - open ended questions .....	88
5.5 Interview data .....	98
5.5.1 Pre-service preparation .....	98
5.5.2 Key areas in novice teachers’ professional development .....	110
5.5.3 Induction arrangements .....	111
5.5.4 Mentor support .....	116
5.5.5 Other sources of support .....	124
5.5.6 Contextual factors .....	137
5.5.7 Challenges .....	139
5.5.8 Novice teachers’ overall impressions .....	165

### **Chapter Six: Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

Introduction .....	184
6.1 Relevance and duration of pre-service preparation .....	185
6.2 Quality of school based support for novice teachers .....	196
6.3 Outside school support .....	208
6.4 Other factors influencing novice teachers’ experiences .....	209

### **Chapter Seven: Discussion and Conclusion**

7.1 Induction - a concept to be developed .....	211
7.2 Teacher professionalism in Libya .....	216
7.2.1 Genderisation of the profession .....	217
7.2.2 Inadequate Remuneration .....	218
7.2.3 Status and ownership .....	218
7.2.4 School culture .....	219
7.3 Wider political and cultural issues .....	225
7.4 Recommendations .....	233
7.5 Reflections on the research journey; suggestions for future research .....	236

<b>References</b> .....	238
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<b>Appendices</b> .....	257
Appendix A: Letter to the gatekeepers and consent form .....	257
Appendix B: Participant information sheet and consent form .....	262
Appendix C: Survey questionnaire English and Arabic .....	267
Appendix D: Participants' interview questions English and Arabic .....	276

Appendix E: Mentor interview questions English and Arabic .....	284
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## List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Map of Libya .....	9
Figure 5.1 Gender .....	71
Figure 5.2 Teaching experience .....	72
Figure 5.3 Location of school .....	72
Figure 5.4 Degree specialism .....	73
Figure 5.5 Specialization .....	73
Figure 5.6 Pre-service training had been relevant to my learning needs as a novice teacher .....	74
Figure 5.7: Ongoing support provided by mentor.....	76
Figure 5.8: My Mentor helped me understand the professional expectations concerning classroom practice and professional responsibilities .....	76
Figure 5.9: My Mentor helped me identify solutions to problems and concerns related to school .....	77
Figure 5.10: My mentor provided me with learning opportunities .....	78
Figure 5.11: Engaging in critical evaluation and target setting .....	78
Figure 5.12: Providing access to community of practice.....	79
Figure 5.13: My mentor provided me with relevant support and guidance .....	80
Figure 5.14: My mentor had been flexible and open minded in assisting me .....	81
Figure 5.15: My mentor helped me balance my own life with teaching .....	81
Figure 5.16: My principal provided me with a staff induction programme .....	82
Figure 5.17: My principal observed lessons and provided prompt feedback .....	83
Figure 5.18: Opportunities for professional learning and development .....	84
Figure 5.19: I have access to teaching and learning resources as required .....	84
Figure 5.20: The teaching rooms are appropriate .....	85
Figure 5.21: Time for teaching the English language curriculum is enough .....	86
Figure 5.22: Workload .....	87
Figure 5.23: Mentor support in developing classroom practice .....	88

## List of Tables

Table 2.1: Enrolment for University Education in Libya .....	20
Table 2.2: Development of Enrolments in Higher Education in Libya .....	21
Table 2.3: Development of female enrolments in higher education in Libya .....	22
Table 2.4: The growth of the number of academic staff in HE in Libya.....	22

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **Introduction**

The reason for undertaking this research is that there is a paucity of accurate information concerning the support of novice English teachers in Libya. The researcher has experience of teaching English as a foreign language over more than two decades at different levels and is familiar with the challenges confronting novice teachers in the early stages of their career, especially those teaching English as a foreign language. There is currently no provision in the Libyan education system to support newly qualified teachers through a formal induction programme. This lack of support is compounded by the fact that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service programmes are inadequate and unorganised (Al-Hazmi, 2003).

At a time of fundamental social, political and cultural change, it is hoped that this study can assist in providing an insight into novice teachers' needs and how they can be best addressed through the provision of adequate support. Furthermore, this study allows novice teachers to have their voices heard and to record their experiences. The findings of this study will be reported from the perspective of the novice teachers, with the aim of enabling policy makers to develop a framework to support them. It will also be of interest to other stakeholders, such as education professionals involved in supporting novice teachers' professional development and novice teachers themselves.

#### **1.1 Significance of the study**

The findings generated by this research will be of relevance to those concerned with the professional development of novice teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools. It will provide insight both into teachers' transition from initial training/education to professional practice and into the challenges with which they are confronted in their day-to-day work. It will provide school principals, teacher educators and policy makers at government level with information that could contribute to improving the quality of support programmes to assist new-comers to the profession. It will shed light on what effective induction and mentoring

programmes should look like and what assistance and training are necessary in order to ease success newcomers entering education (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009).

The outcomes of the research will not only benefit the researcher's own professional development as a teacher educator but, importantly, will allow her to play a part in the development of her country through making an academic and professional contribution to the discipline covered in the research. Such a study should be of interest to all those concerned with the support of novice teachers: teacher educators, school principals, and policy makers. This study aims to make a contribution to improving the relationships between mentors and novice teachers and thus help to raise educational standards in Libya. Finally, this study will inform a set of recommendations for the development of an induction framework for novice EFL teachers in Libyan secondary schools (See chapter 7.4).

The research objectives are to:

1. investigate novice teachers' experiences during their first three years after qualifying.
2. identify novice teachers' personal and professional needs.
3. identify the structural social and cultural factors inherent in the practice context that promote or impair professional learning.
4. design and develop a framework for supporting secondary school novice teachers of English in Libya.

## **1.2 Background of the researcher**

I studied for four years in the Art section after completing the Basic Education (primary and preparatory stage) in order to teach English, history or geography. Having completed my undergraduate study at the Intermediate Institution for Teacher Training I was appointed in the autumn of 1982 at the age of 19 to teach EFL to seventh and eighth grade girls (aged 13-15) at Alwady School in Sabratha.

Each year, I taught three classes. The principal had a strong personality; he was approachable, respected and appreciated the teachers' efforts, especially those who worked hard and were punctual. I used to play games with my students, which was always successful.

My mentor was wonderful and energetic, encouraging me to transform the class into a theatre: acting, singing, and dancing whenever the situation required. He was also my teacher in teaching methodology, so I absorbed his ideas regarding the use of teaching aids and acting all the time. I also used my talent for drawing and made most of teaching aids.

I taught English at this school for four years, until it was banned in all schools in Libya. I then taught geography - especially global geography - and history, with less enthusiasm. These subjects were the only subjects I could teach for this academic year although the principal was trying to accommodate my areas of expertise, the older established colleagues provided me with limited opportunities. When there was an opportunity I chose to teach first grade students, aged 6. After the first two weeks, which were extremely challenging (severe headaches every day), I gradually adjusted to the needs of my students. It became an amazing year for me personally, so much so that I missed the children at the end of the week wishing that there was no weekend.

The principal never entered my class, neither did he provide me with any feedback. I noticed him many times behind classroom doors, listening to teachers secretly in order to assess and record their performance for the annual administrative report. After three years working in the school, he asked me to write assessment reports for student teachers who were training in the school. He told me that he recognised my competence and explained to me that is why he did not ask my more experienced colleagues. Most of them used to sit around in groups gossiping. My other two sisters, who are teachers in the same school, established a positive relationship, because teachers did not appreciate the fact that I did not want to waste my time by having a chat with them and I made it a 'hi-bye' relationship. Instead I put a table in the same room to mark the students' homework without paying any attention to them.

Since the primary and preparatory school for girls in which I taught was next to a similar school for boys, the district education department decided to establish one mixed school for students aged 6-12, and another for students aged 13-15, to which I

was transferred. My mentor had asked me many times before English was banned whether I would like to transfer into a secondary school but I refused, as I preferred teaching in the same area. However, when he heard about my transfer to a school which I did not want to teach in, he transferred me to a secondary school which fulfilled my expectations and where I taught happily for two years. In the winter of 1992, my family moved to my current city of residence, Alzawia, where all my unspoken dreams came true and where due to its urban setting opportunities for achieving these dreams emerged.

The district education department of Alzawia transferred me to a school which needed female teachers as they were setting up a mixed-sex school. In my first year, I worked in this preparatory school as an extra teacher, covering teacher absences, ensuring that students cleaned the school, and supervising the queue waiting to come in the building in the morning and after break. In my second year I taught English to four classes (seventh grade and eighth grade). During the third academic year some opportunities for professional advancement arose. I was awarded a place, on the basis of an interview and an examination, at a newly opened higher education institution, the first of its kind in the west of Libya. I studied there, and was amongst the first cohort of graduates. We were treated very well, personally and academically. To encourage teachers to study there we were paid our monthly teacher's salary and, after my second year, I earned a two-year diploma in English and increased one increment on the teacher's salary scale in line with my completion of another four years of teaching. I graduated achieving an excellent grade and thus realised my dream to complete my studies. I then went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in English after two years at the university in Alzawia, where we were taught by some of same lecturers that we had at the higher education institution. I earned an average grade of 'excellent' from the Faculty of Education at the University. In 2000, this faculty changed its name to the Faculty of Arts, and graduates subsequently prepared to become researchers.

At that time I had to study and teach at the same time, which was challenging. None of the principals adjusted my teaching schedule in light of the additional work, although the head of the English department at the university did his best to timetable our seminars at convenient times. I suffered a lot and had to listen to the

principals' sarcastic comments, such as, '*Do you want to reach the moon?*' When I started going to university, therefore, I was determined to complete my studies and nothing would hinder me, except death. I taught in the school nearest to the university in order to harmonize my work and study time. In the preparatory school (age 13-15) where I was teaching the principal was not very forthcoming. He made no effort to adjust my timetable so I could attend the university programme and gave me different syllabuses which took time in terms of planning and preparation. In spite of these obstacles I completed my programme with strong enthusiasm in the summer of 1998.

After that, I studied for my master's degree at the Academy of Postgraduate Studies in Tripoli. I experienced the same challenges and found it difficult to harmonize my life as a teacher and student at the same time. In my first semester, my father took and collected me from school and university, until later when he developed his disability. This meant that in addition to timetabling problems I now needed a means of reliable transportation. Maybe the reader will wonder how commuting from one area to another can be considered a problem. At that time, the transportation network in Libya was very poor, without timetables specifying bus arrival and departure times. Instead, and most transport was provided by private cars, which will only move when a sufficient number of passengers have been reached, meaning waiting times of up to 90 minutes. Sometimes I paid, when the car was full and sometimes I had to cancel my trip to the Academy because waiting would have taken too long. Consequently, completing my master's degree took me five years instead of four. I attended the academy twice a week full time and taught for the rest of the week. My master's thesis was a critical evaluation of one of the English textbooks relating to the new syllabus in the secondary school (not the current series).

In autumn 2004, I was appointed to a post at the university. My first year was very challenging, since everything was new and I was given four different subjects to teach. I taught reading comprehension for first and second year students, research methods to third year students, as well as morphology to third year students. But after four years, I felt that I had settled in my new role as a university lecturer.

Then I won sponsorship to embark on a PhD programme at a university in the UK. This provided me with the opportunity to achieve my dreams of becoming an academic researcher. I was able to easily determine the focus of my PhD research.

### **1.3 Reasons for undertaking the PhD and claim for originality**

The idea for this research arose when conducting interviews for my master's degree; became aware that English language novice teachers were left to their own devices, without any guidance about teaching. They asked me a lot regarding the syllabus and, instead of conducting the interviews, I responded to their questions as best I could.

My teaching experience in the English department of the Faculty of Arts in Alzawia University has shown that while students are taught to carry out research, they are appointed as teachers with no relevant pre-service preparation. There is no provision in the Libyan education system to support novice teachers through a formal induction programme. Not only are the graduates from faculties of arts in need of relevant and targeted support and guidance; ironically, those who having gained their degree at a college of education are also ill-prepared for their role as classroom practitioners.

This study is original for the following reasons:

- There is no published research on the support of novice teachers in Libya during the first three years of their careers.
- No other studies to date have explored in such depth the provisions by the Libyan education system for the support of newly qualified teachers.
- This research is the first to investigate the experiences of novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools and the kind of support that is available to them in the early stages of their career.

### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the topic, the rationale for conducting the study and the significance of this research.

It also provides information about researcher's background, the reasons for undertaking the PhD research and its claim to originality, in addition to outlining the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two discusses the Libyan context of the research, and provides the historical background to the education system in Libya; specific attention is given to teaching English in Libya in particular.

Chapter Three presents a review of the relevant literature, and examines the development of a professional knowledge base and classroom practice for novice teachers. It also focuses on providing support and guidance, with specific attention given to the mentoring dimension, monitoring progress, and adequate resources. This chapter also discusses the impact of school culture and teacher professionalism.

Chapter Four turns to the approach to the study and its design. Details of the methods used for data collection and analysis are given, the sample is described, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations and limitations of the research.

Chapter Five presents and analyses the quantitative and qualitative data that emerged from the questionnaire survey and interviews, leading to Chapter Six, which includes a discussion of the findings around four distinct themes: the relevance and duration of pre-service preparation; the quality of school-based support for novice teachers; support from outside school; and finally the other factors influencing novice teachers' experiences.

Finally, Chapter Seven concludes the thesis with a discussion around the key issues that emerged from the research: Insufficient pre-service preparation; inadequate support during induction, and a school culture that is not always conducive to workplace learning and professional development. This chapter also includes recommendations for future research.

## Chapter Two

### The Libyan Context

#### Introduction

Throughout the world the progress of education is regarded as a common measure of national development. The pursuit of knowledge in Libya, an Arabic Islamic country, has been influenced by religion, since Islam is a comprehensive way of life and not only a religion. There is much evidence in the Quran supporting the idea of learning and knowledge. Education is at the heart of the Islamic faith; Mohammed, prophet of Islam and a model for Muslims (Esposito, 2002) said that the 'seeking of knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim'. Almost all the 114 suras of the Quran reflect the importance of education, for example: *'God will raise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge'* (Al-Mujadila, 58/11). Moreover, the process of learning was itself considered by Mohammed to be an act of worship: he said *'S/he who goes forth in search of knowledge is considered as struggling in the Cause of Allah until s/he returns'*; and *'whoever is on a path in search of knowledge, Allah will ease his/her way to Paradise'*. The Quran also asks: *'Are those who have knowledge equal to those who do not have knowledge?'* (Al-Zumar, 39:9). Education can be regarded, therefore, as having key importance in the Libyan context.

To understand this context in relation to teachers' professional learning and development, however, it is important to examine the country from different perspectives, and outline the geographical and historical background and the education system.

#### 2.1 Geographical background

Libya is an Arabic Islamic developing country, located on the North African coast of the Mediterranean. It borders Egypt and Sudan to the east, Chad and Niger to the south, and Algeria and Tunisia to the west (Tamtam et al., 2011). Libya covers an area of 1,759,540 km<sup>2</sup>, which makes it the fourth largest country in Africa (Ben Jaber, 2010). The largest cities are Tripoli, Benghazi, Alzawia, Musrata, Derna, Sirt and Sabha (WHO, 2011).

**Figure 2.1:** Map of Libya



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline\\_of\\_Libya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline_of_Libya)

The administrative system in Libya is decentralized; the country is divided into 23 districts, each of which has a department of education which is under the supervision of the national General People's Committee for Education (WHO, 2011). Compared with some nations in the region - Egypt for example - Libya, with over 6 million inhabitants, is not densely populated. (Karam and Tayeh, 1999); there is an average of only 3.3 persons per km<sup>2</sup> (WHO, 2011). In the north, however, the population density is over 50 persons per km<sup>2</sup>, while in the interior it decreases to less than one person per km<sup>2</sup>. This disparity in population density is due to vast areas of drought, which is why more than 90% of Libyans live in the north-east and north-west near the Mediterranean coast (Elzaitni, 2008).

## 2.2 Historical background

### *Post-World War II era (1951-1969)*

After 40 years of European occupation, King Idris al-Sanusi declared Libya to be an independent monarchy on 24 December 1951, to be known as the United Kingdom of Libya. At that time there was a federal government comprising three states:

Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan (Vandewalle, 2006; Andrews, 2009). Despite efforts by some colonial countries to keep Libya divided and weak under a federal government a united Libya, named the Kingdom of Libya, was founded on 26 April, 1963 (Vandewalle, 2006). In 1953 Libya established formal friendly relations with Britain by signing a 20-year military treaty with Britain. This treaty served British military purposes, as it gave Britain ground and transport facilities in exchange for aid (Elabbar, 2011). Oil exploration started in the Kingdom of Libya in 1955, and oil was first exported in 1961. The discovery of oil transformed Libya from a poor state into a wealthy country.

#### *The Gaddafi years (1969-2011)*

On 1 September 1969 a military revolution, led by Muammar Gaddafi, deposed King Idris and ended the monarchy; the country became the Libyan Arab Republic (Ahmida, 2005: 77). On 29 October 1969 the Libyan government demanded the closure of all British and American military bases resulting in withdrawal of troops between March and June 1970 (Vandewalle, 2006). In the Sabha Declaration of 1977 the General People's Congress proclaimed Libya to be a Jamahiriya, a state of the masses (Joffe, 2001), i.e. a country administered directly by its people (Vandewalle, 2006).

On the international front, Libya was added in 1977 to the list of potential enemies of the United States (ibid, 2006), and following a series of terrorist incidents in the UK and Germany, and the Lockerbie explosion in 1988, economic sanctions were imposed on Libya which included freezing overseas assets and flight restrictions to and from Libya (Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 2005; Vandewalle, 2006; Elmabruk, 2008). After long years of isolation and international rejection, Gaddafi agreed to pay compensation to the families of those who had died in the terrorist attacks. Finally, on 23 April 2004, some of the United States' economic sanctions against Libya were revoked after Gaddafi's agreed to end the biological weapons programmes; Libya then resumed normal relations with western nations (Vandewalle, 2006).

*The revolution and post-Gaddafi period (2011-present)*

In 2010, the youth movement in North Africa known as the ‘Arab Spring’ started in Tunisia and Egypt. Soon after, revolution erupted in Libya. As mentioned by Wilson (2011), the Libyan civil war was a result of the lack of economic opportunities for many young people and Gaddafi’s regime of favouritism and repression. Sikkema (2011) added that the high unemployment rate, which exceeded 20 percent, was responsible for some families’ unstable incomes. Moreover, the wealth generated from oil was reserved for the inner circle only (ibid, 2011). Another grievance was that Libyans had no freedom of expression and that the media were controlled and repressed by the Gaddafi regime. Furthermore, there were offences against human rights in the form of collective punishments, sometimes affecting entire towns, for an act that had been committed by one individual (Sikkema, 2011).

This research was interrupted by the events that took place early in 2011, which severely affected the data collection process and had a deeply traumatic effect on the researcher. It is relevant therefore to include an account of these events in this chapter. At the beginning, Wilson (2011) reported that a small group of protesters emerged in Benghazi, the second largest city in the east of Libya. They burned some government buildings, such as a police station, security buildings, Revolutionary Committee offices, and even the Interior Ministry. When the police tried to control the protesters, their numbers increased massively as people in the street joined them. Zoubir and Rozsa (2012) reported that the Libyan security forces, controlled by Gaddafi, fired live ammunition into the crowd of protesters. In the face of police violence, the revolution exploded in Benghazi on 16 and 18 February and for a short time retired soldiers took responsibility for training civilian volunteers in the handling of weapons (Vira and Cordesman, 2011).

Since Gaddafi had no confidence in his army, which was barred from the ‘inner circle of power’ (Zoubir and Rozsa, 2012: 1272), he hired about 5000 mercenaries from Africa (Wilson, 2011), led by his sons, to help repress the rebellion (Zoubir and Rozsa, 2012). This led to large numbers of army personnel becoming estranged and caused a split inside the government. A number of ambassadors and diplomats

resigned, planting the seeds of doubt amongst the staunchest loyalists of the Gaddafi regime (ibid, 2012).

After the conquest of Benghazi, the protesters liberated many cities in the east such as Tobruk, Derna, Goba, ElMarej and Al Bayda (Wilson, 2011). The UN negotiated to apply sanctions (Walid, 2011) and the Arab League talked with the African Union about initiating a no-fly zone over Libya to protect the civilians (Siebens and Case, 2012). It was on 17 March 2011 that the United Nations Security Council authorised the international community to use whatever means necessary to protect Libyan civilians (Zoubir and Rozsa, 2012). With the support of NATO forces there followed nine months of rebel fighting. The rebels liberated Tripoli, putting an end to Gaddafi's regime, which has lasted for 42 years. Gaddafi and his top government loyalists fled to Sirte, some escaped to Sabha, Bani Walid, and others escaped into the Libyan Desert, or nearby countries. But on 20th October 2011 Ghaddafi was arrested and killed (ibid, 2012) and three days later the end of the war and the liberation of Libya were declared.

This was the end of a repressive dictatorship and a triumph for human rights. Now the transition to a popular and democratic new government could begin (Siebens and Case, 2012). Insurgency and chaos led to the Libyan elections being postponed several times, but more than 100 parties finally stood in the election of 7 July 2012 (ibid, 2012). Nevertheless, Gaddafi loyalists are still creating trouble whenever and wherever possible, disturbing the peace to show the world that the new government is incapable of ruling the new Libya. Political and social unrest are still features of day-to-day life in Libya and had an impact on the writing of this thesis. During the time of the revolution data collection was still being carried out in a number of schools, and was halted by the horrible events that took place in the streets on daily basis (see chapter 4.7).

### **2.3 The Libyan education system**

The education system in Libya is a product of its historical, religious and cultural development. The following section therefore outlines the historical factors that led to the structure currently in place. This structure, and the values that underpin it, are

examined in the next two sections, the latter of which focuses on higher education in Libya.

### ***2.3.1 Historical background***

When Libya was a monarchy (1951-1963), schools were instituted at different levels, and Libyans had an entitlement to education, although it was not compulsory. Ancient Koranic schools were reopened, providing the religious education that was an important aspect of education in Libya (Clark, 2004).

Student numbers at primary level increased fast. Vocational education was introduced and the first Libyan university was instituted in Benghazi in 1955. At that time, 94% of the population had had no formal education at all (Vandewalle, 2006; Andrews, 2009). Student numbers (in all sectors) increased from 34,000 in 1951 to about 360,000 on the eve of the 1969 revolution (Clark, 2004).

A UNESCO Commission visited Libya in 1951, to make recommendations about education. At this point there were only 29 primary schools in Tripoli, the capital of Libya, and only one in the other main city, Alzawia (Yousif et al., 1996; Alhmali, 2007). It is interesting to note that the primary schools (age range 6-12) in Tripoli used the Egyptian syllabus while at higher levels, the Italian curriculum was used (ibid, 2007). Moreover, there was only one teacher training centre for women, in Tripoli (ibid, 2007).

The revolutionary regime which took over in 1969 made education a priority, developing and expanding the programmes introduced under the monarchy (Clark, 2004). Educational provision began to grow at a vast rate, alongside economic, political, and social changes (Alhmali, 2007). However, cultural centres and libraries run by foreign governments, such as the British Council, were ordered to close by 1971 (Elmabruk, 2008). As stated in the Education Law of 1971 (GPCE, 2008) education is for all. This policy stressed that education is free and compulsory until the end of Grade 9, without differentiation in terms of gender or social group.

In 1973, Gaddafi declared the start of a cultural revolution in education, which resulted in some improvements by 1977. Libyans were guaranteed the right to

education, and many new primary and secondary schools were instituted all over Libya. At that time, education in Libya experienced a 'limited curriculum', a shortage of qualified teachers and a propensity to 'learn by rote rather than by reasoning' (Alhmali, 2007: 77). Since the majority of teachers in Libyan schools were qualified teachers from Egypt, training for teachers was introduced during 1970s to halt the recruitment of foreign teaching staff (Clark, 2004).

As a result, students' enrolment rose to 95% in 2003 (GPCE, 2008). The number of students in Basic Education by the academic year 2007/2008 was reported to be 939,799, and they were being taught by 119,313 teachers. In Secondary Education there were 226,000 students and 39,847 teachers (ibid, 2008: 13). In the academic year 2006/2007, the numbers at university were 279,150 students and about 2,770 Libyan teaching staff (Elmabruk, 2008: 21).

Nowadays, no one would argue that higher education plays a vital role in developing both individuals and societies. It has been described as the largest service in many states, a complex structure that appoints a huge number of people of diverse kinds. Rapid socio-economic changes have also made it a significant industry that encourages growing numbers of registered students and a diverse range of programmes (Elzalatni, 2008).

The specific case of English as a foreign language in Libya is noteworthy. The imposition of economic sanctions on Libya following the terrorist attacks of the 1980s resulted not only in the removal of English from the school curriculum (Elmabruk, 2008), it also restricted access to equipment and technology (MBendi, 2000), and led to a general decline in the standard of living (Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 2005). However, as a result of the Libyan government promising to stop supporting terrorism and putting an end to its biological weapons programme, the US agreed to accept 500 Libyan students by 2005. The British Council also signed a cultural treaty with Libya which resulted in an increase of the number of Libyans studying in the UK. Indeed, the current research is a result of the researcher benefiting from a scholarship to enrol on a doctoral programme at Liverpool John Moores University.

### ***2.3.2 Values and current structure of mainstream education***

The Education National Report to Libya (2008) was presented at the International Conference on Education (GPCE), in Geneva, (25-28 November 2008), and provided an outline of the key areas to be covered by the education system in Libya.

They are:

- Islamic values.
- Proficiency in the Arabic language and a foreign language to develop students' communication skills.
- The Jamahiriya theory and its application.
- A sense of national identity, and pride in Islamic civilisation.
- Social values.
- Moral and spiritual education.
- Equal opportunities for all in education and career prospects.
- Meta-cognitive skills and self-actualisation.
- Critical thinking skills.
- Physical, mental, psychological, emotional and social development.
- Sense of belonging and identity as Libyan citizens.
- Inter-cultural understanding.
- Innovation and creativity.
- Application of theory in practice.
- Inclusive education.
- Environmental education.
- Peace studies and conflict resolution.

Education in Libya includes learners of all ages, ranging from children in kindergarten to adult learners undertaking postgraduate study. It comprises three phases: pre-school (kindergarten), basic education and secondary education.

The pre-school or kindergarten phase caters for children aged 4 and 5 years. It is not compulsory and its goal is to prepare the children for school (Tamtam et al., 2011). Basic education is the first compulsory phase. Children enrol at the age of 6 and study for nine years. Basic education comprises two stages: primary education and preparatory education. According to the GPCE (2008), the entire number of students

enrolled in basic education (primary and preparatory stage) in the academic year 2005/2006 was over one million, which amounts to 8.9 percent of the entire population of Libya.

The first stage of basic education, primary education comprises six years. Education in this stage, especially during the first three years, focuses on reading, writing, and learning the principles of maths (GPCE, 2008: 48). In years 4, 5, and 6 these subjects are supplemented by history, geography, English, Arabic language, Koranic studies, Jamahiriya society, sciences, art, music, and physical education. Students' progress is assessed by exams at the end of each academic year, which are set by the teachers in each school (ibid, 2008).

At the age of 13 students enrol in the second state of basic education, preparatory education, which lasts three years from grade 7 to grade 9. The same subjects are studied as in the primary stage, with the addition of the principles of technology. At the end of grade 9, the students' progress is assessed by national exams for the Certificate of Basic Education. Students who fail before completing year 9 are granted the opportunity to enrol in vocational centres, where they study from one to three years. They train in practical skills and are awarded a lower certificate which qualifies them to apply for a job (Clark, 2004). These students also have the opportunity to continue their education at home and then sit the exam to complete their basic education (GPCE, 2008: 46).

Students, who complete their basic education (primary and preparatory) successfully, can continue their studies in secondary education, which lasts from age 16 to 18 (Tamtam et al., 2011). There are three types of secondary schools.

General secondary schools offer three curricular pathways: science, arts, and technology, taught over three years (Clark, 2004; Tamtam et al., 2011), culminating in national exams. Specialized secondary schools provide specialisation in six different subject areas: economics, engineering, social sciences, basic science, life science, and languages. These schools were introduced in 1996-1997 to prepare the students with a high level of specialisation in specific subjects (Clark, 2004; Alhmali, 2007). Students study for four years (Clark, 2004 Tamtam et al., 2011) before undertaking national exams. From 2006, the period of study in specialised high schools was shortened to three years (Hamdy, 2007). The third and last type of

secondary school in Libya is the technical vocational training centre. These vocational schools offer programmes in seven main specialisations. Students train for three years in various skills, depending on the profession (Clark, 2004; Tamtam et al., 2011). At the end of their study an intermediate training diploma is awarded (Clark, 2004).

### ***2.3.3 Higher education***

Higher education worldwide has developed rapidly over the last half century (Schofer and Meyer, 2005; Tight, 2007). This is mainly attributable to the considerable economic development and strong social stipulations for its services in developing and developed countries (Chapman and Austin, 2002; Schofer and Meyer, 2005).

In the Libyan context, the General People's Committee Education (GPCE) Act No (18) (2010) states that the aims of policy and stakeholder activities are to ensure that Libya accomplishes its national education goals (Tamtam et al., 2011) as well as to increase human knowledge development. Expanding horizons and facilitating economic and social development in Libya are highlighted as significant aspects of education policy. Consequently, students who complete secondary education successfully can enrol in universities, higher institutions, or higher technical and vocational centres suitable to their specialisation.

The encouragement of scientific research and associated studies, in particular, is crucial in that it will assist in speeding up the solving of the country's diverse socio-political and socio-economic problems. Education policy indicates an awareness of the necessity to promote and develop scientific research through the development of undergraduate educational literature and the translation of texts written in other languages; it includes the stipulation that laboratories should encourage research and clinical training. This will assist creating expertise in areas such as medicine and engineering, support cultural studies and create an increased interest in Arabic language and culture. Establishing scientific cooperation between individual and institutions locally and globally will be great at developing more skills and capability and teachers will play an important part in achieving this aim. Offering work experience, communication and advice to associations and companies will be

supported throughout education. Moreover, GPCE (2010) states that institutions of higher education should be a showcase for values and the development of science and the arts.

There are problems in these areas of higher education, however. Staffing in science and technology is often inadequate, and there is a need to develop these disciplines to cater for learners who are knowledgeable and skilful. This would bring education standards in science and technology up to global levels, and thus ensure that Libya is transformed into a nation that can be an active member of the global community.

#### 2.3.3.1 Structure of higher education

Libyan universities offer three main levels of qualification: bachelors, masters and PhDs (El-Hawat, 1996) and subjects are divided into three main strands: Arts; Science and Technology; and Medicine. A diverse range of programmes is offered at first degree level, including environmental studies, languages and literature, basic sciences, economics, agricultural sciences, Islamic studies, humanities, engineering, industrial, and medical sciences (Suwaed, 2011). Arts degrees generally require four years' study (Alhmali, 2007), while a bachelor's degree in sciences, such as dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, engineering, and architecture takes five years, and the bachelor's degree in medicine and surgery requires studying for six years (European Commission, 2012). The undergraduate medical programmes closely follow the British model. Students are awarded a bachelor's degree in medicine after five years of study, preceded by a preparatory year and followed by a year's session/pre-service (Clark, 2004).

Technical studies are also available at first degree level in Libya. In 2009, 10 higher vocational centres and six higher institutions were transformed into technical faculties (European Commission, 2012). According to El-Hawat (1996), these faculties aim to provide professionals and technicians who are trained both theoretically and practically. Technical bachelor's degrees can be taken in fields such as electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, finance, computer studies, industrial technology, social work, medical technology, and civil aviation (Clark, 2004).

Libyan universities and the Academy of Higher Studies offer master's degrees in some specializations, which require a further 2-3 years' study after a first degree (European Commission, 2012). MA degrees are mostly offered by large universities, such as Benghazi and Tripoli. Postgraduate studies in Libyan universities cover many subjects, but most are in the fields of Arabic, Islamic studies, social sciences, and humanities (Clark, 2004).

PhD degrees in some specializations can be conferred by large universities and require a further three to four years of research. Students on Master's and PhD programmes must meet certain admission requirements and need to be approved by the Administration for Higher Studies in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (European Commission, 2012). Only a small number of students obtain PhDs from Libyan universities; only 100 were awarded in the academic year 1999-2000. Since most research is in the fields of Arabic, Islamic studies and the humanities, many students pursue doctorates abroad (Clark, 2004).

Vocational and technical diplomas also form part of higher education. The Higher Technical and Vocational Institutions provide programmes in many vocational specialities. These require three years' post-school study to gain higher vocational/technical diplomas. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research issues annual requirements for the admission of students to higher vocational/technical institutions; for example, stipulating the number of students in each specialisation admitted from secondary education and their required grade point average to study at this level (European Commission, 2012).

#### 2.3.3.2 Student population

Generally education, including higher education, is free in Libya. So, higher education is therefore totally financed by and under the authority of the state, except in the case of private universities. Students enrolled in any of the five private universities or the Open University pay fees. From the late 1980s until the time of writing there has been a consistent rise in the number of students registered in higher education. Despite receiving a relatively generous proportion of the national budget, Libyan higher education has been under financial pressure as a consequence of the rapid increase in demand and because of outside economic pressures (Clark, 2004).

All students have an entitlement to apply for a place in a higher education institution. The admission procedure requires students to submit their Secondary Education Certificate (Clark, 2004). The District Education Department annually issues regulations for the admission of students to higher education institutions, taking into account the general results of the national secondary stage examinations, the grade point average at the secondary stage level, the capacity of institutions, the needs of the society and students' specialisations as well (European Commission, 2012). Currently, the secondary education stage comprises six specializations: basic sciences, engineering sciences, life sciences, economic sciences, social sciences, and languages. Students from specialised secondary schools are strongly encouraged to continue to study their field of specialization at tertiary level (El-Hawat, 2003; Clark, 2004), with the opportunity to obtain a degree for teaching.

**Table 2.1:** Enrolment for University Education in Libya

No	Division	University Faculties- Students enrol in
1	Basic Sciences	Sections of the Faculty of Science: (Maths-Statistics - Physics - Earth Sciences - Computer - Meteorology Teacher Training Colleges and Higher Vocational Training Centres).
2	Engineering Sciences	Various Sections of the Faculty of Engineering - and Teacher Training Colleges and Higher Vocational Training Centres.
3	Life Sciences	Medicine - Dentistry- Pharmacy – Veterinary - Medical Technology - Teacher Training College - Higher Institutes of Health - Faculty of Science Departments (plants and animals).
4	Economic Sciences	Economy - Accounting - Administrative Sciences - Colleges of Teacher Training - and Higher Vocational Training Centres.
5	Social Sciences	Literature – Law - Political Sciences - Physical Education - Arts and Media
6	Languages	Language Departments in Faculty of Arts and Teacher Training

**Source: GPCE 2008:8**

Libya has the highest educational enrolment and literacy rates in North Africa. 88.5% of the population (males 93.7%, females 83.2%) are literate, which is well above that in neighbouring countries (WHO, 2011: 15). Improvements in the last two decades in the Libyan education system have seen the rate of illiteracy in the female population decrease from 39% in 1980 to less than 16 % in 2006. In the same

year primary, secondary, and higher education had a combined enrolment rate of 88% which is again estimated to be higher than in neighbouring states. What is unusual is that female students have a tendency to engage in education more than their male counterparts (ibid, 2011: 15). Research has attributed the increase in student enrolment in higher education to the following reasons (El-Kikhiya, 1995; El-Hawat, 1996):

1. The effect of high population growth in the past few decades.
2. Improvements in the school sector, so that large numbers of secondary students pass the general secondary stage exams. They are, by law, guaranteed a place in higher education.
3. The Libyan government offers free access to higher education.
4. The discovery of oil precipitated the need for experts and qualified and educated people to run the country.
5. The enormous development in socio-economic initiated programmes raised the need for educated, trained, and well qualified people to manage the new projects.

Elzalatni's table (2008: 49) shows the expansion of student enrolment in higher education for the period 1961-2000.

**Table 2.2:** Development of Enrolment in Higher Education in Libya

HE institution type	1961/62	1969/70	1980/81	1989/90	1999/00
Universities	1,028	3,663	19,315	50,475	204,332
Public Higher Vocational Education and Training Colleges	-	-	1,130	3,916	64,970
Total	1,028	3,663	20,445	54,391	269,302
Growth Rate (%)	-	256.3	458.1	166.0	395.1

Decreasing gender difference has been one of the most important objectives of the Libyan education system as a whole (Keibah, 1998); now there is a considerable

growth in female enrolment in higher education. In 1957, less than 5% of students were female. From that point onwards the proportion of female enrolment in higher education has increased continually (Bubtana and Sarakbi, 1992).

**Table 2.3:** Development of female enrolment in higher education in Libya

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>1987-1988</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>
<b>% of females</b>	21.1%	50.4%	59%
<b>Reference</b>	(El-Hawat, 2003: 395)		(European Commission, 2012).

Another area of significance is the lack of emphasis on science and technology education and training. There is still an urgent need for graduates in many science related fields (Sharif, 2000), since there is an imbalance between the number of students enrolled for humanities and arts degrees, and those who enrol for science and technology qualifications (El-Hawat, 2003; Clark, 2004).

#### 2.3.3.3 Academics staff in higher education

In 1956 the entire teaching staff in higher education numbered six (Alshakshoki, 2006). The picture has changed radically in the past few decades, however, as the following table demonstrates:

**Table 2.4:** The growth of the number of academic staff in higher education in Libya

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>
<b>No. of Staff</b>	1,629	2,409	10,362 members 5,077 (45%) were non-Libyan.	12,697
<b>Source</b>	Bubtana and Sarakbi, 1992: 435	Bubtana and Sarakbi, 1992: 435	(Gannous, 1999)	(Elferjani et al., 2011)

Although over 50 years have passed since the establishment of the higher education sector in Libya there are still fewer graduates than are needed for government posts. Moreover, there are still insufficient suitably-qualified Libyan applicants for university teaching posts (Albadri, 2007). As Elzalatni (2008) reported, there is a shortage of Libyan teachers in general, and teachers in higher education in particular, a situation which necessitated the recruitment of many non-Libyan academics to teach in this sector.

Another worrying problem is the loss of well-qualified and talented experts to other countries (Teferra and Altbach, 2003; Edokat, 2000). This problem is a crucial issue in Libya, as in many other developing countries (El-Kikhiya, 2003). According to Elzalitni (2008) this flight of human capital may be due to low job satisfaction, poor working conditions, or political factors, any or all of which could be viewed as responsible for the exodus of the large number of eligible academic staff in different fields who leave the country in order to gain better working conditions in other countries. El-Kikhiya (2003), reported that about 5% of Libyan intellectuals have migrated to seek better opportunities; for example, Nunn (2005) reported that in 2002 there were 33 Libyan academic staff teaching in higher education in the United Kingdom.

#### **2.4 The English language in Libyan education**

In Libya Arabic is spoken by the majority of population, while Berber is spoken by 2% of the people, who live in cities in the western mountains such as Yefren and Zawara (Imssalem, 2001). Since 1951, Arabic has been the official language, and it is used to promote Arabic and Islamic cultural values (Suwaed, 2011). There are three varieties of Arabic used in Libya: classical Arabic, modern standard Arabic and the spoken Libyan dialect. Classical Arabic is the language of the Quran, and is used in both its written and spoken forms. The Modern Standard Arabic is used in the press, public speeches and in formal settings, while the Libyan dialect is the mother tongue, the language of everyday conversations, and is spoken by everyone (Cowan, 2000).

Even though government policy protects the Arabic language, the attempted Arabisation of the language used in university faculties such as economics, medicine, and science, has not been successful. One reason is that most of the teaching material is written in English (Imssalem, 2001). Another is that after graduation many students undertake further training in the UK or United States, and after completing their studies abroad, they prefer to speak English (Suwaed, 2011). Currently, both English and Arabic are taught in schools and universities, and English is also the medium of instruction in university science and technology departments and in medical schools (Andrews, 2009).

Since 1954, English has been taught from the primary stage (age 10) until the completion of the secondary stage of education (age 18). English has a significant status in Libya. It was reported by Barton (UNESCO, 1968), that expertise in language teaching was provided by a UNESCO commission between 1965 and 1968 for the design of the English curriculum in Libyan schools. This was to aid industrial and economic development and the development of higher education in general (ibid, 1968). Nowadays, Libyan students are interested in learning English: a study which investigated the attitude of Libyan students in preparatory and secondary school toward four subjects (Arabic, English, mathematics and sciences) showed that the students were more interested in learning English than the other subjects (Alhmali, 2007).

Following the Cultural Revolution in 1973, English was no longer taught in primary education and was only available in the preparatory phase, from age 13. From the 1970s until the mid 1980s, English constituted a compulsory element in the curriculum of Libyan schools and universities (Sawani, 2009). A period of Arabisation began in 1986, to eradicate western influence and the teaching and learning of English was banned from schools and universities across the country. This was in reaction to the sanctions imposed on Libya and the United States bombing of Tripoli. This situation had a negative effect on students, who often arrived at university to find that their understanding of many subjects in English was limited. In addition, English language teachers and inspectors (referred to as 'mentors' by teachers) were also affected by the banning of the English language. Sawani (2009) stated that some teachers of English became jobless and had to retrain to teach other subjects, such as history or geography, in Primary and Preparatory Education. Through the cooperation of teachers and inspectors of English, many private language centres were created.

Once international relations with the west improved, however, the English language gradually regained its former status. Currently, English is of major importance for communication in the oil industry, and foreign companies recruit English speaking staff. At the end of the 1990s the Committee of Higher Education in Libya reconsidered its policy on teaching English and introduced a new curriculum for English language teaching in both Basic and Secondary Education (Suwaed, 2011).

Since the academic year 2006/2007, English taught from age 10, in order to increase the students' English language skills (Elmabruk, 2008). When English was reintroduced into the school curriculum in 1997 some former English teachers were unable to teach it, because the new textbooks took a communicative approach and only some possessed the linguistic proficiency to teach using this new approach (Sawani, 2009). Gadour (2006) reported that to cope with this situation, new training programmes for English language teachers were designed, but they were considered ineffective because they used traditional methodologies and materials.

Currently, the Libyan education system offers English language courses from age 8 to university level. Students therefore will have had 10 years of studying English on completion of their Secondary Education (Imssalem, 2001). After the return of English, the Committee of Higher Education organized major scholarship programmes abroad in all academic fields in different western countries. The number of Libyan students studying abroad, therefore, grew from 1,733 in 1994/1995 to 71,000 in 2009 (Suwaed, 2011).

This analysis of the role of the English language in Libya now turns to its place in the secondary curriculum (16-18), the context of the current research. English in the secondary stage is compulsory, and is one of the core curriculum subjects. A new series of English course books was introduced in 2000. This series was designed by the Administration of Syllabi under the responsibility and supervision of the GPCE in order to meet the needs of the different specialisations (Zainol Abidin et al., 2012). The Administration of the Syllabi is the body that has responsibility for designing books, setting weekly time allocations and establishing the criteria for students' assessment (GPCE, 2009). Teachers were not involved in designing this new English curriculum and merely implemented the decisions of the educational policy makers in the Ministry of Education (Orafi and Borg, 2009).

The amount of time devoted to teaching English varies according to specific curricular pathways, ranging from four to 19 lessons a week. Students specializing in subjects other than English take four classes a week while in the English specialisation there are 19 lessons a week. All classes last 45 minutes (Orafi and Borg, 2009). After completing the secondary national exams successfully these

students continue their studies in the English department of a university (Shihiba, 2011).

English teaching materials consist of textbooks, a teacher's handbook, and cassettes. The course books form a series known as *English for Libya*, organized in the same way at each level; each unit includes sections on reading, vocabulary, grammar, the functional use of language, listening, speaking, and writing. Teaching grammar is expected to emerge naturally; the design and rationale of activities presented in these books are informed by the principles of the communicative approach (Orafi and Borg, 2009; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Another characteristic of these books is that they offer materials relevant to the different specialisations in the secondary stage. They provide inspiring topics, written exercises, and varied activities to keep students' interest (Blacknell and Harrison, 1999; Phillips et al., 2008), thus the current curriculum represents a significant change, compared with the previous one (Zainol Abidin et al., 2012).

Since interaction is the main principle inherent in the teaching and learning of a foreign language, students are required to use English as much as possible (Macfarlane, 2000), not only with the teacher, but with students in pairs and in groups (ibid, 2000; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The new English curriculum was not however, implemented as intended, mainly as a consequence of the mismatch between the new approach promoted by the textbooks and teachers' traditional practices and beliefs (Zainol Abidin et al., 2012). It is also an issue of competence and professional development. Training to support teachers in implementing the new English curriculum was limited. The teachers attended seminars, where they were exposed to the new textbooks and were given information about them. These sessions lasted a week and were guided by English language teaching inspectors who had been trained by the publishers of the course books to introduce the new methods (Orafi and Borg, 2009). A study of the way Libyan secondary school teachers ultimately implemented the new curriculum concluded that English is still taught by focusing on presenting grammatical structure, the Arabic language is used most of the time, and is mainly characterised by teacher-centred approach (Orafi and Borg, 2009). Libyan teachers still use the grammar-translation method, which focuses on teaching grammatical structures using the Arabic language for explanations. They also prefer using the audio-lingual method, which is based on

drills and repetition rather than using a communicative approach (Suwaed, 2011). Moreover, students have few opportunities to practice the language other than by engaging in repetition and drills. This style of teaching, using traditional roles and techniques, is prevalent in most Arabic countries (Fareh, 2010).

## **2.5 Teacher education in Libya**

Basic teacher education training programmes in Libya developed gradually, and passed through a series of stages. Following independence from colonial rule, and due to a shortage of teachers during that time, students aged 13 started two-year teacher training programmes after completing primary education successfully. In the 1960s, the training programme was extended to five years post-Primary Education. By the middle of the 1970s an aspiring teacher had to complete Basic Education then undertake teacher training in these institutions for four years.

Currently, teachers in Basic or Secondary Education must have completed successfully both their Secondary Education then a four-year programme at a college of education. These colleges award a license to work in the profession (Clark, 2004). The shortage of qualified teachers in vocational and technical subjects (ibid, 2004), meant that the system was not able to provide the country with the trained workforce it needed (Zubi, 1992), even though Libya had made considerable economic progress as a developing nation by 1980. As a result of these shortcomings, Libya depended on the recruitment of foreigners to fill positions in technology, industry, and the service sector, such as teaching and health care (Clark, 2004).

The Libyan education system is still maturing. In 1987 the Open University, which provides distance learning, was established with the aim of promoting professional development and support (Abou Farwa, 2003). For example, teachers were offered re-training programmes to enable them to respond to their schools' needs. The responsibility for education and vocational training was transferred from the General People's Committee to the regional people's committees of the 32 municipalities in 2000 (Clark, 2004). Teaching in Libya is seen as suitable profession for women (Shihiba, 2011), and teaching overall is a popular occupation for women. The census

of the GPCE for the academic year 2006-2007 showed that 79.38% of the teachers across kindergarten, basic stage, and secondary stage were female (GPCE, 2008).

## **2.6 Teaching English as a profession**

Teachers who are appointed to teach English are usually either graduates from the English department of a teacher training institution (college of higher education), or from a university English department. Those who graduate from a teacher training institution study for four years. The curriculum of the English departments in these colleges consists of both theoretical and practical subjects. The theoretical aspect is concerned with developing student teachers' subject knowledge, such as grammar, reading comprehension, phonetics, and writing. In addition the programmes include teaching in Arabic, theories of psychology in education including general psychology, and psychology and development, and children's health (Shihiba, 2011). The practical aspect is concerned with developing student teachers' linguistic proficiency in English, training them in the effective use of a range of strategies and techniques for teaching the foreign language, including the use of the language lab, and class management (ibid, 2011).

Initial training is in seminars where they apply the theories in practice (micro-teaching). Later, in the fourth and final year, students spend four weeks on school placement where they learn to teach English in real classrooms.

Those who graduate from university Faculty of Arts English departments are prepared for research and further studies, but not for teaching. Their programmes of study includes literature (novel and drama), translation, and theoretical linguistics, which are considered the main subjects, in addition to grammar, reading comprehension, listening, speaking, language lab work and phonetics. They are also taught some additional subjects in Arabic.

It has been asserted that underdeveloped listening and speaking skills are common characteristics among the majority of the teachers who graduate from Faculties of Arts and Colleges of Education (Shihiba, 2011). Indeed, Orafi and Borg (2009:251) stated that 'English language teachers in Libya typically graduate from university with undeveloped spoken communication skills in English', a claim that was supported by a study of the qualifications of a group of sixteen Libyan EFL

secondary school teachers (Akle, 2005). However, the teachers in the Libyan secondary stage are considered to be major providers of information (Saleh, 2002). In order to prepare their students for the examinations, they need to be able to provide them with accurate information and the skills needed to use the English language (Alhmali, 2007). The criteria for assessment are created by the Administration of Syllabi, under the responsibility of the GPCE. An annual official document issued by the Administration provides teachers with the examination specifications, which they use to prepare their students for their final exams.

The inspection of teachers is the responsibility of the Administration of Pedagogical Inspection, again under the supervision of the GPCE (Abdulali, 1986). The Inspectors' commission observes and evaluates teachers' performance and proficiency in English. English language inspectors make regular visits between two and five times a year to observe teachers teaching. A benchmark annual teacher's evaluation form, issued by the GPCE, outlines the standard which should be used by all Libyan inspectors. After completing the classroom observation, the inspectors fill in the form to make judgements about the teacher, ranging from 'weak' to 'excellent'. The final statement is important, as it is reported to the GPCE and will determine a teacher's career prospects and his or her reputation (Abdulali, 1986).

## Chapter Three

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

The international research literature published over the last decade reveals that the transition from student teacher to novice teacher can be dramatic (Joerger and Boettcher, 2000; Whitaker, 2001; Jones, 2002; Wong, 2002). For example, Whitaker (2001) maintained that during this period of transition novice teachers develop from being a student in charge of his/her individual learning to becoming a teacher in charge of encouraging learning in others. According to Killeavy (2006:168) newly qualified teachers 'are required to assume full professional responsibilities from the first day they enter a classroom', while Halford (1998:33) added that education has been dubbed 'the profession that eats its young'. By adopting an international perspective, including studies from the Anglo Celtic Communities (UK, USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) as well as from the developing world, this study intends to investigate the experiences and perceptions of novice teachers' in Libyan secondary schools teaching English as a foreign language during their first three years in the profession.

Awareness of the problems encountered by new teachers in their initial years of teaching can provide significant information for improving the pre-service and in-service training programmes (Veenman, 1984). Therefore, many studies have been conducted to explore these problems and the relation between these issues and teacher education programmes.

A review of the literature concerned with novice teachers' experiences clearly indicates that they are confronted with a diverse range of challenges, which generate an equally diverse range of needs. The following themes have emerged and were used to provide and develop a conceptual framework for the construction of the survey and the interview constituting the research elements for this study:

1. Development of a professional knowledge base and classroom practice
2. Provision of support and guidance (the mentoring dimension, monitoring progress, adequate resources)
3. Impact of school culture and teacher professionalism

This chapter examines each of these themes in turn, through the lens of the relevant literature and research.

### **3.1 Development of a professional knowledge base and classroom practice**

Newly qualified teachers need to develop their pedagogical knowledge and skill base in order to become accomplished classroom practitioners. It is a commonly reported fact that novice teachers in both Anglo-Celtic and developing countries complain that their training programmes did not prepare them sufficiently for ‘real’ teaching in the real world (Heyns, 2000; Brock and Grady, 2001; Steyn, 2004), and that they need to acquire an adequate knowledge and skills base to enable them to teach effectively (Whitaker, 2001; Andrews and Martin, 2003; Steyn, 2004). Many novice teachers consider their pre-service college education to be too theoretical, general, and unrelated to real teaching in school context (Brock and Grady, 2001). Once in the classroom they cannot relate the theory from pre-service training to what is done in reality (Whitaker, 2001; Steyn, 2004); transferring theory from training to their classroom practice therefore can pose a significant difficulty (Whitaker, 2001; Steyn, 2004). As Killeavy (2006) observes, novice teachers need to develop skills that help them to deal with the stress of a progressively more demanding society. In contrast, however, teachers in many developing countries such as in Latin America and South Africa, fall into the category of what Villegas-Reimers (2003:19) terms ‘under- prepared teachers’. They have had limited or no preparatory training in relation to developing their pedagogical knowledge and skills base.

Another challenge highlighted by Lovett and Davey (2009) is that English language novice teachers in secondary schools can find themselves teaching in more than one department, depending on their subject specialism. Diverse subject levels and diverse students mean that newly qualified teachers may have different needs for each of these teaching assignments. In addition, novice teachers are frequently

required to teach subjects that they have not been prepared to teach, particularly where the pressure of teacher shortages in specific subjects determines timetabling decisions. Eventually they become emotionally fatigued, and consequently believe that it is unreasonable for them to leave school every day with feelings of anger and depression (Dube, 2008). In the UK context this can arise because of shortages of physics, science, mathematics teachers as, after graduation, many are lured to work in industry rather than in schools because there they can earn higher salaries. Andrews and Martin (2003) reported that as a result of teacher shortages many schools in Georgia (USA) appoint teachers of inferior quality; at the same time, many new teachers choose to leave the profession early. Andrews and Martin (2003:4) pointed out that '10% of novice teachers leave the field of teaching in their first year, 20% leave within three years, and 30% of new teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching'. Consequently, Darling-Hammond (2003) believed that the focus should be on those newly qualified teachers who are already in the profession by solving their problems to retain them.

Many countries still focus on developing the content knowledge of their student teachers, without providing opportunities for practice. For instance, in Ethiopia and in many other African and Latin American countries universities and colleges generally offer certification programmes without providing the opportunity to undertake pre-service programmes under supervision (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Moreover, in Malawi and Eritrea a large number of untrained teachers are hired in an attempt to widen access to education (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In Pakistan, untrained women have been hired and then trained on the job using distance-education approaches, in an attempt to expand access to education for girls in rural areas. The quality of these training programmes is low, however. Students' and staff motivation is poor, as are the facilities, and there is a general lack of leadership. In India, training programmes tend to be short and do not prepare teachers sufficiently. Also the majority of teacher graduates lack a 'basic knowledge of subject matter' and are ill-equipped to work in schools (ibid, 2003).

Libya, as a developing country, has a very similar education system to that of Saudi Arabia, where EFL pre-service programmes are often described as inadequate and as lacking in a systematic approach (Al-Hazmi, 2003). In the last 40 years EFL

teachers have graduated both from colleges of education and from university faculties of arts which offer a license degree in English language and literature. This preparation is not regarded as sufficient to prepare EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, and leaves English teachers and mentors unqualified to perform such a role (ibid, 2003). They lack subject knowledge, language proficiency, and competence in foreign language teaching methodology. The only difference between Libya and Saudi Arabia is that in Libya graduates from the university have been trained to become researchers, while graduates from teacher training institutions are expected to be English language teachers.

Numerous frameworks recommended in the literature underline the difficulty of learning to teach a specific subject or curriculum unit and the literature presents an array of models of teacher knowledge. Shulman (1987), quoted in Lovett and Davey (2009: 549), distinguished between 'knowledge of content, general pedagogy, curriculum, pedagogical content, learners and their characteristics, educational contexts, educational ends, and purposes and values', while Grossman (1990) likewise cited by Lovett and Davey (2009: 549), identified only three categories: 'knowledge of subject matter, general pedagogy, pedagogical content and context'. Masters (2003) collected and organized a specific mix of subject expertise and pedagogical knowledge known as 'PCK' (Pedagogical Content Knowledge). It consists of 'the conception of what it means to teach a subject matter; knowledge of effective ways of organizing and presenting subject matter; knowledge of how students learn particular subject matter; and in-depth knowledge of available curriculum materials and about how local curricula are organized and structured' (Lovett and Davey, 2009: 550). Grossman (1990) argued that PCK, the knowledge of how to teach, is a specific subject that acquires larger significance 'in learning to teach over time' (Lovett and Davey, 2009: 550). Grossman (1990) also asserted that acquiring PCK subject-matter knowledge requires teachers to establish their selected topics depending on their data about their students' interests, needs, and abilities, which is challenging, specifically for novice teachers. Indeed, another source of stress and tension for newly qualified teachers, highlighted in studies of English teachers, is that novice teachers often have to teach unusual topics. For example, a newly qualified teacher of English may have to teach a novel that s/he has not read,

and a general knowledge is insufficient to succeed in the specific task of teaching a novel (Ringstaff and Sandholtz, 2002).

Other developmental factors identified by Lovett and Davey (2009: 551) from the literature as assisting or hindering novice teachers comprise the following: ‘the difficulty of finding a socio-emotional “fit” between individual backgrounds and working within the constraints of a particular work setting or culture’ (Ringstaff and Sandholtz, 2002; Anderson, 2003); the level of formal qualification achieved (Hansen, 2006); the level of opportunity these teachers have to choose materials, objectives and activities that they believe are appropriate for themselves and their students (McLaughlin et al., 1990); the teachers’ behaviour management knowledge and procedures, the lack of which can block efforts to teach a particular subject area (ibid, 1990), and the teachers’ ability to cope with diversity in their student population (Achinstein and Barrett, 2004). Feiman Nemser (2001) suggested that new teachers would profit from being offered learning strategies to assist them to reflect on their practices and to test strategies that they can use/transfer in other situations rather than seeking ‘solutions’ from more experienced colleagues.

Regardless of the national context, classroom management and discipline are serious challenges for novice teachers in whatever country, an issue that is frequently highlighted in the literature (Joerger and Boettcher, 2000; Tickle, 2000; Whitaker, 2000; Brock and Grady, 2001; Freiberg, 2002; Hertzog, 2002; Andrews and Martin, 2003; Steyn, 2004; Evertson and Weinstein, 2006; Van Tartwijk et al., 2009). Indeed Hertzog (2002) in her study in California affirmed that the majority of teachers have problems both with behaviour management and with curriculum planning. In Anglo-Celtic communities, however, such as the UK, USA, Australia, and New Zealand, statutory professional standards set out expectations of teachers’ and principals’ professional behaviour, whereas in developing countries such as Libya, there is less specific guidance and prescription of professional practice.

Many novice teachers feel unprepared to handle classroom reality and make effective judgments; specific challenges identified include dealing with students with poor language skills, establishing positive trusting relations with students, and catering for diverse needs and motivating students (Steyn, 2004). Veenman (1984)

found that establishing a helpful working atmosphere in the classroom is the first challenge of both students and novice teachers in secondary education. In this respect classroom management relies on three fundamental elements (Sugai and Horner, 2002; Simonsen et al., 2008): managing time for instruction, organizing 'instructional activities', 'and proactive behaviour management practices' (ibid, 2008: 351). Numerous new teachers, particularly in developing countries such as in Botswana, are ill-equipped to cope with classroom dilemmas, carry out habitual tasks and make judgments. They struggle to develop styles of leadership and to implement strategies that respond appropriately to students' needs. Instead of being focused on learning, novice teachers tend to focus their attention predominantly on managing student conduct (Dube, 2008). Moreover new teachers are frequently given classes of low capability where attention shortfall, behaviour problems and learning disabilities are widespread; they are therefore often faced by students who need high level expertise in classroom management, stimulating tactics and personalised attention (Brock and Grady, 2001). Moreover, a lot of new entrants from Omaha, Nebraska, Botswana and South Africa stated that schools have 'poor working conditions' (Steyn, 2004: 87) and lack resources such as materials and textbooks (Brock and Grady, 2001; Steyn, 2004). Having to find an empty room each time they teach disconcerts teachers; Dube (2008) added in Botswana some teachers teach without schoolbooks and other teaching materials for a long time. The availability of textbooks and teaching materials is crucial, and has a major effect on novice teachers' ability to develop their expertise in classroom practice (Joerger and Boettcher, 2000; Steyn, 2004) lack of access to teaching aids such as tape recorders, projectors, DVDs, labs, posters, charts, electronic boards, flashcards, projectors, cartoons and televisions is likewise a significant disadvantage in this respect.

According to Abdal-Haqq (1996) and Villegas-Reimers (2003) lack of time is the main challenge that hinders effective professional development. In developing countries the majority of schools allocate little time for professional development, whereas in countries like China, Germany, and Japan teachers only spend an average of 30 to 40 per cent of their day with students, and can use the remaining time to engage in other professional activities (Abdal -Haqq, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 1996). Grossman and Thompson (2008) also observed that lack of time is an issue for novice teachers when dealing with how to meet the individual needs of learners.

Consequently, teachers need extra time to create teaching resources for individuals and for group activities.

Novice teachers may also feel under pressure as they try to establish new relationships with colleagues and students (Brock and Grady, 2001; Steyn, 2004). Dube (2008) pointed out that making the transition from being a student in academic life to being a teacher in professional practice is not easy. According to Veenman (1984: 143) these former students experience a 'reality shock', described as 'the collapse of the missionary ideas formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude realities of everyday classroom life'. Segregation and being alone are considered as some of the probable reasons for experiencing the reality shock. Beginning teachers, therefore, are frequently disappointed at the discrepancy between their expectations of teaching and the awareness of the real experience (McCann and Johannessen, 2004).

There is convincing evidence emerging from the literature that new teachers experience a diversity of emotions. They frequently experience fear, anxiety, feelings of insecurity and inadequacy, resulting in stress (Joerger and Boettcher, 2000; Styen, 2004), and are frequently assigned a heavy teaching workload (Brock and Grady, 2001; Whitaker, 2001; Steyn, 2004; Jones, 2006). McCann and Johannessen (2004) highlighted this problem as intrinsic to teaching, particularly to teaching English. Rather than allocating new teachers a manageable amount of work, they are frequently assigned additional tasks, and it is not unknown for them to be given undesirable courses, additional activities or the most problematic students (Whitaker, 2001; Danielson, 2002; Andrews and Martin, 2003; Steyn, 2004).

In these circumstances novice teachers are often overtaxed, resulting in physical and emotional stress which can lead to feelings of bitterness and attrition, and ultimately to leaving the profession (Dube, 2008). There is a host of more common problems, however, which appear to be of relevance to all novice teachers, the most frequent of which are: 'classroom discipline, student motivation; response to individual differences; assessment of students' work; relationships with parents; organisation of class work; insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies; and [responding] to individual students' (Veenman, 1984: 143).

### **3.2 Provision of support and guidance**

Many research studies conclude that teacher preparation programmes rarely completely prepare teachers for the job (Halford, 1998), as they offer insufficient pedagogical knowledge and skills. Martin and Rippon (2003) recognised also that novice teachers often do not feel that they are given the support and encouragement they need in their first year of teaching. Commonly, many novice teachers have to 'sink or swim' and to develop their teaching skills through 'trial and error' (Killeavy, 2006: 168). As a result, they often encounter feelings of insecurity, disappointment, and breakdown during the first years in their new profession (Halford, 1998). It is therefore crucial that novice teachers receive encouragement and support, not only professional but also personal support and pastoral care (Jones, 2002). As Hobson (2002) found, a supportive and encouraging mentor, who makes time for a novice teacher and who provides constructive feedback is highly valued. Where pastoral support is strong novice teachers prosper, both personally and professionally (Jones, 2002).

Another form of support is through observation and feedback. One of the best ways of learning skills and developing tactics is by observing more experienced practitioners teach (Jones, 2002). Classroom observation provides novice teachers with opportunities to 'improve their teaching, to get advice from, and exchange ideas with experienced teachers' (Harvey, 2006: 11). This resonates with the findings of Bilash (2009: 1) who believes that much of what novice teachers need to be conscious of cannot be learned in theory; classroom observation will allow newcomers to the profession 'to see real-life teachers in real-life teaching situations' Bilash also pointed out that many different features can be examined in a classroom setting, such as: 'routines, use of time, schedule, participation, teaching strategies, management strategies, learner interest,' (2009: 1). In addition, she pointed out that observation is essential at every stage of a teacher's career and provides an example from Asia, where a master teacher invites all teachers, novice and experienced, into his/her classroom for shared observation and subsequent critical discussion, thus providing an opportunity to learn from one another. In addition, schools in North America are trying to create opportunities for classroom observation in their subject area both in their own school and in other schools (Bilash, 2009). In the UK many

schools utilise observation to monitor the standards of teaching, and it is also used as part of initial training programmes (Teacher Training Agency, 2003). Observation is all the more beneficial if it is well planned between the novice teacher and the observer Teacher Training Agency (2003).

In England, newly qualified teachers are entitled to adequate support and guidance, a requirement which all schools must provide during the first year of employment (DFEE, 2003) and which has been addressed by the introduction of an induction framework. As reported in support and monitoring guidance documents, observation provides information about novice teachers' teaching and progress. It motivates discussion between novice teachers and other colleagues with a focus on teaching and can help to recognise and monitor areas in need of development (Teacher Training Agency, 2003).

Observation and feedback should be carried out so as to enhance the trainee's confidence, eagerness, and expertise. It should be arranged in a positive climate of 'professional trust ... and should be practitioner-led and not observer-led' Harvey, 2006: 11). Professional colleagues acting as observers should be adequately 'qualified and experienced,' and feedback should be 'constructive and a learning experience' (ibid, 2006: 20). For feedback to be effective, it 'needs to be honest and developmental' and needs to be given as soon as possible (Harvey, 2006: 18).

Four types of observation are relevant to this research: focused, semi-structured, peer observation and pair observation, and each has a slightly different focus or role.

Focused observation is used by teachers to learn more about their teaching, about students' motivations, abilities and skills; according to Harvey (2006: 14) it 'reduce[s] classroom observation to a part of the lesson focusing on a particular aspect of the teaching', for instance, the questioning technique of the teacher, or how the teacher controls students' behaviour.

Semi structured observation, on the other hand, is related to a focused observation where many aspects of a lesson can be recorded with a time log, such as: pupil-centred activities, length of each task, and the number of pupils' off-task',

information which can be useful for the teacher (Harvey, 2006: 14). In the third type, peer observation, a professional colleague observes teaching by invitation, in a spirit of collegiality; this can be a 'very positive experience' (ibid, 2006: 17) and can 'provide teachers with opportunities to step out of their normal teaching roles and develop new paradigms for their own work based on observations of other teachers' classroom instruction' (Rodriguez and McKay, 2010: 5). Peer observation increases teachers' confidence and improves 'curriculum planning and pupils' participation' (Harvey, 2006: 17). Pair observation, finally, is another way to improve the effectiveness of classroom observation. It involves: 'two tutors, a subject teacher and a course tutor, two teacher trainees, or a trainee with an experienced teacher' (ibid, 2006: 18). Both observers benefit by comparing and discussing their notes and conclusions. This exercise increases the awareness of subjective analysis in the observation process (Wragg, 1999) and 'creates an opportunity for participants to define and moderate best teaching practice' (Harvey, 2006: 18).

Observation can be useful for both the observer and the observed teacher (Bilash, 2009). It is beneficial for the observer to 'observe new techniques, strategies, ideas and resources; gain insight into one's own strategies and techniques; observe student reactions from a different perspective' (ibid, 2009: 2). For the observed teacher, it is a 'chance to see a class through someone else's eyes, to re-evaluate the classroom from a different perspective and to receive input (suggestions, ideas, and resources) from a colleague'. Thus, observation can contribute to creating 'a professional learning community with the best interests of the students in mind', and facilitate 'personal professional development and growth' (Bilash, 2009: 2).

Feedback analysis is generally recognised as the most important part of the classroom observation process for the tutor and the trainee teachers, since it enhances teachers' confidence, helps them identify their strengths and areas for further development and provides constructive feedback on how to improve (Harvey, 2006). In this process it is vital that a trusting relationship is established between the trainee and the observer (ibid, 2006). Feedback needs to be honest and developmental and be given as soon as possible (Cockburn, 2005). Finally, observation of novice teachers includes not only general pedagogical knowledge, such as classroom management, differentiation, and instructional strategies; it also

needs to focus on Pedagogic Content Knowledge (PCK), specifically on the relationship between pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge (Bilash, 2009).

### **3.2.1 Induction programmes for novice teachers**

Induction, or orientation, is used to provide essential information to novice teachers, and a teacher induction programme is often proposed as a method to ease the transition of the new teachers into the profession (Whitaker, 2001).

The literature proposes various definitions of induction for new teachers. Induction, for the teaching profession, can be regarded as an ‘extension of professional preparation for teaching’ (Steyn, 2004:82), as ‘an introduction to a new set of required skills and practices not learnt during training’, or as ‘an orientation programme’ (Dowding 1998:18). Gordon (1991:9) recommends an element of support in induction, regarding it as ‘a formal, systematic effort to provide ongoing assistance to a new teacher during the induction period’. Similarly, it can be regarded as ‘a planned programme intended to provide some systematic and sustained assistance, specifically to beginning teachers for at least one school year’ (Whitaker, 2001:8). According to Dowding (1998:18), though, induction entails the novice teacher proving themselves; it is ‘the period for improvement and transition, and a process whereby novices are supported to demonstrate competence during the first year of teaching’.

There are also more holistic conceptualisations of induction. For Steyn (2004) it is a continuous process, which comprises both formal and informal components of socialisation and professional development, progressing from pre-service training into the teaching career. Smith and Ingersoll (2004), though, view the induction programme not as extra training in itself, but as being planned for teachers who have already ended essential training or pre-service. Such programmes are to be considered ‘a bridge, enabling the “student of teaching” to become a “teacher of students”’ (ibid, 2004:683). Heilbronn et al. (2002:377) used the same metaphor when they perceived induction as providing as a planned ‘bridge from initial teacher training to effective professional practice’. Tickle (2002:906) takes a longer-term view: induction is a ‘planned and formalized system of assistance and support that enables new teachers not just to survive but to prosper during their first year(s) of teaching and gives them an impulse toward continuous improvement’, a concept

which is echoed by (Steyn, 2004:92), for whom the key to successful and effective induction lies in the way in which novice teachers can be assisted to develop ‘an attitude of lifelong learning’.

Induction programmes, therefore, have been suggested by many researchers as an effective and productive way to assist, develop and nurture ‘an attitude of learning’ among novice teachers (Steyn, 2004:92). It is therefore essential that novice teachers benefit from planned induction programmes which are school-based, context specific and developmental (ibid, 2004). In some places such effective programmes are in place: as Smith and Ingersoll (2004) pointed out, the number of programmes implemented in the USA involving support, guidance, and orientation for novice teachers has been increased in order to ease entry into teaching. However, a third of the new entrants still began their teaching career without essential information about school services, rules and procedures (Wilkinson, 1997).

Support programmes for newly qualified teachers in the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand have common elements, and tend to include one or more of the following: ‘provision of printed materials about employment conditions and school regulations; orientation visits to schools before taking up duty; release time from classes; group meetings among beginning teachers for emotional support; consultations with experienced teachers; and team teaching’ (Veenman, 1984:165). Induction may take the form of a walk around the school, a clarification of the novice teacher's functions, ‘timetables and tasks’, ‘school rules and procedures and the discipline policy, background details about the community of practice, notifying the novice teachers about ‘record keeping’, the location of resources, ‘school activities’ and introducing newcomers to mentors and to staff (Steyn, 2004: 88).

A wide range of formal and informal programmes and models for supporting beginning teachers have been presented in the literature. The ‘teacher-tutor model’, for instance, is an example of a formal programme where the tutor would plan in-service professional development and give professional assistance to novice teachers (Ginns et al., 2001). Another version of this model is the ‘mentor programme model’, which was implemented by the Indiana Mentor Internship Programme, the California Mentor Teacher Programme, the Mentor Teacher Internship Programme

and the Kansas Internship Programme. In this model, beginning teachers are allocated expert teachers to support and advise them, both emotionally and professionally, and ‘organized professional development’ (Ginns et al. 2001:3). In a less formal mentor model, the ‘buddy system’, the mentor is considered as ‘someone who [is] willing to listen and to hear what you are saying, someone who empathises and remembers what it is like to be a new person or on probation’ (Jones, 2006:69). Some induction programmes include the support of university tutors, who provide experience, assistance, advice, and promote the development of reflective practice, on both pre-service and in-service levels (Ginns et al., 2001). The concept of expert support is certainly not limited to the United States. A study of newly qualified teachers in England found that the principal selected experienced members of staff who had the capability ‘to provide day to day monitoring and support’ for the novice teachers, including assessment (Heilbronn et al., 2002).

It is commonly acknowledged, however, that not all induction programmes meet the needs of novice teachers; moreover there are not always channels of communication between teachers and the administrators of such courses (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In Latin America, for example, teachers are poorly prepared even after induction as courses are theory-oriented, do not deal with practical concerns, and are located far away from the schools teacher work in (ibid, 2003).

Although, the key purpose of induction is to integrate newly qualified teachers into their first school in a short time (Heyns, 2000), there are challenges to be met in terms of the developmental aspects of induction, taking into consideration the needs of novice teachers and the opportunities for growth (Steyn, 2004). This is where the mentor plays a crucial role. In addition to expertise in classroom practice, mentors also need to have ‘supportive and empathetic personalities’ (ibid, 2004:91).

However, the mentor’s role, being multi-faceted, is difficult to define and ill understood. Mentors do not have a ‘clear job description’ (Steyn, 2004:91); their role encompasses a wide repertoire of responsibilities, which can generate potential fusions. The quality of the relationship established between mentor and mentee is therefore important.

The tasks and responsibilities of mentors have been described in the literature by many researchers; as a result, there is a variety of ideas on the subject, the principle of which can be summarised thus:

- Acting as a sounding board for the novice teacher's thoughts and concerns by discussing them in regular meetings (Black, 2001).
- Acting as a resource by providing support and guidance to novice teachers by, for example, providing the opportunity to answer novice teachers' questions and transferring 'professional knowledge and coach work skills' (Steyn, 2004:91).
- Advising on staff development programmes. New teachers can be helped by mentors to 'learn and understand teacher practice' (Harrison, 2001:278). Novice teachers can make their own decisions about teaching by listening and discussing ideas about lessons with their mentor. As regards professional development, novice teachers can decide what teaching load is best by discussing teaching work load with mentors (Mohr and Townsend, 2001).
- Acting as a critical friend: someone who is willing and has the ability to say what colleagues may be unwilling to express, perhaps due to fear or out of politeness (Stokes, 2003). The mentor is 'a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be analysed through another lens and offers critique of a person's work as a friend. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work' (Costa and Kallick, 1993:50).
- Being a facilitator: the mentor can assist novice teachers to build and develop professional relationships among colleagues and break the isolation of teaching.
- Assessing the mentee's progress, the mentor may also be responsible for assessing the performance of novice teachers. Fair assessment is an essential part of mentoring and has a significant role to play in improving novice teachers' performance (Roberts, 2000).

In order to support novice teachers effectively mentors need to possess specific personal qualities and professional skills as well as pedagogical knowledge and experience. They should make novice teachers feel welcome and accepted as a developing person (Maynard, 2000; Hascher et al., 2004; Rippon and Martin, 2006; Hobson, et al., 2009), and should respect novice teachers as adult learners, ‘creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust’ (Brock and Grady, 2001:78). Mentors should have good listening skills (Rippon and Martin, 2006; Hobson et al., 2009) and the ability to communicate well. Effective mentors should have a positive outlook and must be reliable (Rippon and Martin, 2006; Hobson et al., 2009). Trust and rapport are the basis for a productive relationship between mentor and novice teacher, so a ‘trusting relationship must be established if mentoring is effective’ (Brock and Grady, 2001:77). Mentors should also want to do the job and be committed to the work of mentoring (Lindgren, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009). The good mentor should be willing to support novice teachers to help them improve their performance. Allocating sufficient time is also important, since good mentors should meet novice teachers frequently and provide emotional and professional support (Brock and Grady, 2001). Johnson et al. (2005), Harrison et al. (2006) and Hobson et al. (2009) agree that successful mentors should devote time to their mentees when needed, both through regular meetings and by being available for informal discussions (Brock and Grady, 2001).

Research on the mentors’ own view of the role found that mentors consider themselves to have five roles: counsellor, resource person, helper, mediator, and model (Brock and Grady, 2001; Freiberg, 2002). To this list, Wischkaemper (2005) added that nurture, encouragement, and motivating the creativity of novice teachers are also the roles of mentors. Lastly, according to Tickle, the characteristics of a good mentor are both numerous and demanding: ‘accessibility; reliability; professional credibility and respect; experience; honesty and humility; approachability and calmness of manner; supportive, constructive and encouraging style; being a good listener, sensitive, and sympathetic; showing empathy, and handling matters with humour; professional knowledge and expertise’ (Tickle, 1994:179).

As well as personal attributes, it is essential that mentors have appropriate professional skills. First and foremost, they should be professional role models (Roehrig et al., 2008; Hobson et al., 2009) in order, for example, to be able to illustrate how to teach in a mixed-age primary class or how to involve students in assessing their work (Teacher Training Agency, 2003). Hobson et al. (2009) and Brock and Grady (2001) added that mentors should also have sufficient knowledge and experience of teaching their subject specialism and the subject area of the novice teachers; Johnson et al. (2004); Smith and Ingersoll (2004); Hobson et al. (2009) agreed that mentoring is more effective when mentors teach the same subject specialism as their mentees. Effective mentors are not only interested in novice teachers' work (ibid, 2009), but have leadership skills and the ability to adjust to various individuals and situations (Brock and Grady, 2001; Samuels et al., 2001).

### **3.2.2 The mentoring dimension**

According to Awaya et al. (2003), mentoring can be considered as the relationship between two people, not a role. In their study, which involved interviewing novice teachers and their mentors, they found that the mentor and the novice teacher can both learn and grow. Based on their findings, Awaya et al. (2003) concluded that the in effective mentoring relationships the relationship between mentor and the novice teacher should be perceived as a journey; the novice teachers should view the mentor as a source of knowledge and support; there should be equivalence between the mentor and novice teacher, and the novice teacher should be given space. Awaya et al. (2003) also found that a successful mentoring relationship is difficult to establish if the novice teacher is incapable of viewing the mentor as an equal and if the mentor is unwilling to support the novice teacher. According to Street (2004) the degree of harmony between support and challenge is a significant factor that affects mentor-mentee relationships. Where mentors provide a secure learning environment, novice teachers can take risks and follow new ideas, and mentors can challenge their perspectives.

Through engaging in collaborative activities, therefore, mentors and mentees can develop a positive and trusting relationship in their endeavour to achieve a common goal. The support received, however is not always equal to the level of support expected by novice teachers, and unclear expectations can result in problems, such as mentors and novice teachers not meeting as regularly as required (Osgood, 2001).

### 3.3 School culture

It is generally accepted that a supportive school culture contributes to a teacher's 'job satisfaction and their motivation' (Steyn, 2004: 84). Novice teachers need to feel 'valued and welcome' and be provided with the opportunity to cooperate with other colleagues (Johnson and Uline, 2005:49). According to Brock and Grady (2001) the interactions between staff reflect a school's culture. Thus, novice teachers' success depends on how well they identify with the school culture, the relationships they establish with their colleagues and to what extent they consider themselves a member of the school community. New teachers are often unaware of the tacitly agreed norms of teacher behaviour in a particular school. Although most schools have clear written explanations of rules and procedures, the unwritten rules are more significant than those in the school booklet. Novice teachers need to know what to anticipate and to understand the role played by diverse structures and procedures followed in the school (Brock and Grady, 2001). Often, however, they are afraid to appear ignorant, make assumptions consequently make mistakes. The type of school culture experienced by a novice teacher can have significant repercussions. Hargreaves (2003) emphasised the importance of a collaborative culture, which is likely to maintain their obligation, vigour and their motivation to stay in the school and continue in the profession. Where novice teachers work in a 'culture of closed classroom doors' and 'uninvolved teachers' they experience feelings of insecurity and frustration, which negatively affect their enthusiasm for teaching (Wanzare, 2007:348). Brock and Grady (2001: 32) stated that novice teachers might find one of the four common levels of culture in a school, since 'elements that are common to school in general, are characteristic of a particular school and community, are common to a specific kind of school and are unique to the people who compose the school community'.

In reality, novice teachers are often left to sink or swim with little support afforded to them, which can lead to premature burnout as a result of disappointment, inadequate information and an inability to deal with the numerous daily requirements of teaching (Kelley, 2004). Teaching in fact involves a large variety of non-educational tasks, and many of those which are of a managerial or clerical nature can contribute to the failure of new teachers (Gordon, 1991). These tasks, for

which they are often ill prepared, include: behaviour management of students, gathering money and forms, and implementing managerial official procedure. For example Dube (2008), who conducted a study in Botswana, concluded that novice teachers need the principal, a mentor and/or an experienced colleague to support them in such tasks, respond to their questions and assist them in making sense of the tacitly agreed customs and norms of teacher behaviour within their respective school. Brock and Grady (2001) stressed the need for novice teachers to interact with the principal, as the most important person in school. It can be concluded, therefore, that it is necessary for the principal to have an open door policy.

Brock and Grady (2001) argued that a school culture is hugely affected by the principal's leadership style, and they play a vital role in 'creating and nurturing a positive school culture' (ibid., 2001: 35-36), by communicating what seems significant; handling difficult situations positively by using effective decision-making processes and through managing reactions; modelling professional practice; distributing rewards; and appointing staff who can contribute to a positive school ethos.. The leader must realise whether the school environment leads to ineffective behaviour; s/he must provide guidance that directs the culture in a positive way that promotes positive behaviour. Research conducted by Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) found that principals who have been more successful in retaining teachers have characteristics of successful entrepreneurs: they are decisive thinkers, make good decisions quickly, and are problem solvers. They possess strong organizational skills, are well-spoken, inherently motivated and have good time management. Furthermore, they have self-confidence, can lead, can get trust and respect, are motivated to continually learn, have good listening skills, and have a sense of humour. The following strategies were identified by principals as being significant to instructional leadership: providing further support for novice teachers, 'assisting teachers to develop and deliver effective lesson plans, 'helping teachers understand the latest education research', and recording student achievement data and helping teachers understand and use this.

In their argument that novice teachers need a level of developmental activities to 'feel welcome and valued', Brock and Grady (2001) stated that there are three factors affecting novice teachers: (a) the opportunity to engage in collaborative

activities with other colleagues (b) the attention that principals provide to novice teachers, and (c) feedback from principals after observation.

Novice teachers need to be aware of their principal's expectations of their teaching and also want to know what the community of practice, the parents and the learners anticipate from them. In the UK, USA and Australia the main point of reference for the evaluation of professional practice, and therefore of what is expected of them, are the statutory professional standards that newly qualified teachers need to achieve by the end of the induction year, something which is non-existent in Libyan schools.

There is a risk of isolation where there is a lack of cooperation between novice teachers and experienced colleagues. There is evidence in the research literature that novice teachers do not seek help for fearing to appear incompetent and that experienced practitioners are afraid to offer help for fear of appearing to be interfering (Brock and Grady, 2001; Whitaker, 2001). These fears can result in professional segregation, when new teachers work on their own with their students and bear sole responsibility for the management of their classes, for assessment of learning outcomes and for administrative roles (Brock and Grady, 2001; Whitaker, 2001; Steyn, 2004). Minimal opportunities for professional discussions or collaboration with their colleagues are offered to them (Tickle, 1994), and in such situations new teachers feel unconfident and anxious without guidance or assistance from expert teachers (Whitaker, 2001). Where such unsupportive cultures prevail, novice teachers may have limited opportunities to access the expertise of experienced colleagues and as a result may experience loss of self-confidence and self-doubt. These negative influences can be minimised where effective learning communities provide role models, support, motivation, encouragement and acceptance of group goals. Within such communities' power, authority, and decision making are shared in a democratic way with novice teachers. In addition, novice teachers have the opportunity to share ideas and resources with colleagues and receive respect and guidance from the principal (Johnson and Birkeland, 2003; Brown and Wynn, 2009). Novice teachers may experience periods during which they lack self-confidence in terms of making significant decisions. In some cases they have limited opportunities to access other teachers' classrooms to observe experienced teachers because classrooms are separated from each other. As a result

of losing their self-confidence and feeling inadequate, they become uncertain in their way of thinking about their performance in the classroom and the teaching profession as a whole (Dube, 2008).

Since novice teachers spend the majority of their time with their students and their busy work schedule makes it difficult for them to interact with their colleagues, they rarely develop close relationships with one another (Whitaker, 2001; Kelley, 2004). However, they require opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues, observe other teachers and be observed to get feedback on their classroom performance and network with other new teachers (ibid, 2004). At the same time novice teachers have extremely little spare time due to all their allocated responsibilities and consequently exchange of thoughts and practices in or between schools is limited (Andrews and Martin, 2003). Ultimately, they resort to ask for advice from outside the school on subjects like instructional planning and how to settle classroom problems (Dube, 2008). NQTs in England are in a fortunate position as they are entitled to 10% reduction of their work load to provide them with time in which to focus on their own professional learning and development.

Apart from the professional challenges with which novice teachers are confronted in schools, they may experience a sense of vulnerability, as a result of being in a new place and distant from home. They may experience feelings of loneliness and isolation, missing their families and friends (Tickle, 1994). One factor contributing to novice teachers' isolation is their reluctance to share their anxieties with their colleagues, which hinders novice teachers' progress and professional development by denying them the opportunity to engage in dialogue with more experienced peers (Brock and Grady, 2001). Steyn (2004) observed this kind of behaviour amongst novice teachers in Botswana and South Africa, and believed that this kind of behaviour hinders beginning teachers in their professional development and limits their access to chances from which they would benefit.

Dube's (2008) research in Botswana highlighted another issue. The personal challenges and insecurities that come from being in a new school environment are often more pronounced in beginning teachers who are usually in the minority, and as a result often feel different. They often feel unjustly treated; they feel puzzled by the

demands of the school culture, policy and rules. They fear being rejected and are uncertain whether they will be accepted by colleagues. This phenomenon is not specific to Botswana or developing countries in general, but is also apparent in Anglo Celtic communities. Andrews and Quinn (2005) mentioned that novice teachers often feel that they are forgotten and no one cares about them; many things about the school remain only vaguely understood. Consequently, they feel that they are not welcome. They may even be hired to fulfil an ethnic quota or in response to a certain need; in this case newcomers can become the object of intense analysis and disapproval.

Another challenge for novice teachers is communication with parents, since their responses and judgment are often questioned in by both students and parents. Jones (2002) pointed out that novice teachers need to develop confidence when dealing with parents, since they may have to cope with insulting comments and handle angry parents. Brock and Grady (1998) affirmed that novices are misunderstood by parents, who fail to fully accept and respect them as teachers. Nevertheless, being young and lacking experience may create a powerful cocktail that weakens novice teachers' ability to manage these challenges.

Sometimes new entrants suffer the consequences of existing problems within a community of practice. When the staff is in conflict with the principal, the newcomer is placed in a difficult position (Brock and Grady, 2001; Steyn, 2004). Steyn (2004) added that with their arrival, a new dynamic is introduced to the staff structure. Older, highly experienced practitioners may view them with suspicion or even become enemies (Jones, 2006), which militates against establishing trusting relationships and effective communication with colleagues and administrators.

Becoming a member of the school community can be particularly problematic where the staff members are divided or where teachers view the newcomer with suspicion and display a defensive attitude. They may act as 'gatekeepers' to their 'isolated kingdoms' (Jones, 2006: 71) rather than as members of a community of practice where novice teachers can benefit from opportunities for professional learning. This kind of inequality arises from colleagues behaving as if they owned rights that other teachers are deprived of (ibid, 2006). In such hostile situations the induction tutor or

mentor takes on a significant role as mediator, to assist and facilitate the newcomer in gaining access to the community of practice. As Jones (2006) asserted, if new entrants do not enjoy an appropriate level of pastoral care, it will have a negative impact on their self-confidence and performance as teachers.

Ultimately, novice teachers find teaching stressful and exhausting especially when unfair demands are made of them. At times, novice teachers are overloaded with activities and expected to undertake additional duties, rather than having their workload allocated fairly. Dube (2008) reported that in Botswana, experienced teachers make novice teachers do work for them. Such issues need to be addressed and require a range of strategies since, faced with a multitude of personal and professional challenges, many teachers at the beginning of their career experience workload fatigue and wonder if they still have time for life outside teaching (McCann and Johannessen, 2004; Lovett and Davey, 2009).

To conclude, if high quality teaching and learning is to be achieved it is essential to make teacher training, support and retention top priorities (Freiberg, 2002; Wong, 2002). Efficient school management of induction is a good deal for the school, the teaching profession in general and the individual in particular. It implies an understanding of the challenges faced by novice teachers and the existence of suitable strategies to address such needs (Steyn, 2004).

Principals particularly need to be effective leaders and support new entrants to the profession. In the Libyan education system, the context of the present research, there is a need not only to improve pre-service programmes for teachers in general but those for teaching English as a foreign language in particular. There is also an urgent need to develop induction programmes to provide its teachers with adequate support during the early stages of their career. Ultimately, effective teacher induction will not only benefit the teachers and pupils but also the schools and society as a whole and should be reflected in improved educational outcomes. However, in order to achieve this, teachers need to develop a shared understanding of the professional values and beliefs that underpin and inform their practice.

### **3.4 The concept of professionalism**

While teacher training and induction programmes have at their core the development of competence in classroom practice, this also needs to be underpinned by

professional values and beliefs. However, the concept of professionalism is difficult to define, as it is shaped by the cultural, social and political context within which it is embedded. Furthermore, there are two distinct models, as highlighted by Evans (2008), which represent the two end points of a continuum. One extreme 'is more attitudinal than behavioural in its focus', the other is 'more functional than attitudinal' (Evans, 2008: 25).

Hargreaves (2000) identified four historical phases of teacher professionalism: the pre-professional age, the age of the autonomous professional, the age of the collegial professional and the post-professional, or postmodern age.

During the pre-professional age teaching was considered to be a craft that could be learned through observation. As Hargreaves (2000: 156) maintained, it was 'managerially demanding but technically simple'. Some people learned to be teachers through practical training and improved individually by trial and error. The good teacher devoted himself to his craft, was loyal and received personal reward for his service. The function of the teachers was merely to carry out the directions of their 'more knowledgeable superiors' (Murray, 1992: 495).

Teachers did not adjust themselves to the individual student's needs, but tended to treat the whole class as a kind of collective student (Bromme, 1987). The teacher simply used his/her judgments about the management and development of the lesson for the class as a whole (Dahloff and Lundgren, 1970). The teacher's concern was not with learning experiences of individual students, but with the flow of the lesson, keeping order and how well s/he concluded the lesson (Clark and Peterson, 1986).

This stage was succeeded by the Age of the Autonomous Professional which was marked by the challenge of individuality of teaching, and a kind of 'licensed autonomy' (Hargreaves, 2000: 159). From the 1960s onwards, the status of teachers improved considerably in many countries, compared with the pre-professional age. In this stage, expansion of in-service training was notable (Fullan and Connelly, 1990). Workshops and courses were delivered by experts to teachers who were then not capable to put into practice what they had learned when they went back to their workplaces (Little, 1993).

In the 1970s and 1980s, individualism and isolation were widespread characteristics in the culture of teaching (Rosenholtz, 1989). As a consequence, teachers received feedback about their performance (*ibid*, 1989) and had limited opportunities to learn from other colleagues (Woods, 1990) and to engage in professional discussion and initial reflection (Little, 1990).

By the mid1980s teacher autonomy waned, teaching became more complex and efforts to establish collaborative culture were increased due to an expanding knowledge base, new curriculum demands, and a growing diversity of learner needs (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000). This was the age of the collegial professional. The world was changing, and many teachers found that they had to teach in new and different ways (McLaughlin, 1997). Many teachers started seeking mutual support from their colleagues, since not only was the power of external expertise being eroded, but the courses delivered by external experts were also being questioned (Day, 1999). The teacher's role had changed and involved consultation, collaboration and other work with colleagues (Hargreaves, 2000).

The 21st century is regarded as the age of the postmodern professional. The world has experienced many social, economic, political and cultural changes and teaching requires working with more diverse communities and viewing parents as sources of support rather than interference (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000). As the social geographies of schooling change and the borders between schools and the world outside are becoming blurred the social geography of professional learning is also changing, and there is more access to networks of professional learning. As Hargreaves and Fullan (2000: 2) maintain, 'the content of professional learning needs to become wider and deeper'. It includes working with parents, coping with scientific advances in education, and collaborating with others to bring positive improvement in education (*ibid*, 2000). Teachers are now dealing with varied customers and increasing moral doubt. Mentoring is currently one of the most influential factors in education. In order to meet the challenges of this age, mentoring must be led by and connected to an inclusive approach (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000). In the era of post modernity, new teacher professionalism will emerge from the interaction of different paradigms and stakeholders' perspectives. This new

professionalism will be 'broader, more flexible and more democratically inclusive of groups outside teaching' (Hargreaves, 2000: 167) and will require teachers to accept responsibility for using flexible judgment.

In Libya, however, novice teachers are still in the pre-professional age. They work in isolation. They do not collaborate with each other, or share knowledge. To improve the Libyan education system, teachers' concept of professionalism must move towards a collegial stage where male and female teachers, long-serving staff and newcomers all work together as a team. It is necessary for post-revolutionary Libya to effect change and reform from inside the teaching profession. Teachers should work together, learn together, collaborate, and share experience together, and should create knowledge together.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

In Chapter One it was stated that this study will investigate novice teachers' experiences in the light of challenges with which they are confronted day to day and the kind of support they receive in secondary schools in the north west of Libya. This chapter focuses on the research approach and design of the study. First, the research method is described and the rationale for the particular approach is discussed. There follows a description of the sample, data collection, analysis, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

#### **4.1 Research approach**

The term 'methods' as described by Bryman (2008a: 161) refer to 'the techniques that researchers employ for practicing their craft'. This may include 'instruments of data collection like questionnaires, interviews or observation', sampling techniques or tools employed in the analysis of data, which may include statistical techniques or emerging themes from unstructured data. Research methodology, on the other hand, is concerned with the whole procedure of an analytical study (Hussey and Hussey, 1997), providing the researcher with a guide to accomplish the objectives of the research (Antony et al., 2002). There are three broad approaches to consider in the selection of an appropriate methodology: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Bryman, 2008b; Cohen et al., 2007; Denscombe, 2008; Creswell, 2008; Berg, 2009). In order to use the approach best suited to their study, researchers must take into account the nature of the inquiry, the nature of the research population, and the kind of research questions to which answers are sought (Cohen et al., 2007; Bryman, 2008b; Creswell, 2008; Berg, 2009).

It is apparent from the literature that some researchers prefer to adopt a quantitative approach when conducting surveys, since it is characterized by its objectivity, its focus on measuring results and its aim: to gather and analyse data by using statistical methods (Amaratunga et al., 2002). Others, such as Creswell (2003), prefer a

qualitative approach, which is subjective in nature and involves examining and reflecting the perceptions of subjects in order to gain an understanding of social and human activities. The advantages and disadvantages of these two very different approaches were analysed by Amaratunga et al. (2002). Although it may be harder to construct a design for a quantitative study, the data analysis and reporting of results may be relatively straightforward due to the high degree of structure. In contrast, while qualitative research is generally easier to begin, it can be difficult to analyse the information and draw the final conclusions. However, in support of a qualitative approach, Cohen et al. (2007) argued that, compared with other approaches, such methods are particularly suited to the generation of rich and in-depth data, and allow for greater depth than quantitative methods. The use of open-ended questions, for example, gives participants the opportunity to contribute detailed data. However, as Harris and Brown (2010) and Bryman (2008b) state, it can be difficult to generalise the results for most qualitative studies because of the relatively small sample sizes.

The kind of research study reported here has never been undertaken within the Libyan education system, so to maximise the breadth and depth of the information collected a mixed methods approach was used, embedded within an interpretive paradigm, as a broad framework of inquiry to serve the research objectives. The underlying assumption supporting this approach is that mixed methods research is a valid research design (Creswell, 2002, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, 2003), the advantages of which are discussed below.

Mixed methods research has been described as ‘an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researchers’ choices’ (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 17), while Creswell (2008: 62) defined it as ‘procedures for collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study’. Accordingly, the researcher employed Creswell’s (2008) two-pronged approach: quantitative methods were used to map the territory to see the wider picture; while qualitative methods sought to obtain a more detailed, in-depth understanding of individual experiences, and thus to gain access to the thoughts and experiences of English language novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools during their first three years of teaching. By adopting this

approach to data collecting, valuable insights can be gained from the research findings that are not possible when using one form of data alone (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998), since questionnaires and interviews can be seen as ‘having differing and possibly complementary strengths and weaknesses’ (Harris and Brown, 2010: 2). Moreover, it can be noted that the mixed methods approach has been used successfully to research a topic in the same broad field: Fantilli and McDougall (2009) in their study of the challenges and supports of novice teachers in the first years of professional practice used a mixed approach for collecting statistical quantitative data from a sample population, from which they identified individual teachers for the generation of qualitative data. Thus it was anticipated that emerging themes from the initial survey for this study would inform the development of the questions used in the follow-up in-depth interviews.

Broadly, the two methods used addressed complementary aims. The self-completion questionnaire survey provided descriptive and contextual data and had, to some extent, the potential to be generalizable and to be compared with other international studies concerned with novice teachers’ professional development. The interviews, however, were intended to gain a deeper understanding of individual cases, i.e. novice teachers’ negotiation of the challenges confronting them in the early stages of their teaching career. The collection and analysis of data to inform the research findings was best facilitated by a strategy of the complementary use of survey and interview data. In essence, the framing of the research questions and the research design was informed by philosophical and pragmatic considerations, one of which was the assumption that the findings would be of interest to policy makers and education practitioners supporting novice teachers in their professional development. On the other hand, some of the patterns and trends emerging from the survey data demanded analysis that is informed by various theoretical perspectives (Sammons et al., 2005).

In accordance with an interpretive approach chosen the research was carried out in a natural setting; reality was conceived of as a human construct reflecting the participants’ individual perspectives (multiple realities). The investigation included the consideration of the structural, social and cultural factors inherent in the individual school settings and how they influenced novice teachers’ professional

development during the early stages of their career. Particular focus was placed on the challenges confronting them in their day-to-day practice and the personal and professional needs that arose.

#### **4.2 Research design**

This study was conducted in two separate phases. Phase 1 was a mapping survey; during Phase 2 in-depth interviews were conducted. The data gathered during the two phases was subject to a process of triangulation, in which the data generated by Likert-scale questions, open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews were compared and contrasted.

The first phase, the mapping survey, was carried out using a structured self-completion questionnaire, which was divided into six sections. The first section was concerned with basic demographic data and the participants' biographical information (gender, number of years of teaching, area of school, where qualified, and specialism). Section two focused on the novice teachers' pre-service experience, while section three investigated the support provided to participants in their first three years of practice by mentors and school principals. Section four was concerned with the availability of adequate resources. A five-point Likert scale was used for sections two to four, to indicate the degree of agreement with statements. The fifth section explored novice teachers' classroom practice and the areas which were in need of development. This was followed by two open-ended questions which formed the last section and gave participants an opportunity to contribute their views about the personal and professional characteristics of the ideal mentor, and the kind of support they feel they need as novice teachers.

Phase two, the qualitative phase, consisted of follow-up, face-to-face in-depth interviews with a sub-sample of 21 novice teachers, exploring the themes emerging from the survey.

#### **4.3 The sample**

Selection of the participants for this study was based on specific criteria, so that 'they [could] purposefully inform understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study' (Creswell 2007: 125). This was therefore a purposive

sample comprising a survey (N=227) and an interview sample (N=21) of novice teachers of English as a foreign language, who between 2007 and 2009 were employed in 29 secondary schools in the north west of Libya. Participation was entirely voluntary and based on informed consent. At the time of the data collection, participants had three years or less teaching experience in government schools.

Accessibility was an important issue for selecting the sample of this study (Bell, 2005; Bryman, 2008b). Although the researcher had worked as an EFL teacher in some schools for more than two decades, only a minority of the research participants were known to her. Only three of these participants had been taught by the researcher during her time as a lecturer in a university English department. A reason for selecting this geographical area was that it provided a diverse range of rural and urban secondary schools. Of the 23 volunteers who expressed their interest to participate in the interview, due to time constraints and logistical challenges, only 21 completed the interview.

#### **4.4 Data collection**

##### **4.4.1 The survey questionnaire**

The process of data collection by questionnaire is commonly associated with a quantitative approach, with a focus on measuring results and with the aim of presenting and analysing data by using statistical methods (Amaratunga et al., 2002). Participant responses are generally sought to the same series of questions or statements.

Questionnaires are generally regarded as an objective research instrument that can be used to generalise results based on large sample sizes (Harris and Brown, 2010). Results, however, can be affected by many factors such as 'faulty questionnaire design; sampling and non-response errors; biased questionnaire design and wording; respondent unreliability, ignorance, misunderstanding, bias; processing, and statistical analysis; and faulty interpretation of results' as highlighted in the literature (Harris and Brown, 2010:2). Questionnaires can be administered in many ways: self-administration; by post, face-to-face interview, telephone, email, group administered, or household-drop off surveys (Cohen et al., 2007; Gay and Airasian, 2003; Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). Even though distributing questionnaires by

email is common, in this study this was impossible due to the lack of internet access for the majority of the teachers.

The process of gaining access to the various participating schools proved to be a huge logistical challenge in terms of travelling long distances and making arrangements for visits to the various schools. First, a letter of permission was obtained from the district education department of each district, since some principals refused access to their schools. Then informed consent was obtained from the school principals (who act as gatekeepers) and finally from individual participants. A meeting was arranged with the principals of all the schools in this study, and the formal consent letter from each district was delivered to schools by hand. A full explanation about the study was provided to the principals and to one teacher in each school, who agreed to distribute the questionnaires to colleagues. In some schools teachers requested further details, individually, in pairs and in many cases, in groups of three. Copies of the Arabic versions of the questionnaire were left with the teacher, who assisted in the collection of data by asking colleagues to read the participant information sheet and explaining the aims of the research. To ensure the confidentiality of participant information, the invitation to participate in this research was hand delivered to all participants at the 29 schools with an information letter and an informed consent form.

The questionnaire included the items to be completed on a voluntary basis by the participating teachers, including 47 closed questions (Likert scale items) and two open ended questions. The questionnaire and some explanations about the study which were included in the covering letter were translated into Arabic. Logistical difficulties arising from the remote rural locations of many schools posed practical problems, such as unreliable or no postal services, poor road conditions, and political unrest; there were instances where the completed questionnaires were returned via the school's principal. Returning the questionnaire to the researcher directly or to a teacher appointed by the principal was a measure to help protect the anonymity of study participants. Contacting individual teachers posed an enormous challenge as it required numerous visits to the respective schools, in some cases up to ten.

Data collection via this questionnaire was conducted between November and December 2010, before the Libyan revolution broke out in February 2011. The majority, if not all of the teachers took the questionnaires home, and repeated reminders were needed to prompt the participants to complete the questionnaire and have it ready for collection. The researcher made many phone calls both to principals and to the teachers assisting with the administration of the questionnaires, asking them to encourage the teachers to complete them. Despite every effort to ensure that the questionnaires were returned, in many cases I was unable to find the principals and the assisting teachers in school. To ensure the completed questionnaires were returned, I left a note to remind them that they could hand them to my husband if they should see him in the village.

#### **4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews**

Interviewing is a significant qualitative data collection method that can be used for describing educational problems and practices. The interviews which represent the qualitative element in this mixed methods study also have their own advantages and disadvantages. Creswell (2003) pointed out that an interview involves examining and reflecting perceptions in order to gain an understanding of social and human activities. Moreover, qualitative interview data can facilitate a better understanding of the participants' manners, 'thoughts, and actions' (Harris and Brown, 2010: 1).

Cohen et al. (2007: 351) define interviewing as 'a two-person conversation' in which the interviewer seeks to elicit information that provides answers to his/her research questions. Burns (2000: 423) defined interviews as 'a verbal interchange, often face to face, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs, or opinions from another person'. Gay and Airasian (2003: 209) defined the interview as 'a purposeful interaction between two or more people that focused on one person trying to get information from the other person'. Since interviews allow participants to express their thoughts and understanding, they provide a positive way of understanding others (Cohen et al., 2007: 349; Punch, 2009: 144). Harris and Brown (2010) highlighted the democratic dimension that an interview can offer to interviewees by providing the opportunity to ask for explanations, and to clarify views in their own words.

The interviewees in the current study were informed that there would be no risks and only benefits associated with participation in the research study. The findings from phase one of the data collection, the survey data, informed the interview questions, particularly questions relating to: pre-service experience; the support provided to novice teachers in their first three years of practice by the mentor and the principal; resources and classroom practice.

Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003: 44) argued that ‘while other instruments focus on the surface elements of what is happening, interviews give the researcher more of an insight into the meaning and significance of what is happening’. Choosing the interview as a complementary method for collecting data allowed the researcher to attempt to probe more deeply; to gain an insight into individual novice teachers’ experiences; and to find out more about the challenges they encountered during the early stages of their career. Consequently, it was necessary to make a judgement about which kind of interview would be most appropriate for the study. It is generally accepted that there are three main types of interview.

- Fully structured interviews require planned questions and aim to generate responses against pre-coded categories (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).
- Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, include questions which are not pre-planned or standardized (ibid, 2009).
- The final type, semi-structured interviews, contains a core of planned questions (Punch (2009) but allows a certain degree of flexibility in terms of additions and omissions, depending on the situation and the responses of the interviewee (Merriam, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews were selected because, by allowing the respondents to express themselves in their own words, they give the interviewee some kind of autonomy for developing the interview (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003; Bryman, 2008b; Berg, 2009). A semi-structured interview also gives the researcher the opportunity to ask for explanations and illustrations, and ask new questions prompted by the interviewee's responses (Merriam, 2009); this aids the generation of rich data. Data collection by this method is also based on the assumption that it

could facilitate understanding and development of the participants' world (Easterby-Smith et al., 2004: 87).

After the completion of the Phase 1 survey, therefore, interviews were conducted with 21 teachers. Unfortunately, the original intention to conduct 30 interviews was drastically interrupted by the Libyan revolution. Participants were asked to provide their preferred dates, times and locations for conducting the interview. These arrangements were flexible and changes were made as required by individual unexpected circumstances. Since the majority of the teachers already knew the researcher from the Phase 1 survey conducted in November and December 2010, introductions were unnecessary. At this stage the researcher attempted to build a trusting and friendly relationship with the research participants; to respect them and communicate with them in a collaborative atmosphere, and to ensure that the democratic principles of equity and respect were adhered to. Participants were told for the second time that the data collected would be anonymous and confidential and that they had the right to withdraw or stop at any time (Berg, 2009).

#### **4.5 Data analysis**

In accordance with the mixed methods approach, multiple strategies were used to analyse the data. The survey questionnaire generated both quantitative and qualitative responses which were used in triangulation with the more in-depth information gained from interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Programmes for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel software in order to discover the challenges that the novice teacher participants faced. Descriptive statistics, tables based on frequencies and percentages were used to describe the data where suitable.

Responses to the two open ended questions posed at the end of the questionnaire, were analysed along with the interview data by means of the NVivo software programme. This allowed for a thematic analysis adopting a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990), where the aim was to generate theory inductively from data collected in a systematic manner. This involved the identification of common themes that emerged from the data and of patterns and links that became apparent across the various categories. The NVivo

programme assisted in determining these key themes relating to the needs of the English language novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools during the first three years of professional practice, and to redesign and develop a framework to support these teachers.

In order to minimize personal biases and opinions having an impact on the interpretation of data, a conscious effort was made to give fair consideration to all the perspectives presented and not allow personal biases and opinions to influence the research.

#### **4.6 Ethical considerations**

As Oliver (2003) pointed out, ethics are the responsibility of the researcher. Ethical considerations are an integral part of educational research and form a significant element in the research methodology. According to Saunders et al. (2007: 178), ethical considerations in research ‘refer to the appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work, or are affected by it’. According to Saunders et al. (2007: 178), research ethics are defined not only by behaviour but also by the ideals that govern it: the ‘moral principles, norms, or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others’.

Prior to data collection, approval for this study was gained from the Research Ethics Committee of Liverpool John Moores University. In addition, permission was obtained from two district departments in the north-west of Libya: Alzawia and Al-Niqat Al-khams. There were no foreseeable risks identified for participants in this study. Data were collected by the researcher and the confidentiality of participants was protected by means of pseudonyms which were used to protect their identities. Moreover, the names of the participating schools were not mentioned. To gain access to the various practice settings, I obtained informed consent from both gatekeepers (the principals) and participants (novice teachers). Participants were informed that their involvement in this study was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time, at which point all data relating to them would be destroyed. Before the start of data collection the teachers were made aware of the purpose of the research and were given brief information about what their

participation involved. Confidentiality of information was ensured through secure storage of data in a locked place. Access to the data set was given only to the researcher and the research supervisor. Paper files were stored in a locked room to which only the researcher had access. Within five years of completing this study, all paperwork will be destroyed.

#### **4.7 Limitations of the research**

In the course of this study many challenges arose - linguistic, logistical, methodological, cultural and political - which proved difficult to manage and which had an impact on the way in which the research was conducted. There follows therefore an account of the difficulties encountered in terms of the linguistic proficiency required to undertake this study, the logistical difficulties involved in the collection of data and the methodological constraints arising from the dearth of academic writing and empirical research concerned with pre-service preparation and professional development of teachers in Libya.

##### ***Linguistic challenges***

The need to read vast amounts of literature in English and to express ideas and arguments in academic English was particularly difficult, as it involved not only acquiring new vocabulary in a foreign language, but also familiarization with new concepts in the substantive research area, as well as the methodology. For example, the term 'mentoring' was problematic; it is a concept which is not well understood, and is rarely used and enacted in a professional practice context. It is only referred to when a school is notified of the visit of an inspecting 'mentor' from the district education department. While in developed countries it is commonly used to describe a learning strategy employed in teachers' workplace learning and professional development, in developing countries like Libya, it lacks definition and critical evaluation of how it is enacted in a practice setting.

Another challenge was posed by the need to translate Arabic texts into English and vice versa, either in connection with the literature review or for the purpose of data collection, since all research instruments (the survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews) were administered in Arabic and required not only transcription but also translation into English. This linguistic and cultural boundary

crossing required an enormous amount of energy and time due to the need to double check meanings and interpretations.

The logistical challenges associated with data collection were equally difficult, not only because of the geographical distances involved in travelling to the various schools where interviews took place, but also because of the political and social unrest that started to make itself felt in the streets in the weeks prior to the Libyan Revolution. Due to extremely poor road conditions (potholes, gravel and sand surfaces), my brand new car suffered extensive damage. In rural areas there were no road signs and a guide was needed to find the schools. Furthermore, postal services were not available in these areas, so survey questionnaires had to be distributed and collected in person, which was very time consuming. Conducting both the mapping survey and follow-up interviews was therefore difficult in terms of arranging visits at specific times and in terms of transport.

A number of cultural and ethical challenges also had to be surmounted, in particular for the interviews. First, the interviews were not recorded, due to the participants' objections. Due to the dearth of research in Libya the concept of participating in research is unfamiliar. A second difficulty was that the questions, originally written in English, required translation into Arabic.

Participants refused both to be interviewed face-to-face in English, and to accept any written material in English, since they needed sufficient time to understand them. The meeting time available - between lessons and break time - was insufficient. Participants also needed to take the interview questions home and needed further explanations, so they were provided with a translation of the interview questions into Arabic. Using their mother tongue enabled them to express their thoughts more accurately, since they were asked to explain in detail as much as they could and give examples if possible. Several meetings were needed to clarify questions and then to respond to further queries. Although participants had been told that their participation would be voluntary and anonymous, and that the information they shared would be confidential, the participants were reluctant to express their honest opinions and tended to give short answers, due to the highly personal nature of the

information and also because they were fearful of Gaddafi and his authority. This in turn affected the data, both in terms of both quantity and quality.

As a result of these problems the participants were encouraged to respond to even more questions than originally planned, in order to elicit more explanations. This process, however, was hampered by another difficulty which seems to be a common phenomenon in Libya. People do not like to be questioned about anything in detail and consider it silly; especially when they found out that the researcher was a teacher. For example, this behaviour occurred when they were asked to talk about mentor support during the first days and weeks of starting employment in a school and how it may help them to establish relationships with staff, students and parents and also to manage their workload and time.

Some respondents laughed, expressing surprise, while others communicated the same kind of disparaging sentiments to their colleagues via facial expressions. They said to me *'you are a teacher, you know all that, and you know that we do not have all this in our schools'*. Consequently, it was explained to them that their detailed thoughts were needed for my research. Conducting some interviews took more than seven attempts. The participants missed appointments on many occasions, and left me waiting. They even switched off their phones, after they had given me their numbers.

Another challenge that occurred during data collection was due to the researcher not heeding the cultural aspects of Libyan society and anticipating how it affected the study. It seemed that data collection was going to be straightforward, since the researcher's extensive experience of teaching EFL in Libyan schools would help to understand the challenges confronting these teachers. For instance while administering the survey I became aware of male teachers' reluctance to provide information to a female researcher. Therefore, I did not hand the questionnaires to them in person, but asked the school principals to distribute the questionnaires amongst their male colleagues and to collect it after completion.

### ***Methodological challenge***

When conducting the interviews it was expected from the beginning that the number of male teachers participating might only constitute a small minority - perhaps 3 or 4 interviewees. But this turned out to be over optimistic, as in fact no male teacher accepted an invitation to be interviewed. One explanation might be found in the fact that Libya is a Muslim country where Islam controls the way people think and act, with clear boundaries between males and females. In view of the fact that the interview sample consisted only of female teachers, It must be acknowledged that the data may be skewed towards the perceptions and experiences of female novice teachers and therefore may not be representative of the entire novice teacher population, particularly since Libyan society is highly genderised, particularly in the public sphere.

### ***Political unrest***

The political context within which this research took place also had a considerable impact on the study. With the outbreak of the Libyan Revolution in February 2011 the researcher's personal life as a Libyan citizen had a tremendous impact on the study. The planned number of interviews could not be conducted as the country was in upheaval and the risk involved in travelling to the various locations was too great. Weapons were commonplace, due to the President's attempt to sow anarchy in the wake of his regime, warning 'after me the deluge'. He released all prisoners and armed them, resulting in their stealing, and killing whoever was in their way. Raids on arms stores resulted in chaos.

My family and I did not leave our home as stepping outside the house risked costing us our lives. All we could hear was the sound of bullets and the roar of rockets and missiles. The smiles on all our faces disappeared and changed to sorrow and concern about residents in other areas when we heard the news of bloody battles and mounting casualties. Unpaid salaries, closed food shops, bakeries, and petrol stations, along with abandoned cars run dry of fuel, all intensified the situation. As a consequence, business was disrupted, including schools and universities, since there was no transport for students and faculty members. Banks were also disrupted and some cities including Alzawia, my own city, were surrounded. A blockade was

imposed. No-one was allowed into or out of the area that we inhabited. It became like a ghost town and even electricity and water were cut. Rumours spread of children being kidnapped. All this forced families to stay in basements. A projectile fell into the house next door to ours. The sound of explosions and collapsing buildings caused shock, anxiety, panic and mothers' tears for they feared for their children's safety. Cities were cut off from each other by road barriers which were armed with people with horrific weapons. Communications, whether by phone or the internet was cut off in some places, especially in those cities and places where the situation was extremely volatile.

This situation continued for a period of time so that some residents used coal for cooking instead of gas, if available. Some fled to other areas. My mother, scared and crying, begged me to leave if I could. My travel ticket was cancelled three times, then my laptop and data pens were taken from me in Libya at one of the checkpoints and were kept for days. The computer was also confiscated in Tunisia. Later, I returned to the UK via Tunisia. Remembering my journey through Tunisia, I cannot believe that I succeeded and that I am alive now. I believe it was a miracle to reach the UK again to complete my studies. Finally, the planned interviews were completed, by phone, from the UK.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Data Presentation**

#### **5.1 The survey questionnaire**

This section presents the data generated by the survey questionnaires completed by novice teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools at their beginning of careers. The researcher used two software programmes, SPSS and Microsoft Excel, to conduct the analysis of the quantitative data. The questionnaire was divided into five sections.

The first consisted of general questions in order to obtain basic demographic or background information about the participant teachers. Section two focused on teachers' pre-service experience, while section three addressed the perceptions of support provided to novice teachers by mentors and principals. The next section focused on the availability of resources, while the fifth consisted of questions about areas in need of development in relation to classroom practice.

The responses to statements were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). A three-point scale was used to identify areas in need for development, with responses ranging from 1 (great deal) through 2 (some) to 3 (none).

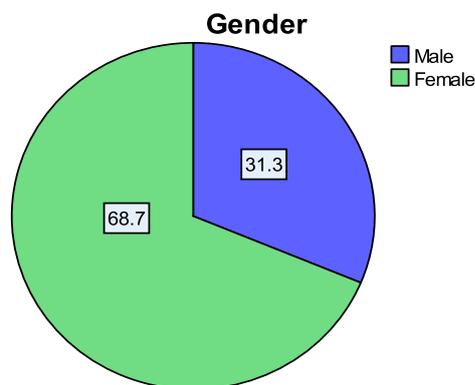
A total of 240 surveys were distributed to novice teachers, of which 227 were returned with sections 1 to 5 completed, a response rate of 95%. Only 50 of these, however, included responses to the open-ended questions in section 6 which focused on novice teachers' perceptions of the characteristics of the ideal mentor, and the kind of support they need.

#### **5.2 Participant profile**

Demographic data were collected by the questionnaire, related to gender, teaching experience, place of school, degree, and subject specialization. This information was used to analyse the sample participating in this study.

### *Gender*

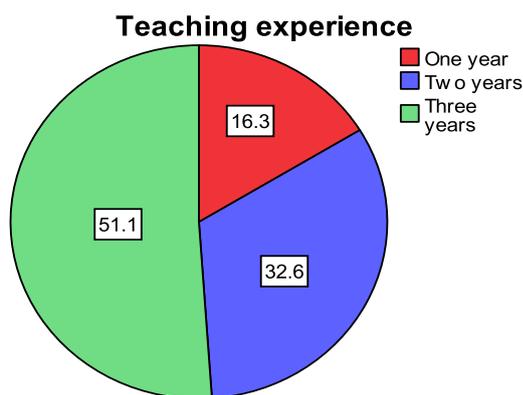
Figure 5.1 illustrates the respondents' gender distribution. There were 156 females and only 71 males reflecting a strong gender imbalance, which is an indication of the fact that in Libya teaching is a predominantly female profession. Males prefer employment outside the public service sector since getting an appointment can take years and teaching is not perceived to be a well paid profession. This can be an issue, especially if the teacher needs to support a family.



**Figure 5.1: Gender**

### *Teaching experience*

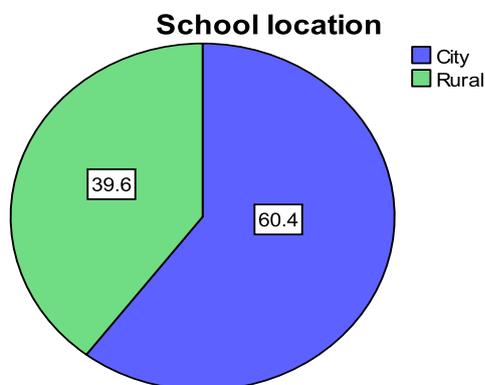
The participants in this study were novice teachers, with between 1 and 3 years of experience, employed in 29 secondary schools in the north-west region of Libya. Figure 5.2 shows teachers' length of experience. Those in their first year of practice (16.3%) constituted a minority. A third of respondents had two years of experience (33%), whilst more than half of the respondents (51%) had spent three years in the profession. This is perhaps not surprising given that securing an appointment is extremely difficult. Moreover, a large number of Libyan teachers stay at home without work but receive a monthly salary, which is in line with government policy.



**Figure 5.2: Teaching experience**

### *Location of schools*

A high proportion of the respondents (60%) worked in urban areas, whereas a much smaller percentage (40%) worked in the rural areas. This indicates teachers' preference for working in city schools, which are better equipped and have more facilities. The demographic data regarding the location of schools is shown in figure 5.3 below.



**Figure 5.3: Location of school**

### *Degree specialism*

Figure 5.4 below shows that of the 227 novice teachers who responded to the questionnaire more than half (52%) graduated from a College of Education, while less than half (49%) of the participants held degrees from faculties of arts. This is because access to higher education after completion of secondary education depends

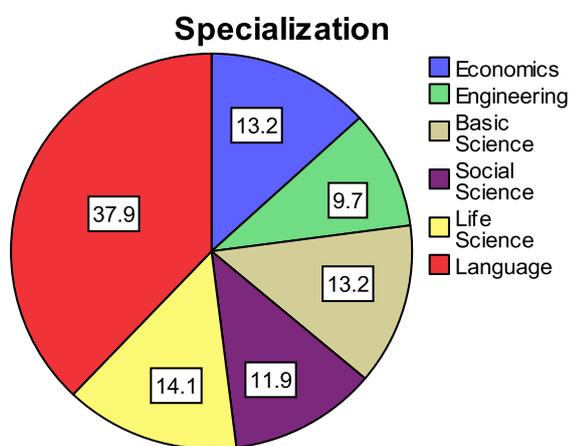
on a point score. Subject departments have strict minimum entry requirements, in contrast to Colleges of Education which accept all students.



**Figure 5.4: Degree specialism**

### *Specializations*

Figure 5.5 shows that over a third of the respondents (38%) were language teachers followed by life science teachers (14%) then economics and basic science teachers (13%). A minority of respondents (10%) had Engineering as their specialism.



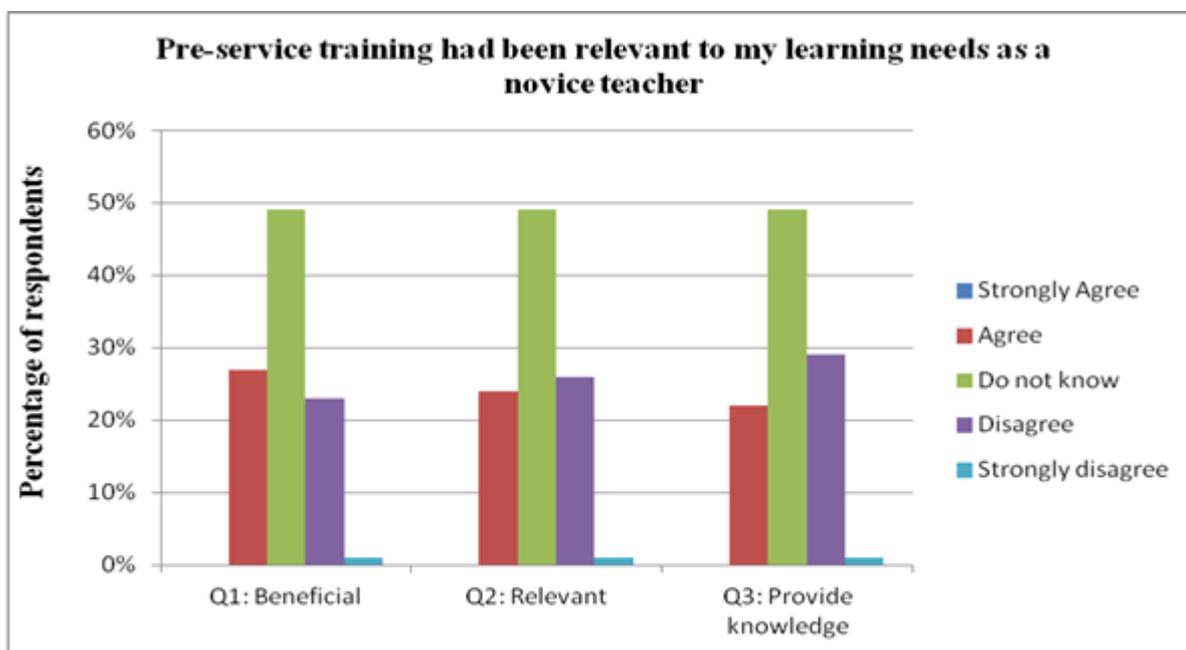
**Figure 5.5: Specialization**

### **5.3 Quantitative data – Likert scale questions**

This section reports the data relating to novice teachers' experiences and perceptions in relation to their pre-service and induction phase, as recorded in the responses to the quantitative questionnaire administered to the participants.

### 5.3.1 Novice teachers' pre-service experience

The three graphs in figure 5.6 below provide an overview of English language novice teachers' pre-service experience in Libyan secondary schools, specifically the participants' view of its relevance and benefit to their experience as a novice teacher.



**Figure 5.6 Pre-service training was relevant to my learning needs as a novice teacher**

Approximately 27% of participants in the survey agreed that their pre-service experience had been beneficial in assisting them in facing professional challenges. However 23% disagreed, whilst a small minority (1%) indicated strong disagreement and almost half of the respondents (49%) in **Q1** said that they did not know. Similar responses were received with regard to the relevance of pre-service experience (**Q2**) and the extent to which it provided them with a robust knowledge base for teaching (**Q3**). In fact, four teachers reported that they did have any pre-service training. Another remarked that she completed a graduation research project but did no pre-service training. Another stated that the pre-service training was so short that it did not achieve its purpose. This indicates that many pre-service training programmes are not perceived as helpful in assisting novice teachers managing the

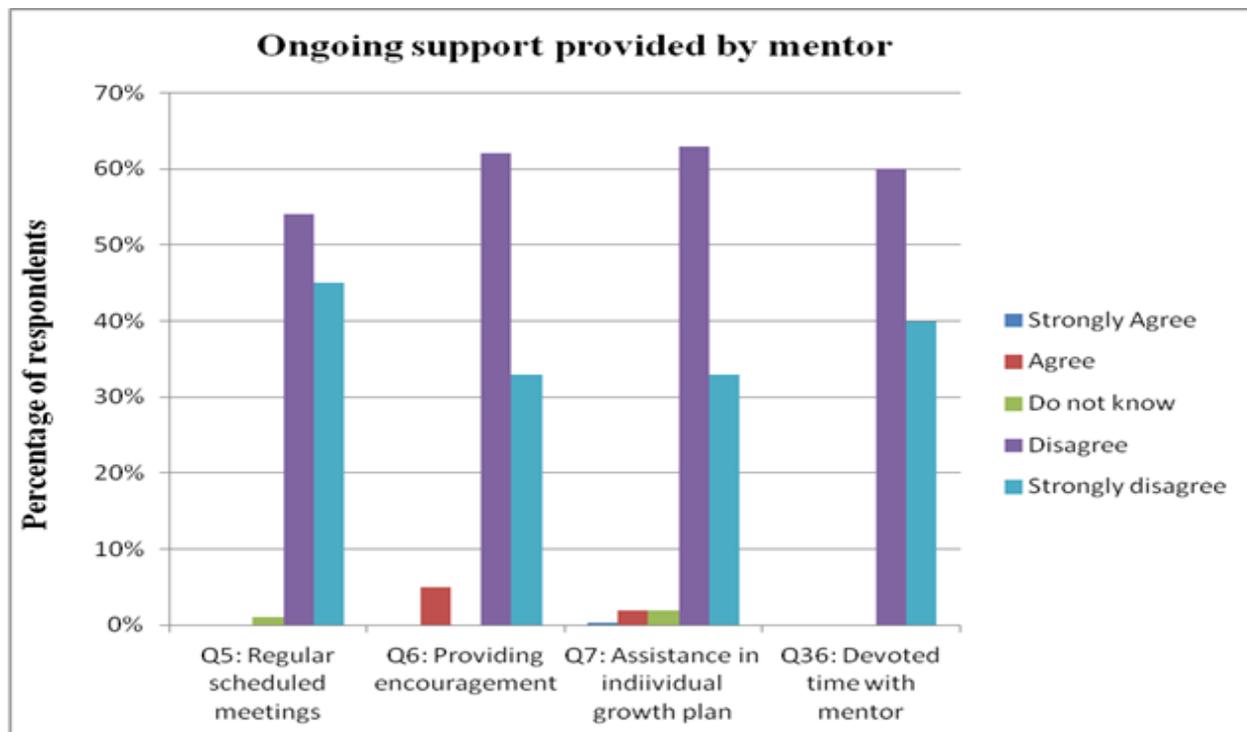
challenges they face in the early stages of their career. These findings suggest that the university prepared them to become researchers, not teachers, and that consequently they had entered the profession without any adequate preparation for classroom practice.

### **5.3.2 Novice teachers' induction experiences**

This section of the survey questionnaire was divided into groups to examine different aspects of the induction experience: support provided by the principal, resources, and developing classroom practice. The first set of questions (**Q4-Q24**) examines the degree and type of support provided by the mentor.

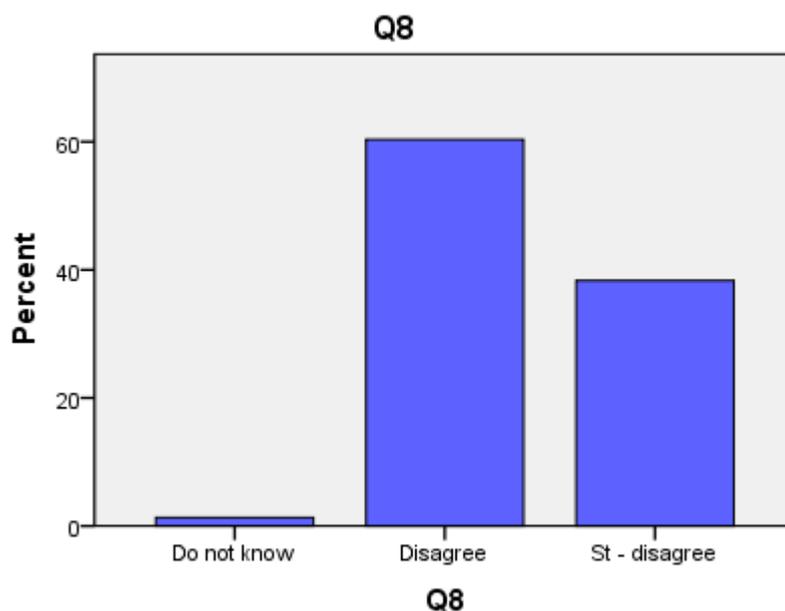
#### ***Support provided by the mentor***

The graph in figure 5.7 below displays the responses concerning the ongoing support mentors provided to English language novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools. None of the respondents showed agreement (strongly agreed / agreed) when asked if they had regular meetings with their mentor. Almost all (99%) disagreed / strongly disagreed and two respondents said that they did not know. Three teachers reported that they met their mentors twice at the end of the year to check the final exam. Again this may well reflect a lack of care and nurture (**Q5**). Concerning encouragement by the mentor at the beginning of the academic year, a large majority of respondents (95%) indicated their disagreement, while (5%) agreed. This could be interpreted as a strong need for mentor support and encouragement (**Q6**). When asked if the mentor provided assistance in developing the individual growth plan, only five respondents agreed, while a substantial majority of respondents (96%) disagreed. (**Q7**). All but one of the respondents disagreed that the time devoted to formal weekly meetings with their mentor had been adequate (**Q36**).



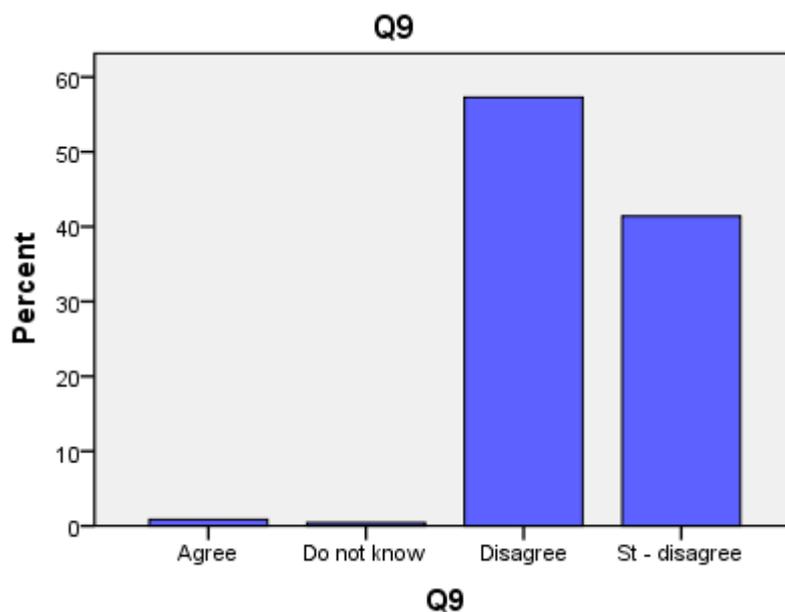
**Figure 5.7: Ongoing support provided by mentor**

Figure 5.8 below shows that none of the respondents considered that their mentor helped them understand professional expectations concerning classroom practice and responsibilities. A high proportion of respondents (99%) disagreed (Q8).



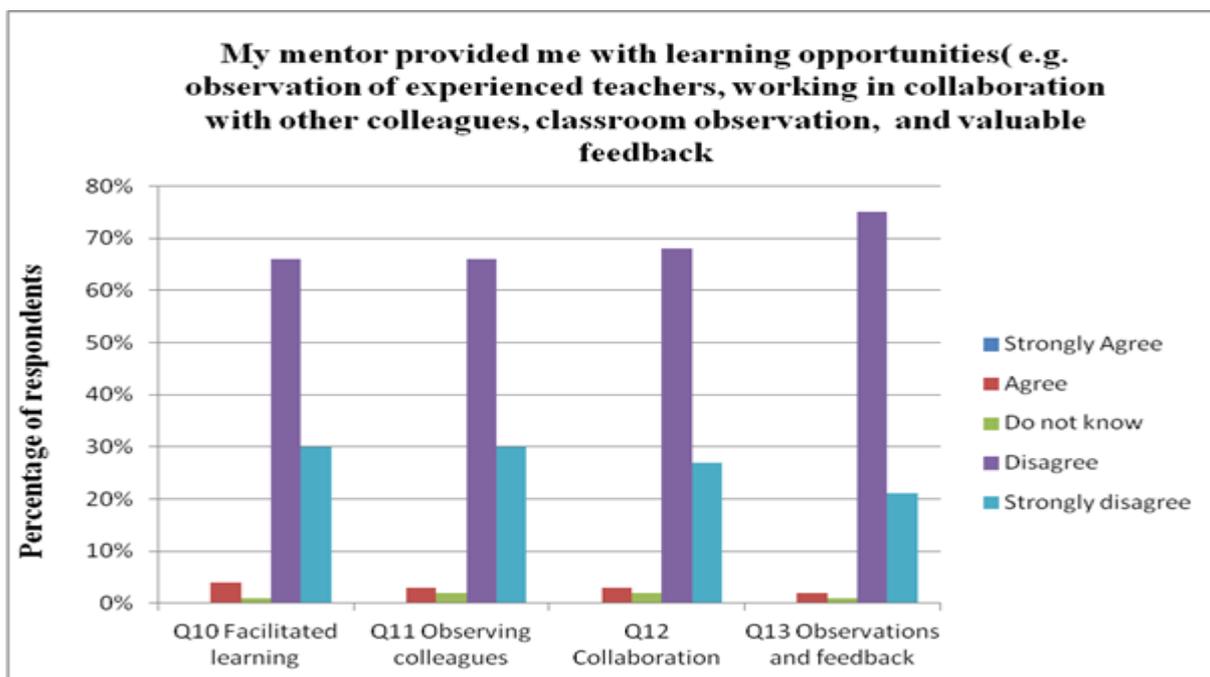
**Figure 5.8: My mentor helped me understand professional expectations concerning classroom practice and professional responsibilities.**

Only two respondents agreed that their mentor helped them identify solutions to professional problems and concerns (Q9), while the vast majority of respondents (99%) disagreed. This may indicate that novice teachers would like their mentor to be an expert who provides solutions to the problems they encounter. See figure 5.9 below.



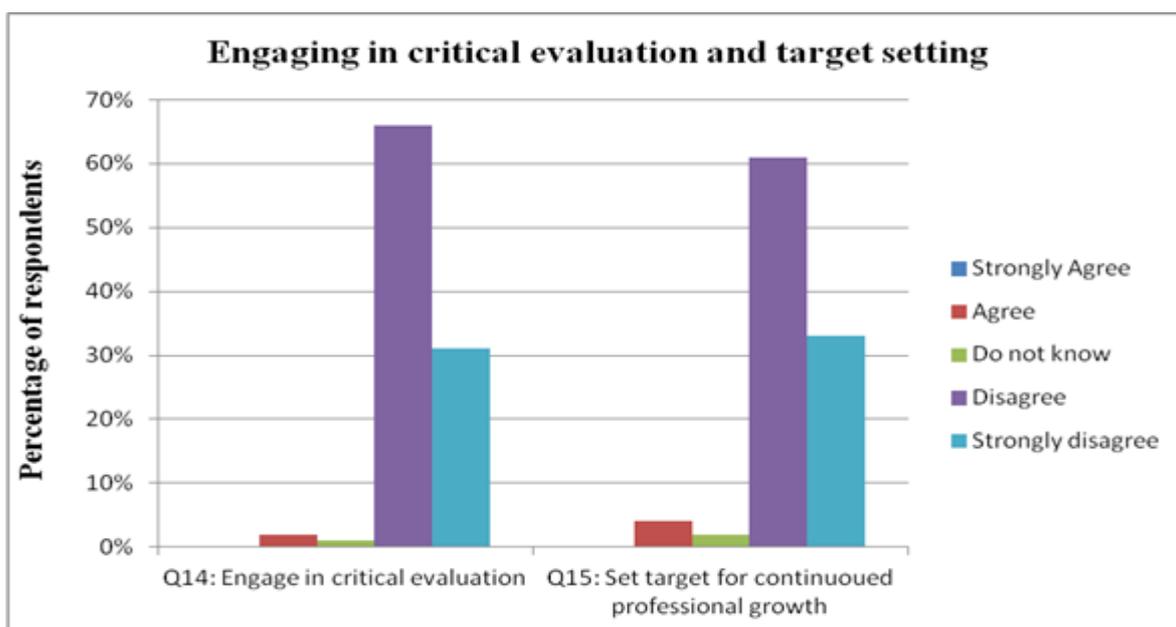
**Figure 5.9: My mentor helped me identify solutions to problems and concerns related to school**

It appears from the response to (Q10) that the overwhelming majority (95%) of respondents believed that their mentor had not provided learning opportunities; only a tiny minority (4%) agreed and (1%) said that they did not know. Similar responses were received with regard to the opportunity of observing experienced teachers (Q11) and the extent to which it provided them with the opportunity to collaborate with other colleagues (Q12). In addition, a considerable majority (96%) of respondents felt that they had not been provided with opportunities for classroom observation and had not received valuable feedback. Only five respondents agreed and three respondents did not know (Q13). These results suggest that English language novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools would welcome mentor support in the form of a ‘critical friend’.



**Figure 5.10: My mentor provided me with learning opportunities**

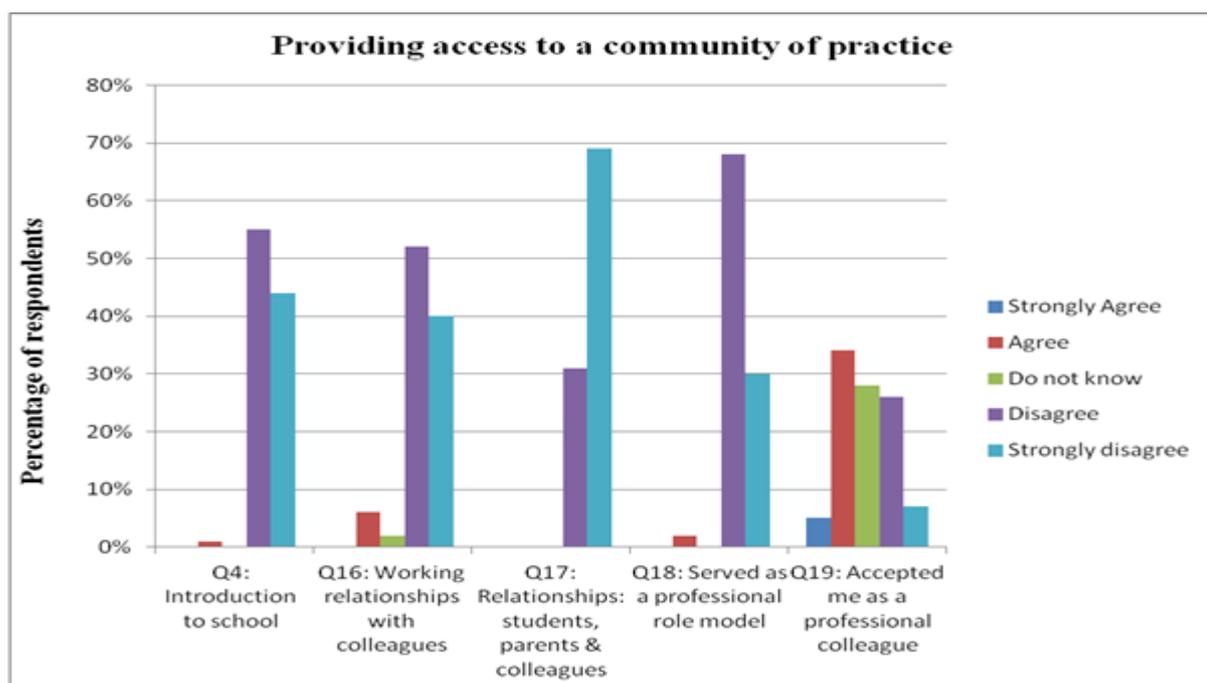
When asked whether mentors helped them to engage in critical evaluation of their teaching practices through regular conversations, the vast majority (97%) disagreed (Q14). Overall a tiny minority (4%) agreed that they were helped to set targets for continued professional growth and (2%) said they did not know. But a large proportion (94%) of respondents disagreed (Q15).



**Figure 5.11: Engaging in critical evaluation and target setting**

The vast majority of the respondents (99%) disagreed that their mentor provided them with an introduction to school rules and procedures, and only three respondents agreed that they did. Two teachers commented that they see their mentor only at the end of the academic year just to check the questions of the final exam. (Q4). 92% of the respondents said that they disagreed that their mentor helped them to establish positive working relationships with their colleagues, only fifteen (7%) agreed and four respondents said they did not know (Q16). None of the respondents believed that the mentor helped them to develop interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues (Q17). One teacher remarked, *'He does not care about such stuff'*. Another teacher reported: *'If we do not get his help regarding teaching the syllabus, we don't expect his help in such stuff!'*

Almost all the respondents (98%) shared the view that their mentors did not act as a professional role model (Q18). Perhaps a little surprising is that when asked if their mentor(s) accepted them as professional colleagues (Q19) the number of respondents indicating their agreement, disagreement, and indecision was fairly equally distributed. Just over a third agreed (38%), a third (33%) disagreed and about 28% did not know.



### Figure 5.12: Providing access to community of practice

The next set of questions explored the amount of professional support and guidance provided by the novice teachers' mentors. When asked if their mentor allocates time for them when they needed assistance, none of the novice teachers felt that this was the case (Q20). Similarly, when asked if their mentor provided them with specific and relevant support and assistance only 3% agreed (Q21), while only two believed that their mentors listened to their concerns and helped them to identify solutions (Q22).

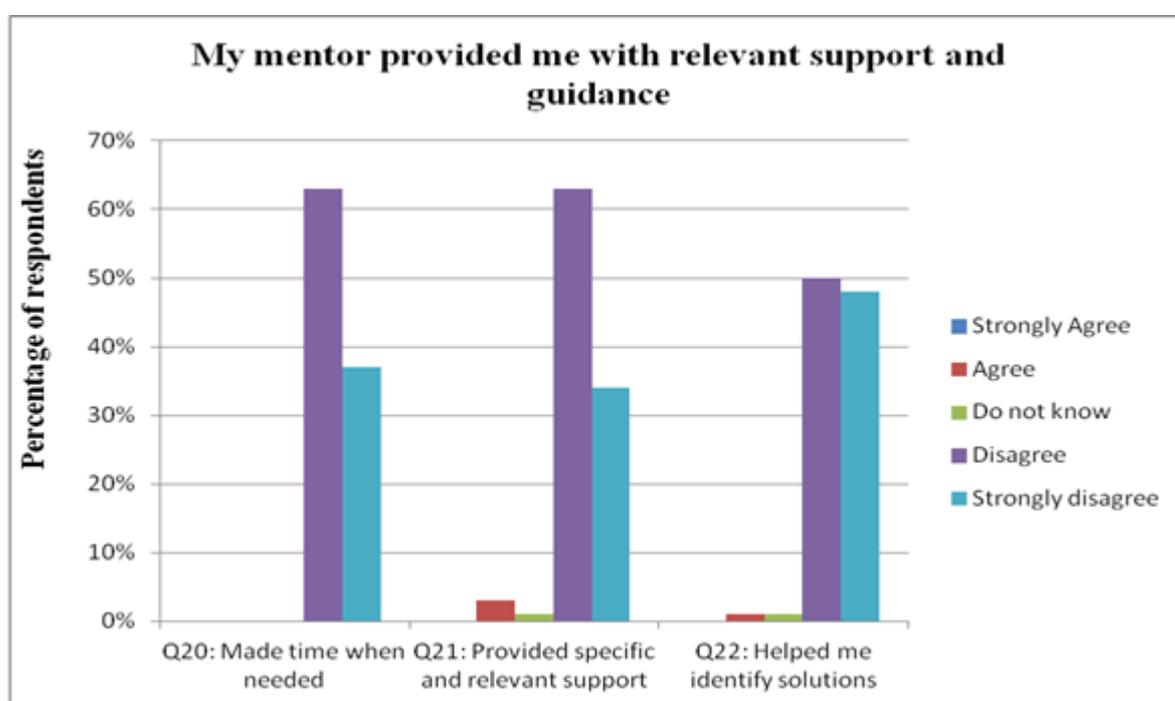
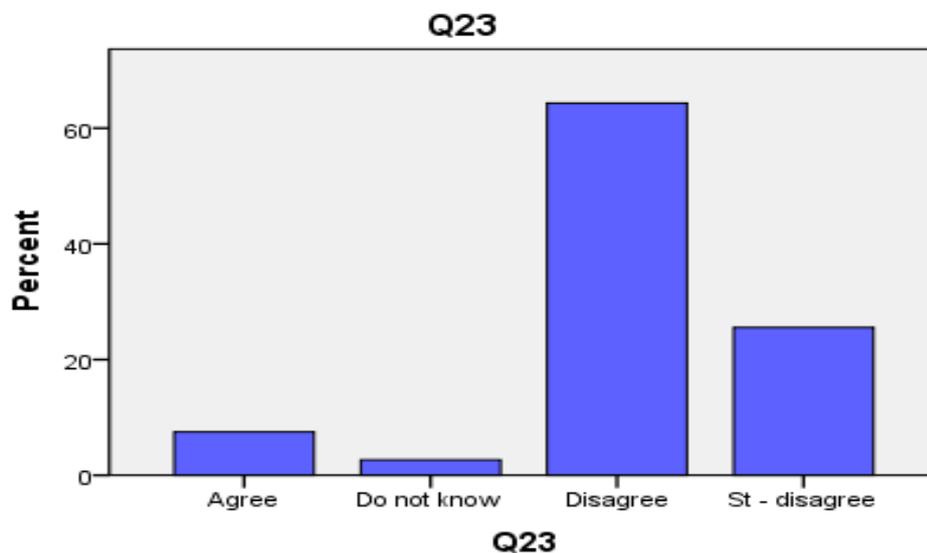


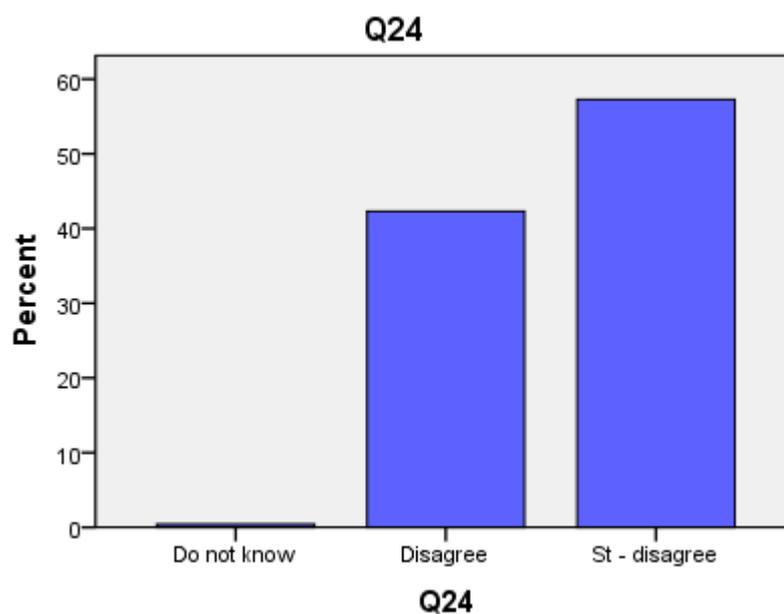
Figure 5.13: My mentor provided me with relevant support and guidance

Moreover, when asked if their mentor had been flexible and open minded in assisting them (Q23), the vast majority (90%) disagreed, and only 8% agreed.



**Figure 5.14: My mentor has been flexible and open minded in assisting me.**

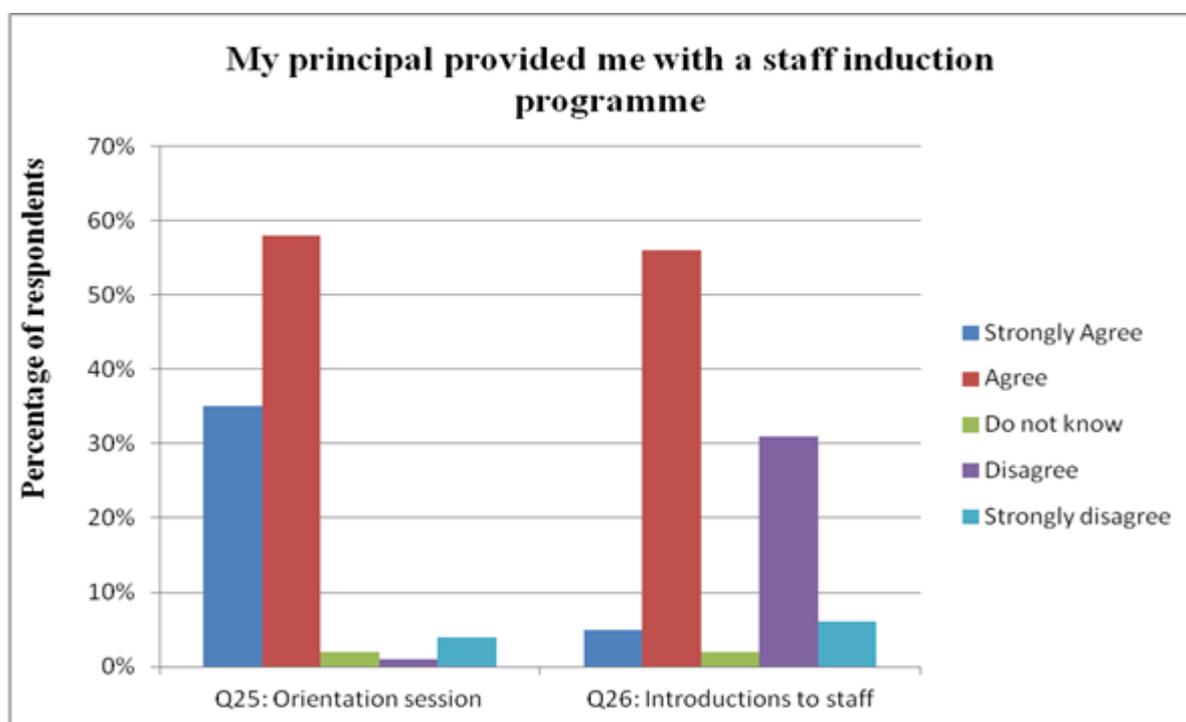
The final question (**Q24**) related to mentoring support explored whether mentors helped novice teachers to achieve a work-life balance. Not surprisingly none of the respondents agreed that they had.



**Figure 5.15: My mentor helped me balance my own life with teaching.**

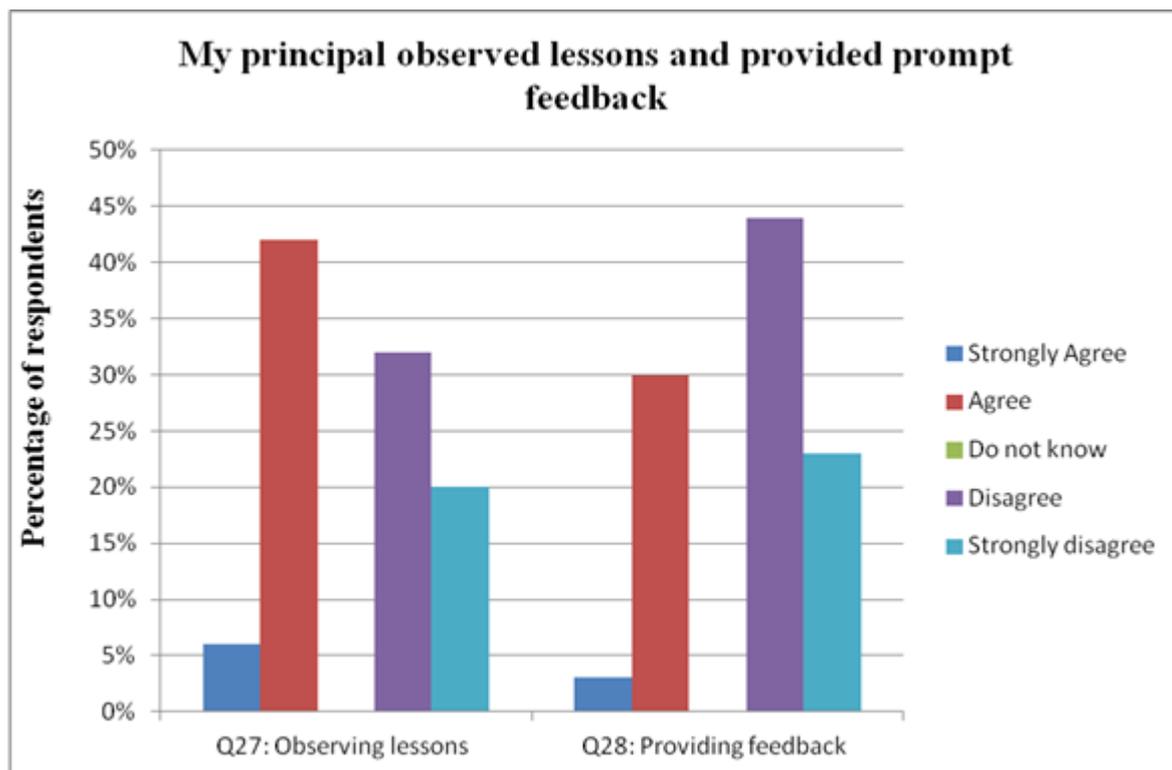
### *Support provided by the principal*

In contrast with the novice teachers' experience of mentor support, the school principals emerged more positively in terms of guidance and assistance, as indicated in figure 5.16. For example, when asked if their principal(s) provided them with a school orientation session prior to the start of school (**Q25**), there was overwhelming agreement (93%). Over half the novice teachers (56%) agreed and (5%) strongly agreed that their principals had provided them with introductions that are keys to operations at the school level. Over a third (37%) disagreed (**Q26**). Their agreement in both the previous questions may reflect the possibility that some of them were provided with a staff induction programme (See figure 5.16).



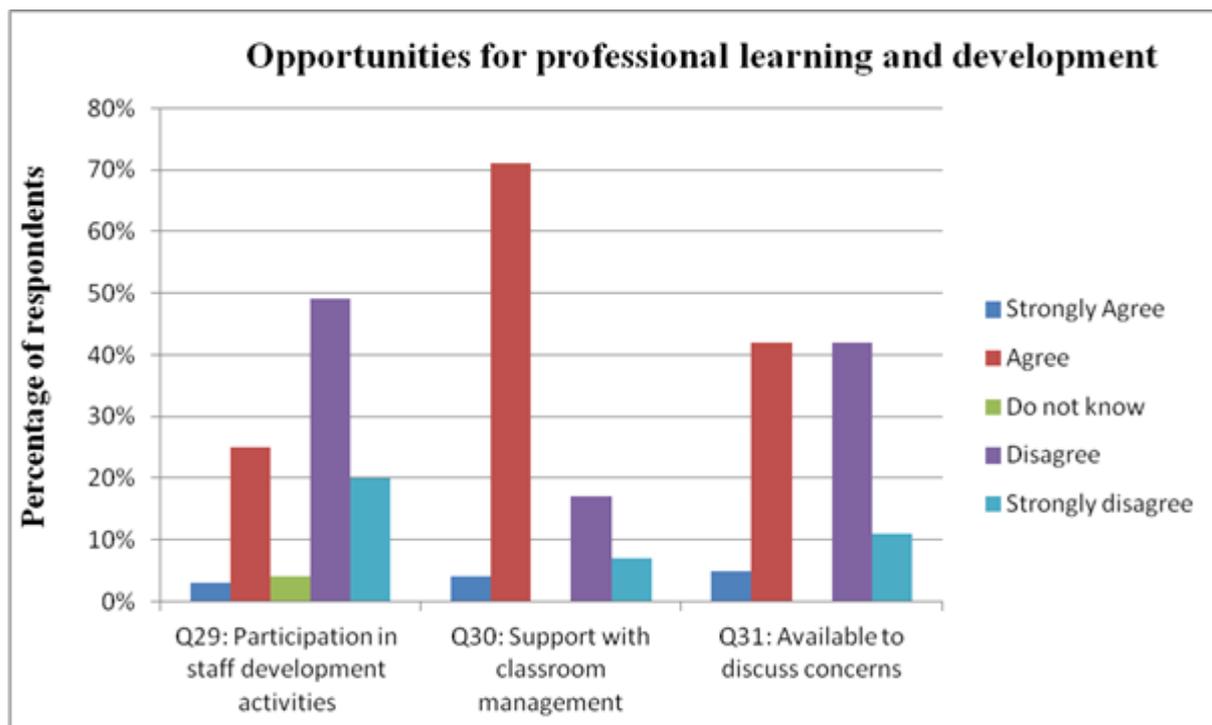
**Figure 5.16: My principal provided me with a staff induction programme**

When asked if their principals observed their lessons (**Q27**), there was an almost even split between those who agreed (48%) and those who did not share this view (52%). In **Q28**, however, different responses were received with regard to getting feedback after observation, with almost a third (30%) of the respondents indicating agreement, 3% strongly agreeing and 67% of respondents disagreeing (figure 5.17). This may reflect that principals observe novice teachers but do not provide feedback.



**Figure 5.17: My principal observed lessons and provided prompt feedback.**

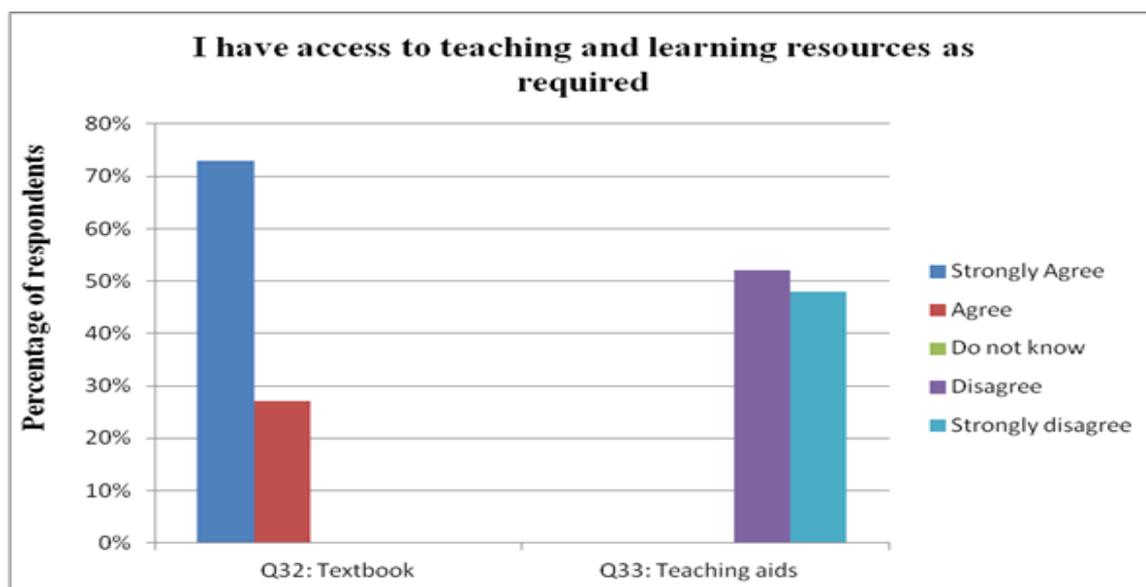
Figure 5.18 displays responses to the statement ‘My principal has encouraged continued participation in staff development activities aimed at improving classroom instruction’ (Q29). Less than a third of respondents (28%) agreed, whilst 68% disagreed and nine respondents did not know. When teachers were asked (Q30) if the principal provided support with classroom management when needed, the majority (75%) agreed while less than a third (24%) disagreed. Regarding their principal’s readiness to discuss concerns and questions related to school concerns throughout their experience, opinion was almost evenly distributed between those who believed that this was the case (47%) and those who did not share this view (53%) (Q31).



**Figure 5.18: Opportunities for professional learning and development**

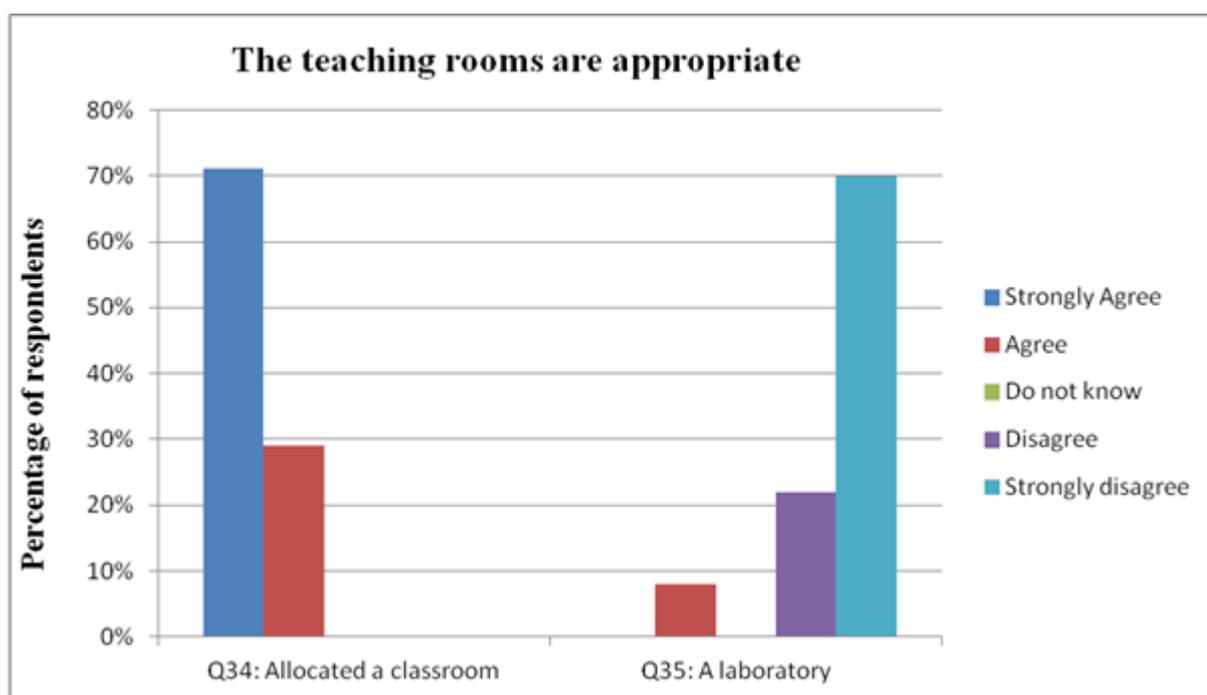
### *Resources*

All participants unanimously believed that they had access to teaching and learning resources as required (Q32). But when asked if they have access to teaching aids (Q33), the respondents all clearly indicated their disagreement; these responses are shown in figure 5.19.



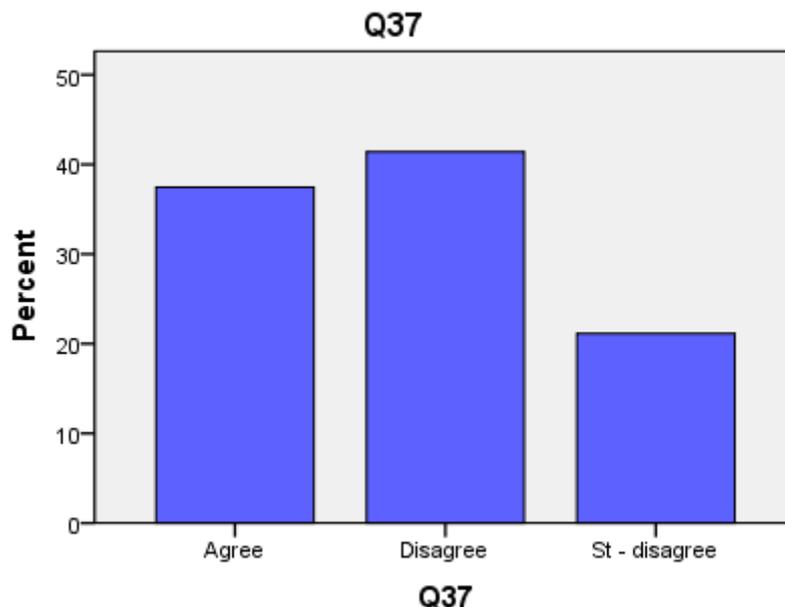
**Figure 5.19: I have access to teaching and learning resources as required**

Every participant in the survey stated that they had their own classroom (Q34), although different responses were received with regard to the availability of a specific room, for example, the use of a lab for listening to authentic language material. Only a tiny minority (8%) of respondents stated that they had this facility (Q35). Their responses are shown in figure 5.20 below.



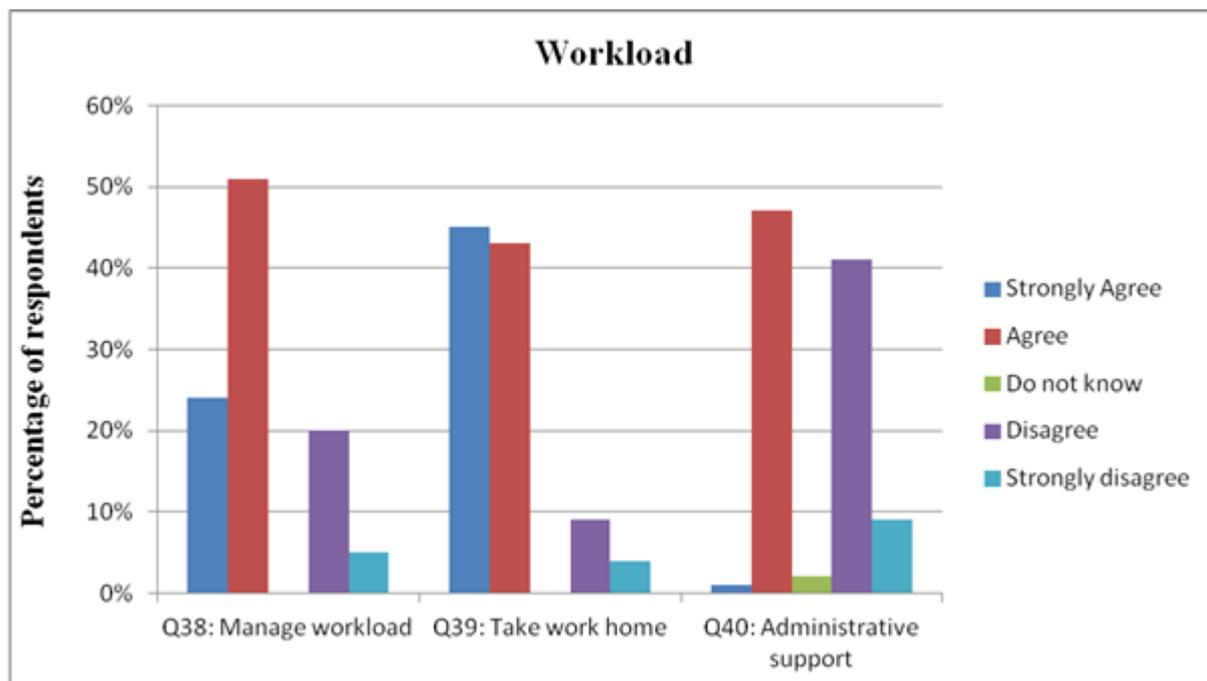
**Figure 5.20: The teaching rooms are appropriate**

Regarding time resources, over a third (37%) of respondents agreed that the time for teaching the English language curriculum it is sufficient and just under two thirds (63%) disagreed (Q37).



**Figure 5.21: Time for teaching the English language curriculum is enough.**

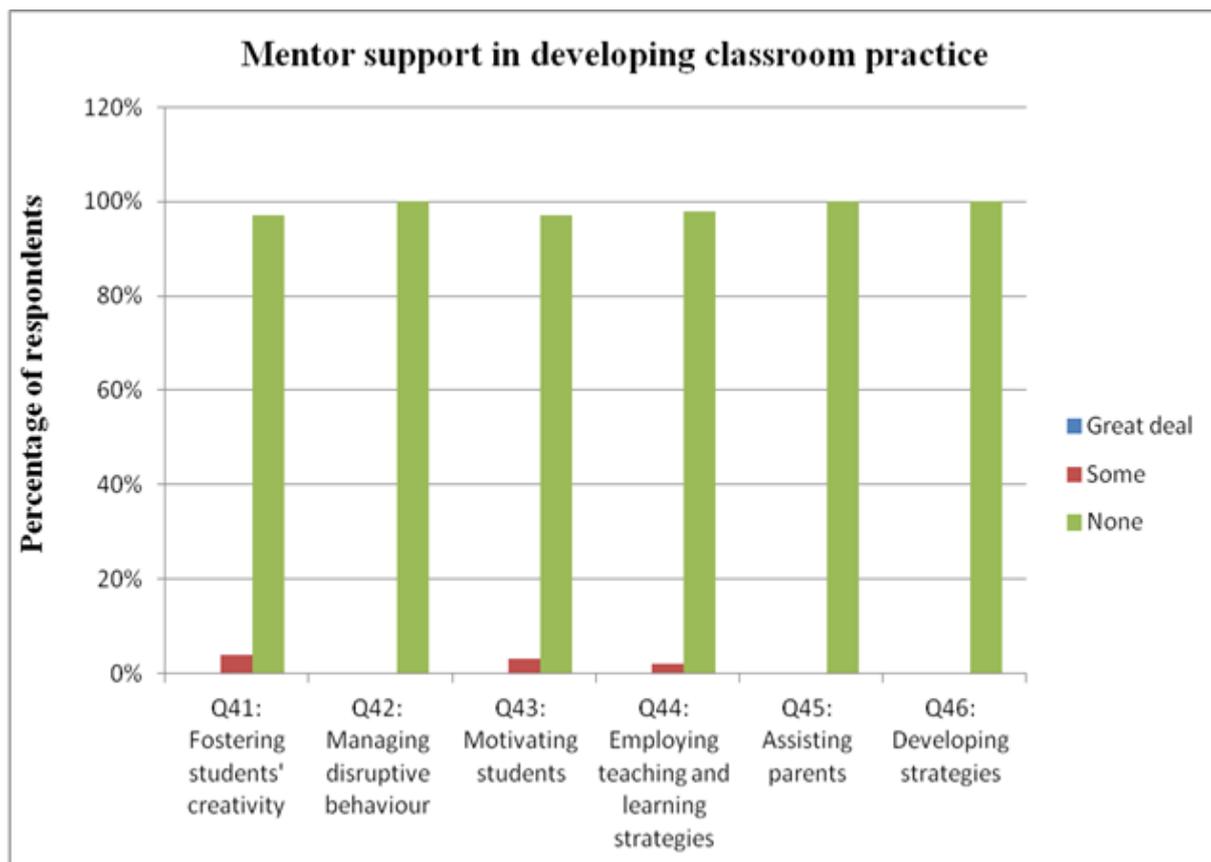
Figure 5.22 illustrates that respondents were markedly more positive that they have the ability to manage their workload: (75%) strongly agreed or agreed that this was the case while the remaining (25%) disagreed (disagreed or strongly disagreed) (Q38). Novice teachers were almost unanimous with regard to taking work home. The majority of respondents agreed (43%) or strongly agreed (45%) that they took work home. Only 9% disagreed with this statement and 4% strongly disagreed (Q39). Five teachers commented that the staff room is always busy and there is not another room to work in. The average number of respondents who indicated their agreement being provided with administrative support was about (48%) (Strongly agreed or agreed), and (50%) disagreed (disagreed or strongly disagreed). Four respondents did not know (Q40).



**Figure 5.22: Workload**

### *Developing classroom practice*

The results of a group of questions on areas in need of development produced negative responses about the value of mentoring support in some respects (figure 5.23). Only eight respondents, for example, agreed that mentoring support was helpful in encouraging students' creativity while 97% disagreed (Q41). None of the respondents believed that mentoring support was helpful in managing disruptive behaviour in the classroom (Q42). Concerning helpfulness of mentoring support in motivating students who show little interest in school work, overall only six respondents agreed and 97% disagreed (Q43). Similar responses were received with regard to the helpfulness of mentoring in employing teaching and learning strategies appropriate to individual learner abilities (Q44). Every respondent disagreed that mentoring support was helpful in assisting parents in helping their children do well in school (Q45), while none of the respondents believed that mentoring support was helpful in developing strategies to challenge able and high achieving students (Q46).



**Figure 5.23: Mentor support in developing classroom practice**

#### 5.4 Qualitative data - Open ended questions

At the end of the questionnaire for novice teachers of English language in Libyan secondary schools there were two open ended questions. The first focused on the personal and professional characteristics of the ideal mentor, while the second related to the respondents' own perceived needs. When asked to describe the ideal mentor, a variety of personal and professional characteristics emerged, namely: flexibility; respect; communication and listening skills; integrity; patience; a positive, trusting relationship; modesty; desire to help; cooperation; responsibility and obligation; reliability; and confidentiality.

One of the most frequently cited characteristics was flexibility. The majority of novices teachers (88%) said they need their mentor to be open minded and flexible:

*The ideal mentor should have an open mind and should be flexible and open minded in assisting me.*

Another quality that appears to be highly valued is respect. Half of the respondents want to be respected by their mentor:

*He should respect the teacher individually or within a group.*

*He should deal with the teacher respectfully, especially in class, and he should avoid using derogatory language with the teacher and with the students.*

*He should not insult and minimize the teacher in front of the class or anywhere else.*

More than a third of the teachers (36%) want their mentors to have integrity; by this they mean that the mentor's judgment and evaluation of their practice should be objective, unbiased and honest, and that their actions should be guided by the principles of equality and fairness:

*We need our mentor to treat us equally and to be honest when evaluating us.*

*We need him to be fair when dealing with us and when evaluating us.*

*I need an objective and honest mentor when assessing me.*

*We need him to show professional honesty and treating us objectively without bias.*

A third of the participants (34%) expressed the wish for their mentor to be patient:

*The ideal mentor should be patient with the teacher and the learners.*

Almost half the English language novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools (46%) attach great importance to the kind of relationship they have with their mentor, believing it should be both positive and trusting:

*The mentor should be able to generate self-confidence in the teachers.*

*He should be able to instil trust in the teachers.*

*He should trust the teachers.*

A quarter of the respondents (26%) appreciate a mentor who is modest, 'not proud' and 'not showing off':

*The ideal mentor should be modest and not proud among students of his level.*

*The ideal mentor should be modest and not proud of himself on the teacher.*

The qualities of being a good listener and having good communication skills were mentioned by over a third (34%) of the respondents as desirable qualities in a mentor:

*The ideal mentor should fully listen to our worries and not be ready to end the conversation.*

*He should listen to my concerns and help me identify solutions.*

*He should be a good speaker in English, fluent and speak clearly.*

Almost a quarter of the respondents (24%) need their mentors to wish to help them to achieve their goals:

*He should enjoy helping the teachers.*

Only a small proportion of respondents (4%), though, mentioned that the mentor should be someone who can be relied on:

*The ideal mentor should be reliable on in difficult situations.*

These personal qualities of the ideal mentor are complemented by a set of key professional characteristics: willingness to share information and knowledge; constructive criticism and feedback; encouragement, guidance and support; appreciation of others' opinions and ideas; sensitivity to the vulnerability of novice teachers (empathy); teaching competence; being a professional role model; interest, enthusiasm, motivation and passion for working with novice teachers; expertise and robust knowledge of the curriculum, pedagogy and the novice teacher's subject area; and guidance.

What emerged very prominently from the participants' responses was their perceived need for the mentor to be the expert in the same subject area of their specialization, in order to be able to provide novice teachers with solutions to the problems they were experiencing:

*He should be willing to help novice teachers in finding solutions to their problems.*

*He should enjoy helping the teachers and guiding them to achieve their goals.*

*He should help us identify solutions to problems and concerns related to school.*

Half of the respondents greatly valued constructive criticism and feedback from their mentor:

*He should provide the teacher with constructive criticism or feedback on his/her performance, not pointing out the novice teacher's mistakes in front of his students.*

*The ideal mentor should avoid providing the teachers with negative criticism.*

*He should provide the teacher with positive criticism and avoid sarcasm.*

Over a third of the respondents (34%) wished for a mentor, who showed interest, enthusiasm, motivation, and passion for working with novice teachers:

*The ideal mentor should motivate other teachers by being a good example or by showing his enthusiasm in teaching.*

*He should motivate the teachers by showing his great enthusiasm in teaching.*

*He should be interested in his work in mentoring to motivate the teachers.*

Having a mentor who acts as a good role model was important for 32% of the novice teachers surveyed:

*The ideal mentor should make a permanent impression on the teachers even after their time with him is over.*

*The ideal mentor should give a good impression by showing enthusiasm about teaching.*

*He should motivate the novice teachers by acting as good role model for them.*

One in four of the participants (24%) felt that a good mentor should appreciate their opinions and ideas:

*He should appreciate the efforts, opinions, and ideas of the novice teachers by providing positive feedback.*

*He should appreciate the teachers' accomplishments and their developing strengths and abilities.*

*He should appreciate their effort by encouraging them to improve their performance.*

Encouragement and support on the part of the mentor was very important for a fifth of the respondents, who expressed the view that:

*He should support and encourage us to give more and to improve our performance.*

*He should be good at encouraging the novice teachers.*

*He should be committed to assist the novice teachers improving their performance.*

*He should be committed to helping the novice teachers to find success in teaching, raise teachers' morale, provide them with adequate support to face the challenges they may face.*

Only two respondents, however, wanted their mentor to be their friend or a colleague:

*The mentor should be a supporter, a friend, or a colleague to the novice teacher.*

The second question in the open ended questions in the survey questionnaire sought to identify English language novice teachers' own perceived needs. The following key themes emerged from the responses, expressing the need for: a language laboratory; a library; a teacher's book and tape; teaching aids; adequate pre-service and in-service training and continuing professional development; limiting language teaching to three skills in one syllabus; novice teachers need to be rewarded for excellence and teaching responsibilities; more visits and discussions with the mentor; resident mentors; mentors acting as a role model; mentors taking on the role of supporter, not just assessor; mentors to be partners and colleagues; mentors as experts; mentors to be critical friends; mentors to care and nurture them; professional freedom and autonomy; mentors not to take on additional work outside the school role; a standard assessment framework and procedure for mentors; support and encouragement from the mentor, principal, colleagues and also from the parents. First of all, novice teachers need an appropriate learning environment. More than a third of respondents (34%) emphasized the importance of a laboratory:

*Our school should be provided with a lab for teaching listening and speaking skills in order to motivate the students and to help us perform our work perfectly.*

*I need a lab for hearing English native speakers to motivate the students and to improve the pronunciation for both: students and the teachers.*

A fifth of respondents identified teaching aids and resources as essential:

*Providing schools with facilities such as teaching aids is one of our necessities for the profession.*

*Providing schools with teaching aids in general and a lab in particular to make students pay more attention to study the language.*

Adequate professional training and development was highlighted by 46% of the respondents:

*I need special courses for renewing and increasing my information in phonetics, comprehension, conversation and the writing.*

*The English language teachers generally and the novice teachers in particular need refresher courses from time to time to assist them in delivering the syllabus, especially when having to deliver the syllabus without any preparation.*

*As a novice teacher, I need annual extensive refresher courses under the supervision of experts.*

The need to be rewarded for excellence and teaching responsibilities was emphasized by over a third of respondents (34%), who expressed the need for a system which would:

*Identify and distinguish the unique teacher from others by increasing their salary to motivate them and to activate the others.*

*Increase the "salary" and differentiate between the teachers as an incentive to make an effort, since some of them are not working, i.e. staying at home, but taking the same salary.*

*Improve our financial situation and distinguish between the unique teachers and the careless ones, also teachers who teach and those who do not.*

Novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools also need high quality mentoring, in the form of regular visits and discussions between mentor and mentee; resident mentors who can act as a role model; mentors who act as a supporter, partner and colleague, expert and a critical friend, not just an assessor; someone who can create

a caring and nurturing environment for workplace learning; freedom, a standard assessment framework and procedure; and, finally, support and encouragement from not only the mentor and principal, but from colleagues and from parents as well.

The importance of more regular mentor contact was mentioned by (34%) of novice teachers of English:

*We need the mentor to visits us regularly, and providing us with the teaching plan from the beginning of the academic year.*

*The mentor should discuss with the novice teacher complications in the syllabus from the beginning of the academic year.*

*He should pay attention to the weak points of the teacher by making more visits and taking action to assist the teacher.*

*The mentor should follow the teacher by his continual visits to the teacher, providing encouragement in order to improve the teacher performance.*

Just under third of the participants (30%) in this study wanted their mentor to be resident:

*We need a permanent resident mentor in school to get his assistance when needed.*

*The novice teacher needs a resident mentor in school; otherwise he should do weekly fixed scheduled visits in known time to all the teachers to benefit from his visit.*

The need for a mentor to be a professional partner and colleague was mentioned by more than a third of the respondents:

*I need the mentor to give me the opportunity to be creative and to share with me his expertise as a teacher.*

*I need an open-minded mentor who can support me, stand beside me in hard times if needed, and help me balance my own life with teaching.*

*I need a mentor who allows us to discuss problematic curriculum issues without ridiculing the novice teacher and passing sarcastic comments.*

*He should help me to establish positive working relationships with my colleagues.*

*The mentor should facilitate collaboration between novice teachers and other colleagues. Also, I need him to accept me as a professional colleague.*

The vast majority of the respondents (90%) expressed the need for their mentors to be an expert:

*I need a mentor who has knowledge about and experience in the syllabus that the teachers teach to be accessed as a source when needed.*

*He should have a comprehensive knowledge of the syllabus the novice teacher has to teach, not in another specialization.*

*I need him to be specialized in one subject especially when teaching English to the language students.*

A mentoring process embedded within a framework providing standardized assessment criteria and procedures was regarded as important by 32% of participants:

*He should not evaluate us depending on his judgment on the planning and marks booklet. For example, he did not enter my class, being late, after finishing my lesson. So, he checked my planning and marks book and booklet of marks and produced his report about me.*

*He should not evaluate us from the first visit and base his assessment of us on the students' level of performance, since many times the teacher is so active but his students' level of engagement is low.*

Almost all the 50 respondents (47/50) who completed the two qualitative questions at the end of the research questionnaire stated that continuous support and encouragement from the mentor and principal were important:

*We need the principal and the mentor to encourage and support us for making good effort for the benefit of both the teacher and the student.*

They also highlighted the need to have their mentors' and principals' trust and respect:

*I need someone to boost my morale, especially from the principal and mentor because in his role as a learner the novice teacher needs motivation in order to succeed continuously in the profession.*

*I need support, encouragement, confidence, and respect from the principal and the mentor to push me to make an effort.*

Fewer than half of the novice teachers (40%), however, believe that they need the support and encouragement of their colleagues:

*Novice teachers need support from the mentor and from the colleagues, especially those who are active classroom practitioners.*

*I need support, encouragement, and confidence from the colleagues. Novice teachers need support, encouragement, and respect of more practitioner teachers.*

### ***Summary of findings of the Phase 1 survey questionnaire***

This section contains a summary of the statistical analysis of the survey questions, divided by the key findings of the quantitative (closed question) element and those of the qualitative (open-ended) element of the questionnaire. Where applicable, the question or questions which elicited the finding are noted after it.

The first part of the questionnaire with closed questions produced six distinct key findings. First, it was clear that mentoring support and guidance is virtually non-existent in the Libyan context: (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q20, Q21, Q22, Q36). Secondly, novice teachers' needs remain unaddressed with regard to several factors. According to the novice teachers themselves, learning opportunities (e.g. observation of experienced teachers, working in collaboration with other colleagues, classroom observation) are needed, as is constructive feedback (Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13) and critical evaluation of professional practice (Q14). There is a need for professional role models (Q18) and professional development through target setting (Q15). They also should be welcomed into the school community (Q4, Q16) and gain access to a community of practice (Q19). Novice teachers' development of interpersonal skills, to establish and maintain positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues (Q17) remains unaddressed, as does a flexible and open-minded approach by the mentor: (Q23).

The third point arising from the quantitative questionnaire was the desirability of support being provided by senior management, in particular by principals. Staff induction programmes (Q25, Q26) and lesson observation (Q27) are valuable, but there is a clear need for these to be followed by feedback (Q28). Senior support would also be valued as regards staff development regarding teaching (Q29) and

class management (Q30). The final role principals could take up is to make themselves available to discuss novice teachers' concerns (Q31).

The fourth key finding concerned lack of resources. This takes the form of lack of teaching aids (Q32, Q33), lack of purpose-built classrooms, for example language labs (Q34, Q35) and insufficient time for teaching the English language curriculum (Q37).

Novice teachers' workload, on the other hand, is appropriate. Most novice teachers feel that they can manage their workload (Q38), but they do need to take work home because there is only the staff room to work in, which is always busy (Q39). Novice teachers are provided with administrative support (Q40), but they are not helped to maintain a work-life balance (Q24).

The final key finding is that there are areas where novice teachers perceive a need for professional development; these are: creativity in teaching and learning, managing disruptive behaviour, motivating disaffected students, differentiation, developing a teacher-parent partnership and challenging able and high achieving students. (Q41, Q42, Q43, Q44, Q45, Q46).

This summary now turns to the second part of the survey questionnaire which contained the open-ended questions. The two questions concerned examined aspects of effective mentoring and, secondly, novice teachers' self-perceived needs.

The findings regarding effective mentors fall into two categories. The first is concerns the personal attributes of a successful mentor. These can be summarised as: flexibility; respect; communication skill and listening skill; integrity; patience; positive, trusting relationship; modesty; desire to help; cooperation; responsibility and obligation; reliability; and confidentiality. The professional attributes consist of: willingness to share information and knowledge; constructive criticism and feedback; encouragement, guidance and support; appreciation of others' opinions and ideas; sensitivity to the vulnerability of novice teachers (empathy); teaching competence; a professional role model; interest, enthusiasm, motivation and passion

for working with novice teachers; expertise and robust knowledge base in curriculum, pedagogy and novice teachers' subject area; and guidance.

Novice teachers of English in Libyan school expressed the need for practical, skills-based and morale- and confidence-boosting needs. The findings on teachers' practical needs concerned the learning environment (a language laboratory; a library); teaching aids and resources (text books; tapes; teaching aids); adequate professional training and development (pre-service; in-service and continuing professional development). Participants believed that their professional skills would be enhanced by high quality mentoring (more regular mentor contact; the mentor to be resident; acting as a partner and colleague; being expert; continuous support and encouragement from the mentor and principal; and having mentors' and principals' trust and respect). Professional skills would also be enhanced by a framework for providing standardised assessment criteria and procedures. Finally, novice teachers felt that recognition for excellence and teaching responsibilities and support and encouragement from their colleagues would benefit them professionally, and were not generally at present being provided.

## **5.5 Interview data**

The Phase 1 questionnaire, the key findings of which have been explored above, was followed by a set of semi-structured interviews with 21 novice teachers of English in Libyan schools. These interviews comprised Phase 2, the data from which is reported in this section. From these qualitative interview responses a number of themes emerged.

### **5.5.1 Pre-service preparation**

#### ***Novice teachers' preparedness when starting teaching***

The interviews with the novice teachers of English in Libya revealed that they felt unprepared to start teaching. This was particularly the case for Faculty of Arts graduates whose degree programmes were designed to prepare them to become researchers; instead of pre-service teacher training, they completed a graduation project. These teachers were appointed to posts in secondary schools. The following excerpts from the data illustrate the point of views of novice teachers who graduated from Faculties of Arts regarding their preparedness for teaching in general.

*Because I have no pre-service training, I feel that I am not prepared psychologically and practically to teach. In addition, school is chaos and the principal is careless. (Afrah)*

*When I first started to teach, I was not satisfied with my level of preparedness, but I tried to show all my language skills for the benefit of the students. (Aram)*

*I felt that I was not prepared enough; even standing in front of my students was embarrassing because I didn't have practical training. So it requires more effort from me to give a successful lesson. (Dalia)*

*I feel unprepared and lack many things because I am a researcher not a teacher. (Laila)*

It was not only teachers who graduated from Faculty of Arts programmes who felt unprepared; teachers who studied in Colleges of Education also felt that their preparation had been insufficient. In many instances they found their pre-service training to be too short, given that its duration varies from college to another; a lack in basic knowledge content was also commented on:

*Psychologically I was ready to teach but my training was not enough because my pre-service was so short (i.e., it was once a week for a month). Basic materials for learning were not sufficient. (Noora)*

*I did not feel well, as my pre-service was so short. I observed my cooperating teacher once and taught four times. Our college supervisors entered my class just once during the four times. I feel that I was wronged as I did not have opportunities to prepare enough. There was lack of preparation to face day-to-day challenges such as dealing with a difficult syllabus. I have to teach varied subjects with specialist vocabularies which I am not familiar with in my own language; to manage the students' behaviour; to deal with slow learners who lack enthusiasm; and, to handle time management in general. (Sulwa)*

*Preparation was not appropriate. The duration of the practical training was once a week for two months which was not enough and the supervisor was not always with us. Not only the pre-service programme was short, but also it lacked the necessary foundation training. This had a detrimental impact on my teaching, especially the first months which were terrifying. (Najah)*

Some teachers particularly pointed out that their preparation was limited just to basic pedagogical training on how to deliver a lesson. Both Sumia and Nadia found this to be inadequate:

*I feel that I did not have effective training since I was so confused when I started to teach. They prepared us on just how to give a lesson in general and I found that many things needed to be dealt with in the classroom. (Sumia)*

*Although I did pre-service I felt that I wasn't sufficiently prepared to teach, as the learning outcomes of the training programmes only dealt with how to give a lesson whereas we have things to attend to as teachers. (Nadia)*

Other novice teachers, like Sufia and Murwa, regretted the lack of opportunities to observe more experienced colleagues, or to be observed by another teacher and to get constructive feedback, which may have allowed them to learn some potentially helpful strategies.

*I felt that I am not ready to start teaching; it could be because our pre-service was limited to delivering only two lessons. I did not observe other colleagues and also no one observed me. I entered to give lessons. As a result I found myself demoralized to do anything and everything is difficult: controlling the syllabus and the students. (Sufia)*

*I think that delivering only four lessons is not enough. There were also no opportunities to observe other teachers in order to know what happens in other classes. In addition I face the challenges of dealing with a difficult syllabus, of controlling students' behaviour and of dealing with high level students especially those who are studying medicine. All this puts me in embarrassing situations with students and makes me feel demoralized, and makes me feel totally unprepared. (Murwa)*

Suhila felt that her own pre-service education had suffered because of the quality of the teaching staff. She described her professors in the following way:

*They did not prepare enough. Some teachers in my college of education did not give the subject matter the proper respect it deserved. In addition, they on occasion did not show up to teach, came late, or left early. My experience teaching has been my main source of training and I have learnt from my mistakes. (Suhila)*

Although most novice teachers in this study felt unprepared or inadequately prepared, Wafa believed that her programmes had sufficiently prepared her. She reported that there was an effective professor who was a role model in her college of education, who made her feel prepared to start in the profession:

*I felt that I am ready as graduated/qualified teacher to start performing my work. My pre-service was beneficial even though the supervisors (psychology professor and the methodology professor) entered my class just twice during my two week training to observe me. I learnt what I needed from my professors especially from one lovely teacher who*

*became a role model in everything, even how I positioned myself in the classroom. (Wafa)*

Raja believed that giving five lessons in her pre-service had sufficiently prepared her, even though she regretted the lack of support from her supervisors:

*I felt that I was qualified. I got the chance to give lessons five times but our supervisors didn't care and observed me just once without feedback. (Raja)*

### ***Novice teachers' preparedness for EFL teaching***

The interviews with novice teachers revealed that most of them (n=18), felt ill-prepared, regardless of whether they had qualified at a College of Education or a Faculty of Arts. Some of them found their pre-service teaching preparation to be inadequate; in particular they felt unprepared to teach English for specific purposes, as they need to do in their teaching assignments. They reported that they were prepared only to teach general English. Interviewees found English grammar to be the only beneficial subject in their pre-service academic programmes, and the following comments illustrate novice teachers' views regarding this issue:

*My preparation was weak. Although we studied many subjects in English such as grammar, conversation, phonetics, translation, novel, drama, and poetry, writing and applied linguistics I only benefited from studying grammar and conversation. (Afrah)*

*I feel that I am not prepared sufficiently. I studied some subjects which were not beneficial and have no relation to what I teach. Only my grammar lessons at college seem to be of any real use. I use what I learned as a resource. (Amal)*

*I feel that I am not prepared for the different challenges I face as an EFL teacher. Teaching general English is the only thing I can do fluently because I use what I studied as a resource for teaching my students. (Fatin)*

*My university education did not prepare me well to teach English. I studied subjects in education and in my specialization in Arabic without practicing teaching. Furthermore, we only studied general English and find ourselves teaching a variety of subjects full of new vocabularies that we had not heard before even in Arabic. (Majda)*

*Regarding my previous study, it was general and so easy, does not work, or harmonize with what we teach to our students. (Sumia)*

The novice teachers believed that the focus of their faculties' and colleges' programmes were too theoretical and ignored practical aspects:

*My college programmes did not prepare me enough for EFL teaching because our teachers at the university concentrated on theoretical aspects only. They did not concentrate on pronunciation and conversation. (Dalia)*

*The college of education programmes was too theoretical. Although we had listening labs, we did not benefit because the lack of opportunities to hear native speakers. (Nadia)*

*The subjects that we studied were too theoretical; these subjects did not qualify me to be a good teacher. The only beneficial subjects were grammar and pronunciation. (Sulwa)*

Although most novice teachers believed that their college and faculty programmes did not prepare them to teach EFL, some did believe that they were prepared sufficiently, and they benefited from studying subjects such as phonetics, reading, conversation, grammar, translation, morphology and methodology.

*Although the university prepared me to be a researcher I benefited from many things that assisted me in teaching: I am using the syllabus of my university as a guide when needed; also I learnt from my professors at the university many other useful subjects such as: phonetics, reading and conversation. (Hana)*

*Methodology in English teaching has been particularly useful. (Wafa)*

*I feel that I am prepared because there were some subjects that assisted my preparation as a teacher such as grammar and phonetics. (Suhila)*

*My college programmes prepared me for EFL teaching, since I acquired skills for teaching the language. I benefited from studying subjects such as morphology and translation. (Raja)*

### ***Areas in which novice teachers felt adequately or inadequately prepared***

Most novice teachers in this study (n=18) reported that they were adequately prepared to teach general English, especially grammar, since the syllabuses at their faculties and colleges focused on grammar, and some of them utilized what they had studied as a resource when needed.

*I am prepared well since university teachers concentrate extensively on grammar. (Dalia)*

*I felt capable only to teach grammar because we concentrated on learning it at college. (Sufia)*

*I feel that I am qualified to teach English grammar or general English only and I still use what I had studied before as resource to teach my students. (Lubna)*

*I prefer to teach grammar only because it is the only subject that I prepared for in my previous education. I am not prepared sufficiently since we graduated to be researchers. (Majda)*

Sulwa and Suhila felt adequately prepared to teach both English grammar and pronunciation.

*Although subjects that we studied were theoretical and general they were so beneficial for me and I felt qualified to teach them such as grammar and pronunciation. (Sulwa)*

*There are some subjects that affected my preparation as a teacher such as grammar and phonetics which make me feel qualified to teach them. (Suhila)*

As a novice teacher, Nadia believed that her previous studies in the College of Education prepared her well to teach reading comprehension and grammar. Hana, another novice teacher who graduated from a Faculty of Arts and has two years' experience in teaching, felt prepared for teaching some subjects such as phonetics, reading, and conversation:

*Although the university prepared me to be a researcher I learnt from my professors at the university many other useful subjects such as: phonetics, reading, and conversation. I am using the syllabus of my university as a guide when needed. (Hana)*

Whilst there was evidence that novice teachers felt prepared adequately in some areas of specialization such as grammar, pronunciation, reading comprehension, and conversation; there were indications that this was so in all cases. For example, some novice teachers felt unprepared to teach other specialisations or in departments other than English:

*I felt that I am not prepared to deal with high level students especially those who are studying medicine. All this put me in embarrassing situations with students and made me feel demoralized. (Murwa)*

*I feel that I am not prepared enough in introducing some words which sometimes put me in difficult situations because we teach scientific terms so I am forced to use Arabic. (Aram)*

*Also I feel ill prepared and lack basic knowledge when teaching English to other scientific sections. I studied general English. In any department I need to explain everything in detail. So teaching in scientific departments*

*will double the problem because the syllabus is full of scientific terms which we do not even know in Arabic (Noora) .*

*I feel that I am not prepared adequately to teach in other departments because of my lack of basic knowledge when teaching in that department; also, they only concentrated on teaching grammar in my college programmes. (Sufia)*

*Since I graduated to be a researcher I am not prepared sufficiently. I studied general English and find myself teaching in different specialisations, where there is a variety of subjects which are full of new vocabularies we had not heard before even in Arabic. (Majda)*

Some novice teachers in their second year felt inadequately prepared to teach phonetics. Muna, for example, reported that the time devoted to study this subject at her College of Education was not sufficient:

*I feel unqualified in phonetics and in the lab subjects because we studied them just for one year and that is not enough for it is a foreign language. (Muna)*

Dalia, on the other hand, felt unprepared as her Faculty of Arts had covered little phonetics. She also reported, as did Muna, that insufficient time was given over to the study of phonetics:

*I am not prepared well in teaching phonetics since my university programmes did not concentrate on this and did not give the subject sufficient time or the depth that was required. I need more effort and help to teach this part of lessons in particular. (Dalia)*

The feeling of being unprepared to teach was not limited to teachers with two years' teaching experience, like Muna and Dalia. Teachers with three years of practice still felt insufficiently prepared as well.

*I felt that I am not qualified in teaching phonetics since we studied it just a year. (Amal)*

*I feel that I am not qualified enough in teaching pronunciation and still find it difficult although this is my third year. (Nadia)*

*I feel weak and not prepared enough to teach pronunciation because of limited opportunities to study this appropriate in the college. (Noora)*

Since Haifa graduated to be a researcher and not a teacher, she also feels unprepared and still finds difficulty in teaching pronunciation and conversation.

The evidence showed that it was not only teachers who graduated from Faculty of Arts programmes trained as researchers who felt they were not prepared to teach pronunciation and conversation. Sumia, a novice teacher who graduated from a College of Education, had the same experience.

*I feel I did not prepare well to teach pronunciation and conversation. I did not benefit from studying them and their teaching time was not enough. (Sumia)*

Najah and Lubna, in their third year, felt that their studies had not prepared them sufficiently to teach the listening skills, which benefit from experience with conversation and pronunciation:

*I feel unprepared and feel totally confused when teaching listening skills, although I feel I am good in teaching in general. (Najah)*

*I feel that I am not prepared adequately in teaching listening skills. Students need the lab for the syllabus designed to learn in the lab, and I did not study myself in the lab and find myself responsible to do something I have no idea about at all. (Lubna)*

Of the teachers who admitted to feeling unprepared to teach in certain areas of their specialization, Lubna was the only interviewee who reported that she feels unprepared to teach the writing, and she feels she needs more assistance to teach it.

Afrah felt that the university prepared her inadequately both because of the lack of basic knowledge training and because of the communication problems she faced in her second year, when communicating with parents:

*I feel that I am not prepared at all to deal with parents; I lack basic knowledge when communicating with them. You know, I did not study anything in my university to use in such situations because I am a researcher not a teacher. (Afrah)*

Najah felt scared and speechless when a student's mother attacked her in school when her child failed an exam. This means that not only did novice teachers who graduated from a Faculty of Arts feel un-prepared; novice teachers who trained at a College of Education likewise felt inadequately prepared for negotiating with parents:

*When I say my college did not sufficiently prepare me. I mean it did not prepare me at all. The syllabus in my previous study did not include a single line about how to deal with parents. Also no one told us what to do in such circumstances. When I was exposed to an attack from a student's mum because her son failed the exam, I felt that I am still young, with*

*limited knowledge. I did not defend myself but just burst into tears. Really that moment made me feel not ready to start teaching. And this does not mean I do not want to establish good relationships with parents. (Najah)*

Assessment was identified as the main challenge at the beginning of a novice teacher's career. Najah feels that her prior school and pre-service education programme were not effective. They did not prepare her to develop suitable assessment criteria to set a good exam, so she depends on open-ended questions:

*I feel that my college of education preparation, and pre-service training programme were not effective. They did not prepare me for the area of students' assessment. I do not know how to do multiple choice exams. I frequently do an open-ended questions exam only. (Najah)*

Haifa and Laila, who graduated as researchers, felt that they were not prepared in the area of classroom management. Although the syllabus of the Faculty of Arts at the university was, as they reported, theoretical, they did study some educational subjects although nothing that related to classroom management. Also they feel that they lack the experience because they are researchers. They believe classroom management could be learnt by practice from pre-service training.

Sufia, who graduated to be a teacher, felt inadequately prepared when it came to the area of classroom management. She reported that her lesson rarely finishes in the same class period. Her College of Education did not deliver a single lecture which covered classroom management; neither did her pre-service placement prepare her to manage her class effectively: *'It was once a week for a month, while for [her], she entered the classes just two times, and [she] lost [her] chance twice for there were other events taking place at the school on those occasions.'*

In addition to the themes emerging from the interviews which have been discussed above, novice teachers felt inadequately prepared in planning lessons. One novice teacher believed that her pre-service preparation programme did not prepare her to design effective lesson plans so she could attract her students' attention and improve her teaching by learning a repertoire of teaching strategies. So Noora, in her third year of teaching, reported:

*I believe that the college of education preparation and my pre-service placement which was once a week for a month did little to prepare me to deliver interesting lessons. I myself feel bored, since I deliver lessons in a boring way repeating the same strategies. (Noora)*

Novice teachers felt inadequately prepared not only to design effective lesson plans using different strategies, but even to plan lessons at all; Aram, who is studying for a masters degree, believes that her Faculty of Arts ignored this aspect as she was prepared to be a researcher:

*I feel that my faculty of arts did nothing to train me ... also; I feel that preparing my lessons in the preparation book is not going well. (Aram)*

Novice teachers from both types of faculty and college, whether they have been teaching for just one year, like Sulwa, or three years like Najah, Sumia, Suhila, Fatin and Lubna, felt inadequate when it came to areas in which they needed development in classroom practice. They reported that their place of graduation was neither effective nor supportive. They believe that their college/faculty did not prepare them to employ teaching and learning strategies appropriate to individual learner abilities, which would have enabled them to increase and enhance their students' achievement.

The interviews carried out with novice teachers revealed that most felt unprepared when it came to effectively motivating the students academically and behaviourally in the day-to-day challenges they face. Most novice teachers who graduated from Faculty of Arts programmes reported that they found it difficult to motivate their students academically and behaviourally, even though they encounter students who behave badly and have severe academic problems. They often felt disappointed and disheartened, and lack the experience due to their having trained research, not teaching. For example, these teachers had studied general psychology only for one year, which is not sufficient, and neither did they have an initial teacher pre-service programme:

*My prior school did not prepare me or help me to motivate students academically or behaviourally, because I studied general psychology just once and that was not enough to be beneficial. (Afrah)*

*I did a graduation project at the university but I did not do any practical training. We studied general educational subjects in Arabic in our first*

*year only, which was not enough to help us to motivate students behaviourally and academically. (Fatin)*

In addition, Lubna, a novice teacher in her third year, felt ill prepared by her Faculty of Arts. She depends on herself, but felt paralysed by the challenges she faces in order to motivate her students:

*There is nothing to motivate students academically from my prior education. So I depend on creating my own style: motivating students as if I am swimming in a troubled sea. (Lubna)*

The interviewees who graduated from Colleges of Education as teachers were provided with pre-service training programmes, but they gave responses similar to those who graduated to be researchers only. Sulwa and Sumia, for example, reported that during their previous study they did not learn how to motivate their students behaviourally or academically. They pointed out that there was no emphasis on these matters in either their college or university coursework or in their pre-service placements.

*I am not prepared to motivate students academically or behaviourally since the purpose of the university-based and placement elements of my teacher education experiences involved training in how to deliver lessons and to convey information to students, while other aspects such as managing students' behaviour and motivating them were ignored completely. We have been left to acquire this by experience. (Sulwa)*

*The first and the last emphasis was on how the teacher can give a successful lesson, while other aspects were ignored completely and they let the teacher learn these things by trial and error. Although we studied many subjects, nothing from them was of benefit to improve students' motivation either academically or behaviourally. (Sumia)*

Some novice teachers, on the other hand, were positive and had different points of view regarding being prepared to motivate their students, both academically and behaviourally. Najah, Suhila and Wafa reported that they benefited to some extent from their study at a College of Education in motivating their students' behaviour. They also got some sort of preparation from their initial teacher pre-service programmes for motivating their students effectively, academically and behaviourally.

*Although my pre-service programmes were three times a month for two months, which was not enough, it assisted me in acquiring some sort of experience to deal with students behaviourally and academically. My previous study was not effective in motivating students who show little interest in learning the language, because we studied general*

*educational psychology in Arabic just once and it was not enough. (Najah)*

*My general psychology study in the first year at a college of education prepared me a little bit to deal with students' disruptive behaviour. The practical training assisted me in acquiring experience in dealing with students behaviourally and academically. (Suhila)*

*It was a valuable preparation and of benefit to us. Through studying educational psychology, I learnt how to deal with students' disruptive behaviour. And through pre-service I learnt how to motivate my students academically and behaviourally. I learnt how to control students' behaviour, although controlling their behaviour is harder especially as our classes suffered from a large number of students. (Wafa)*

As a consequence of the College of Education and teacher pre-service programme preparation Raja, in her third year, reported that she felt fortunate. She had acquired what she needed from her outstanding professor, including the skills to effectively motivate her students academically and behaviourally:

*I was lucky since one of professors at the college of education was such a good teacher: open minded, extraordinary in teaching, always telling stories from his experience which were so beneficial. I learnt from him how to deal with students and how to motivate them, how to get the best from my students, and what to do as a teacher in many various situations. (Raja)*

Some interviewees, regardless of which type of place they graduated from, reported that they felt prepared to motivate their students behaviourally because of their study of psychology. However, there was no preparation on how to motivate students who lack interest in learning a foreign language. Novice teachers from Colleges of Education also reported that motivating students academically is a skill that is acquired by practice:

*My previous preparation in a college of education helped me to motivate the students' behaviourally for we studied the psychology of behaviour, whereas regarding motivating students academically I acquired it by practicing the profession. (Muna)*

*Through the practical training I learnt how to deal with the students' behaviour through the supervisor's advice and guidance, whereas motivating students who lack enthusiasm I acquired by experience. (Noora)*

*The syllabus of the university assisted me in controlling students' disruptive behaviour. (Aram)*

*Although I did not have pre-service training at the university, my previous study has had a great effect on me in how to motivate my students behaviourally. (Hana)*

### **5.5.2 Key areas in novice teachers' professional development**

When the interviewees were asked to choose one key area in their professional development, whether that be planning, assessment or class management, some novice teachers believed that planning was the main aspect in their professional development. They discussed how planning a lesson involves identifying limited objectives and providing students with opportunities to learn the necessary skills to be achieved by the end of the lesson; how textbook and teaching aids or facilities should be provided before the lesson starts to practice the activities as planned; and how activities should be varied in type (whole group, paired, individual) and modality (speaking, listening, and writing).

For Afrah, though, planning is different. She focuses on the idea of the lesson, the vocabulary, pronunciation, and the questions. She reported that *'[she] prepares [her] lesson a week in advance comprehensively; this is followed by daily preparation, which is the most important aspect in [her] professional development'*.

Some novice teachers recognise that planning and class management are fundamental to their professional development; for example Dalia pointed out that *'Planning and class management are the most important aspects in [her] professional development. Because when preparing [her] lesson well that helps [her] to answer all the questions and class management helps [her] in completing [her] lesson on time'*.

Other novice teachers believed that planning, assessment, and class management are core elements in their professional development. Lubna believed that they complement each other and that each is necessary for a teacher to be successful. She reported that *'they are connected together and necessary ingredients in the mix'*.

### 5.5.3 Induction arrangements

In Libya there is no formal induction programme for newly qualified teachers. There is a professional standards framework; however, it is rarely referred to. Teachers graduate from two separate types of institution, even though both follow four-year programmes of study.

Those who study in Colleges of Education, which specialise in teacher training, graduate as teachers. They study a combination of specialist subjects (e.g. reading, writing, grammar, language laboratory, conversation, phonetics, linguistics, and teaching methods as well as general education topics such as psychology and developmental psychology). In their third year of study these students apply teaching methodology in their seminars. In their fourth year, some students do serial (e.g. one day a week) and block practice, (e.g. whole week of school placements), although this varies from one institution to another.

Those students who study at a university Faculty of Arts graduate trained as researchers. They also study some general educational subjects, such as general psychology (in Arabic) and some specialist areas, such as reading, writing, grammar, lab, conversation, phonetics, linguistics, and morphology. In their third year of study, they study research methods. In their final year, they conduct small-scale research projects and apply the research methods that they studied in their third year. In both cases no one fails in pre-service or in his/her final project/research.

#### ***The role of the school principal in the professional development of novice teachers***

The principal of the school plays many roles in the early professional development of novice teachers. For example, some novice teachers reported that their principals took an active interest in their work and approachable' encouraging, and appreciative of their efforts to improve the educational performance of their schools.

*His role was amazing by changing me from first year to second and third year, this change of syllabus although it is hard for a novice teacher but made me study hard and search more for my benefit. (Murwa)*

*His cooperation and encouragement gives me a push that makes me more confident, he provided me with money many times to buy the suitable teaching aids. (Sumia)*

*When changing teachers from school to another and letting some staying at home, my principal insisted to let me in my school without asking me, this motivated me for more effort. This was a remarkable situation for me. (Dalia)*

*His encouragement, his confidence in me, and allowing me relating to him as a colleague were the major roles of my principal in my professional development. (Suhila)*

Some novice teachers declared that they teach in schools where their principals make them feel welcome by creating an atmosphere conducive to teaching.

*He gave me the chance to introduce myself and my qualification by creating the atmosphere to give my lessons appropriately. (Nadia)*

*He has a good role in my professional development by his cooperation with us for the benefit of school. Also, he is always available to help in an encouraging environment. (Muna)*

A supportive principal will visit teachers during their lessons and give feedback, as reported by Noora and Sufia:

*The principal follows students' presence and their behaviour, also follows teachers' attendance, preparation, checking the marks of students, and also does visits to the teachers during the lesson and giving feedback. (Noora)*

*The principal's main role was and still following students' and teachers' attendance, teachers' preparation, checking the marks of students and also does visits to the teachers in the class and sometimes providing us with his notes depending on his observation. (Sufia)*

Some novice teachers, however, reported that their principals' role is limited to administrative affairs:

*My principal has no role in my early professional development because his only role is following the students' attendance through the pastoral care, and following the teachers' presence. (Sulwa)*

*The principal's role is just administrative organizer. Organizing the time table for all and I return to him sometimes to discuss problems I face. (Raja)*

*The principal plays a role in my professional development by providing books for us from the beginning of the academic year and his help when I encounter any problem with students. (Amal)*

Only one novice teacher reported that her principal allowed her professional autonomy:

*His trust in me and in my abilities in facing any challenge I may face. (Aram)*

Another novice teacher reported that the principal's role is limited to giving advice and professional behaviour when communicating with parents. Lubna reported:

*The principal is providing advice to me on the division of marks, how to deal with parents, and how to make them know levels of their children through school meetings. (Lubna)*

Although most novice teachers (15/21) reported that their principals played a significant role for them (whether by encouraging and appreciating any effort to improve the school level, creating a good atmosphere for teaching, visiting the teachers during the lesson and giving feedback, administrative role, allowing autonomy or giving advice when communicating with parents), there remained a significant minority (6/21) for whom this was not the case. The following comments illustrate this point:

*He had no role in my professional development because I do my work by myself without his help. (Haifa)*

*Principal did not play any role in my early professional development; in most times he is absent and if he is in school, the atmosphere in general is mess and chaos. (Fatin)*

*My principal is not educated enough, not encouraging, stubborn, careless and always on vacation. So with these characteristics, my principal did not play any role in my professional development. (Najah)*

### **Workload**

Novice teachers participating in this study reported that they do not have a reduced workload, and also, reported having the same workload. The following comments illustrate this point.

*No, I do not have a reduced workload. (Afrah)*

*No, they deal with me as any other teacher who is older and more experienced. (Sumia)*

*No, hours of work are the same for all the teachers whether they are novice or older. (Aram)*

*I do not have a reduction in my workload and they dealt with me like the rest of the teachers. (Hana)*

Amal, Dalia and Haifa have different point of views regarding their workload. They said:

*No, the important thing is not the performance but filling the classes and occupying them. (Amal)*

*Usually, more experienced teachers are appreciated and given fewer hours and giving more hours to novice teachers being they are still fresh and sometimes we do official work. (Dalia)*

*I have no reduction in my workload and that is depends on the needs of school and the education department in our area. Haifa*

As a result of the unavailability of the work space, almost all novice teachers (20/21) reported that they take work home either always or most of the time, since the school environment is inappropriate for this kind of work:

*I always take my work home for planning my lessons, correction of exams and homework, because we have no quiet place. (Afrah)*

*I always take my school work with me because it is a room for all teachers and I need quiet atmosphere to concentrate. (Dalia)*

Only one teacher stated that she does all her work in school:

*I don't take any work home with me because I am busy at home, so I stay extra time in school to complete all my school work, since I usually do courses at home. (Raja)*

### ***The working environment***

The majority of novice teachers (19/21) reported that their students were supplied with text books, while over three quarters (17/21) of novice teachers said that they have the teachers' guide. Two teachers were less fortunate, in that, as they reported that they do not have either the text book or the teachers' guide:

*It is not only me who do not have the book of teacher's guide also; students in my first year of teaching had no books. So I forced to copy to all the class on my account, because we do not have a photo copier in our school since it is far away. (Sufia)*

*If the problem is limited to me for not having the teacher's guide it could be sorted, but even the textbook is not available to the students and I*

*have to copy for them as a result of the carelessness of our principal. (Afrah)*

The language laboratory is a facility which only few of the novice teachers reported having in their schools.

*Although we have material for listening there is no suitable place for hearing it and sometimes I bring my recorder but no socket or class without echo in addition to mess in school. (Dalia)*

*School provided us with the syllabus book and the teacher guide only. Although we have part for listening but we were not given a tape for teaching that part, so I forced to buy the tape, in addition to a vocal dictionary for the correct meaning and pronunciation on my account. (Murwa)*

All the interviewees reported teaching classes where they always have to go to the students' classroom, rather than the students coming to the teacher.

*Definitely each class has his own room. (Murwa)*

*Yes students always have their classes. (Najah)*

*Surely I have a class for my students. (Aram)*

Two of the interview respondents reported that they have classrooms, but these are in poor condition, and unhealthy:

*Yes I have a normal room for each class, but classes lack many necessities for teaching. For example we are using the black board and the chalk. A very bad quality of chalk, its writing is not clear, dust makes us sneeze. (Sufia)*

*Our school is in so poor condition, since it was deserted but because parents ask to open a nearby school for their children, they opened this school to them, the classes are without doors or windowpanes. (Sumia)*

When they asked if they have been allocated a work space, some novice teachers reported correcting homework in the staff room, while correcting exam papers and preparation was done at home since, they needed to concentrate:

*Yes, we have a room for all the staff in school. I use it for correcting the homework booklets only. (Murwa)*

*English language teachers do not have a specific room but there is a room for all teachers in different specializations which they can use for correction students' work, while preparation is at home for the room is crowded and noisy. (Najah)*

*There is a room for different specializations teachers which can be used for correction students' work only. (Suhila)*

*We don't have a special room but there is one for all the teachers from different specializations. Planning my lessons and correcting exam papers are always done at home; correcting students' homework is done in the teachers' room. (Haifa)*

As a result of the staff room being busy, some novice teachers reported that they do all their work at home:

*I used to do my work as planning, correction students' work, and marks at home because staff room is always busy. (Sulwa)*

*Yes we have a room, but it is for all the teachers in school. For it is always busy, I have to take work home. (Dalia)*

*We have a room for all the teachers which can be used at the breaks only because it is always busy. Preparation and correction are always at home. (Noora)*

A few novice teachers reported that staff room is used only for eating breakfast, or for tea or coffee breaks:

*There is a room shared by all teachers from different specialisations in school, in most times it is busy and noisy, so it can be used just for breakfast, tea, or coffee only. (Fatin)*

Only one novice teacher reported preparing and correcting students' work in the library, if it is open:

*Preparation and correction of students' work takes place whether in the staff room which is shared by all school teachers or in the library if it is open, since at most times it is closed. (Lubna)*

Whereas Sumia, who is teaching in a derelict school, reported:

*Our school is derelict. If the school is not provided with doors and windows, how can you expect to find a suitable room specialized for the staff to stay in. (Sumia)*

Although teachers should have some kind of privacy when communicating with students' parents, some novice teachers reported that meetings with students' parents usually take place in the principal's office, while the other novice teachers reported that meetings with parents sometimes took place in the pastoral care office.

#### **5.5.4 Mentor support**

It has emerged from the interviews with novice teachers who teach English as a Foreign Language in Libyan secondary schools that only the minority have received some sort of formal support from their mentor. Only one novice teacher appreciated her mentor's assistance. Suhila reported that her mentor was very supportive and a highly respected person; this, in turn, motivated her to make greater efforts:

*My mentor in my first year was smooth, easy to deal with. His relationship with me was confident and respectful. He supported and motivated me at the beginning of practicing the profession. (Suhila)*

A few novice teachers spoke positively of their mentors and pointed out that they are very valuable sources of support, which is illustrated in the following two accounts by two novice teachers:

*Support from ... mentor ... was the most helpful. He is supporting me in a variety of areas relating to the syllabus: pronunciation, meaning, how to introduce specific piece of information. I always get the answer for each question I ask, since he is my father's friend and our neighbour as well. (Sufia)*

In a different way Aram highlighted the recognition she received from her mentor as most helpful:

*Support from ... my mentor is the most helpful for me ... by getting excellent reports about me, always praising me, and this is something I appreciate so much. It is a nice feeling that makes you feel as if you are superior or better than the others, a feeling of satisfaction. (Aram)*

### ***Encouragement during the first term***

In respect of the different ways in which mentors can provide support and encouragement during the first days and weeks of school, the interviews with novice teachers revealed that mentors in Libyan secondary schools are rather passive. The following comments illustrate novice teachers' negative experiences during a time when they desperately seek support and guidance. Afrah, a novice teacher in her second year, pointed out:

*He did not support and encourage me at all because he did not visit me.*

Similarly Raja and Majda, who have been teaching for three years, state:

*I didn't see a mentor in my first two years, but this year since I have been assigned to set the exams, I will see him. (Raja)*

*My mentor did not support and encourage me during the first days and weeks in my new school. He did not visit me. (Majda)*

Many novice teachers feel that they did not benefit from their formally-assigned mentor because they were visited so infrequently, usually take place at the end of the academic year in order to check the final exams, not when they need him.

*My mentor does not provide me with encouragement because his visits are rare and he is always late right from the beginning of the academic year. (Najah)*

*I didn't get any support or encouragement because he visited me in the second half of the year near the final exams. (Dalia)*

*He did not provide any encouragement or support, because he came late in my first year. But I did not see him in my second year of teaching. (Lubna)*

*There was no encouragement for the lack of mentor visits. These visits were late from the beginning of the academic year. (Suhila)*

*He did not provide any encouragement or support since he visited me just once in my first year and twice in my second year for the final exam only. (Fatin)*

Due to mentors' often very sporadic visits novice teachers felt that the support they had was of limited benefit. Wafa pointed out that even if there is a mentor provided, this will not help because *'he is an evaluator only, not a supporter'*. Similarly, Sumia emphasises: *'He is an assessor only and we hope that he is fair'*. Sulwa described her mentor as an *'uncooperative person'*. A teacher in her third year, Laila added that *'he usually visits me late. When we ask him a question, we do not get the answer'*, since he usually advises them to search in books or says that he will give them the answer at the next visit.

Amal feels her mentor did not provide her with any support and encouragement at all during the first term. She derived no benefit because he lacked the characteristics of a good mentor:

*'He did not provide me with any kind of encouragement. Instead he provided us with destructive criticism, which was mixed with pride and arrogance'*.

*I cannot remember any support from my mentor because he does not exist in the lives of the teachers. His visits were as a compulsory routine, where he comes to school at the beginning of the year to take the time*

*table, which is not fixed. Coming to school is the first, and the final visit to see us which is usually in the last month of the year. He sits in the corner and at the back of class and asks 2 or 3 questions and leaves, and at the principal office, he makes his comments without showing respect or mercy for our feelings among colleagues. The final visit to school is just to check the final exams. (Sufia)*

Although the interviews with novice teachers revealed that many mentors in Libyan secondary schools are passive Aram, who is a novice teacher in her third year of teaching and currently studying for a higher degree, is very fortunate. She has a different opinion:

*In my first year of teaching, I was teaching life science to Year 1 when my mentor visited me. He said, this teacher is good and she should teach second year students, and the principal transferred me to teach them. This kind of praise motivated me so much and increased my-self-confidence to do my best for my students. (Aram)*

### ***Helping to establish relationships with staff, students and parents***

The interviews with novice teachers revealed that mentors in Libyan secondary schools are inactive in terms of assisting novice teachers to establish positive working relationships with other staff, students, and parents. The following comments illustrate this issue:

*My mentor didn't support me in establishing any relationships, due to his rare and late visits. (Muna)*

*Frankly, I could not remember him ever performing this role aspect of helping me to establish relationships with colleagues and parents. (Sufia)*

*Mentoring doesn't involve relationship building with others. I built myself because I did not see him until my third year of teaching. (Raja)*

*My mentor did not help me. He did not interfere, and did not suggest any of these issues. (Dalia)*

*He didn't help me to establish relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. The mentor cares only about the taught syllabus, whether the teacher completes it or not. (Fatin)*

*My mentor gives me general oral advices, not more. He does not assist me to establish relationships with colleagues, students, or parents. Neither does he give me the answer to questions about the syllabus. I hope if parents visit the school weekly or twice a month for the benefit of their children and giving their comments frankly. (Laila)*

Similarly, assistance with the taught syllabus was virtually non-existent:

*We do not see him to help us manage the difficulties facing us in the syllabus. (Wafa)*

*If we do not get his help regarding teaching the syllabus, we don't expect his help in such issue! (Afrah)*

Only one teacher pointed out that her mentor provided her with some help.

*He gave me general advice on how to deal with parents and how to communicate with them depending on their level of education. (Majda)*

### ***Mentor availability***

The availability of mentors and their lack of support are challenges confronting novice teachers in their first years of practice. Noora, for example, did not benefit from any mentor support at all as she was only appointed in the middle of the second semester. She criticised her mentor for not having inspired her and described him as passive for not assisting her. She felt isolated and pressured because she had not received the kind of support she needed. Not only is the school far from where she lives, but most of her colleagues are older, approaching the age of retirement, and are not cooperative:

*The most difficult situation I faced with my mentor was the mentor not being available when needed. I expected that he will help me at least for the last two months. At the time of the midterm exams, the mentor visited me once without benefit, for he sat at the back of class till the end of my lesson without comments after the class, when I told him that I need him for different stuff, he told me that will happen in another visit. But, this was his only visit to me! From his first visit I realised that he is neither an active nor cooperative person. (Noora)*

Noora, whose mentor was unavailable most of the time, was left her to her own devices with regard to delivering the syllabus for the first time. She did, however, find her own solution to the lack of support:

*Since the mentor is virtually non-existent and the teachers are not cooperative, when I face something I do not know I absent myself in some cases, sometimes I delay giving a specific lesson or make revision, or leave that lesson and go to the next one until finding solution. And sometimes I ask the students to search the meaning at home and who brings the meaning will get extra mark. (Noora)*

*Since our mentor visits us twice a year just a visit, where he sits, asks some questions, and finally leaves. I am forced to get help outside the school. (Najah)*

*Yes, sometimes I need him when I face a difficulty, or I cannot understand something in the syllabus but where is he!?! (Wafa)*

*He visits us twice a year and I sometimes face a difficulty to understand specific information in the syllabus and I cannot do it without his help, especially since English syllabuses are different in our school for the different specializations. (Aram)*

Colleagues are not always available to answer questions, and some are uncooperative and unwilling to help; this increases the novice teachers' need of their mentor.

### ***Identifying solutions to problems***

The interviews with novice teachers who teach English as a Foreign Language in Libyan secondary schools revealed that their mentors did not support them when they were seeking solutions to the problems they encountered. Some, therefore, were left alone when faced with a difficult situation at school.

Some interviewees reported that they solved their problems on their own, since most were not major problems that none other than the mentor could address. However, it seems that the mentors' role in Libya is only to assess teachers' competence, and they have no other function:

*Thank God, until now I have not faced a difficult situation that needed assistance from the mentor. I am used to solving my problems by myself. (Aram)*

*I did not encounter a problem that needed the mentor's help until now. I depend on myself to solve my problems. (Dalia)*

*When I face a difficult situation I solve my problem by myself even without the help of the principal who is in school with me. (Sufia)*

*If I encounter a difficulty, I will not find a mentor by my side. Instead, he is against me with his destructive criticism and ironic comments in front of students and all staff as well. So I depend on myself to solve my problems. (Murwa)*

The novice teachers' experiences made apparent that the mentors in Libya do not regard it as their responsibility to assist novice teachers confronted with difficult situations:

*I solve my problems by myself and my mentor has no role at all. For example, at the beginning of the year, students are studying without enough textbooks, and I found myself copying for them on my account and no one helped me, neither the principal nor the mentor. (Afrah)*

*In my second year of teaching, I taught listening skills subject for third year students, who are specialised in English, without a lab since there is no lab in our school. I spoke with the mentor and the principal, but there was no suggestion for a solution from either of them. (Laila)*

*In fact, I did not receive any kind of assistance from my mentor in identifying solution to my problems, because he does not care about the challenges with which teachers are confronted. So, I do not expect him to care about such stuff. (Fatin)*

*The mentor doesn't interfere in our difficulties. He cares only for completing the syllabus. (Nadia)*

*He does not interfere in our affairs. His only role is assessing us. (Majda)*

### ***Becoming an effective classroom practitioner***

In their work towards becoming an effective classroom practitioner, only two teachers reported that their mentors provided any support:

*I didn't get any support from my colleagues, but I got some praise from my mentor. Those expressions encourage me to improve my giving and increase my self-confidence. (Sufia)*

*Mentor support is simple but so beneficial for me. It is a kind of encouragement and raising my morale to stand more especially when I have problems with my students. (Wafa)*

Some novice teachers were less fortunate and were obliged to depend on their own ideas in order to becoming effective classroom practitioners. The following comments illustrate the responses of novice teachers who were left to their own devices and adopted a trial and error approach, without any kind of support:

*I did not get any kind of support from my mentor to become an effective classroom practitioner, for our mentor is uncooperative and his visits are rare. (Fatin)*

*I haven't received mentor support. He even visited me without comments. (Nadia)*

*I did not get any kind of support from my mentor since mentors rarely visit us. (Lubna)*

*I did not get mentor support. He is rarely to appear and useless. (Noora)*

Some novice teachers reported that classroom practice could be improved by making changes to the mentor's role:

*It could be improved by existence of resident mentor because the syllabus is new, teachers are about the same level, and there is no preparation to teach this new syllabus since we were prepared to teach general English not more. (Sulwa)*

*Since mentor role is just writing a note (sentence) in the teacher's preparation book through the teacher's lesson, he is unhelpful at all. His role could be improved by organizing scheduled meetings with all the teachers in general and novice teachers in particular to discuss syllabus difficulties. (Dalia)*

*It could be improved by establishing scheduled meetings for the teachers with their mentor. (Wafa)*

*I wish that mentor could try to improve the teachers' level not just assessing them. (Laila)*

*Mentors should have knowledge about the syllabus we teach, he should trust us and also he should respect our characters being teachers. (Noora)*

### ***Time management***

The interviews with novice teachers revealed once again that mentors did not support them in managing their time. Some reported that they had been left to find their own solutions:

*No one helped me in managing my time because it is acquired by practice and I still suffer from this problem. (Murwa)*

*I manage my time depending on my own ability and according to the way students respond to me. (Noora)*

*Frankly, believe me, I didn't receive any help or support from any one, since everything was with through my own effort. (Raja)*

*I manage my time by myself without assistance from any person. It depends on the difficulty of the lesson and also the students' responses. (Sufia)*

*Although managing time is the most problematic aspect that hinders us in the process of education no one assisted us. (Wafa)*

The issue of time management and lack of support was identified by some of the interviewees:

*No one helped me in managing my time whether my mentor or colleagues. If we were provided with the sufficient time to teach then we would not require help in managing our time. (Muna)*

*No one helped me in managing class time. It could be more helpful by increasing the time for teaching the English language. (Fatin)*

Laila, in her third year of teaching, believes that time management should be included in pre-service training, and that there should be an opportunity to observe practitioner colleagues' techniques in how to manage time.

*I am managing my time by myself. It could be improved by observing older colleagues during pre-service, since we can observe their techniques, and we can get what works and what is most appropriate for our classes. (I did not do pre-service). (Laila)*

Lubna suggested that novice teachers should be strong, precise, and not waste class time in controlling students and similar issues.

*No one helped me in managing my time. It could be more useful by using time properly in giving the lesson and not to waste class time on secondary issues inside the class. (Lubna)*

Whilst there was evidence that novice teachers benefited from various kinds of support, not necessarily delivered by mentors, there were indications that this was not the case for all. Noora, for example, had very limited support due to the sporadic availability of her mentor.

*Mentors support is less helpful because of his rare visits, and if we ask him any questions relating to the syllabus he does not give us the answer. (Noora)*

Sulwa and Muna had a similarly negative experience due to the mentor's rare visits and lack of care.

*He visits us twice a year, but we need him with us in school to find him when we need. (Muna)*

### **5.5.5 Other sources of support**

#### ***Colleagues***

The interviews with novice teachers who teach English as a Foreign Language in Libyan secondary schools revealed that due to the paucity of formal mentor support, novice teachers sought guidance and advice from other colleagues, both in respect of specific problems and in their attempt to become effective classroom practitioners.

Sometimes collaboration with other colleagues, their encouragement and assistance, was the only support a novice teacher received in school.

Some novice teachers reported that teachers, generally novice and older colleagues, support each other in diverse issues relates to the syllabus and students. The following comments illustrate this:

*I got helpful support from colleagues in various situations for the syllabus is rich: explaining the meaning of some new words, getting answer to specific questions, pronouncing unknown words. (Afrah)*

*Colleagues support me by advice and exchange point of views with them in explaining ambiguity of some words in the syllabus. It is helpful to some extent. (Sumia)*

*... my colleagues encourage me by explaining difficulties in different situations; their encouragement assisted me to make more effort in order to increase students' understanding. (Murwa)*

*Although support which I have received from my colleagues was simple but it is good through their point of views and their previous experience. (Muna)*

Some interviewees indicated that they receive support particularly from more experienced practitioners, who can help them overcome to the challenges with which they are confronted: for example, matters regarding the syllabus, student behaviour, dealing with parents, setting the exam questions, assessing students' work:

*Support was obtained by consulting some older teachers. (Najah)*

*I have received support from more experienced colleagues who provided me with further explanations and clarifications regarding the syllabus. (Haifa)*

*I received support from my friend, who is a more experienced colleague and teaches in another school. (Dalia)*

*I have received support from more experienced colleagues in the form of advice. (Laila)*

*Some help from an older colleague regarding the syllabus and setting the exam questions. My current principal plays both roles as a more experienced practitioner colleague previously and currently as a principal. (Sumia)*

*I got informal mentoring support from older colleagues. They are helpful and cooperative with each other in planning strategies, setting exam questions, and in correcting pronunciation. (Majda)*

*I received informal mentoring supported from more experienced colleagues in relation to issues relating to students and how to deal with them. (Sufia)*

Hana, in her second year, found she benefited in particular from her more experienced colleagues' moral support; she finds that they:

*... raise [my] morale and self-esteem. This in turn, gives [me] a push and makes the fragile ground which [I] stand on more solid. (Hana)*

Majda, now in her third year of teaching, feels comfortable that she has good relationships with all her colleagues, and in particular with more experienced practitioners:

*In school I feel so comfortable as if I am at home among my family members. Colleagues are helpful and cooperative with each other as in a family. We are swapping thoughts, planning strategies, exchanging exam questions, asking about pronunciation, and whatever confronts us. (Majda)*

Laila, however, although similarly in her third year of teaching, has limited relationships with her colleagues, and everyone works on their own:

*I get my most helpful support from one more experienced colleague who is my best friend and next door neighbour. I feel encouraged and I don't feel embarrassed about the continuous asking.*

Some novice teachers highlighted the value of peer support, where novice teachers assist each other in an atmosphere of collaboration and in the knowledge that they have similar needs:

*My only support was from my colleagues who are new as me, because some of them suffer the same problem. If we don't ask each other, no one cares about us. (Murwa)*

*My colleagues, who are at the same cohort, support me. Sometimes we ask each other if a lesson was given by one of them before us. This kind of support is some sort helpful. (Dalia)*

Murwa also found that another peer group, former students from her year, provided her with the most helpful kind of support:

*I have two friends from my college same cohort in the same school. We work as a team. We always check with each other what lesson plan and ideas we can. We usually cooperate on some issues, such as setting integrated exams and sometimes we exchange the exam questions with*

*each other, check pronunciation, and some specific pieces of information related to the taught syllabus. (Murwa)*

Many of the interviewees found the idea of mutual support attractive; some novice teachers in this study suggested that teachers should establish and keep positive working relationships with each other.

*It could be improved by establishing and keeping good relationship between us. (Afrah)*

*It could be improved by more cooperation between colleagues since they are in the same school. (Sumia)*

*Support from colleagues could be improved by cooperation between all of us in general, and with the new teachers in particular, by exchange point of views in explaining any difficulties whatever its kind (syllabus or students) and by dealing with each other without sensitivity and superiority. (Najah)*

*All teachers should get rid of their sensitivity and should assist each other as a family without aggression or superiority. (Noora)*

*It could be improved by asking for help if you need because nothing is ready, no one will help you if you don't ask and not to feel embarrassing. (Haifa)*

Whilst there was evidence that some novice teachers benefited from their colleagues' support, there were indications that this was not the case for all. Some novice teachers, like Wafa, described her colleagues as 'uncooperative', and felt that she 'didn't benefit from them at all':

*I expect colleagues to be more helpful to me, especially as I was appointed in the middle of the second semester and the school was not in the area where I live. You know I don't know any of them, whether novice or experienced teachers. (Wafa)*

Similarly, Raja found she could not depend on her colleagues, who were all male, for support:

*In fact, at the beginning I was the only female teacher in school i.e. my colleagues were male teachers so I didn't benefit from them because they were always fighting. Each one wants to get rid of his time table so I depend on myself. (Raja)*

Afrah, Dalia and Muna referred to other novice teacher colleagues, their peers, as less helpful, as 'they were all at the same level', while more experienced colleagues

failed to provide them with enough encouragement and made them feel disillusioned:

*When I talk with them about what should I do with some students who have academic problems in order to improve their level, they always advise me not to worry any more about them. They say these students are weak in all subjects, not only in English and that I can ask other teachers about them. (Nadia)*

Lubna gained the impression that more experienced colleagues are unwilling to help her:

*They made me feel uncomfortable with their contempt looks. They look at me as if they were superior and I was inadequate. (Lubna)*

In some schools there is a culture of lack of enthusiasm and minimal work, particularly of the principal is unmotivated and fails to supervise effectively. Sufia found such an atmosphere among her colleagues and, far from seeking support, she simply avoided them:

*I don't know anyone from the staff teachers there, I felt lonely since there is no one from the same cohort, and teachers are uncooperative and look doubtfully to me as if I did something wrong, 'from the last corner of their eyes', although I didn't approach them. They are always just eating and gossip without mercy with each other. They are not motivated at all and they don't like their work. When the bell rings to start another lesson, they have no intention to make a move and do so reluctantly, as if someone was forcing to do their work. They only do it for the money. So, I avoided communicating with them; also, I avoided any discussion with them. And I did not enter the staffroom. I usually give my lessons and directly to my home for not see them. (Sufia)*

In other cases, though, the school principal proved to be an invaluable source of support for novice teachers.

### ***The school principal***

In addition to collegial support, be it from newcomers or from more experienced practitioners, support was also provided by their principals. Raja for instance reported that her principal was very supportive, taking into consideration that she was new to the profession;

*I got fabulous support from the principal. I feel lucky he was my principal. (Raja)*

Muna also reported that she benefited from guidance from her principal, which assisted her in setting the final exam:

*Yes, I get mentoring support from my principal in the form of formal instructions. It was in the month before the final exams. I received a closed envelope informing me to set the final exams. Instructions as criteria for the exam such as: the exam questions should not be limited to the first half of the text book but the questions should include/cover the entire text book. Exam questions should be varied and should include open ended questions such as choices and closed questions. Also, it should be relevant to all ability levels. (Muna)*

Lubna and Sumia benefited from effective informal mentoring support from their principals who were always available to assist them:

*Although mentor in Arabic means: 'a person who gives advice and supports teachers', he performed an assessor role (evaluator). I saw him just twice in my first year, once in the last month of the year and once to check the final exam questions. I got informal mentoring support from my principal, who is approachable, supportive and has adopted an open door policy with us with his readiness to help at any time. (Lubna)*

*I got informal mentoring support from my principal who has had extensive experience as a classroom practitioner. His assistance is amazing in both ways, as an experienced colleague and as a principal, since he is perfect and ready to help whatever the time is. But if you mean mentor support, he is virtually non-existent. He is not helpful at all. He rarely visits and even when he comes his role is that of an assessor only. (Sumia)*

Also, some novice teachers were fortunate and received informal guidance from their principals in the form of advice on controlling students' behaviour, communicating with parents or setting exam questions:

*My mentor made one formal visit in my third month of the academic year. He was not supportive. I got informal mentoring support from my principal who made me teach in a supportive atmosphere. His mentoring support was in the form of advice in diverse situations. (Nadia)*

*Since our mentor infrequently visits us, my principal provided me with mentoring support, which was informal as a kind of advice regarding controlling students' behaviour and communication with parents. (Noora)*

*I have received only the annual formal written report from my mentor. Also, I got informal mentoring support from my principal. His mentoring support relates to classroom management in the form of advice for example: not to mix with students, controlling students and not to let them interrupt my lesson. (Aram)*

*Since my mentor is negative and I did not benefit from him, I got informal mentoring support from both principal and deputy principal in things relating to controlling students' behaviour and setting exam questions. (Sulwa)*

Although the degree of support from the principal varied in each case, it was generally appreciated:

*My only support was from my principal, who encouraged me and strengthened my self-confidence through his co-operation with me for the benefit of students. (Muna)*

*I received little help from the principal which is supporting sometimes to some extent, better than nothing as in the case of mentor support. (Sumia)*

*I have received amazing assistance from my principal, who trusted and respected me so much I believe because I am also studying for a post graduate degree. (Aram)*

A novice teacher in her first year was very pleased that her principal had adopted an open door policy with all staff teachers. She described him as an exemplary model:

*Administration support was fantastic. The principal was always ready to help whatever you asked. Being always encouraged makes me always keen to satisfy the principal's expectations. (Lubna)*

Other novice teachers also find that this kind of support is encouraging, and instils, and increases their self-esteem:

*The Principal's support is valuable since he explains to parents anything relating to their child, how to deal with their children appropriately, and also how I can deal with these children's behaviour in class in particular. (Noora)*

Another interviewee in her first year of teaching appreciated her deputy principal's effort. She pointed out that:

*... support was received from deputy principal depending on my request. He encourages and increases my self-confidence by his readiness to assist. (Sulwa)*

The novice teachers participating in this study found principal support is the most helpful. Many novice teachers spoke positively of their principals and they indicated that they represented the most helpful support for them. As a teacher in her third year, Sumia feels very fortunate in this respect:

*I feel lucky to be a teacher in his school, although the school is in very poor condition and no one bears working there. I felt like having a massage or a balsam, but you know, he was one of three English language teachers, and then he became a principal. He feels what we feel. He is older and has five years' experience. I swap points of view with him and he is supportive and knowledgeable in both ways, as an experienced colleague and as a principal. (Sumia)*

One respondent commented that her principal trusts her, and this in turn encourages her. Nadia said that he is ready to help, whatever the situation.

*My principal is convinced that as a teacher I need time and a supportive atmosphere in order to develop. He enhances my self-confidence as a teacher. Difficulties always exist and thanks to discussion between the teacher and the principal, problems become smaller and can vanish. (Nadia)*

Principals can not only increase the confidence of their staff members, they can also give advice on behaviour management of students and communication with parents:

*The support of the principal is the most helpful for us, where the principal raises our morale and tries to clarify the finer details of the problems that may confront us when dealing with parents and with students' discipline. (Noora)*

Aram also valued the support of her principal, who is helpful, offering support and advice. She admitted that her principal is such a highly respected and knowledgeable person:

*My principal is a model of the good dream friend. He is at the beginning of his fifties; I don't feel the difference in age. He treats me as a friend with all the respect and trust. He is a supportive person. I cannot remember him ever say no to any of my actions and suggestions. (Aram)*

Due to the dearth of mentor support, novice teachers sought guidance from their principals to find solution to the problems they encountered in school. Amal for example described her principal's support as ranging from 'fair to very good'. Muna stated that she received great support from her principal and 'all the colleagues and I usually solve my problems with the help of the principal'.

Some novice teachers reported that their principal is the only shelter and source of support for them.

*If I encountered a difficult situation, the principal would be the only person who would understand me and would find a solution to my difficulty. (Lubna)*

*When facing a difficult situation, the first, and the last assistance I usually receive come from my principal in identifying a solution to some problems. (Sumia)*

*I used to solve my problems by discussing them with the principal and take his point of view in consideration. (Raja)*

Not all novice teachers find they can rely on the principal. The interviews with novice teachers revealed that there are diverse points of views regarding their principal's supportive role in relation to their classroom management. Afrah and Fatin believe that their principals are rather passive. Both mentioned that their principals are always absent. Afrah pointed out that her

*Principal has no involvement in [my] classroom management, for he is so careless, and [I] rarely see him in school. He does not respect the teachers and the students do not respect him either. (Afrah)*

Fatin provides a similar account:

*He could assist us in improving the students' behaviour in order to create the appropriate atmosphere for teaching. But our principal has a weak personality. He does not have an impact on the school at all due to his continuous absence. (Fatin)*

Some novice teachers, such as Murwa and Dalia, think their principal's role consists only of administrative work:

*The principal's main role is monitoring student attendance and absence. He has no role in managing my classroom. (Murwa)*

*The principal's major role is monitoring students' attendance without punishing students who are always absent or misbehave, but he is always absent and does not know anything about what happens in classes. (Dalia)*

On the other hand, many novice teachers spoke positively about their principals, describing them as respected professionals, who have strong personalities. Overall, they believe that their principal's role is concerned with student attendance and discipline. However, there are some novice teachers who believe that their principals play an active role in supporting them in the management of their classes:

*My principal plays an important role in my classroom management. He has a very strong personality; students are afraid of him and respect him. He keeps an eye on students' attendance and their behaviour inside the class and the school. (Muna)*

*Since our principal is respected by both students and teachers, he always follows students' attendance and behaviour and punishes those who are trouble makers. He is always ready to help. (Nadia)*

*He has a major role for me since I am still with little experience. He sometimes helps me controlling the students, especially, as it is boys' school. (Noora)*

Novice teachers particularly appreciated advice that was relevant and specific.

*The principal is always advising and guiding me by saying for example: Be a teacher and don't mix with students. Control your students and don't let them disrupt your lesson. etc. (Aram)*

Principals do not only advise teachers in their schools, they also give guidance to students in a very effective way. Hana, who is a novice teacher in her second year of teaching, believes that her principal is an excellent communicator. Depending on the situation he can be both tough and kind.

*I sometimes need him in my class, because he speaks effectively, not like me. He deals with the students as a friend and as a kind of father advising his children and is always ready to help. (Hana)*

*His role is following the student attendance, assisting and encouraging us to face any challenge in teaching/school, advising students, punishing those who are riotous, and he is always available to help. (Lubna)*

*The principal is always careful about the teacher attendance in class. If a teacher is absent, he demands to be given a reason and then sends a report to the finance department in order to make a deduction from his salary. Also, he follows student attendance and behaviour and punishes misbehaviour in students. (Raja)*

*My principal has a strong personality. He manages the school with competence and toughness with both students and teachers, so it is easy for us to give our lessons easily; we are able to control our classes. No absence for students and discipline in behaviour. And also discipline for teachers. (Sulwa)*

*His role is so positive for his effort to providing us with books from the beginning of the school year, following the students' attendance, assisting and encouraging us to face any challenge in school. (Amal)*

Sumia summarized her principal's role as the following:

*The principal plays an active role in the school in general: He is in charge of all administrative matters and their ratification. He follows the attendance of students with a focus on their behaviour in the classroom and their level of interaction. Also, he follows the teachers' attendance.*

*He is responsible for matters relating to students, teachers, and parents.  
(Sumia)*

Although most novice teachers had found the support provided by their principal was beneficial, there was a minority for whom this was not the case. The following accounts by five novice teachers illustrate the difficulties they encountered. Afrah mentioned that although the principal could sort out the problem of inadequate numbers of books, he refused to find a workable solution. There were enough books for four classes, as long as pupils shared a book between them, but instead of distributing the books equally, he allocated sufficient books to three classes, too few for the remaining class.

*Although the textbook is the only thing we have as teachers in this school, there is a photo-copier in the school; he gave me just 7 books, but I have 36 students. I tried with him to repeat the distribution of books but he did not care. I copied the textbook to 13 students who had bad financial conditions and I paid on my own account although the school has a photo copier. (Afrah)*

The school culture affected Dalia negatively, for it lacked leadership. For instance she described her principal as ‘uncooperative’, and she indicated that ‘he is always absent while the school is always in chaos’, resulting lack of control over students’ behaviour. She added that he takes the side of the students and keeps staff quiet to please the parents, so he can go about his business without interruption. Amal, who is a novice teacher in her third year of teaching, also believes that she cannot benefit from her principal’s support, as he is always tense and irritable. Similarly, Murwa feels that her principal’s decision to give her two different syllabuses to teach was not very helpful, when he could have allocated these to more experienced colleagues instead. Wafa also felt disappointed at the lack of support and consideration she received from her principal:

*My principal always has staff meetings, mostly when I have a class. Class time is not enough and with each meeting I lose a precious time. In addition, I generally lose my classes due to some national and religious occasions and also during bank holidays. (Wafa)*

*Our school is like as if we had no principal. He is not helpful for he is always out and does not have a strong personality He is always absent doing his own business in the vegetable and fruit market, since he has a farm. The school for our principal is a fixed continuous source of income only. (Fatin)*

Sufia also reported that her school lacked leadership due to the principal's continuous absence, she reported:

*At the beginning I asked the principal to attend my class, he entered once then he told me that I am a teacher and should do my work without interference of the others. For his negative response, and closing the door in my way, I did many endeavours with each student individually to know their reasons for behaving in that way. I dealt with them as matures; I also informed their parents but the students are still the same although the parents promised to sort the problem. (Sufia)*

### **Family members, friends and local contacts**

Some newcomers to teaching in Libyan secondary schools get neither collegial nor their principal's support, but they do receive their families' encouragement. This was cited as key source of informal support for novice teachers:

*I got informal mentoring support from my father whom I rely on in the meaning, and pronunciation of some scientific words, since the mentor does not exist. (Muna)*

*I didn't get any mentoring support from my mentor because he visited me just once by the end of the year to check questions of the final exam. Instead, my older brother who is a teacher in my school is the source of informal mentoring support in some issues as controlling students' behaviour, marking students work, and in setting exam questions. (Haifa)*

Family support is encouraging and raises their morale for two main reasons: they are an income source for their families and they know that they are one of the few graduates each year who have secured a teaching post.

*My family is supporting me since it is rare to be appointed, nowadays, as a teacher. Hundreds of graduates are at home. (Raja)*

The interviews with novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools revealed that some of them get the most helpful support from their families. The following accounts by three novice teachers illustrate how this takes place. Muna, who is a novice teacher in her second year of teaching, pointed out that she got the most helpful support from her father who is good at English, especially in pronunciation and the meaning of some scientific words:

*My father was the most helpful support for me. I don't know what to do without him. I rely on him each night when preparing my lessons. (Muna)*

Similarly, Haifa got ‘remarkable’ support from her older brother, who was a teacher with her in the same school.

*Although my older brother is not an English language teacher, I got the most helpful support from him in relation to student behaviour, marking students’ work, setting exam questions. (Haifa)*

Murwa on the other hand refers to her family, but in a different kind of way. Murwa is the only person in her family who is working; the eldest and her father have a disability, so she is responsible for all the family members, including six younger siblings:

*I am the only person who can help my family since my father has a disability. My mum doesn’t let me do any house work, such as cleaning or washing, just preparing my lessons in order to succeed and to improve our quality of life. (Murwa)*

Sufia was one of those few fortunate novice teachers who was supported by a mentor from outside the school in relation to issues related to the syllabus:

*In addition to mentoring support from older colleagues, I got informal mentoring support from my father friend and our neighbour in relation to specific questions about the syllabus. (Sufia)*

Finding herself in uncooperative school, Najah described how she asked colleagues’ assistance from another school in issues relate to the syllabus.

*I did not receive any support from both colleagues and the mentor. Teachers are uncooperative, and the mentor is rarely to come and even if he comes he is useless. So, I usually ask help from outside the school. (Najah)*

Similarly Dalia, who found herself unwelcomed in her new school, sought support from her friend, who is a teacher in another school. Similarly, Laila reported:

*I got informal mentoring support from an older colleague friend. She is my next door neighbour. I feel encouraged and I don’t feel embarrassed about the continuous asking. (Laila)*

Dalia is a novice teacher in her second year. She feels unlucky not only with her colleagues or principal but also with her mentor. But she did appreciate her students’ parents’ support. She refers to them as ‘cooperative’ and ‘respected’ people:

*My only support was from students’ parents, who encouraged me and strengthened my self-confidence through their co-operation with me for the benefit of the students. (Dalia)*

Students' parents are considered the most helpful support for some novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools. Amal reported that:

*I feel fortunate about teaching in this area. Students' parents are very cooperative with me. They are so respectful; they appreciate the teacher's effort. When dealing with them I feel more motivated and they raise my moral as well. (Amal)*

Students' parents' support was welcomed by novice teachers, but was not always provided. For example, some novice teachers, who were frustrated, pointed out that many of their students' parents are not helpful or cooperative at all. They do not come to school and ask about their children, and if they come, they usually come to fight in order to increase their children's marks:

*One of my student's mum attacked me in school. She wanted to beat me when her child fails the exam, although she didn't come during normal school hours, but just after getting the results. (Najah)*

*In many cases, if they come, they ask to have their children's marks raised, regardless of whether this improves their standard of attainment. (Fatin)*

### **5.5.6 Contextual factors**

Some novice teachers spoke negatively about their feeling of loneliness and being left without support. The following accounts by two novice teachers illustrate how they cope:

*My best and the most helpful support for me is my personal effort for the benefit of the students, my self-confidence, and my endeavour to improve my students' level. (Wafa)*

On the other hand, Fatin finds her books and memories, from when she was a student, are a comfort. A participant who lacks support found that her great enthusiasms for teaching, her intention to succeed and to improve her identity as a teacher are the only positives sustaining her:

*Support was derived from my inside and it is my determination to succeed. (Amal)*

### ***Exam results***

For Fatin, in her third year of teaching, the students' results are a different kind of reward. This mitigates her lack of assistance and encouragement and encourages her. Sulwa has similar perspective, considering her students' marks to be one of the most helpful kinds of support in her school:

*I found my students' exams results which reflected their level is most helpful and the only support which supports me so much and increases my self-confidence, gives me nice feeling, and mitigates the severe lack of support. (Sulwa)*

### **Salary**

Raja, a novice teacher of English in Libyan secondary schools, believes that getting her salary at the end of each month is the most help she can get and deserves.

*You know we learn on a trial and error basis, i.e. not through being supported. So money is the only and the most helpful support that gives me satisfaction, especially without interruption. Also, I don't pose a burden for my father any more. This is comforting me so much. Now I am relying on myself and I can reward my students from time to time as a kind of encouragement. (Raja)*

Financial concerns are also commonly cited as problems encountered by novice teachers in Libya and as having a negative impact on their general wellbeing and professional learning.

*Generally, teachers' salaries are good and are considered a positive factor in novice teachers' professional development. But the Office of Education has recruited a surplus of teachers, who have to stay at home and get the same amount of money as those who are teaching, and this is so frustrating. (Aram)*

Some novice teachers, like Hana and Sulwa, reported that they had not even received their monthly salary:

*The material support 'salary' was less helpful, although it is my second year but till now I have not received my proposed monthly salary. (Hana)*

*My challenge is that I did not get paid until now, although this is my fifth month in the school. Why just me, I need money not only for me. I need money to print students' exam papers, teaching aids and also sometimes to buy rewards for my students as encouragement. The finance department just tells me that I need to wait but this is just causing me discomfort. (Sulwa)*

### **Resources**

Language teachers need not only textbooks and curriculum guides, they need teaching aids and appropriate facilities, such as a language laboratory, which is vital for foreign language teachers to help pupils develop communication skills in a foreign language. Through the lab learners can communicate with native speakers,

therefore the language laboratory has become a necessary tool in learning any language, since it helps:

to develop the language skills of speaking and listening, to more easily provide individual attention to students, to provide opportunities for students to work independently, to provide enrichment as well as remediation, to allow students to work in more focused pairing and grouping activities, and to allow multiple levels to be taught at the same time' (Educational Media, 2008: 1).

Laila and Majda explained there is a need for this kind of equipment to enhance the quality of teaching and learning:

*It is important to motivate students and the students' opportunity to hear authentic English speakers. (Laila)*

*Although we need the lab but we don't have it in our schools. We need it to encourage students to speak and to focus students' attention. (Majda)*

In the Libyan education system, however, this kind of facility for the development of practical skills is available to teachers in the science subjects, while it is rare for teaching English and, despite many opinions to the contrary, some novice teachers still consider the language lab is less helpful for them in Libyan secondary schools.

### ***The district department of education***

The district education department has responsibility for all schools in its area and provides novice teachers with some assistance; as Raja pointed out; it is just chalk and board. For example, it does not observe different schools' activities, although ideally it should encourage active schools by providing them with what they need and it should motivate passive schools in order to improve them. In addition it should monitor schools' final results, honouring the high achieving schools and providing support to those where underachievement has been identified as a problem. Finally, it should identify and recognise effective teachers with the aim of maintaining high levels of morale, motivation, and commitment within the profession.

### **5.5.7 Challenges**

#### ***Syllabus***

Novice teachers have many challenges during the first three years of teaching. Many new teachers in secondary schools struggle with the syllabus at the beginning of

their career. Some found their limited English language competencies impede their delivery of syllabi with a wide variety of topics and to students whose specialism requires specific English language skills appropriate to the subject area. For example, some of the participants have to teach in a school which has three different departments: a life science department which prepares students for medical studies, an economics department where students are trained for work in a bank or a company, and a basic science department where teachers need to teach topics related to physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics.

*I have faced the difficulty in developing student language skills in a variety of subjects for which I myself do not know the technical vocabulary. (Majda)*

*The richness of the syllabus with the scientific terms that I do not know even the meaning and pronunciation as I teach English to students studying physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, history, geography, psychology, interpretation and logic science. (Sulwa)*

Some of the participants who face challenges regarding the syllabus felt disappointed and related their problem with the syllabus to their pre-service programme, which they believed had prepared them inadequately, as their preparation had been in teaching general English not English for specific purposes.

*I have encountered difficulty in the syllabus since I teach two different specializations syllabuses, which are full of medical and scientific terms, and I graduated to teach general English not for specialised students. (Murwa)*

In order to cope with the difficulty of the teaching syllabus, novice teachers tried various strategies such as consulting other practitioner colleagues, courses and their own books. The following comments illustrated their strategies.

*I asked assistance from older colleagues who teach the same syllabus when there is a difficulty. (Majda)*

*To help me with teaching the syllabus, I consulted some older teachers and my old advanced books. (Sulwa)*

*I bought by myself a scientific medical dictionary. Also, in order to understand the syllabus, I approached a neighbour who is a graduate of medicine. (Murwa)*

### ***Curriculum mapping and delivery***

Following the district education curriculum mapping and delivery is another challenge. Most novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools complained that there is not enough time to complete the syllabus, regardless of whether they have one or three years' experience. Not completing the syllabus means that students do not have the appropriate knowledge for their chosen career. Furthermore, there is added pressure for teachers with regard to examinations and whether they have covered the syllabus adequately:

*Challenges that I have faced are: how to complete the syllabus by the end of the year, to be honest, there is simply too much to cover in the syllabus. I try to hurry after the midterm exam although there is no progress on students' level since I have many diverse topics to cover, insufficient time, lack of learner motivation and behaviour problems. (Haifa)*

*My problems are: how to deal with the syllabus, i.e. complete it on time in order to feel comfortable that I did my work properly, and guarantee that students have benefited and to some extent ready to start another stage in their educational life. (Nadia)*

With the aim of their students achieving the highest possible grades, some teachers concentrate on specific lessons or pages in order to get high results for their students. Other teachers ask their students not to study the syllabus, and instead provide students with questions and answers to help their students and to hide their inability to complete the syllabus as well:

*One day I had chat with my sister, who is a student in second year in my school. I told her about the problem of the syllabus and the time of the final exams, she told me to try what her teacher last year did. She told me that her teacher gave them four pages in the form of questions and their answers for the final exam. You know it is not fair, horrible! (Murwa)*

In order to follow the curriculum map, novice teachers tried different ways to cover the syllabus. The following comments illustrate their strategies.

*I usually take the lessons of activities such as drawing, physics, and music although the students refuse studying other subjects instead of activities. I know it is their right to refuse but it is the only thing I can do. (Haifa)*

*In the second half of the year I used to prepare extra lessons to be ready to give a lesson at any time in case of an absent teacher. Also, I planned*

*with a friend of mine when I told her about the syllabus she told me that her syllabus is ok and ready to help. She gave me two classes a week secretly. (Nadia)*

*I felt confused about the strategy that I should follow in order to cover the syllabus especially my sister told me that her teacher summarize the syllabus in some pages in a form of question and answer. So I did something similar and gave them just the main important things but not in the form of question and answer. (Murwa)*

### **Lesson planning**

In addition to the themes outlined above, many novice teachers stated that planning is the main challenge for them. They considered that they were not prepared for their current position. Noora in her third year of teaching reported:

*Producing lesson plan is my problem; I found difficulty to plan my lessons and how to give them in smooth way. I give them in a boring way. Always I use the same strategies. I myself feel bored. This relates to our faculty of arts preparation, since it prepared us to be researchers only. (Noora)*

Noora however felt she was improving since she asked her colleague, who is from the same cohort group and close friend as well, for help:

*I asked my close friend many times what to do in some activities. Also I enter her class four times to observe her giving lesson in specific activities and skills.*

### **Assessment**

Assessment is a main area used in teaching to evaluate the students' academic progress. Teachers use different methods of assessment to evaluate their students including formative and summative assessment. These methods are formal and informal, such as quizzes, tests, and district assessment. Also, it includes homework assignments, and participation in class.

There are many ways to inform parents about their children' progress in the Libyan education system. In general this happens after assessing students. A results card is given at the end of the first semester and the second semester. Some schools send also a monthly report on students' academic progress, which parents have to sign and return to the responsible teacher. In addition, most teachers give quizzes and test papers to students to be marked and returned them as well. Moreover, in schools

teachers are required to set a weekly exam and principals in some schools have to check the students' marks in teachers' booklets on a weekly basis.

Novice teachers identified assessment as one of the main challenges commonly encountered at the beginning of their career. Some teachers reported that with limited knowledge and lack of experience and training, they do not know how to get the required percentage for the students' marks; also, they find that filling in the result form is a challenge for them. They relate their reasons to their lack of experience and because they are not supported by their administration or their colleagues.

As a new teacher with limited preparation and an uncooperative school administrator, Najah struggled to grade students' work. She lacked experience in developing appropriate assessment criteria for a good exam. She felt uncomfortable because she always depended on open ended questions in her exams.

*I feel I am being unfair. You know, not my problem, personally. I was not prepared for such issues in my pre-service training. I frequently evaluate my students by doing an exam consisting of two open ended questions only, where there's no option choice for students, and this kind of exam takes longer to grade, but I do not know how to do multiple choice exam. And if I knew I would do the same kind of questions. You know, my principal will not help to print the exam papers although he has a printer, and I will pay for printing. (Najah)*

Since student assessment is a continuous process, many novice teachers found assessment is both trying and overwhelming. On a daily basis they must assist their students with each activity, at the end of each lesson, quizzes, exams, assignments, attendance. One of the key factors that make assessment a challenge for novice teachers is the crowded classroom and the inadequate time allocated for teaching the language syllabus.

*It is horrible having to assess them daily, I have just three classes for each group weekly, if I do a quiz in a class just two classes remain and this in turn intensifies the problem. (Hana)*

Muna realized that she does not know how to allocate points to each question appropriately, and relates her problem to her limited experience and uncooperative colleagues.

*Although I am in the beginning of my second year, still I have the same problem of grading the exam questions. (Muna)*

Some participants lack self-esteem and uncomfortable when marking students' work. Novice teachers feel that this is not fair, especially if a good student gets a low mark. They believe that the mark is not always an accurate measure of a student's ability:

*I know that some student's level of performance in class is better than their grades. (Raja)*

Regarding assessing slow learners, novice teachers are shocked by some of the policies they perform in schools, whether these are issued by school administrations or by the district education department. Teachers are expected to ensure that slow learners' grades do not fall below a minimum level. As a consequence, there is no encouragement for students to study well since they get good grades without investing much effort:

*Although I am in my third year of experience I find this situation is not fair with regard to the other students (e.g. average and high achievers). If I follow the principal's instructions and give the low achievers enhanced marks, I should also apply this strategy to the rest of the class. (Majda)*

Najah is uncertain of the criteria for a good exam and, as seen above, always depends on open ended questions; she reported the following strategy as a solution.

*I collected exam papers' questions from the teachers who teach the same syllabus as me in school, I tried to do similar questions as theirs. Near the exams, I collected money from the students, then copied to all and not asking the principal for the photo-copier any more. Now I feel comfortable since there are options for students and correcting the students' exam papers is easier too much as well. (Najah)*

Hana found assessment a challenge due to the crowded classes and the inadequate time for teaching. She tried various solutions to no avail:

*You know, there is no way. I asked the principal to give me the first period every day, each day to different class to be the same. Not only had I asked the students to come half an hour before the morning queue, but I also, cancelled the revision at the beginning of the lesson. Instead I did a quiz at the beginning of the lesson for just ten minutes but still it is not sufficient. (Hana)*

Muna who did not know how to grade exam questions, tried the following strategy:

*For the first exam, after having read through all the exam papers, I changed the allocation of marks per question. For the second exam, I asked an experienced colleague who follows the same syllabus with her*

*class to set the exam and produce a marking scheme, to which my colleague agreed. Now I feel some improvement. ( Muna)*

Raja believes that the mark does not represent a student's ability, and she reported that she created many strategies:

*At the beginning I tried to know his/her problem, why his/her mark was low. I wrote his/her mark in pencil. By doing another exam to him/her in another class secretly I gave them another opportunity. Then I felt also this solution is not fair since some students got low marks and asked me to repeat the exam. Final solution I told them that I will not take the higher mark for those students who will repeat the exam. And if a student entered the exam for the second time considers that his/her previous mark cancelled even it is higher than the new one, since all of them wanted to repeat the exam and asked me to get the higher mark.(Raja)*

It is not unusual for novice teachers to be told that the grades of low achievers should not fall below a minimum level. Majda reported:

*You know this situation is somewhat sensitive, so I gave all the students general extra marks because it is hard to add enhanced marks only to the slow learners. (Majda)*

### ***Classroom management and student behaviour***

Some novice teachers considered student discipline and classroom management to be one of their main problems, and gave several reasons for this situation at their school. Afrah, in her second year, attributed this problem to the large number of students in her class, while Sufia, in her third year, reported that students' behaviour is worse as a result for the school's lack of leadership, due to the principal's continuous absence. She considered the chaos in her school in general to be the reason for the problems as there were challenges whatever the class size. In neither case did they have the ability to control their students in order to complete a lesson:

*The most difficult situation I faced is the crowded mixed class. In turn the large number of students in class requires more time and effort to control them and the class time is limited. A lot of time and energy is required in just getting them to sit down. My lesson rarely finishes in the same class period. In addition, there is no time to try anything new from my own mind. Students in my class, especially males, whatever their age, conduct themselves rudely. They neither respect each other nor the teacher; they use street words in the classroom, and force me to welcome them in spite of their coming late. They want to leave the class without permission, and are always outside the classroom giving feeble excuses. (Sufia)*

Each teacher has their own strategy for controlling the students and managing the classroom. Afrah, for example, whose principal is always absent, blamed the class size. She reported that

*[She] advised [her] students as an older sister, but talk did not affect them. Later [she] changed [her] style with them by two ways: decreasing their discipline marks or depriving them from discipline marks, in addition hitting trouble makers' students. (Afrah)*

Sufia, who her principal was cooperative, has a different strategy:

*For controlling students' behaviour in order to complete my lesson in the same class, I asked the principal to interfere to help me. I told him that I am not going to enter this class and give them lessons any more unless he does a solution. He entered my class three or four times and spoke with the students seriously with strong accent. Although the situation is not 100 % better but I feel it is ok. (Sufia)*

### **Teacher-student relations**

Many novice teachers report that they have good formal, working relationships with their students:

*A good relationship, where I sometimes overlook any misdemeanour that the student may be involved in. (Aram)*

*A good relationship enables me without difficulty to use continuous encouragement. (Muna)*

*If I have a disruptive student, I try to find a solution and establish a good relationship with him/her. (Dalia)*

*It is between rigorous and flexible. It depends on the lesson's level of difficulty. (Suhila)*

*I have a good relationship with them; flexible, sometimes soft, and sometimes serious in order to make them love the subject to be more understanding and to promote acceptance of it. (Wafa)*

Despite the difficulties novice teachers faced with students, some of them pointed out that they maintain a good relationship with their students, treating them like younger sisters.

*I feel as if I was their older sister. (Murwa)*

*My relationship with the students is good. I usually deal with them as their eldest sister. (Hana)*

Novice teachers do not deal with all students as their elder sister; in her third year of teaching Raja reported that she is comfortable and she is 'close to them as a friend'. Interviews with newcomers in Libyan secondary schools revealed, however, that some of them do have problems with their relationship with their students. Afrah,

for example, in her second year, related that to overcrowded classes and careless leadership:

*I have a problem with them since the class is 50 students, so it is hard to control them, especially, some of them are too old and school leadership is weak. (Afrah)*

Although some novice teachers have two years' experience, they are still struggling to develop their relationship with their students. They believe it is hard to establish and maintain good relationships. Dalia, for instance, reported:

*I tried to be like their sister, but it was not an easy task, especially in my first year. Students are not responding during the lesson, they do not care and conduct themselves badly in class.*

On the other hand, some interviewees were even less fortunate. For example, Murwa described her first month of teaching as '*full of fear and confusion*'. She relates her reasons to her students who are '*older males*'.

Some novice teachers believe that, in spite of their efforts to maintain positive relationships with the students, it is still a problematic issue whatever their gender.

*I try to establish a positive student teacher relationship. But since I was in boys' school, they need more time to control them, for they want to have fun for some of the time. (Sufia)*

*I have a little problem with some older boys who want to have fun all the time and waste time. (Noora)*

*I tried to establish a good student teacher relationship: serious, formal, but hard to control them. (Najah)*

*I am trying to establish a serious relationship with the students, but I cannot control them completely. (Haifa)*

### ***Student motivation***

Motivating students, attracting them, and making them love the subject was challenging for many teachers at the beginning of their practice in the Libyan secondary schools. Many Libyan students consider that the English language is difficult subject to learn and they study it just to pass the exam, especially when teaching English to the Arabic department, where students generally lack enthusiasm. One reason mentioned by some novice teachers is the existence of older students who show little interest in school in general and in English in particular. The district education department allows these older slow learner students to study

in a school without considering the time they will spend there in order to complete their studies. In turn this is horrible for the teacher, since this kind of student encourages other students to misbehave and changes the classroom environment into hell. Sulwa described her students and said:

*I have nine older students in one of my first year classes and their ages are from 19 to 22 instead of 16 to 17 imagine! You know what I mean! (Sulwa)*

*They are always in class to enjoy themselves, they always are trouble makers, wasting my time, and that is it. (Dalia)*

*The level of students was so weak, not motivated, since it was males' secondary school, students were older, my age, and some of them were studying in school in my time. (Raja)*

The teachers interviewed, being novices with little experience, considered the lack of a responsible, strong personality leading the school to be the main reason. A participant described her principal as uncooperative, and she mentioned that he is always absent doing his own business while the school is always in 'chaos as a beehive', and if he is present in school when students parents are meeting a teacher, he always sides with the students in order to make parents satisfied and quiet and this in turn gives him more encouragement to do his own external work without interruption.

A novice teacher in her third year mentioned that students seem unmotivated not only as regards learning English, but in all subjects; and she related this to the misconduct of students' parents who are teachers in the same school. They do not appreciate teachers' honest judgments of their children's behaviour and performance. They are selfish and ignore the effect their child's misconduct has on other students, who are frustrated when they find out that there is no difference between them and other students who are not investing as much effort in their studies:

*Some teachers have their children in the school with them, they ask teachers to give them more marks and try to force the teacher to give them the exam questions, surely in this case, the results will not be fair, since all students will be in the same level, and in most cases students who study hard will find those whose their mothers in school are higher marks more than them, so they will frustrated, not motivated anymore because of such misbehaviours of some teachers. (Noora)*

Regarding students' lack of enthusiasm, another teacher related this to the careless teachers, who have children in school and whose principal happens to be also their neighbour. Transferring a child from one school to another for the purpose of sitting an exam and obtaining higher marks is possible, on the basis of knowing the principal.

*The teacher has a child in her school, he is studying in our school, and doing exams in another city, when we ask her about transferring her son three times a year, she mentioned that our school is good for studying, not to get high marks, but in that city teachers give high marks. (Nadia)*

Moreover, another participant in her third year of teaching held the administrator of the school responsible for student motivation, whether he is a positive and active person or not:

*My previous manager in my previous school was so active; he always does competitions between classes, and does a monthly festival for the honour of the winners in the competition, the excellent students according to the monthly report, and some teachers mention the excellent students in their subjects in front of all students and the staff. The effect of this festival increases the students motivation to study harder, on the other hand, it is rarely to see my current principal, to be honest it is better not to see him, he even wants to pick a fight with a fly on his face. He gets drunk from a raisin [loses his temper easily], when the monthly report of students' marks is given in classes, and this is not motivating at all. (Amal)*

In addition, some novice teachers felt paralysis in the face of their inability to motivate their students, and attributed their reasons to the poor preparation for teaching provided by their Faculty of Arts training and not being supported by anyone'; one participant said:

*I struggled for I lack self-esteem to give a lesson. Planning for the lesson takes a lot of time. This by turn makes the situation harder to motivate them for feeling weak and lack of self-confidence. (Afrah)*

*For motivating my students I feel as if I don't know how to swim and am about to drown in a rough sea. (Lubna)*

One participant blamed the condition of school as another reason that has a great effect on students' motivation. Sumia described her school:

*The major difficulties and obstacles that I encountered is that the school is located in a remote area far from the city centre. We are three teachers only, number of classes 7. They appointed one of the three teachers to be a principal, so his time table was divided amongst us. The school was in poor condition, as it had been empty for some time. But because parents asked to open a new school for their children nearby, they opened this school to them instead. The classes are without doors or windowpanes, no teaching aids. I feel that such a dismal place decreases students' motivation. (Sumia)*

Lack of resources is a core factor for motivating students. Many participants felt that resources such as teaching aids, a lab, a well prepared class, or a recorder may increase students' motivation and improve students' language level in general, especially students who specialise in English:

*Lack of teaching aids, no recorders, or a language lab, all these are reasons together create unmotivated students. (Dalia)*

*I am teaching students who specialise in English. They are unmotivated for the lack of resources such as the lab, or a well prepared classroom used as a lab for listening skills since students need to listen to native speakers to improve their language. (Laila)*

Some novice teachers in their second and third year of teaching reported that having exams at the end of the academic year poses a problem. Generally most students have someone who is a teacher (mother, sister, brother, neighbour, relative, or a family friend) and therefore prepare for the end of year exams at home rather than attend classes with their teacher. Those who do not have this kind of support go to school in those final weeks, but tend to be unmotivated and disruptive. Some play truant as well.

*Motivating students is complicated in general and becomes harder at the beginning of the last month before the final exam in particular. In one of my classes I have 34 students. That is in the normal days at the end it is usually just 15: 16 students only. In this month most students who are good stayed at home preparing for the exam, while the others usually have problems concerning their behaviour. (Haifa)*

In order to motivate the older students, Sulwa reported:

*I asked the principal to distribute them between the other classes to decrease their severity of their effect; I tried to strength my personality and pretended to be self-confident. Also, I talked with my students individually, what s/he needs. I told them that I am ready to assist them. I encouraged them by giving extra mark each time they sharing in class activities. I tried to extract the best of their abilities and concentrate on them. (Sulwa)*

Dalia had several strategies for motivating students whom she described as ‘trouble makers’:

*I tried to decrease the severity of the situation which was intensified by the school principal because you know he is always absent. I asked the psychologist who is so cooperative and gave me some ideas to try them with the students. Also, I sent to some parents not all just to whom they are care and aware of such situation.*

In order to create a motivating learning environment for older students, Raja reported:

*What works with one student does not work necessarily with the other. So, I tried with each one individually. I tried to control their behaviour by mitigation my style with them and dealing with them as mature friends. Also, by simplifying my lesson as I could, and making them share in my classes more than the others, in addition to the extra marks as encouragement even for a single word. (Raja)*

The principal is passive and left his school effectively leaderless; however it is he who should be responsible to create an atmosphere of motivation in his school. As Amal reported:

*Teachers in my school discuss together and send their group idea to the principal by saying: we need to encourage the students by giving rewards to the best in school; we need to do competition between classes and we need to make cleaning campaign in the school. We need your support, telling him that he is the older in position. We appreciate your effort and time since you are the most capable person. When he said that the school has no money we told him we will collect from teachers and students as well. (Amal)*

As regards the novice teachers’ own motivation, one of the interviewees, Afrah, reported ‘*feeling weak and lacking self-confidence*; as the Arabic proverb says: *a person cannot give what he does not have*.

Another interviewee had found that: *when I come active and move in class more than before, give them more examples and a lot of questions, they are more positive and vice versa*.

Sumia remarked that it was hard to motivate students who are studying in a school which is in a bad condition, and has been described as a ‘*dismal place*’. Sumia

remarked that the school has a great effect on students' motivation, and she reported the following strategy to change her class condition:

*With collaboration with the students, we cleaned the class and painted it. I asked them to bring natural roses, or artificial in vase. I filled the class with roses and plants. Also, we did some wall charts and when we did all this, it became acceptable and better. (Sumia)*

In order to motivate the students who lack enthusiasm due to the lack of resources, many teachers shared Laila's strategy, since there is no prepared room to prevent echo, and away from mess and movement:

*I collected a small amount of money from the students, and copied the CDs and made them hear them at their homes. (Laila)*

Novice teachers found no strategy to motivate their students when the effect of additional marks finished in the last month before the final exam:

*There are only the students who have bad behaviour and they do not stayed at their homes to study, since most of the class are absent, especially the good ones, so the only thing I did is revising with them in serious atmosphere nothing else. Sometimes they stop coming. And since I concentrate on them, i.e. their sharing is more than before, so they stop coming before the end of next/another week. (Haifa)*

### ***Dealing with students' parents***

Many novice teachers faced challenges when communicating with parents. It was commonly felt that parents generally do not care and tend always to choose the side of their child, whatever his/her level or behaviour. In addition, Libyan students' parents typically do not come to school to inquire about their children, even on occasions not responding when they receive a written paper asking them for important information regarding their child, whilst some Libyan parents only came to school when they and/or their child were not happy with the final results.

*Communicating with parents is a challenge for me. In one instance when her child failed the exam. She wanted to hit me. (Najah)*

*Some parents do not care completely, others try to make me increase their children's' marks without concern for improving their child's educational attainment. (Fatin)*

Some parents, who were teachers in the same school as the novice teachers often behaved in the same way; not caring about their child's progress but only for his/her marks:

*I found challenges when communicating with parents, it is very bad for parents do not understand, especially teachers at my school who have a child in my class asking me to give high scores to his/her child. (Noora)*

Afrah felt particularly challenged when communicating with parents; she believes that her difficulties are due to the training that she received at university, where she primarily trained as a researcher. In addition, she blamed the lack of leadership in her school, since the administrator was frequently absent and also slapdash:

*I have challenges when communicating with parents, I feel so bad for parents do not take into consideration that I am new. I did not study anything in my university to use in such situations. When students group together it is hard to control them, whilst the principal is careless and I rarely see him in school most days of the week. (Afrah)*

Novice teachers related how their lack of orientation to their new work environment at times compounded their difficulties. For example Najah realised later that her school has a specific system for teachers to follow when parents come to school, with meetings taking place in the psychologist's office. If the situation is more complicated, regarding a child's marks, there is in some schools a person who is responsible for exams and has a detailed understanding about exam regulations; this person should be present in such situations:

*No one told me that I should meet parents in the psychologist's room with the principal and his deputy present. Also, I was not aware that there is a teacher with responsibility for examinations who could assist in situations when parents are tough or need more information about their child's marks. (Najah)*

The novice teachers spoke the various strategies that they took when a parent asked them to give extra marks to their children, depending on whether the parent was a teacher in the school or someone with a strong personality or a position in society. A novice teacher reported the following:

*I increased a specific student's marks during my first year, also, because of his mother's work position and because his mum insisted relentlessly in a high, strong accent and language. If his mum had been an average person and not a strong personality I would not have increased even one mark. (Fatin)*

Noora reported that the lady who asked her to increase her child's scores was one of the teachers at her school.

*I felt embarrassed and intimidated so I arranged for her child to have another chance to sit the exam. I asked her to revise with him and not to tell anyone on the condition that whatever his mark it will be final with no additional opportunities to set the exam.*

*In addition, I tutored her son in my house, providing repeated revision with many sets of question to allow him to get a good mark in the exam.  
(Dalia)*

Afrah encountered parents blaming her for their child's low results, and putting all the blame on her:

*I tried to defend myself by explaining to parents that it is the mess in school and the fault of the principal, but no one listened and believed me. In my second year a teacher told the authorities about our careless principal and about the mess in school in general, since she had a neighbour in the district education department. They changed the first principal and the school becomes better.*

When they were asked about their confidence when communicating with parents orally and by written reports, some novice teachers reported feeling confident when communicating with parents because they were appointed to posts in the area where they live. They believe parents who live in a rural area are respected people. For example, Amal reported: *'I have self-confidence in myself especially most families are known in my area'*.

Muna added:

*Most parents respect me because our area is small; people know each other. I can deal with all of them, whether they are educated or not.*

Some novice teachers believe that they are fortunate to have good relations with parents. Sufia, for example, has self-confidence, as her communications with parents are; smooth'. Similarly, Raja also felt very lucky for various reasons:

*I have confidence in myself. I was lucky teaching in a boys school where visits of parents were rare in my area. (Raja)*

Some novice teachers mentioned that parents generally respond well if the matter relates to their son's or daughter's study or to their behaviour. Nadia pointed out that

her relation with parents is good, and that sometimes ‘*parents confess that their children are careless and their achievement is low*’.

Amal’s comment supports Nadia’s point of view:

*Communication with parents is helpful if the problem concerns their children’s level, whereas if it relates to their behaviour, it can be useless. (Amal)*

Majda also felt confident about her relationship with parents, which she described as follows:

*My relationship with parents is like that of a daughter and her mum or dad or that of an older sister with her brother or sister. I meet with parents in the pastoral care office, where I discuss with them their son’s or daughter’s level of attainment, their behaviour, attendance and their marks. (Majda)*

Some novice teachers are confident and have the ability to communicate with parents, even though they reported having substantial difficulty in this area before. They have become increasingly confident and believe that their ability to communicate effectively with parents has improved significantly as they gain experience through practice:

*My self-confidence as a novice teacher in my third year of teaching is better now than it was in my two previous years of teaching, because now I have the ability to meet with students’ parents face-to-face and communicate with them through written reports. (Aram)*  
*At the beginning, I was worried and lacked confidence to communicate with parents, but now it is better. (Murwa)*

*In my first year, I was troubled regarding communication with parents. Then my confidence increased from good to better. (Dalia)*

But communicating with parents was difficult for some novice teachers even in their third year. They still struggle. They experience nervousness and worry when discussing students’ results with parents. They indicated that the underlying reason for the difficulties is that some parents do not care and expect them to increase their son’s or daughter’s marks:

*I have little self-confidence because some parents do not respect me at all. They want me to increase their children’s marks without taking into consideration their children’s academic level or their behaviour. (Fatin)*

*I have a very bad experience with parents, especially when they are teachers who have children in the same school, who have asked me to award their children high scores. (Noora)*

To avoid that parents ask to see the exam questions and to have their children's marks raised, Noora developed the following strategy.

*Without exception, I thoroughly prepared all my students for the exam by using questions similar to those on the exam. I also increased everyone's score by three marks. This strategy did not benefit those students who are good. However, to be fair with all, where possible, I gave them additional marks in the second semester exam. (Noora)*

Some schools implement a strategy to avoid teachers' parents asking about the exam questions. As one novice teacher reported:

*The principal in our school asked all the teachers to submit all questions they feel important. Then he makes this collection available to all the students to cut the way of asking the exam questions and guarantee no one will ask. On the other hand, there is no teacher will put the exam to his students: for example I am teaching first year, but will design exam for second year. (Raja)*

When parents side with their sons or daughters, some novice teachers are not confident enough, as the following accounts illustrate:

*Communicating with parents is horrible for me, because parents in most cases do not care and they do not respond properly and they always take the side of their child whatever his level or behaviour. (Sumia)*

*Communicating with parents in my first meeting is not an easy task because I still remember that I was worried whether they will accept and respect me or whether they will take the side of their children. But now my self-confidence is better. (Haifa)*

*I was terrified since parents sometimes misunderstand me and take the side of their son/daughter. (Suhila)*

Najah indicates that most of her contacts with students' parents have been negative and even involved physical violence:

*Communicating with parents is a worrying issue, especially when parents do not follow their children's progress until getting the results/report card. A mum came to school, after getting the results and found her son had failed the English language exam. She argued in an aggressive manner by moving her hands towards my face, and then started hitting me until other teachers intervened. (Najah)*

Najah mentioned that her principal's behaviour provides little support. He follows a system of intimidation with the students, then leaves them without punishment and finally calls their parents.

Sulwa, frequently requested assistance from the deputy principal, asking for his cooperation and presence in the school when a parent came to see her.

*I am not confident enough, for it is my first year. I usually go to the deputy principal whose support is fantastic (he is cooperative and approachable) and tell him about a particular student; for example, when students display bad behaviour or their parents misunderstand the teacher, mistreat the teacher, and do not behave well. (Sulwa)*

### ***Integrating into the school community***

Some novice teachers gave positive responses when asked about their feelings during the first week or month in their new school. Muna, for example, describes her first weeks in school as '*feeling full of happiness*' and scribes this to the enthusiasm generated by the new experience.

Similarly, Raja also reported that her new life as a teacher filled her with enthusiasm and excitement. The reasons for these positive experiences differ. Nadia felt good, as her new school was in the same area where she lived. Amal stated:

*It was a great feeling, full of interest and great motivation. I did not feel of any fear because it is my previous school where I had studied before. (Amal)*

Another participant felt insecure due to the pressure of a new environment. Sumia reported that '*[she] was afraid of the students, syllabus, colleagues, and principal*'.

Some novice teachers experienced negative feeling of loneliness and isolation, as their school was at a distance from their homes.

*It was a feeling of confusion and fear of dealing with different kinds of students because it was not in the area where I live. (Lubna)*

*I was appointed in the second half of the year. I felt lonely. The school is far from where I live, also colleagues are older, and they are not cooperative. (Noora)*

*I would like to say that the first week in my profession is confused for the new place and the new faces especially work place is far from home. (Wafa)*

Novice teachers who had been pupils in the same school where they started their teaching career expressed similar feelings. Najah reported that

*it was the same school where I was a student. Since all students and staff were relatives, no one respected me or cared for me. In the beginning I felt confused, embarrassed, and afraid to face the students when explaining the lesson, but this sense vanished through practice.*

Afrah reported another reason:

*I still remember the first week in my school. It is an unforgettable day; it is imprinted in my memory. The students' assault on the principal of the school made me feel horrible and think how can I teach in such a school. If the students do not respect their older principal, how will they respect me?*

Dalia's negative feelings were related to her professional practice. Since she was new and had limited experience, she was only given menial jobs to do:

*It was a terrible day, full of work, and being new in the school a lot of work was given to me as: administrative work and giving lessons to classes whose teachers were absent. (Dalia)*

Some of the novice teachers had mixed feelings during their first month:

*It was an amazing month full of different feelings: confusion, shyness, and enthusiasm because I was not sure if students will accept me or not, not sure whether I would be a successful teacher or not, also I was so eager to teach well. I felt confusion to some extent although my lessons were well prepared since it was my first time practicing the profession and I had graduated to be a researcher. (Hana)*

*It was mixed: feeling of happiness and fear of the sudden. I was happy because I was starting a new life, depending on myself, and not having to ask my father for any money any more. I was worried because I was unsure about the syllabus and the kind of people I was going to deal with: students, teachers, and the principal, and whether if they would relate to me in a good way or not. (Sulwa)*

When they were asked about their relationships with their colleagues, some interviewees described their work place as collaborative, where colleagues were approachable and encouraging:

*I established good relationships with my colleagues who always encouraged me to improve in a co-operative manner. (Murwa)*

*My colleagues were co-operative. There was an atmosphere of working as one team, by helping each other when needed, and by giving ideas about teaching specific pieces of information. (Dalia)*

Some novice teachers highlighted the mutual respect and collaboration they experienced with their colleagues. Suhila reported that '*this relation is characterised by sharing experiences and information with colleagues*'.

Sumia's relationships with her colleagues improved gradually over time. Now she is satisfied in her school with her colleagues whom she describes as '*respectful*'.

*In the beginning it was hard to speak with any one in school, and then through dealing with them my relation developed and became better. (Sumia)*

Amal, Nadia, and Majda describe their relationships with colleagues as superficial and limited to the work place only.

*I have good, but superficial relationships with colleagues. It is a limited relationship ... Since each teacher has his own syllabus and problems. (Fatin)*

*My relationships with colleagues were limited to the assessment period, the marking of exam papers or when I needed to make an inquiry about something. (Lubna)*

Sulwa, who is in her third year of teaching, had positive relationships with female teachers but less so with her male colleagues with whom she avoided any unnecessary contact:

*I have a good relationship with my colleagues, especially the females. It is characterised by respect for each other and a willingness to cooperate. The rest of teachers are male. I do not deal with them or start any discussion with them because of their negativity, tough behaviour, and the fact that they consider us young. (Sulwa)*

Some participants had benefited from trusting, positive, supportive relationships with their peers, but failed to achieve this with the more experienced colleagues.

*My relationship with the novice teachers was good but with more experienced teachers it was not ... because they had been my teachers. I felt relax after time. (Raja)*

*My relationship with new teachers is smooth while with more experienced colleagues it was problematic. I always see hate in their eyes but I cannot interpret it. Why! (Aram)*

Some novice teachers, however, reported having completely negative relationships with their colleagues.

*There is no cooperation among my colleagues, because who asks for help is perceived as incompetent, while the person who is asked is seen as the best, so does not help the others in order to stay unique. (Noora)*

Najah expressed a similar point of view regarding her negative relations with her colleagues. She reported that most of the English language teachers in her school are 'older and relatives'. Her relationship with them lacks collegiality.

When novice teachers were asked about their relationships with their principals, some reported that they have a positive professional relationship with their principal. Aram, in her third year of teaching, reported that she has an excellent relationship with her principal, which was built on mutual respect and appreciation.

*I feel lucky. Since my principal is supportive. He never says No to any question or suggestion. He treats me as the only close friend with all the respect and trust. It is more than a model relationship between friends, not a teacher and a principal. (Aram)*

Sumia also has a positive relationship with her principal, who once was a colleague.

*He treated me as a friend and colleague with full trust and respect. We swap points of view with each other. He is supportive, knowledgeable and encouraging, as an experienced colleague not as a principal. (Sumia)*

Conversely, there were novice teachers who had not succeeded in establishing positive relationships with their principals. Dalia deplored her principal's indiscretion. She reported:

*Imagine the school is small in suburb. If you are always doing well, and one day you make a little mistake, he will let all people know, not only people in school even outside.*

Unfair and unequal treatment of teachers was another issue:

*My relationship with the principal is not good. He is careless or uncaring. Does not respect us and he is usually unfair. For example, at the beginning of the academic year he gave me seven books, although my class has 36 students, while in three other classes, he gave each student a book. Also, there is a photocopier in the school, which he did not let me use to copy materials for my students, as if I was begging from his own house. (Afrah)*

As well as teaching their specialist subjects, novice teachers are involved in collaborative activities. Some of these activities are motivational, others are aesthetic, and there are also entertainment activities. The motivational activities usually involve competitions in relation to the syllabus, which are organized amongst classes inside the school, and then among schools to improve the level of students' attainment. They can include aesthetic activities, such as wall display competitions between classes to see which class has produced the best wall charts. Cleaning the school is another kind of activity. Novice teachers usually take part with other teachers and their students. It is an everyday activity. When a teacher is absent, her class will be organised by another colleague.

*We start cleaning our classes, corridors, yard, collecting the rubbish and cleaning the toilets as well. (Najah)*

Some novice teachers take part in entertainment activities, such as trips, visits and open week, which provides release from the pressure of studying for students and teachers alike. Open week usually takes place a week or two before the final exams. Students are free from studying and engage in diverse activities under their teachers' supervision: sport, drawing, singing, acting, decorating classes with wall charts, and gardening. Some novice teachers, however, had no opportunity to get involved in any collaborative activities. Murwa, for example, attributes this to the chaos in the school which is due to the continuous absence and lack of leadership of the principal:

*He is a stubborn man with everybody. He has no empathy, and does not respect us as human beings who have feelings. He treats us as if we are servants in his own house. (Murwa)*

*There are no activities in the school as a result of the apathy of administration and the chaos of students. (Afrah)*

Fatin reported that she does not have enough time to get involved in any collaborative activities:

*I have 12 lessons per week, different specialisations. And I have kids who need me at home. (Fatin)*

Regardless of whether opportunities for collaborative activities were available, some novice teachers showed little initiative and only got involved if they were asked to do so. When novice teachers were asked whether they meet with colleagues socially,

some revealed that the only time they meet colleagues is in formal school meetings with the principal:

*I meet with all colleagues socially in school in some meetings with the principal to get some guidance, instructions or to settle some problems there. (Laila)*

*I meet with colleagues in school meetings only, since I have a family, and after school I have to care for my children. (Fatin)*

*I cannot meet with them socially unless in the principal school meetings because I am studying and teaching at the same time. (Aram)*

Some novice teachers meet with their colleagues socially during break times and whenever possible. They meet to discuss matters relating to the syllabus, students and sometimes just to have a chat:

*I meet with colleagues socially in school only to settle some challenges that we face in syllabus and sometimes to discuss students' affairs. (Majda)*

*We meet socially in school. We discuss things regarding syllabus: the meaning of some vocabulary and checking the pronunciation of some difficult new words. (Raja)*

Novice teachers do meet their colleagues outside school, but such visits are limited.

### ***Time management***

Many novice teachers stated that time management posed one of the key challenges for them. Planning lessons and assessing students' work day after day resulted in an inability to plan the entire unit, or the entire lesson, at once. They did not have enough time to check the syllabus, which in Libya is a textbook issued by the Education Ministry. Moreover, they found that they cannot achieve a work-life balance:

*I have a family and courtesy visits to friends and relatives. Also after school I have to care for my children. (Fatin)*

Novice teachers pointed out that dealing with students who are not motivated or behave badly in class hinders teachers in doing their work properly and is time consuming for both teachers and students. Teachers cannot deliver their lessons as planned and in addition cannot care for students who are slow learners or not motivated, while for students they cannot prepare for their future career.

*... time management is a main challenge: motivating students with bad behaviour requires time to control them. Wasting class time deprives them of learning opportunities. (Fatin)*

Usually school meetings are limited in Libyan schools. Staff meetings, for example, occur twice at the beginning of the school year: the first meeting takes place to divide the classes, and the second meeting to deliver the timetable. Staffs also have a meeting before the midterm exams in order to inform them about how the exams will be conducted. They find out, for example, whether the exams will take place according to a school-wide timetable or whether each teacher will set exams in normal lesson time, and whether the principal will appoint one person to write the exam questions or whether each teacher has to do this. The same procedure usually happens before the final exams.

Another kind of staff meeting occurs during some national and religious events, as well as during an 'open week' which takes place a week or two before the final exams. During Gaddafi's time, students would not study during open week, but instead they would practise diverse activities outdoors such as sport and gardening. They would also practice indoor activities, for example drawing, singing, acting, and decorating classes with wall charts, and there were revolutionary lessons for all students with revolutionary slogans hanging everywhere. At the end of the week, a celebration would take place, and each group would share their activity in a competition.

There is also a meeting for all students' parents; it usually takes place annually in the middle of the year. Teachers must attend and speak to students' parents, regardless of whether they have finished their classes or still have classes to teach that day. The parents' day is not only to make parents aware of their role regarding their children's progress, in some schools it is a way to ask parents for donations for school maintenance and equipment, in spite of the fact that the schools receive state funding.

Wafa reported that she frequently lost class time for a variety of reasons:

*I feel disillusionment and not lucky, since I usually have a problem managing my class time ... my principal always has meetings with staff mostly when I have a class. Class time is not enough and with each*

*meeting I lose a class, in addition I generally lose my classes due to some national and religious occasions and also during bank holidays. (Wafa)*

Wafa addressed this challenge by made her students come into school three days a week, in the evening.

As for achieving a work-life balance, Fatin reported:

*I personally found that I did not do either properly. Sometimes I stayed at home, other times I left my children with my neighbour. When I asked an older colleague, she told me to be patient and that achieving a work-life balance would come with practice. (Fatin)*

### **Financial difficulties**

Whilst financial concerns are not uncommon amongst teachers at the beginning of their career, in Libya this can be a major problem. For example, novice teachers are often economically reliant on their parents for living expenses, transport, health, and dental care (Brock and Grady, 2001). A participant reported that she did not get her salary as did other colleagues, but instead is still dependent on her father's money, which makes her feel worried and uncomfortable in her work. It also has a negative impact on her job satisfaction:

*My challenge is that I did not get paid until now, although this is my fifth month in the school. Why just me, I need money not only for me I need money to print students' exam papers, teaching aids and also sometimes to buy rewards for my students as encouragement. The finance department just tells me that I need to wait but this is just causing me discomfort. (Sulwa)*

Sulwa's lack of pay impacted on her feelings about her teaching post as well as on her students, since she could not provide additional teaching materials:

*At the beginning, I felt happy for my appointment, because I would like to be independent financially, and rely on myself and not to ask my father any more. The situation continued and my father is still giving me my expenses but the amount of money is not enough for he has a family and I cannot ask him more for my students.*

### **Novice teachers' concerns**

An analysis of the experiences of 21 novice teachers of English as a foreign language, who had been teaching between one and three years in the north-west region of Libya showed that participants had a range of concerns. These included controlling pupil behaviour; asserting themselves as a teacher; differentiation in the use of learning and teaching strategies which are appropriate for all abilities;

ensuring pupils' learning, i.e. proficiency in English; use of the target language; and achieving an appropriate balance between their professional and personal lives.

The interviews revealed that communication in English in Libyan secondary schools is an aspect of teaching that most novice teachers find the most challenging. The following accounts by three novice teachers illustrate the difficulties they encounter:

*Students cannot understand me when communicating with them in English, especially when teaching reading and conversation. They are always used to translate into Arabic and sometimes I do not know another meaning of some scientific words in English, so I need to resort to the use of Arabic for clarification. (Murwa)*

Aram, who is a novice teacher in her third year of teaching and is currently studying for a higher degree, believes that students' lack of enthusiasm and their low levels of English language ability are the reasons for this problem:

*Communicating and dealing with students in English is most challenging for me, because their language proficiency is limited and they lack motivation to learn the English language. (Aram)*

Similarly Afrah, who prepares students to specialise in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics, also admitted using a lot of Arabic in her English lessons. She also finds it difficult to teach English without resorting to the Arabic language for she:

*always feel[s] it is so hard clarifying information in English, as it is a foreign language not only for them only but also for [her]. It becomes particularly difficult when [she] teach [es] students who specialise in basic science.*

Many novice teachers reported that their main problem is that teaching is a demanding profession, requiring day by day planning and assessing students' work; this is compounded by the diverse subjects they are teaching. Sumia, being one of two teachers who teach English in her school, reported that:

*Also preparing different lessons and evaluating students' work every day is stressful especially when the topics in the syllabus are varied and full of scientific terms. This makes it difficult because it is necessary to spend time planning every day. (Sumia)*

Feeling that teaching is such a demanding profession, Sumia:

*I asked the principal since he is older about the work which takes a lot of time and as if no end or relax time. He told me not to be worry. It is just the beginning then I will familiarize the syllabus and will be ok later.*

### **5.5.8 Novice teachers' overall impressions**

#### ***Development of confidence***

The interviews with novice teachers of English revealed that despite having accumulated some teaching experience, self-confidence did not necessarily improve. After two years' teaching, Afrah reports that in the second half of the second year her self confidence has not improved, for she has the same problem as in her first year. Even though she has a good relationship with colleagues, her principal is uncooperative, always absent, and does not care:

*My self-esteem in my first year of teaching is so low. Now, it is still low and has not improved yet in my second year for my problems are still unresolved such as: difficulty of communicating with students in English, unmotivated students, planning lessons, and communicating with parents. (Afrah)*

Similarly to Afrah, Najah felt that in her third year her self confidence has not improved, especially when it comes to communication with parents:

*Although it is my third year in profession I feel that my self-confidence is still the same not improved. I do not feel comfortable if I have to talk with parents since I was slapped by a mother when her child failed the exam. (Najah)*

Not having received a particularly warm welcome from the principal and colleagues in her school, Dalia was fortunate enough to receive the support of her friend, who is a teacher in another school. She admitted that she has very little confidence, a situation which improved to some extent in her second year:

*My self-confidence has increased so little, for the school is always in mess without any leadership. Students conduct themselves badly. (Dalia)*

The self-esteem of teachers who have three years' experience had somewhat improved. The following comments illustrate novice teachers' general confidence levels:

*I feel that my-self-confidence has increased just little bit and not improved well due to challenges with the syllabus, difficulty when communicating with students in English, the lack of training and mentor support. (Murwa)*

*In my first two years of teaching, my effort was greater, my desire and enthusiasm to teach was stronger, but I was less confident because the syllabus was new. But now in the current time I have more self-confidence, although my circumstances are more difficult with changing my social status, getting married. (Amal)*

*I feel more confident in my third year in the profession, although I still suffer because of the students, the syllabus, and the principal who is uncooperative, absent and active only in doing his business in the fruit market. (Fatin)*

*At the beginning of teaching, I felt that I do not have enough confidence in explaining my lessons in an interesting way, communicating with parents, confronting students, and dealing with them, but through continued practice I feel more trust in myself to face most situations. (Noora)*

*In my third year I feel I am getting a little bit stronger in terms of being able to understand the educational syllabus and how to prepare my lessons well, and how to find appropriate solutions to difficulties that I may face. I believe that the secret of a novice teacher's success is self-confidence in spite of all the challenges that s/he may face from students and their parents. (Lubna)*

*I was hesitating, had less self-confidence for lack of experience. Now, despite not being supported, the principal is uncooperative, the school is far away, and the teachers are new and do not trust each other, I feel greater confidence in myself as a teacher. (Wafa)*

On the other hand, the interviews with novice teachers revealed that those who have three years' experience reported that they have good self-esteem which improved through practice and becomes better:

*I feel that my self-confidence increased in my third year of teaching and improved more than 70%, although communication with students in English is still hard. (Aram)*

*My-self-confidence is good due to my proficiency level in English, the years of experience, a supportive principal, and an awareness of students' parents. (Nadia)*

*My-self-confidence is good and has reached about 80%, but less so with regard to pronunciation, it is still my main problem. (Haifa)*

*At the beginning of teaching I didn't have enough confidence in myself, but it increased gradually through continued practice, and a collaborative principal, who performs two main roles at the same time, being a principal and a more experienced colleague. (Sumia)*

*Thank God, I am teaching in a good school with many specializations, dealing with all levels, giving courses in advanced centres and I completed my study for a master's degree in translation. (Raja)*

*Thank God. My confidence has improved, for the general atmosphere of the school is so good, although not perfect. Only God is perfect. I feel that my language has improved for experience that I got through practice. (Laila)*

*I have self-confidence to some extent, which increases a lot by practicing the profession, as a result of my great enthusiasm to teach, a collaborative principal and colleagues. (Majda)*

Not only did novice teachers in their third year of professional practice report increased confidence, but also those who have only had one or two years' experience. They attribute their increased confidence to the improvements they observed in their abilities to face their challenges:

*In my first month of teaching I didn't have enough trust in myself, but now because of practicing teaching my self-confidence and my experience increased a little bit. Also, I have become better controlling students because the principal who has a strong personality maintains a high level of discipline. (This is my fifth month in teaching). (Sulwa)*

*Now in my second year of teaching I become more self-confident in practicing teaching and my strong desire to teach. Also, I have benefited from my mistakes and my previous experience. (Muna)*

*Although it is my second year in teaching but I have great self-confidence in myself as a successful teacher. (Hana)*

### ***Achievements***

When novice teachers were asked whether they had made any achievements during this early stage in their career they referred to who had improved learner motivation and attainment, organisation of curricular activities and delivery of the syllabus.

*On the level of the school I have been doing displays concerning the English language. On the personal level I completed my study and got a master's degree in translation. (Raja)*

*My main achievements are making teaching aids; I did a wall display and provided students with summaries of the syllabus and finally I made my students love the subject. (Sulwa)*

Some novice teachers reported establishing good rapports in their new schools.

*The most important thing I have achieved is establishing good relationships with the administration and with colleagues, also loving and respecting my students to me. (Aram)*

Also, some novice teachers cited that they improved students' level and motivation.

*My main achievements are making students love the subject by giving the English language another taste, motivating students, and improving their attainment. (Suhila)*

*Improving some students' level and motivate them through paying more attention and giving them extra time. (Laila)*

*My main achievements are organising some competitions between classes and supporting students. (Amal)*

*My main achievement is students' progress in the subjects that I am teaching. (Lubna)*

*My only achievement is good class management and high academic attainment for all students. (Nadia)*

While a tiny minority cited that they improved their way of teaching

*I do not have a clear achievement but I am trying to deliver my lessons in a simple way that is easy to understand at all levels. (Majda)*

*My main achievement is teaching my students in a good way. (Muna)*

Some novice teachers, though, felt that they had not achieved much:

*To be honest I cannot achieve anything as long as I am in this school. (Afrah)*

*I have not achieved anything. I have not even engaged in any collaborative activities with colleagues, because even planning my lessons usually takes a long time. (Haifa)*

*No achievement, because there are no incentives and encouragement for us as teachers. We get the same salary whether we teach or not. (Najah)*

Many novice teachers feel that they have a positive experience for different reasons. Murwa for example, describes her first year of teaching as 'wonderful'. She believes that it was better than her current experience and relates her reasons to the teaching syllabus. Because she is still a novice, like her peers, she has only limited experience from her pre-service and therefore, prefers teaching one syllabus in the same specialisation, but there are three different specialisations in her current school: life science, economics and basic science.

*My first year was wonderful because I taught first year, i.e. one syllabus only. And recently I have been teaching two different specialized syllabuses. (Murwa)*

Muna referred to her experience in her first and second year of teaching as 'interesting and exciting'. She relates her reasons to her enthusiasm for teaching and her endeavour to become an effective English language teacher.

*My experience was interesting and exciting because I had a strong desire in teaching English. (Muna)*

Amal also, provides similar reasons for having a positive experience; her love of teaching and her great efforts to improve herself to be a successful teacher:

*My experience was difficult, but wonderful, since I proved a clear success, because fo my strong desire to assert my identity as a teacher (Amal)*

Aram has also had a positive experience due to having been given adequate support and positive feedback in her annual evaluation reports. She is proud that she is being recognised as a first year teacher:

*It was amazing experience that full of interest where I received support from both the principal and the mentor. (Aram)*

*Support from both the principal and my mentor by getting excellent reports about me and this is something I appreciate. (Aram)*

Raja had a positive experience during her first year for totally different reasons. She enjoys being in the classroom and has a great level of enthusiasm for teaching. She has been teaching in a rural area, where schools suffer teacher shortages, and where students and parents respect and appreciate teachers, which gives encouragement and in return has a beneficial effect on the teacher:

*The situation for me was comfortable being in a rural far area where there are not enough teachers. I was new in profession, eager for the new work in my life. (Raja)*

On the other hand, some interviewees were less fortunate. For example, Sulwa described her experience in her first year of teaching as dreadful. Teaching male students required a high level of pedagogical expertise to ensure control in the classroom and learner engagement. In addition, the fact that these students were relatively old - some were over 20 - meant they were almost the same age as their teachers.

*I used to dread having taught older, male students, especially in the first three months. Then I became more accustomed to the situation, which improved. (Sulwa)*

Another participant who also found student behaviour extremely challenging described her first year 'horrible'. She explains: 'The situation is new because, now, I am responsible for the students, and trying to control them wastes my time' (Nadia). Another teacher who lacked confidence in class relates her negative experience to poor student behaviour, although academically they performed well. This appears to be a contradiction, as academic students tend to behave well, unless the teacher is incompetent.

*My experience was filled with minuses such as: anarchist students who showed lack of respect for the teacher - in spite of the of students' bad behaviour, their level of academic attainment is good. (Afrah)*

Not only do students sometimes have a negative impact on novice teachers, but also the lack of experience they bring to the job. Some interviewees mentioned that they suffered particularly in the first few months. They describe their experience as 'awful' and 'tiring' until they familiarized themselves with their work, as one novice teacher recalled:

*As any novice teacher, the most difficult and terrifying period was the beginning, I was trying hard to convey information to students through lessons, trying to communicate with them and keep good relation with them. (Sufia)*

Lack of collegial support with regard to assessment and communicating with parents was cited as another reason for feeling despondent:

*Although I was keen to start the profession, it is a stressful, arduous, and demanding profession. It needs the assistance of the more experienced practitioner colleagues with regard to in marking and dealing with parents. (Noora)*

Lack of confidence, embarrassment and fear of facing the students are also frequently mentioned as causes for novice teachers' negative experiences. This again relates to inadequate pre-service preparation.

Although Aram described her first and second year as 'amazing', she had a different point of view in her third year, when due to teacher shortages the education department transferred her to another school; what she found particularly difficult was teaching in different departments.

*My first year was comfortable. But because there was a lack of English language teachers in a remote rural school, they moved me to a new school in my third year of teaching where my problem started and where I had to teach different specialisations at the same time. (Aram)*

Some of the novice teachers' experiences are not altogether positive or negative. For example, Sumia has mixed feelings:

*My first year of experience was mixed: feelings of happiness, fear and stress. I am happy because I was appointed, while hundreds of graduates from my year are still waiting. I am anxious since everything is new and the preparation of different lessons every day is stressful. (Sumia)*

In Libya, every year graduates wait to be appointed. A good social network or a good relationship with key personnel in administration can help in securing a position. Otherwise, your name will be placed on a waiting list and you can only leave it to luck and God or whether you will be one of the fortunate ones who join the profession. Moreover, even if you are appointed there is no guarantee that you will be working in a classroom. Many are still at home, waiting their turn to be called, whilst drawing their salaries just like those who are actually teaching.

Another novice teacher, Haifa, describes her experience of teaching as something that fills her with 'fear' on the one hand, but also something she finds 'interesting'. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts to be a researcher and was appointed to teach in a school without any pre-service training at all.

Majda's and Laila's accounts describe a similar mix of emotions and feelings:

*I was unemployed for more than three years. My initial experience of teaching filled me with interest because I had strong desire for teaching. But it was also, full of fear since I have no practical training. It is my first time that I stand in front of a class to give a lesson to students whose reaction I cannot predict and whether they will accept me or not. (Majda)*

*My experience was remarkable. I learnt from my last two years of experience that teaching requires extensive effort in order to achieve your goals. A wonderful feeling when start teaching. I am so keen to teach, that I did not much care about any challenges. But there was also a strange feeling of fear of students' reactions when standing in front of them. (Laila)*

All three novice teachers share a strong desire to become good teachers and seem to believe that with sufficient practice and experience they can achieve this goal.

***Novice teachers' advice to graduates considering teaching as a career***

Novice teachers believe and recommend that new graduates who want to start teaching English in Libyan secondary schools should take the following into consideration.

They should be learning alongside their students, in a lifelong process.

*Teaching the English language is interesting. S/He should consider him-self /her-self a student. S/He should learn as his students in order to face any difficulty that hinders his/her work. S/He should always search and follow English programmes that assisting him/her for making more effort. (Wafa)*

*S/He has to develop his/her information and maintaining them by returning to resources and using the dictionary. (Amal)*

They should not depend only on what they studied before.

*S/He should prepare her/his lessons well and studying external books and not to depend only on what f/he studied before, otherwise s/he will put himself/herself in difficult situations. (Dalia)*

*Try well and search in resources because teaching in school sometimes has no relation with what we study in the university to be researchers. (Nadia)*

They should develop self-confidence.

*When starting the profession, you should have self-confidence. Try to choose the appropriate school if possible before starting otherwise you will complete your life in tiredness. (Afrah)*

*First of all s/he should be characterised by a high level of self-confidence, and s/he should be ready to any shock may happen from students or the principal. (Aram)*

They should be able to have the opportunity to observe experienced teachers.

*Before starting your work, you should observe many good experienced teachers to know ways of teaching, managing class, and dealing with students, and then s/he can choose the best way to deal with the class. (Suhila)*

*You should prepare yourself for the new profession by observing experienced teachers if possible before starting teaching, since teaching English in secondary school is too difficult. Teaching requires concentrated effort, self-confidence, and co-operation as well with more experienced teachers. Observing experienced teachers is so important in*

*order to know different strategies in teaching, in managing students' behaviour and also in time management. (Sumia)*

They should be able to control their students, dealing with them in a friendly manner, and also, they should be able to motivate them in order to achieve competence.

*S/He must be careful to impose his/her personality on his/her students for not losing their respect to him/her, and should understand her/his students and deal with them friendly as their older sister or brother and not to be dry and tough with them. (Hana)*

*If you want to be a successful teacher, you should take in consideration to motivate your students with different levels in the same class, which is not an easy task. (Majda)*

*You should control your students, deal with them seriously and firmness because they are teenagers. In the beginning of the academic year you should make replacement test to specify your students' levels in order to know how to motivate them depending on their levels. (Raja)*

Teaching English as a Foreign Language requires a lot of time and effort.

*It is interesting language but it requires a lot of time and effort in order to make your students communicate with you in English successfully, especially they used their mother tongue so much. (Muna)*

*You should pay more attention to improve your language to be able to teach well. (Laila)*

*S/He should focus on students' benefit. Improving the students' level in language should be his/her first care not only always in hurry just to coverage the subject, Also, s/he should make them love the English language subject. (Fatin)*

Syllabus and lesson planning requires thorough preparation.

*S/He should control the syllabus very well before starting his/her teaching to allow him/her introducing and conveying the syllabus to the students and making them love the subject, because most of our students consider it as difficult subject. So the teacher must concentrate on teaching the new vocabulary by heart and introducing it with the correct pronunciation. (Sulwa)*

*You should be more familiar with phonetics, because you will get used to explain lessons, introducing new vocabularies, also you will find resources to return to them if you needed, but pronouncing words will form a considerable obstacle. So, you should be more recognizable with words' pronunciation. (Haifa)*

*You should fully understand all the subjects in your syllabus in order to avoid any difficulty might be exposed to it. (Lubna)*

*You should prepare your lesson completely for not surprising by the richness and difficulty of the syllabus. You should answer all the questions in the book before entering the class, otherwise you will sudden find some questions need help. (Raja)*

The majority of novice teachers participating in this study intend to make teaching their career. Only two novice teachers reported that new graduates should find jobs in another field because teaching is uninteresting profession.

*It is better to get a job in another field because it is uninteresting, stressful and demanding job, also preparing daily lessons for different classes takes much time. Otherwise, before starting any work, you should improve your level by yourself, try to benefit from your practical training if there is any because teaching has no relation with what we studied before, syllabus is difficult, each year in a new department (new syllabus), students are not motivated, they are slow learners. (Khadiga)*

*Before starting the profession, you should know it is stressful and demanding profession; you have to plan daily new lessons in different specializations, no support, and students are riotous. So, don't work in school and try to get a work in a company. (Sufia)*

#### ***Perceived benefits of a formal induction programme***

Both graduates from Faculties of Arts and Colleges of Education felt that a formal induction programme would be of benefit to them. They reported that formal induction programmes will have a positive effect and will provide background information:

*Yes, because this programme will make a background for the teachers and will decrease teachers' difficulties in future. (Najah)*

*Yes, it would be so beneficial for the character of the teacher and his background understanding of teaching before his/her sudden entry into it. (Raja)*

*Yes, definitely because such a programme at a suitable time would have a great effect and would be beneficial to the teacher at the beginning of teaching. (Fatin)*

*Undoubtedly, providing teachers with such a programme under qualified supervision continuously will be beneficial for them, since it would be of great positive effect for them and would give good results. (Majda)*

Novice teachers who graduated from teacher training institutions believed that formal induction programmes would be of benefit to them. They compared it to their

pre-service programmes. They reported that their pre-service was short and without supervision:

*Definitely especially our practical training was too short (4 times only), and supervisor's visits are few, so it would be useful for preparing well teachers to face any difficulties in the syllabus or profession. (Murwa)*

*Surely, it would be of great benefit for me, where there is more time for practice the more we discover new more things in our capabilities, in our contacts with students and thus more benefit. (Noora)*

*Definitely, it would be beneficial for me if it is long not as our previous pre-service, under good supervision. (Sufia)*

Some novice teachers believed that formal induction programmes would be of benefit to them. They reported that practical training enhances self-confidence and motivates students' ability to be successful teachers.

Also, through the formal induction programmes some novice teachers who graduated from Colleges of Education reported that they will apply theories they studied previously.

*Yes, because as in this programme, students will apply what they studied in their college of education. (Suhila)*

On the other hand, some novice teachers believe that formal induction programmes would be of great benefit to them, because they did not undergo any pre-service training programmes since they graduated as researchers.

*Surely especially we have no practical training. It would be beneficial for preparing good teachers who can face the profession with more trust. (Dalia)*

*Definitely, it would be beneficial for us especially we had no practical training since we graduated to be researchers. (Afrah)*

*Yes, the existence of such a programme for a long time, under good supervision would be beneficial as a concession year as in medicine to increase the level of education. Because I did not practice this experience, sometimes I face difficulties. (Amal)*

*Yes, because such a programme for a long time would be beneficial to the teacher that s/he get used to face the students and controlling them. (Lubna)*

Few novice teachers who graduated to be researchers reported that informal induction programmes would be beneficial to them; in order to be of value the programme should include elements such as: lesson planning, phonetics, and

communication in the foreign language, and also dealing with students and motivating them.

*Surely, if this practical training includes: planning lessons, phonetics, and conversation, controlling students and motivating them. Also if it is under good staff supervision it would be benefit to me. (Haifa)*

Also, a few who graduated from a university reported that would be preferable if continued mentor support is available.

*Yes, I feel it would be so useful but permanently since teachers will return as before unless there will be following by extensive/continues visits of mentors. (Aram)*

Both those who graduated to be teachers and those who graduated to be researchers stated that such a programmes would be useful to them if they were an integral part of their university/college degree programmes:

*Definitely, a high level formal induction programmes would be of benefit before graduation for the next generations. (Sumia)*

*Certainly, teaching could be improved by practice under continuous supervision, but I feel that the benefit of such a programme will be better before graduation. (Laila)*

*No, I do not think so because I do not need it, but I think in future it would be of great beneficial for the new next generation teachers before graduation. (Hana)*

### ***Perceived benefits of a professional standards framework for novice teachers***

More than three quarters of the novice teachers in this study (19/21) felt that a professional standards framework for teachers would be helpful in developing their competence and confidence. They reported it would be helpful in motivating teachers to reach the required professional standard. The following comments illustrate their responses:

*Yes, since it would motivating teachers for studying and to make more effort in order to reach the professional standard to be qualified, and give the opportunity to develop their competence and confidence. (Sumia)*

*Yes, I think it would be valuable to build the teacher's professional character, to develop teachers' abilities and increasing their competence and self-confidence, and it would be motivating teachers to do their best in order to reach the required standard. (Laila)*

*Yes, because it would be motivating for more effort and getting out trainers' abilities. And it considers factors for giving the practitioner*

*self-confidence and opportunity to ensure himself/herself and his/her abilities. (Suhila)*

*Yes, it would be basic in developing teachers' abilities and increasing their self- confidence where teachers will do their best in order to reach the required standard. (Majda)*

Few of the interviewees (2/21) believed that it should be a part of lifelong professional learning and development.

*Yes, it would be so useful in developing competence and confidence. It should be lifelong and not for the induction only. (Aram)*

### ***Novice teachers' wish list***

The interviews revealed that the novice teachers who participated in this study would like to see changes to improve the quality of support provided to them during the first three years of their career. Their wish list focuses on three distinct areas: the induction process, the mentoring dimension, and opportunities for professional development.

#### ***(i) The induction process***

In order to make the first year of teaching easier for novice teachers in the Libyan secondary schools, they would like to be provided with the following:

- Allocation to a lower age group level, e.g. primary or preparatory stage.
- Knowledge about the syllabus before the beginning of the academic year.
- Opportunity to work with qualified and experienced mentors and regular meetings.
- Access to a range of resources (labs and teaching aids): tapes and CDs, sockets for plugging in the recorder, and books used as resources for the library.
- A collaborative and supportive learning environment.
- Effective school leadership.
- Adequate remuneration according the teacher's qualification, experience and achievements.
- Manageable class sizes.

- Training in behaviour management.
- Sufficient time to cover the syllabus.

**(ii) The mentoring dimension**

In response to the question of how the mentor relationship could be improved, novice teachers made the following suggestions:

*Increasing mentor visits, some of which should be friendly informal and announced in advance to discuss any challenges the novice teachers may encounter with the principal, with students or with parents, also, by encouragement, raising teachers' morale, in order to make them increase more effort to improve their levels. (Majda)*

Mentors should devote time to working with novice teachers:

*They should spend time with us from time to time, assist in the planning of the new syllabus from the beginning of the academic year, and finally should give us constructive criticism. (Fatin)*

*By communicating more frequently and effectively with the novice teachers, so that they can benefit from their experience. (Wafa)*

Some novice teachers reported that the mentor relationship could be improved if the mentor was available or resident in school.

*He should be permanent at the school as a guide and not as an assessor. (Muna)*

*He should be one of the colleagues to guarantee his availability, assist the teacher by providing the required information. (Sulwa)*

The mentor-novice relationship should be trusting, friendly, and respectful.

*The novice teacher should be respected inside the class, and not be embarrassed by the mentor in front of the students or colleagues and be provided with constructive criticism. (Noora)*

*By respecting novice teachers and trusting their abilities mentors need to give them a chance to improve their performance and that requires the mentor's encouragement, assistance, and support to the teacher. (Laila)*

*The mentor relationship can be improved by not highlighting the novice teacher's weaknesses in front of his students, but by developing mutual respect. (Najah)*

Novice teachers also believed that mentors should possess the personal qualities and professional skills, pedagogic knowledge and experience to provide effective

support and guidance. They should be a colleague, friend, adviser, guide, and assistant, and above all they should be fair:

*He should be a colleague, deal with us as a friend in order to assist the teacher by providing the needed assistance to generalise his benefit. (Sulwa)*

*Mentorship could be improved for novice teachers by providing schools with well-prepared mentors who should have experience in how to deal with the teachers smoothly and in a friendly manner. (Sufia)*

*Also, he should act as an adviser, guide, and assistant to the teacher, not as an assessor. (Fatin)*

*The mentor relationship could be improved by mentors trying to understand the teachers, giving them constructive criticism and monitoring their progress. (Amal)*

*Mentoring could be improved for novice teachers by providing schools with well-prepared mentors who should have not only experience in the syllabuses but also possess the interpersonal skills to deal with the teachers respectfully, smoothly and friendly manner. (Sulwa)*

*The mentor should be fair and not be influenced by his relationship with the novice teacher. If students' success rate is 100%, why cannot the teacher's annual report be excellent!?! (Sulwa)*

*I would like mentors to change from being so formal in the assessment/evaluation process of novice teachers' competence to being a friend in order to benefit from him. (Muna)*

In addition to appropriate personal qualities, mentors should also have relevant professional characteristics. They should be knowledgeable, well prepared, experienced, and adequately qualified.

*Mentors should have experience in the taught syllabuses. (Sufia)*

*Mentors should be well prepared and have experience. The mentor will not be useful unless they can put themselves in the place of the teacher. (Noora)*

*If the mentor is qualified, has information and experience more than the teacher, also it could be improved by increasing the qualification/competence of the mentor. (Sulwa)*

### **(iii) Professional development for teachers of English as a foreign language**

When novice teachers were asked what aspects of their professional development they felt required further development, they cited training in language-specific and

general pedagogy and classroom practice. Some novice teachers reported that they need refresher courses in the syllabus in general in order to improve their level.

*We need English language courses before the beginning of the academic year as activation to us. This makes me pay a large amount of money to attend as these courses on my own account in private centres although as these courses should be done by education department for improving the level of English language teachers. (Murwa)*

While some novice teachers need courses in specific subjects in the textbook, some feel that they need phonetics and listening courses, and these subjects require to be taught in laboratory for further development. They reported:

*Listening and phonetics subjects require further development because they are ignored in the college of education and schools. (Muna)*

*Teaching the English language should be in labs and requires further development in order to change the routine of teaching, also to motivate the students and to make it more interesting. (Raja)*

*Phonetics is the major subject that requires further development because I usually encounter some medical and scientific glossaries I have not heard before as I didn't get the suitable preparation from my university when I was still studying. (Haifa)*

*Pronunciation requires further development because it is easy to forget. (Amal)*

*I hope if I have more experience in some specific subjects such as phonetics, because I did not get the opportunity before while studying and in the time of training. (Suhila)*

In addition, some novice teachers feel that they need specific courses in phonetics, reading, and conversation. They gave different reasons for these choices:

*Phonetics, reading, and conversation are needed more for my professional development because I didn't get the suitable support when I was still studying and I haven't received the appropriate support now as well. (Nadia)*

*I need to be provided with training courses relating to the syllabus in pronunciation and conversation because these subjects are important in teaching English, and I did not learn them sufficiently because the time allowed for teaching them was not enough. (Noora)*

*I would like to be provided with training courses relating to the syllabus we are teaching now in reading and phonetics, because these subjects were ignored at our college although they are essential in teaching English. (Sufia)*

*More care in learning conversation and phonetics (for students cannot communicate and pronounce well). (Dalia)*

Few teachers reported that writing and conversation require further development, although Najah claimed that they

*need training courses in writing and conversation specifically for teachers who teach in the English department. If they do not have the knowledge so nothing will be given to the students. (Najah)*

Novice teachers reported having some pedagogical aspects that require further development such as: motivating students, behaviour management, time management, communicating with students in English, and creating strategies to increase students' level.

Some novice teachers felt that motivating students is an area in their professional development that requires further development.

*I feel that dealing with students specially those who lack motivation requires further development to increase their enthusiasm and by turn increase their understanding of language because they are not motivated. (Sulwa)*

*Motivating the students who show low interest in the subject requires further development in order to improve their attainment abilities. (Sumia)*

*I hope to put a plan for motivating students who show low interest in the subject to increase their motivation and make them love the subject. (Suhila)*

*Motivating students who have little interest in learning English requires further effort in order to increase their abilities to learn, and by turn facilitate my teaching. (Dalia)*

Controlling students is another aspect that requires further development for some novice teachers. Afrah, for example, believes that behaviour management or discipline is her next step to motivate her students. She reported:

*I feel that I require further development in controlling the students' behaviour to sharpen the motivation of those who lack enthusiasm. (Afrah)*

Dalia, on the other hand, reported that she needs to develop in the area of controlling students' behaviour, since she had the problem that her lesson rare to finish on time as a result of students' behaviour.

*Managing disruptive behaviour in the class is an area that requires further development in order to complete my lesson in a good way on time and without interruption to the line of my thoughts. (Dalia)*

Communicating with students in English is another aspect that requires further development for some novice teachers.

*Students cannot understand when communicating with them in English completely because they used to understand the language by translation since their levels are low/weak. (Aram)*

Teaching and learning strategies are one of the aspects that require more attention for novice teachers, in order to increase their students' achievement levels.

*The teacher, like any person, always requires further development such as in setting up strategies that enable them to face challenges in order to increase students' level. (Hana)*

*Utilize teaching and learning strategies suitable to everyone, for students have different abilities to understand, in addition to support slow learners. (Dalia)*

## Chapter Six

### Data analysis and discussion of findings

#### Introduction

The researcher undertook this research in order to develop a framework to support novice teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools during the first three years of professional practice. As there is no provision in the Libyan education system to support newly qualified teachers through a formal induction programme, newly qualified teachers are left to their own devices in a sink or swim situation and have to develop their teaching skills through trial and error (Killeavy, 2006).

This study was carried out in the North West of Libya for secondary school teachers. It was facilitated by the collection of quantitative and qualitative data in two main phases: phase one was a survey, using a structured a self-completion questionnaire for the quantitative data, and included two open ended questions. Phase two involved follow-up, face-to-face, in-depth interviews for qualitative data.

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the personal and professional needs of novice teachers of EFL in Libyan secondary schools?
2. What kind of support is available to novice teachers of EFL?
3. To what extent are the needs of novice teachers of EFL met?
4. How well does the university programme prepare novice teachers for EFL teaching in Libyan secondary schools?

This chapter discusses: the pre-service training of the participating teachers, the challenges confronting them, and the support they received in order to teach English effectively in Libyan schools. Understanding the challenges faced by novice teachers may provide considerable information for improving pre-service and in-service programmes (Veenman, 1984). Consequently, several studies have been done to find ways of minimising these challenges.

Upon analysis of the survey and the interviews, a number of commonalities emerged which have informed the critique of the apparent limitations of the pre-service preparation teacher programmes in Libya. The key issues are described below.

## **6.1 Relevance and duration of pre-service preparation**

### ***Length of pre-service programme***

No one should assume that teachers who graduated and completed their pre-service training programme have the necessary strategies and solutions at hand. Teacher education programmes need to better address issues related to novice teachers, hence improvements can be made based on the types of support novice teachers require when they start the profession.

As described in the literature by Villegas-Reimers (2003), many universities and colleges in African and Latin American countries provide short pre-service training programmes, which concentrate on content more than practice, and do not include supervision (ibid, 2003). The case of the graduates from the Faculty of Arts in the west of Libya is similar, in that they enter the profession without pre-service training experience.

Although the pre-service training, as reported by Villegas-Reimers (2003), is the first step in a longer process of professional development it is the only training that Libyan teachers receive. There is no induction or in-service training, as in some other countries. Villegas-Reimers (2003) highlighted the importance to novice teachers of in-service under supervision when the pre-service training programme is short. There is a dearth of workshops and they are usually only offered when a new syllabus is introduced (Orafi and Borg, 2009). Teachers attend seminars for a week and are given information about the curriculum. Regarding pre-service training

programmes, teachers in this study expressed the view that there is a lack of systematic relevant quality provision as in other Arabic countries (Al-Hazmi, 2003), which is also apparent in Libya.

The ten participants who had graduated from the Faculty of Arts were dissatisfied with their level of preparedness, since they had been educated and trained to become researchers but instead had been appointed as teachers. The duration of their pre-service training programme varied from institution to institution; although there is a central higher education framework each institution has its own system and regulations. Giving lessons in their pre-service training ranged between two to twelve times, and only Nadia reported teaching a lesson about 16 times, having been trained in a different geographical area, in one of the schools in the Libyan capital, Tripoli.

The lack of pre-service training and school-based practice left Dalia feeling embarrassed standing in front of a class and, as a consequence, she required more effort in order to give a lesson. The experience of many participants like Lubna and Majda was marked by fear and confusion of confronting the students, but through practice they gradually lost these feelings.

Pre-service training programmes which provide opportunities for supervised teaching practice throughout the duration of the course are the most effective. The length of training period differs from one country to another throughout the world (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). For example, in Japan the initial training is for just two weeks for secondary-school student-teachers, and four weeks for elementary school student-teachers in Japan and New Zealand, or as in the case of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Chinese Taipei (ibid, 2003) it consists of a full year.

In India, criticism has been expressed of pre-service training programmes as they are generally short; for they are for one year and do not prepare teachers sufficiently for classroom responsibilities. Novice teachers lack basic a knowledge of subject matter, pedagogical training and are ill-equipped to work in schools and communities (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). The same findings are reported by Marcondes (1999) with regard to Brazilian teachers.

In Libya, novice teachers' lack of experience is particularly apparent in the first few months of starting the job. Sufia, for example, described her experience as 'awful and tiring,' until she familiarized herself with her work. Also, lack of confidence, embarrassment and fear of facing the students, reported by Najah, is a cause for novice teachers' negative experience. Novice teachers like Sulwa experienced diverse difficulties in managing the day-to-day challenges, such as dealing with the syllabus, student behaviour, slow learners and time management.

Guskey reported that many professional development training programmes include short-term workshops and presentations that contain little guidance for application (2000). This was definitely the case for the participants' pre-service training programme in this study, who commented that their training was too short.

The findings of the current study resonate with Lortie (1975: 68) who stated that novice teachers are 'critical of the preparation they receive'. Training programmes should be not only of a sufficient length; but also they should be a continuous process even after teachers have completed their initial education programme. In Hong Kong, initial teacher education has undergone a major pedagogical shift. Training institutions are now required to ensure that pre-service teachers are competent to meet the needs of different learners. This includes preparing them to teach learners with special needs and learning difficulties and taking into account culture, gender, sex orientation, socio-economic disadvantage etc (Sharma et al., 2006).

### ***Training lacks relevance to practice***

Since the training programme in the Libyan teacher training institutions is short, random, and disorganized, it lacks the basic knowledge content required. Consequently, teachers have difficulty managing the day-to-day challenges involved in the planning and delivery of the syllabus.

Dube (2008) affirmed that newcomers are frequently required to teach topics that they have not been prepared to teach. In the UK this happens sometimes because of teacher shortages in curriculum areas such as physics, science, and mathematics, as

many graduates in these subjects prefer to work in industry. The reason in Libya is completely different. Teachers in Libya form the majority of all graduates, but they are not adequately prepared with subject knowledge. Another reason is the recruitment of teachers for jobs in schools takes place in many instances on the basis of social networks and not academic qualifications. Moreover there are a large number of teachers who have been graduated for several years, enjoying a full salary without interruption who still do not have jobs. This situation is de-motivating for teachers who are working and wish to engage in further professional development and subject knowledge enhancement. For the various students' needs and the diverse curriculum specialisations in schools, teaching English in Libyan secondary schools becomes a demanding job after changing the syllabus.

Libyan teachers of English as a foreign language find themselves in a similar situation to those in Saudi Arabia. On the one hand the government has achieved a great deal of improvement in developing the English syllabus; on the other it did not do the same for preparing the teachers adequately to deliver it. Thus, Al-Hazmi (2003) reported that many graduates find communicating in English is challenge because they lack the essential linguistic skills.

As reported by Orafi and Borg (2009), the new syllabus is designed and based on the communicative principle (see, for example, Richards and Rodgers, 2001). It is recommended that both students and teachers should use English as much as possible in the classroom, since the aim is to make the students communicate easily and efficiently with each other and to make communication in English the main means of communication in the classroom (Macfarlane, 2000).

As teachers had no part in designing the new syllabus, and their role was merely to implement the decisions of educational policy makers, their training was limited as highlighted by (Orafi and Borg, 2009). This created a gap between the teachers' knowledge and the new syllabus (Zaid, 1993). The discrepancy between the two is highlighted in the literature by many researchers (Gorsuch, 2000; Li, 2001; Wang, 2002; Nunan, 2003; Smith and Southerland, 2007; Waters and Vilches, 2008; Orafi and Borg, 2009).

The interview data from this study showed that the overwhelming majority of the interviewees (n=18) were adequately prepared to teach general English grammar. It seemed to be of real use and appeared to be the only relevant subject studied at the university. Some teachers, such as Fatin, have no difficulty teaching general English. They ascribed that to their faculties' syllabuses which had a strong focus on grammar, and some of them utilized what they studied as a resource when needed for teaching in schools.

English language novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools have to teach unfamiliar topics, as did the teachers studied by Ringstaff and Sandholtz (2002) in California. Also, they had to teach in more than one department depending on the school needs, as highlighted by Lovett and Davey (2009).

Since the time allocated for teaching English per class in Libyan secondary schools is generally about 2 hours 15 minutes per week, teachers will be given from 3 to 4 classes in different specialisations which require them to invest a great deal of time in preparation and planning of lessons. Renard (2003) recommend that novice teachers should be assigned to the grade and subject area for which they are qualified for two or three years at least to enable them to become experienced teachers, this is not the norm. Majda, who trained to be a researcher, studied general English, but had to teach a variety of subjects involving a large amount of unknown, new vocabulary in different specialisations. Sumia's previous study at the teacher training institution was easy, general and is of no relevance to what she teaches her students. Also, the data show that many of the participants in this study from Faculties of Arts and College of Education were ill prepared to teach other specialisations or curriculum areas other than English. For example, Noora and Murwa felt embarrassed and demoralised, as they were unprepared to teach English in the Life Sciences department, where students will specialise in medicine. Consequently, they had difficulty teaching the scientific terms in the syllabus and consequently had to resort to the use of Arabic instead.

As reported by Borzellino (2005), training programmes can be beneficial if they are specific to the needs of novice teachers and the learners they teach, and take into consideration the style of training workshops and their context. Furthermore,

Guskey (2000) reported that most professional development training programmes comprise unrelated presentations that have little follow-up or guidance for application.

One particular shortcoming apparent in the preparation of English teachers in Libya is the lack of opportunities to listen to native speakers. The programmes offered by universities and Colleges of Education study are too theoretical and pay no attention to the practical aspects of language learning such as pronunciation, conversation, listening and writing. Some interviewees felt insufficiently prepared to teach these aspects of English, and still feel challenged by them.

The novice teachers in this study shared the idea that they lacked sufficient pre-service training as well as workshops to support them to teach students in different specialisations in the Libyan secondary schools. They require training that is specific to their needs and to their students' needs.

Providing novice teachers with sufficient pre-service training does not mean that they will not need any support in assisting them to teach the English language effectively. This study indicates that much of what they have learned about teaching English as a foreign language is being achieved through practising teaching and therefore it is important that pre-service preparation programmes include a sustained period of school-based classroom experience.

In analysing the survey and interview data a number of themes emerged with regard to the challenges confronting novice teachers in Libya, one of which is the relationship between preparation for teaching and how well it relates to teachers' work. This mismatch is particularly apparent in relation to teaching and learning strategies, availability of sufficient material and supplies, communication in English, class management, and discipline, assessment, motivating students, and dealing with parents.

According to Brock and Grady (2001) and Steyn (2004) novice teachers in the USA and in South Africa need to develop their pedagogical knowledge and skill base. They often protest that the pre-service programme did not prepare them sufficiently

for the real world of the classroom, and that they need adequate knowledge and skills in relation to planning and preparing lessons, teaching approach and evaluation, lesson pace (Freiberg, 2002; Steyn, 2004), assessing students' work (Andrews and Martin, 2003), classroom management (Veenman, 1984; Steyn, 2004), and time management (Veenman, 1984; Andrews and Martin, 2003).

The situation in Libya is more difficult. As the research data show, the pedagogical training programmes in Libyan schools are limited. Some novice teachers in this study struggled, particularly with the area of planning. The level of opportunity that novice teachers have to choose materials, decide on objectives, and activities that they believe are suitable for their students and for them are one of the developmental factors that ease or hinder novice teachers' development (McLaughlin et al., 1990). Novice teachers in Libya feel restricted in the options available to them. For example, Noora, who graduated from a College of Education, felt bored as a result of repeating the same strategies over and over again. She blamed her inadequate preparation for teaching that prevents her from designing an interesting lesson to attract her students' attention and from developing a diverse repertoire of teaching strategies that enhance the teaching and learning process.

Moreover Aram, who is currently studying for a master's degree, blamed the university where she obtained her first degree and was trained to be a researcher, for not preparing her adequately for lesson planning. Tudor (2001) reported that teachers who can draw on a variety of resources and thus offer a variety of activity types are obviously in a better situation to respond to the diverse learning needs of their students.

Novice teachers in this study, regardless of whatever they attended a university or a teacher training institution, expressed their feelings of inadequacy where catering for different ability levels was concerned. Their initial training programme lacked opportunities for the observation of experienced, effective classroom practitioners and did not include any entitlement to prompt constructive feedback on their own performance.

Having neither observed other colleagues nor having been observed by them, Murwa did not have access to models of good practice, specifically with regard to the aspect of differentiation. On the contrary, teaching staff tended to present negative examples of professional practice, in that they lacked commitment and enthusiasm and appeared to consider attendance and punctuality not as one of their priorities.

Veenman (1984) cited by Fantilli and McDougall (2009) discussed the paucity of teaching materials and supplies as one of eight common internationally relevant problems. Novice teachers in this study also reported a shortage of adequate materials and resources for teaching English in secondary schools as one of the major challenges they faced.

The literature underscores the fact that a lot of newcomers have limited access to materials and textbooks, in addition to working in schools that have poor working conditions and resources (Brock and Grady, 2001; Whitaker, 2001; Steyn, 2004). However, the majority of the questionnaire respondents reported that their students were supplied with a text book and more than three quarters had the teachers' guide. In spite of the recommendations of (Brewster and Railsback, 2001), that principals should provide novice teachers with the materials they need to start teaching, some novice teachers such as Sufia were forced to photocopy material for their students outside school, because this facility was not available at their schools.

The respondents to the open-ended questionnaire questions emphasised the importance of an appropriate learning environment as a key requirement. The majority of participants taking part in the questionnaire survey and interviews stated that they had their own classrooms. Only a minority reported having to teach in classrooms which were in poor condition and not healthy. For example, Sufia is still using a black board and bad quality chalk, which results in unclear writing, while Sumia taught in classrooms without doors or glazed windows.

Only a tiny minority of participants stated that they had a language laboratory in their schools, while more than a third of respondents emphasised the importance of the language laboratory to motivate the students and to improve the pronunciation

for both students and teachers. Some novice teachers, such as Dalia, reported bringing in their own recorders but that was often useless because their classes are inappropriate for the use of such equipment: no socket, echoing acoustics, and mess in school.

The majority of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they were not allocated a work space. Therefore, they had to take their work home since they needed to concentrate and the staff room was always busy and noisy and was usually in use during break times for breakfast. Also, they reported having no privacy even when communicating with students' parents, as meetings either took place in the principal's office or in the pastoral care office. Only in one school, which was located in the desert, was there was no designated space for meeting with parents.

Another issue related to resources is time. Most novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools, whatever their years of experience, complained that time needed to teach the syllabus is not sufficient. Not completing the syllabus makes students not meet their needs properly to be ready for their future career. Moreover, there is added pressure for teachers with regard to examinations and whether they have covered the syllabus adequately. The lack of time is exacerbated further by the disruptive behaviour of students who are not motivated to learn or who behave badly in class. It wastes time and hinders teachers delivering their lessons as planned. In addition, they cannot give due care and attention to students who are slow learners.

As noted in the literature review, classroom management and discipline is a serious challenge for novice teachers (Joeger and Boettcher, 2000; Tickle, 2000; Brock and Grady, 2001; Freiberg, 2002; Hertzog, 2002; Andrews and Martin, 2003; Steyn, 2004; Evertson and Weinstein, 2006; Van Tartwijk et al., 2009). According to Steyn (2004), many novice teachers feel unprepared for the classroom reality, which requires them to make decisions in often unpredictable and complex situations. Most participants in this study felt that this was another area for which they had been ill prepared, particularly with regard to dealing with the wide range of behavioural and academic differences displayed by their students. They felt they had not been given opportunities to develop relevant skills, particularly the university graduates who had been destined to become researchers. Accordingly, they believed that classroom management could be learnt through practice from prior pre-service training.

In the literature review it was also seen that novice teachers are frequently given the most problematic classes, and they need to be expert in classroom management, stimulating students and personalised attention. Also, transferring the theory from pre-service training to classroom practice is another issue raised by Whitaker, 2001 and Steyn, 2004. Another issue raised by a minority of interviewees was the loss of time due to school meetings, national and religious occasions or days off to celebrate occasions as well as monthly students' parents' meetings.

Many novice teachers cited that planning different lessons, assessing students' work day by day, and managing their time were main concerns. In Libyan society, where family and friends provide a supportive social network and where maintaining regular relationships is seen as important, they had difficulty maintaining a work-life balance.

Teachers were spending a considerable amount of time to meet the demands of the profession. Some participants reported that they were working tremendously long hours to fulfil the countless responsibilities school demanded of them, such as planning and assessing students' work. Consequently, they invested a disproportionate amount of time and effort to keep their heads above water (Marshall et al., 1990). With the aim of assisting their students to achieve the highest possible grades, some novice teachers resorted to concentrating on specific lessons in order to improve test results. Other teachers provide focus on specific questions and answers to help their students and to hide their own inability to cover the entire syllabus. To compensate for the lack of time some teachers, like Haifa, made their students come in early before normal classes started, others like Wafa made the students come three days a week in the evening.

As referred to in the literature, novice teachers found time is a challenge, as highlighted by Abdal-Haqq, 1996 and Villegas-Reimers, 2003, especially in developing countries. The situation in Libya is compounded by the fact that novice teachers are neither given sufficient time to deliver the syllabus nor to engage in professional development activities. In addition teaching across different specialisations intensifies the challenge of lack of time due to having to prepare for

curriculum areas for which they have not acquired the relevant knowledge and skills. Consequently, they felt unprepared to effectively motivate their students academically and behaviourally for the challenges they face day to day.

Most university graduates whatever their experience (in the case of the current research, between one and three years) were not satisfied with their ability to motivate their students academically and behaviourally, particularly with students who display severe learning and behavioural difficulties. They believe that studying psychology just in the first year of their university programme was considered entirely inappropriate. Some novice teachers felt that the study of psychology had somewhat prepared them to motivate and stimulate their students. However, all in all, they felt that due to their inadequate preparation, they had had to develop their own strategies on learner motivation through practice.

Communication in English in the Libyan secondary schools was cited as one of the most common challenges that emerged from the interviews with many novice teachers. They themselves have difficulty using English as a means of communication in the classroom without resorting to Arabic, especially when teaching students who will specialise in a scientific subject. As in Saudi Arabia, novice teachers in Libya lack subject knowledge, language proficiency, and competence in foreign language teaching methodology (Al-Hazmi, 2003). But as highlighted by Al-Hazmi (2003) the government did see a need to address these shortcomings.

Another key challenge that emerged from this study as confronting novice teachers is assessment. This has also been identified by Veenman (1984; 1987) and Mandel (2006) as an area that novice teachers generally find difficult. Participants of this study seemed to be largely unaware of the diverse ways of assessment, such as formative and summative assessment, and also had difficulty managing the practical and administrative aspects of assessment. They felt that they were not supported by their colleagues when it came to recording marks, calculating percentages and grading students' work.

Subjectivity in assessment also posed a challenge for novice teachers who continuously struggled in order to minimize bias and negotiate other equity issues in

their personal assessment practices. This finding is consistent with Mandel (2006) who stated that grading fairly is a main challenge for novice teachers who struggle to assess equitably without hurting the self-esteem of students. Raja for example believed that the mark is not always an accurate measure of a student's ability. For example, Majda reported that in her school the principal expected teachers to ensure that slow learners' grades do not fall below a minimum level. The data showed that many participants in this study reported having difficulties when dealing with parents. The need for guidance and professional development in relation to communicating effectively with parents, particularly with regard to their children's progress, has been recognised in the literature (Veenman, 1984, 1987; Meister and Jenks, 2000; Mandel, 2006). Jones (2002) pointed out that novice teachers need to develop independence and self-esteem when dealing with parents. Some novice teachers participating in this study even increased a student's marks, intimidated by his mother's strong personality and high social standing.

Another issue raised by the novice teachers in this study was that they were not given due respect. Some had to handle angry parents and were even insulted. Novice teachers having to cope with these stressful situations is not specific to the Libyan context, but has also been highlighted as a general phenomenon by Brock and Grady (1998). Some participants in this study associated attributed the difficulties they were experiencing not only to their lack of experience but also to the parents' unawareness of their role and their children's role. In order to enable novice teachers to establish and maintain positive relationships and effective communication with parents, efforts must be made to improve new teachers' self-esteem and comfort level (Meister and Jenks, 2000; Jones 2002).

## **6.2 Quality of school based support for novice teachers**

Although formal support for novice teachers in Libyan schools is lacking, the questionnaire and interview data revealed that they did get some support, albeit rather inconsistent, limited and ad hoc. In contrast to this situation, Cole et al. (1995) provide us with an ideal model of how this can be effectively provided:

*Formalized support for new teachers is provided in a systematic way through the organization and delivery of relevant content by designated support personnel. Formalized support can be provided on a day-to-day*

*basis at the level of the school, usually by experienced colleagues, or outside the school through a program of professional development activities' (ibid, 1995: 8).*

Libyan novice teachers usually receive informal support. It is usually provided at the school level, however, not by 'caring colleagues who are naturally attentive and responsive to new teachers' needs and concerns' (Cole et al. 1995: 8), 'assisting them with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to be successful in the classroom and school' (Gold, 1996: 561).

The participants in this study got some sort of personal and professional, formal and informal support inside and outside of their schools, while some of them cited that they were left to their own devices without any kind of support. More significantly, though, is to what extent the support they received impacted on their development and success as novice teachers.

### ***Mentor support***

The interview data showed that only a very tiny minority of participants received formal support from their assigned mentors.

The literature reveals that successful mentors provide novice teachers with interpersonal support and guidance (Whitaker, 2000; Harrison, 2001; Mohr and Townsend, 2001; Whitaker, 2001; Freiberg, 2002; Steyn, 2004). Moreover a good mentor, has interpersonal skills, and is challenging and encouraging (School Management Teams, 2002; Steyn, 2004). Roehrig et al. (2008); Hobson et al. (2009), highlighted the effectiveness of some professional qualities such as: role model and having adequate knowledge about novice teachers' subject specialism (ibid, 2009).

Very few novice teachers benefited from this kind of support. However, those who did, spoke positively about their mentors and pointed out that they were very valuable sources of support in a diversity of areas. They highlighted that the recognition they received from their mentors as most helpful in terms of increasing motivation and self-confidence.

Decker (2008: 35) established four stages of mentoring relationships: 'initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition'. The first stage takes place when the mentor and novice teacher start to get to know each other. They may not completely trust each other yet; though, the formal relationship has been established (Kram, 1983). In the cultivation stage, trust which lies at the heart of a true mentoring relationship is beginning to develop. When the relationship has served its purpose and the novice teacher becomes independent from the mentor that stage is called separation (Kram, 1983). Finally, when the mentoring relationship becomes a collegial relationship rather than one characterized by differences in rank the 'redefinition' phase occurs (ibid, 1983). In contrast, these four stages of mentoring relationships are not apparent in the culture of Libyan schools.

The literature revealed that mentors' ability to give novice teachers space is one of the key characteristics of effective mentoring (Awaya et al., 2003). Kwan and Lopez- Real (2005) in their study found that many mentors described their most significant role as a counsellor. Effective mentors must be helpful, accessible, non-judgemental and reliable (Rippon and Martin, 2006; Hobson et al. 2009). In a study done by Rippon and Martin (2006), novice teachers stated that they wanted mentors who were approachable, trustworthy, and motivational. An effective mentor should make novice teachers feel welcome as developing persons (Maynard, 2000; Feiman Nemser, 2001; Hascher et al. 2004; Rippon and Martin, 2006; Hobson et al. 2009). Furthermore, mentors can play a significant role in the socialisation of novice teachers. They can help them to become accustomed to the norms, standards and expectations related to the teaching in general and schools in particular (Wang and Odell, 2002; Bullough and Draper, 2004; Hobson et al. 2009). In contrast, a vast majority of the respondents in this study stated that their mentor did not provide them with access to a community of practice - that is, an introduction to school rules and procedures. Two teachers commented that they see their mentor only at the end of the academic year just to check the questions on the final exam.

Novice teachers are exposed to the reality of the classroom on the first day. Mentors can nevertheless offer them significant help in encountering reality. For example, mentors may be introducing novice teachers to their colleagues, timetables and may explain to them their tasks (Heyns, 2000; Steyn, 2004). However, in the Libyan

context, the interview data with novice teachers revealed that mentors in Libyan secondary schools are rather passive in ways they provide support and encouragement during the first days and weeks of school. Awaya et al. (2003) and Decker (2008) in their study recognised that the novice teacher's ability to view the mentor as a knowledgeable resource is one of the characteristics of effective mentoring relationships, and where this is the case, both the mentor and novice teacher are able to learn and grow (Awaya et al., 2003; Decker, 2008).

Some studies suggest that the success of novice teacher mentoring is, partially, a function of the ways mentors are selected and paired with novices. Mentors should be effective practitioners have adequate knowledge and experience for example in teaching and their subject specialism (Hobson et al., 2009). Conversely, novice teachers in this study had negative experiences during a time when they desperately sought support and guidance. They were advised to search in books or referred to the next visit.

Mentor commitment to do the job (Hobson et al, 2009) and willingness to support novice teachers are qualities highlighted in the literature. Some novice teachers participating in this study stated that their mentors do their work under duress and that they showed little interest. The majority of the participants believed that their mentors lacked flexibility and open mindedness. The literature reveals that one of the main responsibilities of effective mentoring is to be a 'sounding board' for the novice teachers' thoughts by holding debates with them (Whitaker, 2000; Whitaker, 2001; Harrison, 2001; Mohr and Townsend, 2001; Freiberg, 2002; Steyn, 2004). Moreover, research identified that effective mentors make time for the novice teachers: they meet regularly with them and are available for informal debate at other times (Johnson et al. 2005; Harrison et al. 2006; Hobson et al., 2009).

This study showed that many novice teachers did not benefit from their formally assigned mentor due to the paucity of his visits, which often took place too late or at the end of the academic year in order to check the final exams, not when they needed him. Regarding his ongoing support, none of the participants noted regular scheduled mentor meetings. Some novice teachers reported that they met their mentors twice at the end of the year to check the final exam. Again this may well

reflect a lack of care and nurture. None of the participants of this study stated that the time devoted to formal weekly meetings with their mentor had been adequate. Due to mentors' very sporadic visits, novice teachers felt that the support they had was of limited benefit as the mentor performed the role of an assessor only, not a supporter.

Even though mentor support in the classroom can be helpful, critical analysis and discussion based on shared experience is greater, for example, when mentors share new knowledge with novice teachers in a collegial way and when mentors and novice teachers can observe each other, and other teachers. Many studies have found that one of the most significant aspects of the mentor responsibility is lesson observation with consequent analysis of the procedures involved (e.g. Heilbronn et al., 2002; Hobson, 2002). Effective mentors are skilled in understanding what to observe and providing feedback for the novice teachers (Danielson, 2002). Good mentors provide novice teachers with an effective feedback (Brock and Grady, 2001). Avoiding critical feedback can be damaging to the development of both the novice teachers, and their students (Bullough, 2005).

Similar findings are highlighted by Hobson (2002) who found that novice teachers highly valued mentors who provide constructive feedback. Harvey (2006) stressed the importance of classroom observation and its effect on improving novice teachers' teaching, and the opportunity to swap ideas with their experienced colleagues. This resonates with Bilash (2009: 1) who believed that classroom observation allows novice teachers to 'see real-life teachers in real-life teaching situations'.

Harvey (2006) emphasised the significance of observation and feedback to enhance teachers' self-confidence, enthusiasm, and knowledge. Also, he stressed that the observers should be experienced, and that the feedback should be 'constructive and a learning experience' (ibid, 2006: 20). For feedback to be effective, it 'needs to be honest and developmental' and needs to be given as soon as possible (ibid, 2006: 18). Feedback analysis is the most vital part of the classroom observation process for the novice teachers, as highlighted by Harvey (2006). For teacher to be effective, Harvey (2006: 18) argued that respect and trust between the observed and the

observer are fundamental for a 'healthy relationship and successful outcome'. Cockburn (2005) emphasised the importance of honesty, and constructive and punctual feedback.

The data of this study showed that the vast majority of novice teachers believed that they had not been provided with learning opportunities. Mentors did not provide novice teachers with opportunities to observe experienced teachers nor to collaborate with other colleagues. It has emerged from this study that novice teachers received limited or no feedback, which tends to be unsupportive. A considerable majority of the participants were not provided with opportunities for classroom observation and had not received valuable feedback. Many stated that their mentors lacked the characteristics of a good mentor to accomplish their roles successfully as they were proud and arrogant and provided destructive criticism.

A mentor should be a good listener (Rippon and Martin, 2006; Hobson et al., 2009). Brock and Grady (2001) mentioned that mentors must demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with novice teachers. Lasley (1996) argued that the essential characteristic of a mentor is his capability to communicate his belief in a person's ability to manage challenges, who shares his own experiences as a teacher in an honest way that promotes trust.

Successful mentors provide insights to diverse levels of challenges (Danielson, 2002). Novice teachers in this study stated that their mentors did not assist them and even posed a challenge as they were uncooperative, their visits were infrequent, and without feedback. Often, when they first arrive at school, the timetable has not yet been fixed. Assistance with the taught syllabus is virtually non-existent. This study showed that overall mentors did not support novice teachers to find solution to the problems they encountered. The majority were left to their own devices when faced with a difficult situation at school. This is not surprising, as in Libya the mentors' role is just to assess teachers' competence, and there is no other function for them.

The novice teachers' experiences made apparent that the mentors in Libya do not regard it as their responsibility to assist novice teachers confronted with difficult situations. For example, two teachers taught without enough textbooks, and were forced to provide photocopies for their students. Another example is that a minority

spoke with their mentors regarding a prepared class instead of the lab for teaching the listening skills, but there was no suggestion for a solution from their mentors. A minority stated that the mentor will not be on their side if they encounter a difficulty in school, in view of his destructive criticism and disparaging comments in front of students and staff. They stated that the mentor does not interfere in their difficulties, and he is only concerned about covering everything in the textbook. Also, the massive majority of respondents stated that the mentor did not provide assistance in developing the individual growth plan.

In a study carried out by Kwan and Lopez-Real (2005) many mentors described their most significant role as an equal partner, or critical friend (ibid, 2005; Decker, 2008). This was not the case for the participants of this study. Mentors should agree with their novice teachers the goals of the mentoring process, and individual learning objectives, which they should regularly revisit (Lindgren, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009). Data showed that monitoring of progress is inconsistent and unreliable. The vast majority of participants stated that their mentors did not help them to engage in critical evaluation of their teaching practices through regular conversations. Also, a large proportion of respondents stated that they were not helped to set targets for continued professional growth. Consequently, it is difficult for novice teachers to develop confidence.

A mentor's task and responsibility should not only be to act as an advocate of novice teachers, they should also be able to support them in creating networks with experts in the community (Brown, 2003). Data generated from this study showed that a high proportion of the novice teachers in this study stated that their mentors did not help them to establish positive working relationships with their colleagues. Also, none of the respondents in this study stated that the mentor helped them to develop their interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues.

Decker (2008) in reference to Allen and Poteet (1999) recognized a number of factors that increased or limited the success of mentoring relationships. Among the most required qualities of mentoring relationships was an open communication system that allowed clear expectations for the relationship. Moreover, the data from

this study showed that none of the participants stated that their mentor helped them understand the professional expectations concerning classroom practice and responsibilities.

Data generated from this study showed that novice teachers depended on their own ideas in their endeavour to become effective classroom practitioners in a culture where senior and experienced colleagues feel superior, where each one is concerned with his/her own syllabus and is reluctant to engage in collaborative activities. It is common practice for mentors to make only two visits, one at the beginning of the academic year to check the staff timetable, which often has not been fixed, and a second, final visit at end of the year to report on individual teachers' performance.

It is undisputed that mentoring has a beneficial effect on novice teachers, developing their craft knowledge, classroom management skills, and teaching of subject content (Lee and Feng, 2007; Sundi, 2007; Hobson et al., 2009). Data generated from this study revealed that the vast majority of novice teachers were not provided with adequate support from their mentors and only a tiny minority was fortunate enough to get establish trusting and respectful relationships with their mentors.

Another aspect, which must not be overlooked, is mentors' guidance in relation to developing novice teachers' ability to manage their time and workload (e.g. Lindgren, 2005; Moor et al., 2005; Malderez et al., 2007; Hobson et al., 2009). The interview data of this study revealed that mentors did not provide this kind of support to novice teachers.

There is evidence in the literature that some mentors do not provide novice teachers with the adequate emotional and psychological support to ensure their well-being (Smith and Maclay, 2007; Hobson et al., 2009). Ultimately, mentors must have a genuine interest in novice teachers' work and lives (ibid, 2009). However, mentors in this study showed little concern for novice teachers' well-being. None of the participants stated that their mentors helped them to achieve a work-life balance. Nevertheless, a minority of novice teachers cited examples of beneficial mentoring experiences:

- Introduction to school rules and procedures.
- Encouragement at the beginning of the academic year.
- Assistance in developing their individual growth plan.
- Provision of learning opportunities.
- Observation of experienced teachers.
- Opportunities for collaboration with other colleagues
- Observation of their teaching and constructive feedback.
- Regular conversations for critical evaluation of their teaching practices and target setting.
- Establish positive working relationships with their colleagues.
- Providing a professional role model.
- Listening to their concerns and help with the identification of solutions to problems.
- Flexible and open minded approach.

Even though novice teachers in Libyan secondary schools lack the support of a formal mentor, they recognized some kinds of informal mentoring support that were available to them through their colleagues and the school principal.

### ***Colleague support***

Some novice teachers stated that collaboration with colleagues in general, their encouragement, and assistance was the only support they received in their schools. Also, it has emerged from the interview data that novice teachers found their colleagues were an important source of support which was most helpful to them. Some novice teachers highlighted the need for peer support in assisting each other in

an atmosphere of collaboration and in the knowledge that they have similar needs. They found the support of their peers as the most helpful.

On the other hand, some novice teachers in this study received support from their more experienced colleagues to overcome the challenges such as syllabus, student behaviour, dealing with parents, setting the exam questions, and in assessing students' work. Only one novice teacher had a comfortable relationship with all colleagues in general and with the more experienced colleague friend in particular. Colleagues in her school are supportive and cooperate with each other as in a family. The minority reported having limited relationships with their colleagues in general. The school culture is not encouraging, and each one works on her own. They reported getting the most helpful support from a more experienced colleagues who are encouraging, like a best friend or next door neighbour.

Due to the dearth of support from a formal mentor, some novice teachers sought guidance from their colleagues to solve their problems. They reported receiving informal mentoring support from their more experienced colleagues when they encountered a difficult situation at school. A novice teacher, for instance, found her colleagues' thoughts were valuable in many situations.

Their colleagues gave them a push and made them feel confident and standing on a solid ground. Also, they expressed their need for psychological support. They reported that their colleagues raise their morale and self confidence. According to Gold (1996), psychological support comprises diverse forms of assessing of how a person manages stress, acquires strategies to solve problems, and how to set up a plan to help teachers meet their needs to gain confidence and 'reinforce positive self-esteem' (Gold, 1996: 562). Only one novice teacher reported getting support from her colleagues regarding time management. She reported asking them many times on how to divide her lesson on its specific time.

Support from more practitioners' colleagues results in higher job satisfaction for novice teachers (Dianda et al., 1991). However, some novice teachers in this study were less fortunate than other colleagues; they found their colleagues less helpful. A novice teacher described her colleagues (peers and experienced) as 'uncooperative',

for she didn't benefit from them since she was recruited in the middle of the second semester and the school was in a different area. As a consequence she expected to be supported, but instead she felt isolated.

Some novice teachers referred to their peers' colleagues, as less helpful, as they were at the same level, whereas more experienced colleagues failed to provide them with sufficient encouragement and made them feel frustrated. For example when a novice teacher asked them about some students who have academic problems in order to improve their level, they recommended her not to worry about these students since they are weak in all subjects, not only in English.

The community of practice in some schools in this study, especially the more experienced colleagues, made novice teachers feel uncomfortable and inadequate, which made some novice teachers reluctant to ask for help. The interview data showed that some novice teachers were left to their own devices. They felt lonely and did not get support from their colleagues. They struggled, especially those who were recruited from different areas. Most of their colleagues were old, and did not trust one another. They feel superior and lack cooperation. They stated that their colleagues' working relationship in school was characterised by individualism and a kind of contrived collegiality. Each one was concerned only for his/her syllabus that they had to complete and rarely discussed in teaching with other colleagues.

### ***Professional support from the principal***

It has emerged from this study that a minority of novice teachers who teach English as a foreign language in Libyan secondary schools have received a little support from their mentors. Some reported benefiting some from their colleagues, and even more from their principal, which they described as more valuable. It was often of an informal nature, and was available when needed. Half of them rated the support provided by their principals as good. They described them as approachable, supportive, having an open door policy and as someone who could provide advice in relation to student behaviour, and class management, communicating with parents and setting exam questions. They believed that they were knowledgeable persons and someone who they could trust and respect; who would encourage them and also be willing to help them at any time and assisting increasing their self esteem and

develop a sense of job satisfaction. The data that emerged from the questionnaire showed that principals were positive in terms of guidance and assistance. Some of novice teachers were provided with a school orientation session prior to the start of school and introductions to staff members that are key to operations at school level.

This study showed that some principals observe novice teachers' lessons. More than two thirds of the questionnaire participants reported that they did not get feedback after observation. A tiny minority of novice teachers perceived their principals as fantastic. They visited them during their lessons and provided feedback.

The questionnaire data revealed that the majority of participants received their principal's support with classroom management, when needed. Only less than a third of respondents stated that their principals encouraged continued participation in staff development activities aimed at improving classroom instruction. Less than half shared the view that their principals were ready to discuss concerns and questions related to school concerns throughout their experience.

Although the principals played an active role in supporting novice teachers in managing their classes, their main concern was teachers' and students' attendance, discipline and general standards of behaviour inside the classroom and the school, organizing the timetable and providing textbooks at the beginning of the academic year. Their main responsibilities were described as being of an administrative nature relating to students, teachers, and parents.

Only in a minority of schools did the principals make novice teachers feel welcome by creating an atmosphere for teaching and learning. Although most novice teachers (15/21) reported that their principals played a considerable role for them in their early professional development (whether by encouraging and appreciating any effort that improved the school level, creating the atmosphere for teaching, visiting the teachers during the lesson and giving feedback, administrative role, allowing autonomy or giving advice when communicating with parents), still there was a minority (6/21) for whom this was not the case.

Some novice teachers felt abandoned in their schools by the lack of the principal's support. The minority stated that their principals intensified their problems by their continuous absence running their own business. The minority of novice teachers stated that their principals have no involvement in assisting them in managing their classrooms, because they do not care and they are continuously absent. Principals do not respect the teachers and students do not respect the principals. They stated that their principals had weak leadership and their continuous absence made them have no impact on the school at all. A minority stated that their principals had no role.

### **6.3 Outside school support**

Some novice teachers who received neither their mentors', nor their colleagues', nor their principals' support, sought support outside their schools from family members for example. They cited this kind of assistance as a key source of support was encouraging, raising their morale and the most helpful source of support. A novice teacher in this study is the eldest and is responsible for all her family for she is the only person who is working. And another is supported by her family because a large number of graduates are at homes because of the paucity of recruitment.

Some novice teachers in this study have someone in their family who is also in the teaching profession and can draw on their support; whether by providing advice on the syllabus or dealing with student behaviour and motivation. A father for example, who was proficient in English, was helping his daughter who is a novice teacher in preparing her lessons. Another novice teacher received support from her father, who is a retired teacher, with regard to managing her class, assessment, and setting a good exam. Also, an older brother who is a teacher in the same school supported his sister in relation to controlling student behaviour, marking students' work, and setting exam questions.

It has emerged from the interview data that some novice teachers received assistance from students' parents. They feel satisfied with their support. They are cooperative, respected people and they give them encouragement, and strengthened their self-confidence.

Even though novice teachers in this study lack the support of a formal mentor, they recognized some kinds of informal mentoring supports that were available to them

through external mentors. For instance a novice teacher got informal mentoring support, outside the school from a mentor who is her father's friend and their neighbour at the same time, in relation to issues related to the syllabus.

The interview data also showed that students' parents and friends are the most helpful source of support for some novice teachers, particularly when they appreciate the teacher's effort, which motivates and raises their self-esteem.

Some researchers recommend that novice teachers benefit from meeting regularly with each other (Rogers and Babinski, 2002; Borzelino, 2005). Due to the lack of good rapport, communication with colleagues in the work place, and uncooperative school, a minority commented that they resort to friends whom they did not work with and teachers out of school for support in issues relate to the syllabus. However, some novice teachers were frustrated as many of their students' parents were not helpful or cooperative at all. They show little interest in their children's progress. A mum wanted to assault a novice teacher when her child failed the exam.

#### **6.4 Other factors influencing novice teachers' experiences**

This research showed that some novice teachers gained re-assurance and confidence through other kinds of support, which has impact on their work on students' learning. This kind of support includes: support from inside, student's marks or result, salary, resources, and the district department. A minority of novice teachers' support arose from inside so they support themselves, which raises their self-confidence, and was the most helpful kind of support for them. Conversely, some participants found their books from when they were students were the most helpful support for them, while a minority found their enthusiasm is the only source of support. Also, this study showed that for a minority of novice teachers good exam results helped them to strengthen their confidence and increase their enthusiasm for teaching.

This research showed that some novice teachers believed getting the salary they deserve at the end of each month was the most helpful support for them. Having a sustained source of income was the only and the most helpful reward. However, some novice teachers stated that finance impacted their general well being and their professional learning negatively. They felt disappointed and lacked recognition, as

they receive the same salary as the large number of teachers staying a home due to over recruitment. Some novice teachers had not even received their monthly salary for between five months and two years. Teachers also had financial difficulty as they pay the cost of printing students' exam papers, teaching aids and also for rewarding students as encouragement from their salaries.

When teaching languages, teachers need not only textbooks and curriculum guides; they need to be provided with resources in the form of teaching aids and appropriate facilities, such as a language laboratory, which is vital equipment for foreign language learning. Some novice teachers consider a language lab a necessity to improve the quality of teaching the English language for motivating and encouraging their students to speak. Nevertheless, In the Libyan education system this kind of facility is available to teachers in the science subjects, while only a tiny minority of English novice teachers has this facility.

It has emerged from this study that District Education Department provides novice teachers with some assistance. Some novice teachers stated that they were only provided with chalk and a board. A minority stated that district education departments did not monitor schools' activities to identify high performing active schools and to motivate and support passive schools to improve. They stated that district departments did not monitor final schools' results, honouring the high achieving schools, and supporting the problematic achievement schools. Also, they stated that it did not provide recognition for effective teachers with the aim of maintaining high levels of motivation, and commitment within the profession.



## Chapter Seven

### Discussion and Conclusion

#### 7.1 Induction- a concept to be developed

There is no provision in the Libyan education system to support novice teachers through a formal induction programme. Although there is induction framework, it is on paper only, and not implemented. In fact, there is a gap between policy and practice. This framework is devoid of any reference to the term 'mentor', and instead uses the term 'inspector'. However the rules and responsibilities listed in relation to this key position in teacher induction evoke the mentoring concept. This may explain why the mentor role is ambiguous, and not clearly defined. Some refer to him as a mentor, others as an inspector. These days their place is called *Educational inspection administration*.

Those who call him 'mentor' may do so because the word mentor means 'supporter'. Those who call him 'inspector' may do so because his real function is inspection. There are many words in the Arabic language and in Libyan slang that have contradictory meanings. For example, there are two words for the English translation of 'coal'. One is the scientific term, 'faham' (فحم), the other is 'biad' (بياض), which is the more colloquial term and is synonymous with the notion of 'whiteness'. This is due to a negative association with the actual word for coal in terms of its blackness, which reminds people of sadness and pain. Similarly, people refer to someone who is blind as a 'buseer' (بصير), which means 'seer' for not hurting his/her feelings and in the hope of a possible recovery.

This duality in expectations is problematic, in that the novice teachers may not receive the support they are led to believe to be given, whilst the 'inspectors' interpret their role as defined by district education department in which they work. A mentor has been defined as 'the person in the school with responsibility for managing and co-ordinating the student's learning as it relates to subject teaching' (Cullingford, 2006: 87). According to Fransson (2010), mentors may be asked to

provide both support and assessment; however, these roles may be decoupled and allocated to two different staff members.

Although mentor in Arabic means leader, guide, and supporter, the way that the mentor functions in the Libyan education system is as an assessor only. Researchers and informed commentators point out that mentoring has benefits for novice teachers, such as reducing isolation, increasing confidence, professional growth, and improving self-reflection and problem-solving capacity (McIntyre and Hagger, 1996; Hobson et al., 2009). A good mentor is a more experienced colleague who is reliable, thoughtful, and encouraging; s/he is a good listener with highly developed interpersonal skills (School Management Teams, 2002; Steyn, 2004). The sharing of professional experience with novice teachers is essential for successful mentoring (Whitaker, 2001; Hertzog, 2002; Steyn, 2004).

There needs to be a positive working relationship between mentor and mentee if mentoring is to be truly effective. Allen (2006) highlighted the importance of mentoring going 'beyond teaching knowledge or skills or the mere passing on of information'. She goes on to say that 'It is a complex nurturing, developing, and empowering relationship that requires mutual sharing, growing, and learning' (ibid, 2006: 52). Allen used the metaphors of 'garden' (mentee) and 'gardener' (mentor) to describe the necessary productive interactions. She wrote:

*There is a dynamic interaction between the gardener and the garden. These two distinct living entities have a unique relationship. The garden has a dependency on the gardener, and the gardener must consider the unique properties of each plant as well as the forces of nature (Ibid. 2006: 52).*

In contrast to the positive relationships which the literature underscores as key to successful mentoring, participants in this study reported that the mentor was non-existent in their schools. Even though Noora was appointed in the middle of the second semester, to a remote area in a school where her colleagues were older and approaching the age of retirement, she did not benefit from her mentor. She criticised her mentor for not having inspired her and described him as passive for not assisting her. Because Noora had limited experience of the real situation in schools

and because a mentor means supporter, she expected that he would help her, instead he visited her just once without feedback.

What many participants would have liked was for their mentors to be dovetailed with the characteristics of effective mentors described in the literature. They hoped for mentors who would be willing to engage fully with their role and show genuine commitment to their work with newcomers to the profession (Lindgren, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009), who would provide them with constructive feedback (Brock and Grady, 2001) and meet with them frequently providing emotional and professional support (Brock and Grady, 2001; Johnson et al., 2005; Harrison et al., 2006; Hobson et al., 2009).

The benefits of mentoring for novice teachers also include emotional and psychological support, which is helpful in improving the confidence of novice teachers; help them to put challenge into perspective, and improving their morale and job satisfaction (Bullough, 2005; Johnson et al., 2005; Lindgren, 2005; Marable and Raimondi, 2007; Hobson et al., 2009).

Shihiba (2011: 369) in reference to El-Zawam (2009), the coordinator of the regional language inspectorate, described the inspector's role in the Libyan education system as follows:

- 'The inspector helps the teacher in understanding the syllabus s/he teaches.'
- The inspector acts as a guide for the EFL teachers to develop their subject pedagogy whilst showing concern for their well-being.
- 'The inspector has a major role in the assessment of the teachers through observing the teachers' performance during their visits at least two visits for those teachers who have a good mastery of the subject and four or five visits for those teachers who face difficulties or lack confidence.'
- His role is to give advice and assistance. However, he has the authority to change what he feels appropriate.

However, the participants in this study reported that their mentors were unsupportive and did not do their work properly. They lacked commitment and were not interested in doing their job. Also, the participants in this study did not find their mentors carry out their expected duties. For example, they visited the novice teachers just once or twice at the end of the year, not when they were in need of support.

Since mentors have audible voice, some exploit their authority as a sword on teachers' necks. As a result, teachers are quiet, because if they submit a complaint, nothing will happen. The mentor will stay in his/her position; will receive his salary as usual at the end of each month. And if a teacher speaks out, he will be the loser, because the mentor will not forget that teacher, and will give that teacher a poor report, even if he is a good teacher as there is no higher supervision and commitment.

The majority of the participants in this study had similar experiences. They reported that their mentors promised them that they would discuss something in a subsequent visit as a way to avoid a problematic situation. Also, they experienced negative criticism from their mentors. If available, time and distance were impediments to mentors performing their role effectively. Conway et al. (2002) recommended that the mentor should have arranged for someone at the mentee's school to provide support and guidance when they could not be present. These novice teachers' challenges were intensified because more experienced colleagues were uncooperative, while their peers could not be of help because they had the same kind of insufficient preparedness.

Veenman (1987) stresses the importance of a positive relationship between the mentor and novice teacher and to achieve this, a mentor must not only have the relevant professional qualifications, but must also possess the appropriate personal qualities, such as a caring attitude and a genuine interest in the novice teacher's work.

Only in recent years has mentoring in Libya become a widespread phenomenon in the professional development of teachers. As reported earlier, in other countries

mentors have different roles, including assisting and assessing novice teachers' teaching competence. But in Libya, where assessment is their main function, most of the mentors described by the participants of this study did not do their assessment appropriately. They do not see the teachers on a regular basis, but often have only one face-to-face meeting. On their first visit, they usually come to collect the timetable from the principal or the secretary. The next time, they try to observe all the teachers, without giving any feedback, on one day to avoid multiple trips to the school. At the end of the school year they make a third visit to check the final exam questions.

Many study participants felt a sense of despair, as they were not optimistic that the present state of affairs would change quickly. They worried that the mentors' lack of commitment is unchangeable and impossible to amend. Their typical comments were: *'You are wasting your time. Are you Libyan? You know all this and nothing will change the situation whatever you will done, this needs fundamental change, their misconduct is in their blood.'*

The researcher interviewed a Libyan retired mentor. He listed a number of reasons why teachers have become mentors in the last 20 years:

- Administrative laxity and bribery is a widespread phenomenon throughout the country. Favouritism and nepotism have influenced education negatively in many aspects. Because of the low teacher salaries many teachers move into mentoring to increase their income.
- Escape from the commitment that a teacher must possess was a major reason for many teachers to give up teaching and join mentoring, where they can determine their workload and time as they deem appropriate.
- Lack sense of moral responsibility, national and professional loyalty, and commitment that teachers have to demonstrate in their day-to-day work.
- Low teacher salaries are another reason why the mentor becomes a taxi driver and a vegetable merchant and other professions that bring him money.

- Unwillingness to work and the seriousness in syllabuses make a lot of teachers either to change their work or flee to mentoring to find some time to escape.
- Cultural leisure and low educational attainment of teachers and their inability in many cases to cope with the educational syllabuses that were not placed on the correct educational and scientific standards, in line with the capabilities of both students and teachers.

- Dependency, carelessness, lack of sincere patriotism, lack of religious and national sense and lack feeling of public interest to the country and the selfishness which characterize most people, all this in turn make teachers resort to mentoring as a means for the salvation of commitment and compliance.
- The weakness of education and lack of sources of cultural nutrition such as lectures, seminars and educational sessions and studying abroad. All this generated psychological and political tension and weak sense of citizenship were reasons to go to the mentoring process or any other business for getting money.

Even selecting the mentor is affected by the social network. For example, Abdulali, (1986) reported that criterion for becoming a mentor is an average of not less than 'very good' for the last three years of teaching. Also, candidates must pass an oral and a written test in their subject specialisation and in psychology as well. When they pass the selection process, they will be responsible for observing and evaluating a number of teachers (ibid, 1986). But all this exists only on paper. If one investigates the mentors' background, you will find a large number of them have many years in teaching, while their annual reports are poor. They are mentors either because there is a shortage of mentors or because appointments are commonly made through personal contacts and social networks.

The word in which teachers refer to the mentoring role denotes 'guide' and 'supporter', but their real function is assessor only. Because of destructive criticism and ironic comments, some teachers leave the school when they hear that the mentor is in school even though they have a class.

## **7.2 Teacher professionalism in Libya**

Even though, there is no shortage of graduates each year in all the different specialisations in Libya, District Education Departments allow a large number to stay at home whilst being in receipt of their full teacher's salary, like those who are

teaching in the classroom. Furthermore, their modest salaries do not provide an incentive and lead to low morale and lack of motivation amongst staff. So, why do they not collaborate, or just stay at home? This kind of culture is pre-professional, where every teacher is working in isolation and subject to a closed door policy. This undoubtedly has a negative impact on teachers' professionalism. As a consequence, teachers lack enthusiasm and commitment. They also lack interest in engaging in collaborative activities and sharing, and have tendency to work in isolation to protect their classroom territory.

The concept of a community of practice was more or less non-existent. Professional learning through 'legitimate peripheral participation', as promoted by Lave and Wenger (1991), is a foreign concept and welcoming newcomers to the profession is not something the old-timers subscribe to.

### **7.2.1 Genderisation of the profession**

Teaching in Libya, in primary, preparatory, and secondary education (age 6-18), is highly genderised, which may also have an impact on the profession's status and how it is perceived by its members and the public. This phenomenon of genderisation is also observed by Murray (2006), in English primary schools.

During the academic year 2005-2006, the statistics of the GPCE (2008) showed that 79 % of teachers (240,618) teachers in Libyan schools were female. They were employed in basic and secondary education and in kindergartens. All the interviewees in this study were female, and the majority of questionnaire participants were female (69%). That in turn, reflects a strong gender imbalance. This is an indication that teaching in Libya is a mostly female profession (Shihiba, 2011). Males tend to seek employment in the private sector since getting an appointment takes years and teaching is not perceived to be a well-paid profession (Elmabruk, 2008). This in turn poses a challenge for those who prepare themselves to intend to live an independent life or starting a new family.

On the other hand most of schools' principals and mentors, whatever the stage, are men. Hutchings et al., (2010), pointed out childcare, home commitments and

women's responsibilities may not allow women teachers the time for performing the role of inspector or principal (Hutchings et al., 2010).

### **7.2.2 Inadequate remuneration**

Elmabruk in his study (2008) reported that teachers in the Libyan state schools have no enthusiasm, which is ascribed to the fact that they are underpaid. They were promised an increase in their salaries in 2006/2007 to equate with the cost of living. For example, the monthly salary of a newly appointed teacher in a state school, who teaches grade 7, is 175 Libyan Dinars, which is equivalent to \$134. Also, a teacher who teaches for about 15 years to grade 11 may get 300 Libyan Dinars. This is affecting them. Consequently, teachers' lack of enthusiasm and poor pay impact the graduate negatively. Their view of teaching is that it is not a lifelong profession (Mabrouk, 1997), and a main cause of teachers attrition, particularly among males, is the need to start families which need support (Elmabruk, 2008).

### **7.2.3 Status and ownership**

Teachers in Libya are not respected and not treated in the way they deserve. They have no voice, for example, each time the authority changes the textbook without taking teachers' point of view in consideration (Orafi and Borg, 2009). Principals in many cases in this study did not respect their teachers, as a (sister, wife, daughter, friend, or neighbour) they treated teachers not as colleagues. They use their authority as male principal and teachers are female workers. Teachers want recognition. For example, you were the best when studying, you are doing well in your new school: punctual, good with the administration, and you are unique in your teaching, your results are good, your students love you so much and parents as well. Instead of praising you as a kind of motivation, you will find teachers who are always absent, if they come, they come late, and leave early, their results are not good, and they usually are not reliable. They give the exam questions to some students, add extra marks to some students, and even allocate marks to students who are absent in exams. Such teachers will get better reports than others. It all depends on the social network of which they are members.

The authority changes the syllabus (in the text book only) from time to time. In the 90s, Libya invited a professional team from the UK to change the syllabus, while

teachers have no role just implementing the decision of the education policy makers. In 2008, for example, they borrowed textbooks from Malaysia in all subjects from first year study till the 9th year study in school (students' age from 6 years till 15 years). Although, courses were offered to the mentors, teachers still face many problems to implement these textbooks based curriculum. For example they were confronted with new and foreign concepts, which they did not understand. Another difficulty is the programme in Malaysia need studying from the morning till six o'clock in the evening, and each textbook in the series depends on the previous one and so on, while in Libya students study from morning till 1.00 pm, maximum time in school just 2:00 to students who are 15 years old.

Even though they borrowed the new textbooks, they still use the same old regulations and laws in education. Designing any textbook depends on the culture of the country, use the foreign country terms, which is all different for them.

#### **7.2.4 School culture**

The school culture as discussed in the literature relates to the communication between and the behaviour of the staff members and the general atmosphere (Brock and Grady, 2001). To understand the customs, beliefs, collegial relations, occasions for collaboration, and challenges of mutual support and obligation, it is important to look at the school as a professional learning community (Flores, 2004).

It has been highlighted in the literature that workplace conditions play a major role in increasing and supporting teacher learning and development in schools and in classrooms, for the quality of education provided to students (Day, 1999; Flores, 2004). Smylie (1995: 92) argued that it is practically impossible to create and support 'conditions for productive learning for students when they do not exist for teachers'. Hargreaves (1994), Day (1999) and Flores (2004) suggested two major powerful factors that affect teacher learning and development at school level: school culture and leadership.

The problem of novice teachers not feeling fully accepted and valued in the community of practice within a particular school is not limited to developing countries, as reported by Dube (2008). It is also a phenomenon in Anglo-Celtic

communities, as highlighted in the literature, and is seen as one of the reasons for novice teachers' lack of confidence (Brock and Grady, 2001).

The need for clear expectations and understanding the school structures and procedures to be followed was another issue highlighted in the literature (Brock and Grady, 1997). This is not what I experienced as a beginning teacher. I remember my first day meeting with my new principal; I met with him as soon I reached the school. This was quite fortuitous as he had not scheduled an introductory meeting with me and typically he would have not been present in the building.

Similarly, many teachers in this study lacked the feeling of being welcomed into their new schools. They had to wait for the principal to introduce himself, as he had other, more important commitments to attend to. My first meeting with my principal in school was for administrative work to provide some personal information. He told me about the other four English Language teachers, who were older, informed me of my working hours and directed me to my timetable on the wall. It my experience and that of the participants in this study a principal's role is no more than managerial work.

Brock and Grady (2001) highlighted the importance of handbooks and the unwritten rules and tacit agreements influencing novice teachers in schools. And what is of even greater concern is the fact that in many schools in the current study, there was only one syllabus, and in some instances even this did not exist. As a consequence, the novice teachers participating in this study were left to sink or swim with little support provided to them. They felt disappointed, and an inability to deal with the many daily requirements of teaching (Kelley, 2004).

New teachers are frequently assigned more tasks, including undesirable courses, additional activities that their more experienced colleagues do not wish to get involved in and the most problematic students (Whitaker, 2001; Danielson, 2002; Andrews and Martin, 2003 and Steyn, 2004). In spite of there being a lack of time to cover the entire curriculum set out in textbooks over the course of an academic year, novice teachers in this study were given difficult classes and were asked to use textbook including diverse topics ranging from history to maths during the same

year. Notwithstanding the recommendations of DePaul (2000) and Renard (2003) who criticize assigning the most challenging classes to novice teachers, some of the novice teachers in this study were given crowded classes and had to teach a large number of mature students who showed low interest in learning. Some novice teachers taught students whose parents were teachers in the same school. This was not ideal, as this creates pressure from these teachers for favouritism towards their child.

As discussed by Dube (2008), novice teachers in Libya have similar needs to participants in Botswana in that they need someone they can turn to when they need help or guidance. In the UK, USA and Australia the main point of reference for novice teachers is a school-based mentor, who supports their professional learning in adherence to statutory professional standards that novice teachers need to achieve by the end of the induction year.

School culture affected participants in this study negatively. Some novice teachers experienced fear and confusion in the first months of their teaching, particularly when they had to lead older male students, and overcome feelings of insecurity in a new environment.

In some schools, there was a precise system that teachers usually followed when parents came to school. There was a person with responsibility for exams and knowledge of exam regulations. Because of novice teachers' ignorance of the roles and regulations in their school, some was assaulted verbally and physically by a student's parent, when their children failed the exam.

Hargreaves (1994) identified four major common types of school culture: individualism, balkanization, contrived collegiality, and collaboration. The first three of these cultures were apparent in many of the schools involved in this study. But there was scant evidence of a truly collaborative culture. Instead individualism, balkanization, and to some extent contrived collegiality were the dominant cultures in which the novice teachers in this study were trying to develop their teaching competence.



### *Isolation*

It is widespread in school cultures in which individualism prevails, where teachers are isolated in their classrooms without receiving criticism or feedback. As argued by Steyn (2004), school-life isolation is typified by 'professional' segregation, when new teachers work on their own with their students and bear sole responsibility for the management of their classes, assessment of learning outcomes and administrative rules (Brock and Grady, 2001). In such situations new teachers feel unconfident and anxious without guidance or assistance from expert teachers (Whitaker, 2001).

To clarify some of the contributing factors of teachers' isolation, MacDonald (1991) maintained that often the community of practice is unwilling to share professional worries with one another, because when they go away from the classroom they seek respite and prefer to talk about topics that are professionally irrelevant. Also, he declared that this tendency to keeping to one's self and not sharing concerns with colleagues hinders beginning teacher's progress and professional development.

The challenge of isolation is highlighted by Brock and Grady (2001) who stated that novice teachers may find themselves in a position where they feel vulnerable, their feelings of isolation and vulnerability is intensified further when they are in a new post away from family and friends (Tickle, 1994). Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) identified isolation as one of the main problems that need to be addressed in school environments, as it allows conservative practices to continue and prevents innovation.

Novice teachers in this study experienced negative feelings of loneliness and isolation. They related their reason to their far schools, and unhelpful older colleagues. They may act as 'gatekeepers' to their 'isolated kingdoms' (Jones, 2006: 71)

### ***Balkanization***

‘Balkanization’ manifests itself when teachers form groups. The older teachers have status and power within school and often have the best students academically and behaviourally. They tend to teach in the best equipped classrooms, have the most favourable timetable, and a manageable workload. They often behave as if they owned the school. Moreover, they treat newcomers not as their equals but as servants. A novice teacher experience illustrates this sense of isolation and lack of respect:

*My challenge is that they appointed me in a school which is not in my area: I don't know anyone from the staff teachers there, I felt lonely since there is no one from the graduated group with me, and teachers are uncooperative and look doubtfully to me as if I did something wrong, from the last corner of their eyes, although I didn't approach them. They are always just eating and gossiping without mercy with each other. They are not motivated at all and they don't like their work. When the bell rings to start another lesson, they have no intention to make a move and do so reluctantly, as if someone was forcing to do their work. They only do it for the money. (Sufia)*

The phenomenon of balkanization has been highlighted by Jones (2006). As described by Sufia, becoming a member of the school community can be particularly problematic. And the old-timers remain aloof, and do not accept or welcome the newcomer into their community of practice.

The lack of opportunities to engage with colleagues is compounded further by the fact that novice teachers spend the majority of their time with their students, and therefore have limited opportunities to develop supportive relationships with one another (Whitaker, 2001; Kelley, 2004) and to engage in collaborative activities. This kind of difference in opportunities arises when colleagues behave as if they are not willing to share.

Balkanization takes place when teachers are loyal to a specified group in the school community. In this culture, groups of teachers vie for resources, status, and power in school and cooperation only happens for the benefit of the groups to which they belong.

### ***Contrived collegiality***

Flores (2004: 300) quoting Hargreaves, (1994), maintains that contrived collegiality is 'imposed' and 'compulsory' for teachers. So, working relationships are predictable and seemingly permanent in time and space. This kind of collaboration probably has a limited effect on teacher development.

Participants in this study, instead of establishing good relations with colleagues, reported having very limited relationships. Their relationships with each other lack cooperation since the one who asks will be referred as 'incompetent' while the person who is asked means she is the best, therefore they do not assist the others to stay unique.

Moreover, the teachers who work in the same school do not always have a good rapport with each other, and even if they engage in conversation, they speak about their social life, shopping, and their children. They are uncooperative with each other. After graduation, they do not study in an endeavour to improve themselves.

Most of the participants in this study reported that their relationships with each other lacked cooperation and respect for each other, not only in the workplace but also in their social life because of the age differences between the young novice teachers and the older experienced staff.

### ***Collaborative culture***

According to Flores (2004: 300) collaborative culture is 'spontaneous, voluntary, evolutionary, development-oriented, and pervasive across time and space, and unpredictable'. The importance of a collaborative culture and its positive effect on novice teachers was emphasised by Hargreaves (2003), while the culture of a closed door policy can negatively affect novice teachers (Wanzare, 2007). Novice teachers in this study lacked opportunities to get involved in any collaborative activities. Some attributes this to the chaos in their schools which lacked leadership, due to the continuous absence and weak personality of their principals. Some cited that there is no kind of activities in their schools due to the apathy of administration and the chaos of students. The effect of unsupportive cultures was only too apparent.

Regardless of whether opportunities for collaborative activities were available, some novice teachers in this study were not stimulated. They showed little initiative and only got involved if they were asked to do so.

Like the novice teachers of this study, new teachers often have limited opportunities to access the expertise of experienced colleagues through lack of communication and modelling of good practice. As a result they develop self-doubt about teaching in general and the school in particular (Dube, 2008). So, communities of practice can provide an environment for workplace learning, but can also pose challenges, particularly if the more experienced teachers do not have the same qualifications and knowledge base as the newcomers. This is the case in many Libyan schools.

On the basis of these findings we can assume that in Libya, novice teachers are located in the pre-professional age which is one of the four ages of professionalism identified by Hargreaves (2000) and where teachers are not collaborating with each other, and are not sharing knowledge. To improve the Libyan education system, there is a need for change. So that teachers engage in working together, learning together, and sharing experience together and creating knowledge together. To achieve this, transformation in professional culture, novice teachers will have to be assisted in developing the positive features and aspects of Hargreaves' autonomous, collegial and post modern professional. For example, teachers have the right to choose the method that suits their students. Also, they are provided with the opportunities for training and professional development. To engage in this, teacher's role has expanded to accept consultation, collaboration, and other kinds of work with colleagues (ibid, 2000).

'Once they had served their brief apprenticeship, experienced teachers saw no more of their colleagues in the classroom, received no feedback on their practice, and changed and improved mainly by trial and error, in their own isolated classes' (Hargreaves, 2000: 156).

### **7.3 Wider political and cultural issues**

Although all citizens in Libya are Muslims, religion did not feature in Gaddafi's politics. It would have been difficult to adhere in his actions to the precepts of the

Quran. The moral values promoted by Islam are not enacted by the political leaders in Libya (corruption, misappropriation of public funds, and abuse of power). However, most citizens follow the Quran, but the behaviour of Gaddafi and his inner circle did not reflect those values. Instead it demonstrated lack of moral leadership and integrity.

There is a lot of guidance in the way in which the Quran encourages and urges Muslims to do their work to the best of their ability. As Muslims, we learn from the Quran that Allah considers those people as the crowning glory of creation. ‘Those who believe and do good deeds are the best of creation’ (Abdel Haleem, 2004: Al-Bayyina, 98/7).

Also, in The Cave Sura, Allah says that people, who do their work well, will not be wasted; they are promised a life in paradise.

*‘As for those who believe and do good deeds- we do not let the reward of anyone who does a good deed go to waste-they will have Gardens of lasting bliss graced with flowing streams.’ (Ibid, 2004: Al-Kahf, 18/30)*

*Whenever they are given sustenance from the fruits of these Gardens, they will say, we have been given this before, because they were provided with something like it. They will have pure spouses, and there they will stay (Ibid, 2004: Al-Baqara, 2/ 25).*

Also in the Sunnah, we learn from the prophet of Allah the importance of hard work, and work to the best of one’s ability. The Prophet said: *‘Allah loves each one of you, when he works to do the best job possible and to perfect his work’.*

According to the survey conducted by the Organisation for Transparency in Libya (2007), respondents reported different forms of corruption which are wide spread across the country: direct and indirect stealing and misuse of public funds; Nepotism and favouritism in recruitment and preference of relatives and friends; the use of public resources for personal benefit, and commissioning for trade contracts or procurement; giving bribes in exchange for a specific favour; money laundering to avoid the law (Johnson and Martini, 2012).

Libya was ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world in 2010 (Denyer, 2011). It was noted that bureaucratic inefficiency and low salaries for employees in

Libya create an environment in which bribes were commonplace and seen as required to guarantee the best service (IBP, 2013). Also, relationships play a significant role in business dealings with operators in Libya (ibid, 2013). Gaddafi's inner circle is based on blood, loyalty and long-term Relationships (Johnson and Martini, 2012).

Libya's massive oil revenue helped nurture a well-developed system of corruption which was directed by Gaddafi and his sons and this is still a common phenomenon at the time of writing. Libya was ranked 172 according to Transparency International. For example, Gaddafi's sons used the state oil company 'as a personal bank' and one of them, Mutassim, had commanded \$1.2 billion directly from the company to fund his work (Johnson and Martini, 2012: 9; The Telegraph, 2011). When oil prices reached \$145 a barrel in July 2008, Libya formally decreased its production and selling 'the rest on the black market' (Denyer, 2011: 2).

Libya is commonly referred to as a 'kleptocracy' as Gaddafi used high levels of public wealth for private benefit (Lichtblau et al., 2011; Johnson and Martini, 2012). The Gaddafi regime used the government to benefit family members, which leaves Libya rife with political patronage (Lichtblau et al., 2011; Johnson and Martini, 2012). The US State Department Cable in 2009 confirmed that the Gaddafi family and close friends had a direct interest in anything worth buying, selling or possessing (New York Times, 2011; Johnson and Martini, 2012). According to the New York Times, Gaddafi and his close friends often endeavoured to extract millions of dollars in contracts with international companies operating in Libyan market (IBP, 2013). The New York Times referred to Gaddafi's relatives adopted luxury lifestyles, including luxury houses, Hollywood film investments, as well as 'private parties with American pop stars' (Lichtblau et al., 2011: 3; Ghosh et al., 2012: 6).

Against this, in more than 16% of Libyan families not one of its members has a fixed income, while 43.3% have only one. Although Libya has the highest unemployment rates in the area, and lack of manpower, there are over a million migrant workers in the market (Ghosh et al., 2012). The United States Institute of Peace confirmed that the Libyan government before the war was responsible for

‘mass unemployment’ and poverty which were wide spread in Libya .It argued that the country's oil wealth was concentrated among Gaddafi’s inner circle, and therefore, the majority of people were barely able to take advantage of the oil revenue (Gilpin, 2011; Johnson and Martini, 2012).

When Gaddafi was in power, favouritism was paramount. He recruited his sons to run different sectors in Libya. Muhammad controlled the telecommunications sector, Muatassim was National Security Adviser, Hannibal was in maritime shipping, Khamis commanded a top military unit. Saadi was in charge of an Export Free Trade Zone in western Libya, and Saif al-Islam also benefited from government financing and political backing of his business (IBP, 2013). In addition, when Gaddafi was not making the decisions, one of his sons was appointed by him to run the economy of the country (Lichtblau et al., 2011). According to Idris Abdullah al-Sanusi, Gaddafi and his family had accounts in banks all over the world (ibid, 2011).

A leaked diplomatic cable reported that the foreign assets of the Libyan investments authority set up by Gaddafi and his son Saif al-Islam amounted to 65 billion US dollars in 2010 (Wyatt, 2011; Johnson and Martini, 2012). When Libya was liberated, the rebels found evidence of an opulent lifestyle.

- Guns made out of gold. : When the rebels entered Gaddafi’s palace, they found a hideout full of weapons, including pistols encrusted with jewellery with his name engraved on the handle.
- He had also a fully equipped private zoo for his children only. His son Saadi kept nine lions as pets in his private zoo, which he visited every day with a group of armed guards.
- Also, he had his own ‘Neverland-style’ amusement Park in his garden. It was as ‘a private Disney Fantasy land’.
- A golden mermaid couch with his daughter’s face (Gallagher, 2011: 2)

Rebels discovered that Gaddafi also had another home in case of an emergency as an ‘underground lair’. They were a long series of zigzag tunnels and dugouts almost 40

feet under his compound. The tunnels may have had secret exits that reach to all parts of Tripoli (ibid, 2011: 2).

While on the one hand Gaddafi promoted his image as the country's supreme leader, on the other, he lacked the qualities to do this role justice. He usually made haphazard and incoherent planning for devoid of any concern for sustainability. For example, people in my city were informed that a train line would be established between their farms (our farm was one of them). My father and some other people left their homes before the government started implementing the project. However, after five years or so the project was aborted and the local people were informed due to the sandy soil that the project could not succeed. As a result, they wasted public money and people lost their homes.

Another example is the great artificial river. We were told that this project would provide us with clean and fresh water. Although we had paid taxes for this project for years, only cities near the artificial river benefited from it. Consequently, until now we have to buy water for washing, and for drinking respectively.

Moreover, the political leadership let the country down with unfulfilled promises: each year Gaddafi promised the people that he would give them a surprise in September, for example, increasing their salaries. But they remained unfulfilled promises in order to give people dreams and have something to engage in, to let his anniversary celebration pass safely and to ensure his position was safe.

In spite of this corrosive environment, there were examples of integrity at school leadership level. Some principals behaved in a paternalistic manner toward their staff. As Brock and Grady (2001) maintain, school culture is hugely affected by the principal's leadership style and how s/he selects and promotes individual staff members. S/he must provide guidance that generates a supportive culture that promotes positive behaviour. Thus novice teachers' success depends on how well they identify with the school culture, the relationships they establish with their colleagues and to what extent they consider themselves a member of the school community. It is generally accepted that a supportive school culture contributes to teachers' 'job satisfaction and their motivation' (Steyn, 2004: 84). An effective

school leader creates positive school environments where teaching can ‘flourish and grow’ Darling-Hammond (2003:13), through the establishment of a community of learners (Leithwood et al., 1999; Fernandez, 2000; Retallick and Fink, 2002).

However, such an environment was not commonly experienced by the participants in this study. They were frustrated by the problems they faced and found that the unhelpful school culture was the direct result of inept leadership that unmotivated principals provided. A minority of the interviewees in this study reported that they could not achieve anything and they had not engaged in any collaborative activities in their schools because their principals are not encouraging them. An interviewee described her principal in the following terms: *‘He is always absent attending to his own non-school-related business, while the school is buzzing like a ‘beehive’*. He does not back up teachers who wish to discuss behavioural or academic concerns about a child with a parent, as he sides with the students in order not to upset parents, as he believes that they are less apt than to criticise to him for engaging in non-school business during school time.

Fernandez (2000), in her study suggested that leadership forms one of the most important influences in nurturing a sense of professional community for the teachers who work in collaboration to generate shared goals and standards for their schools. She argued that the development of a sense of self-competence and self-worth between teachers is a common feature in the school leaders who support the professional communities within schools. Brock and Grady (2001), described the ideal leader as one who motivates and supports the teachers in school to achieve their goals. The leader must communicate his vision and model it through his behaviour and, through sharing power and decision making, promote the development of a learning community (Brown and Wynn, 2009). According to Brown and Wynn (2009), a thriving learning community has a principal who can be a suitable role model, provide support, stimulation, and promote acceptance of group goals. Effective school leaders share power and decision making with teachers.

In contrast to the principal acting as role model in commitment and enthusiasm, novice teachers in this study reported that their colleagues were unmotivated as a result of bad leadership. Teachers were lazy; they formed cliques, behaved as if the

school was only for them; they came late, and left early for there was no supervision, as the Arabic proverb says: *All the people in the house are dancing, if the owner plays the tambourine*. Accordingly, the principal's behaviour sets the tone. His continuous absence gave staff the chance to do whatever they wanted. For instance, teachers had no intention to make a move when the bell rang to start another lesson.

Given that the novice teachers in Johnson and Birkeland's (2003) study reported that the respect and support of their principals were significant factors in their level of satisfaction, it is not surprising that participants in this study reported that they were not satisfied in the school community as their principals were uncooperative and non-supportive. In one of the schools involved in this study, a principal gave all students in three classes a text book; but he gave only seven books to a novice teacher who had 36 students in her class, and he did not allow her to use the school photocopier. This demonstrates his lack of care. The novice teacher felt compelled to pay for the copying of textbooks for 13 students who could not afford to purchase their own copies.

Brock and Grady (2001) highlighted the importance of the principal providing support to novice teachers in developing strategies of classroom management to provide a productive environment for learning. This means that the principal should be present and willing to deal with disruptive behaviour in classes. Many participants in this study spoke of how students' behaviour deteriorated whenever the principal was absent and lacked of the commitment to deal with these issues. For instance, an interviewee's class was always in a mess. There was no respect in her class. Students used slang in the classroom, did not come to class on time on many occasions, and gave feeble excuses when asked to explain where they had been. In addition, they often left the class without permission.

The need for school leaders (principals) to be accessible is crucial (Brown and Wynn, 2009), to encourage collaboration by creating opportunities for teachers to learn from each other throughout their practice (Wong, 2004; Brown and Wynn, 2009). Participants in this study reported that they had bad relationships with their principals for they lacked these qualities of successful leaders. Their principals were persistent, and did not encourage and accept new ideas. Some interviewees

described their principals as '*inflexible and slapdash, not understandable person, not respected and he dealt with them as servants*'. In contrast, the Governor's Teacher Working Conditions Initiative Survey of 2002 in America stated that the successful principal has the same qualities of successful entrepreneur (Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004).

The situation in the Libyan schools of the participants who took part in this study was completely different. Principals appeared not to be able to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with the teachers; they did not deal with them fairly, and favouritism was commonplace. For instance, Najah resorted to setting an exam with only two open-ended questions because her principal only allowed his close friends on the staff to use the photocopier. Another incident was reported by Nadia. Her principal allowed a teacher, who is a parent in his school and a neighbour at the same time to transfer her child from one school to another 3 times in a year in order to get higher marks in the exam.

When the public want to speak about a specific school in Libya, they usually do not mention the name of the school, but only refer to the principal (Alkhaboli's school for example). As a consequence, they feel that the school is a reflection of their personal reputation. Although, some principals feel responsible for their schools, they leave them in complete chaos. Another concern was that some principals dealt with the teachers in a pejorative and disdainful manner, not caring for their teachers when they needed someone to talk to (Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004). The ability to lead is one of the main qualities that are required of the principal (Ibid, 2004). In contrast, some principals of participants in this study had weak personalities and were unable to lead the learning community.

Teachers are a valuable and indispensable resource for building a country's future. They are candles, that light the way to others, and if we want to improve the country, we need to change them. Therefore, we need a new enthusiastic and inspiring generation of teachers, who are full of life, well prepared, and provided with quality mentoring support. As the Arabic poet says: he showed stand up for the teacher who is a messenger-a messenger of how to build a better future.

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

Many novice teachers suffer from overload and low confidence resulting in stress and anxiety. The research provided evidence that support at school and district level varies and is often inadequate.

While novice teachers work along their colleagues and have the same responsibilities and workloads, they should be considered 'learners' as well as 'teachers'. They should be supported by a professional mentor that promotes teacher learning through collaboration, modelling of good practice and critical reflection.

Over the past 20 years, mentoring has been employed as a key strategy in professional and workplace learning and has formed a key component in initial teacher training and induction (Ingersol and Kralik, 2004; Hobson et al., 2009). However, to ensure effective, high quality support during the induction period of novice teachers, the following points need to be considered: novice teachers need to be assigned mentors who are knowledgeable, experienced and committed practitioners.

On the basis of the findings of this study of novice English teachers' experiences and perceptions in Libyan secondary schools, the following recommendations can be made with the aim of enhancing the quality of their induction into the profession. These recommendations should be of interest and relevance not only to novice teachers, but also those who play a key role in their professional learning and development during the early stages of their career, namely principals and district departments.

##### **1. Induction Programme**

All novice teachers should be entitled to a formal statutory induction which is to provide them with high quality support. Similar to the induction framework introduced in England (DfEE, 1999), the cornerstones of such a framework should support, guide, and monitor progress and assessment.

## 2. Mentoring

To ensure that novice teachers' individual needs are met, mentoring is considered an integral component. Each novice teacher should be assigned a mentor, who will play a key role in their professional learning through modelling of good practice, classroom observation and regular review meetings. However, to ensure effective, high quality support mentors should be selected according to the following characteristics: They need to

- Be excellent classroom practitioners.
- Be committed to the supporting novice teachers' professional and personal development.
- Be able to act as role models, facilitators and critical friends.
- Set high standards for themselves.
- Possess the pedagogical skills and knowledge for working with adult learners.
- Be able to listen and communicate effectively and give constructive feedback.
- Perceive themselves as learners
- Possess excellent interpersonal qualities.
- Be respected by their colleagues and thus assist the novice teachers in establishing working relationships with the school staff.

## 3. Professional Standards

Furthermore, the induction process should be located within a professional standards framework, similar to the one implemented by the Department for Education in England (2012), to ensure consistency in the delivery of the programme and to provide criteria for the assessment of novice teachers' practice. Accordingly, teachers are expected to:

- Set high expectations which motivate and challenge their students.

- Promote good progress and outcomes by students.
- Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge.
- Plan and teach well structured lessons.
- Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all the students.
- Make accurate and productive use of assessment.
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment'.(DFEE, 2012: 10-12)

Moreover, teachers should consistently demonstrate high standards in their personal and professional behaviour and sustain high moral standards within and outside their school. They should:

- Treat students with dignity and established relationships based on mutual respect all times to monitor the proper professional attitude of the teacher.
- Demonstrating tolerance of and respect for the others
- 'Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law'.
- Teachers must have ethics, respect policies of their schools, and must maintain high standards of commitment and must be punctual.
- Teachers must have an understanding of professional duties and responsibilities, within, the statutory frameworks. (DFEE, 2012: 14)

#### **4. Reduced workload and adequate resources**

Each novice teacher should also have an entitlement to a reduced workload to have sufficient time for mentor meetings, planning and preparation of lessons. Adequate

resources (e.g. text books, tapes, teaching aids) and equipment (e.g. a language laboratory; library) need to be made available to enable novice teachers to develop their professional competence without constraints.

### **5. Relevant pre-service training**

Pre-service training programmes should contain opportunities for school-based practice and observation of experienced practitioners. It should include aspects of planning, teaching and assessment as well as behaviour management, learner motivation and catering for diverse learner needs. The knowledge gained during the pre-service programme for English Language teachers should include aspects of language skill development, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.

## **6. Mentor Training**

In order to provide high quality support through mentoring, all those taking this role should undergo some form of training. This would involve developing an initial understanding of the multi-faceted mentor role and responsibilities, in addition to the operational aspect of induction process. During induction there should be opportunities made available for further development.

### **7.5 Reflections on the research journey and suggestions for future research**

Undertaking this PhD has been a very challenging journey and at the same time an enjoyable and rewarding experience. It was my dream to pursue this study in the UK. I believe that research is just like a river that keeps running and never stops and which quenches my thirst for knowledge.

When I got my sponsorship from the Libyan Government in 2007, my sister wanted me to go with her to Canada. But I did not accept her invitation, as I believed that my fate was waiting for me in the UK. Since I arrived in England I have seen the world in a different way.

During my learning journey I learnt more about methods of research, how to construct a survey questionnaire, an interview schedule and an ethics application. I became particularly aware of the potential ethical and methodological considerations to be taken into account when collecting and analysing data in different ways. I also learnt how to use programmes, such as Microsoft Excel, SPSS, and NVIVO, for the thematic coding and analysis of qualitative data, which did not form part of my master's degree in Libya. Furthermore, although I am a qualified secondary school teacher of English as a Foreign Language and have had extensive experience working with novice teachers, I did not possess the range of vocabulary required for academic writing. Acquiring the level of linguistic proficiency required to read and write at doctoral level and to express my ideas and arguments clearly in English, demanded a great deal of time and effort. I have also learned to develop my arguments in a structured way.

Undertaking empirical research that involves human interaction in a country where the infrastructure is poor and where the political situation was unstable and culminated in a revolution was extremely hard, I benefited from this experience in many ways: I had ample opportunity for critical reflection about the Libyan education system and the concept of guidance and support provided to novice teachers. Also, I learnt something about the English education system and how it entitles novice teachers to high quality support and guidance during the early stage of their career. This is something I will take back with me to Libya in order to share this newly acquired knowledge with my colleagues.

This research provided insights about novice teachers of English in Libya, their experiences, needs and the challenges they encounter during the early years in the profession. In this study, the participants spoke negatively about their mentors and their experience with them. The novice teachers indicated the need for quality mentoring. Further research could take the form of a qualitative study exploring why mentors and principals in Libya do not approach their work in ways that better meet the needs of teachers and seeking to identify how the Libyan Education Ministry can provide effective professional development opportunities for both mentors and principals. This should also include a critical examination of pre-service teacher programmes.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter to the gatekeepers and consent form.



### **The Induction Experience of Secondary English Language Novice Teachers in Libyan Secondary Schools**

Name of Researcher: Naema A. Alarabi Alkhaboli  
College of education, Community and Health

#### **Dear Principal**

I am currently enrolled as a PhD student at Liverpool John Moores University, where I am conducting a research study concerned with novice teachers' experiences during the first three years of their professional practice teaching English in secondary schools. By investigating their experiences and perceptions I hope to identify their learning needs and the challenges confronting them. Novice teachers in Libya are currently not provided with any induction support. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will be of relevance to policy makers and practitioners and all those concerned with the continuing professional development of novice teachers.

I am inviting you to participate in my study entitled: **The Induction Experience of Secondary English Language Novice Teachers in Libyan Secondary Schools** and would like to ask you to read this letter carefully.

Please note that participation is voluntary and that participants are absolutely free to withdraw at any time. All responses will be anonymous. Participants are asked to complete a survey which will take approximately 20 minutes.. Please rest assured that participation will be anonymous. All novice teachers and the schools where they are employed will not be named in the survey.

Follow-up interviews will be conducted with a smaller sample of approximately 30 teachers to examine the key issues emerging from the survey in greater depth. Each interview will take approximately 30 minutes and take place a time and place convenient for you.

It is anticipated that the findings of the study will enable head teachers, policy maker and practitioners to understand better the challenges confronting newcomers to the profession and how to respond to their individual professional development needs most appropriately.

I would be delighted if you could support this research by giving your permission for novice teachers in your school to participate in this study. If you agree, please complete the enclosed consent form. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact myself or my supervisor.

Respectfully yours,

Naema Alkhaboli  
Liverpool John Moores University

Contact details:

Researcher: Naema Alkhaboli      Mob: 0925213278  
E: n203196333@yahoo.com

Supervisor: Prof Marion Jones      T: 0151 231 5277      E: m.jones@ljmu.ac.uk

## GATEKEEPER CONSENT

**The induction Experience of Secondary English Language Novice Teachers in Libyan Secondary Schools**



**I hereby give my permission for any novice teacher of English as a foreign language to take part in the above named study.**

<b>To complete the survey questionnaire.</b>	
<b>To participate in a face-to-face, audio recorded interviews.</b>	

**Principal's name:**

**School:**

**Cell Phone:**

**Email:**

**Signature**

**Date**

المعرفة  
حق طبيعي لكل إنسان

الجمهورية العربية السورية  
اللجنة الشعبية العامة للتعليم

اللجان في كل مكان

التاريخ: ٢٠١٢ / ١٢ / ٢٠١٥ ف  
الموافق: / / و.ر

الرقم الإشاري: ٣١١ / ٥



اللجنة الشعبية للتعليم بشعبية الزاوية

الإخوة/ مديري مؤسسات التعليم الثانوي

؛؛ بعد التحية

في إطار التعاون المشترك بين اللجنة الشعبية للتعليم والبحث  
العلمي بشعبية الزاوية وجامعة ليفربول ببريطانيا  
يسلم عليكم ونتمنى تقديم يد العون والمساعدة للأخت/ نعيمة على العربي الخبولى  
في مجال تخصصها

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

ناجي مفتاح الأزرق

مدير مكتب شؤون التعليم الثانوي بشعبية الزاوية



صورة الى

الذوري

\*\*\*\*\*

الأزرق..... بريش

اللجان في كل مكان



لاديمقراطية  
بدون مؤتمرات شعبية

رابطة عربيه العربيه الشعبيه للشعبه الاسلاميه والعلميه  
اللجنة الشعبية العامة للتعليم  
اللجنة الشعبية للتعليم بشعبية النقاط الخمس

التاريخ : / / 13

الموافق : 15 / 12 / 2010 ف

الرقم الإشاري : /

## الأخ / مديري مؤسسات التعليم الثانوي

تحيية طيبة وبعد ...

في إطار .. التعاون المشترك بين اللجنة الشعبية للتعليم والبحث العلمي

بشعبية النقاط وجامعة ليفربول ببريطانيا .

يطلب منكم تقديم العون والمساعدة للأخت / نعيمة علي العربي الخبوني

في مجال تخصصها .

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

زائد الكونسي الناجح

مدير مكتب التعليم الثانوي

مسورة إلى :-  
تو الملف الشخصى  
الفرنى ف. الفرجانى //

**Appendix B:** Participant information sheet, reply slip and consent form

**LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY  
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**



**The Induction Experience of Secondary English Language  
Novice Teachers in Libyan Secondary Schools**

Name of Researcher: Naema A. Alarabi Alkhaboli  
College of education, Community and Leisure

**Dear Colleague**

You are being invited to take part in a research study investigating the induction experiences of English language novice teachers in secondary schools in Libya. Before you decide whether you take part, it is important that you are aware of why the research is being done. Please take time to read the following information. Please do not hesitate to request further information if there is anything that is not clear, take time to decide if you want to take part or not.

**What is the research about?**

The research is about the experiences and perceptions of Libyan secondary school teachers of English in their first three years of professional practice. It is concerned with their personal and professional needs during the early stages of their teaching career and how they can be adequately addressed. It aims to inform the development of a framework for the support of novice English teachers in secondary schools. It intends to generate and report findings from the perspectives of the novice teachers with the aim of informing policy and practice with regard to teacher induction. As

such the study should be of interest to all those concerned with the support of novice teachers, teacher educators, head teachers, and policy makers and be of benefit of new entrants to the profession and the pupils they teach. It will involve an initial survey and follow-up, face-to-face interviews.

### **The purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the induction process of novice teachers and use this information to develop a support for novice teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools during the first three years of their professional practice. It seeks to investigate the challenges confronting them and to identify their personal and professional needs and how they can be adequately addressed. It intends to generate and report findings from the perspective of the novice teachers with the aim of informing policy and practice with regard to teacher induction.

### **Do I have to take part?**

Participation will be entirely voluntary and you will have the right to withdraw at any time of the study without giving a reason. Your decision will not affect your rights to any services in any way.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

The study involves a questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The interview will be face-to-face, will be audio-recorded, and should take no longer than 30 minutes. It will take place at a time and place convenient for you. The entire study will be completed in December 2012.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

There are no particular risks involved for respondents participating in this study.

### **Anonymity of participants and confidentiality of information**

You will be asked to fill in the survey questionnaire and to participate in a face-to-face, recorded interview. For the guarantee of your identity the survey will be anonymous and anyone participating in an interview will be protected by the use of pseudonyms. All

information divulged will be treated in the strictest confidence and only be available to the researcher. The data collected will be stored electronically and be protected by a password. All information generated by the survey and interview will be destroyed two years after completion of the study.

**Contact details:**

Researcher: Naema A. Alarabi Alkhboli, Liverpool John Moores University

Mob: 07588451660 E: n203196333@yahoo.com

Supervisor: Professor Marion Jones, Liverpool John Moores University,

E: [m.jones@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:m.jones@ljmu.ac.uk) T: 0151 231 5277

**INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION****The induction Experience of Secondary English Language  
Novice Teachers in Libyan Secondary Schools****REPLY SLIP**

**I would like to participate in face-to-face, audio recorded interview in connection with the above named study and am happy to be contacted by the researcher to arrange time and place.**

**My contact details are:**

**Name:**

**School:**

**Cell Phone:**

**Email:**

**Signature**

**Date**

## LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

### CONSENT FORM

#### The Induction Experience of Secondary English Language Novice Teachers in Libyan Secondary Schools

**Name of Researcher:**

Naema A. Alarabi Alkholi, Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure

I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.

I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential.

I agree to take part in the above study.

I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and I am happy to proceed.

I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
Naema A. Alarabi Alkholi		
Name of Person taking consent (if different from researcher)	Date	Signature

*Note: When completed 1 copy for participant and 1 copy for researcher*

## Appendix C: Survey questionnaire

## QUESTIONNAIRE



## The induction experiences of Secondary English Language Novice Teachers in Libyan Secondary Schools

### 1. Your profile

Your gender?

Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------	---------------------------------

How long have you have been teaching?

year one <input type="checkbox"/>	Year two <input type="checkbox"/>	Year three <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Your school is in a:

Rural area <input type="checkbox"/>	city <input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------	-------------------------------

Did you obtain your degree at a:

College of education <input type="checkbox"/>	Faculty of Arts <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--

Specialization:

Economic <input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic Science <input type="checkbox"/>
Social Science <input type="checkbox"/>	Life Science <input type="checkbox"/>	Languages <input type="checkbox"/>

For the following sections please indicate your agreement/disagree with the statements by placing a tick in the appropriate box.

1 indicating 'strongly agree' and 5 indicating 'strongly disagree'

#### 2. Pre -Service Experience

Question Number	A. Pre-Service Experience	strongly agree	disagree	Do not know	disagree	strongly disagree
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	<b>Pre</b> -service (initial training) has been beneficial in managing the challenges I face as a novice teacher	1	2	3	4	5
2.	<b>Pre</b> -service training has been relevant to my needs as a novice teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

3.	Pre-service training has been provided me with the knowledge base for teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
----	---	---	---	---	---	---

**Further comments:**

### 3. Support provided to me in my first three years of practice

#### 3.1. By a mentor

Questions Number	Mentor support					
		strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	strongly disagree
4	My mentor has provided me with an introduction to school rules and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
5	My mentor has provided ongoing support through regularly scheduled meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
6	My mentor has provided encouragement during the beginning of the school year.	1	2	3	4	5
7	My mentor has provided assistance in the development of my individual growth plan.	1	2	3	4	5
8	My mentor has helped me understand the professional expectations concerning classroom practice and professional responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
9	My mentor has helped me identify solutions to problems and concerns related to school.	1	2	3	4	5
10	My mentor has facilitated learning opportunities for me	1	2	3	4	5
11	My mentor has facilitated observing experienced teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
12	My mentor has facilitated working collaborative with other colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
13	My mentor has undertaken regular classroom observations and provided me with valuable feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Through regular conversations my mentor has helped me to engage in critical evaluation of my teaching practices.	1	2	3	4	5
15	My mentor has helped me to set targets for continued professional growth.	1	2	3	4	5
16	My mentor has helped me to establish positive working relationships with my colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	My mentor has helped me develop my interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships with :( if your answer is 1 or 2 then answers 17.a, 17.b, and 17.c. If your answer is 3, 4 or 5 then go to question 18	1	2	3	4	5

17.a	Students	1	2	3	4	5
17.b	Parents	1	2	3	4	5
17.c	Colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
18	My mentor has served as a professional role model	1	2	3	4	5
19	My mentor has accepted me as a professional colleague	1	2	3	4	5
20.	My mentor has made time for me when I needed assistance.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	My mentor has provided me with specific and relevant support and assistance.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	My mentor has listened to my concerns and helped me identify solutions.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	My mentor has been flexible and open minded in assisting me.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	My mentor has helped me balance my own life with teaching.	1	2	3	4	5

**Further comments:**

### 3.2. By my principal

Questions Number	Principal support	Response options				
		strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	strongly disagree
25	My principal has provided a school orientation session prior to the start of school.	1	2	3	4	5
26	My principal has provided introductions to staff members that are keys to operations at the school level.	1	2	3	4	5
27	My principal has observed lessons about (two, three, four times) throughout the course of the school year.	1	2	3	4	5
28	My principal has provided prompt feedback following observations that encourage and challenge the beginning teacher to improve classroom instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
29	My principal has encouraged continued participation in staff development activities aimed at improving classroom instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
30	My principal has provided support with classroom management, when needed.	1	2	3	4	5
31	My principal was readily available to discuss concerns and questions related to school	1	2	3	4	5

	concerns throughout the beginning teacher experience.					
--	---	--	--	--	--	--

**Further comments:**

#### 4. Availability of resources

Question Number	Resources	strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	strongly disagree
32	I have materials (textbook) to teach.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I have teaching aids to teach.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I have been allocated my own classroom	1	2	3	4	5
35	I have a specific room used as a lab for listening to authentic material ( native speakers)	1	2	3	4	5
36	The time devoted to formal, weekly meetings with my mentor has been adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
37	Time for teaching the English language curriculum is enough.	1	2	3	4	5
38	I can manage my workload.	1	2	3	4	5
39	I often have to take work home.	1	2	3	4	5
40	I have been provided with administrative support.	1	2	3	4	5

**Further comments:**

#### 5. Classroom practice - areas in need of development

Questions Number	In which aspects of your professional development as a teacher has mentoring support been particularly beneficial?	great deal	Some	None
41	Fostering students' creativity	1	2	3
42	Managing disruptive behaviour in the classroom	1	2	3
43	Motivating students who show low interest in school work	1	2	3
44	Employing teaching and learning strategies appropriate to individual learner abilities	1	2	3
45	Assisting parents in helping their children do well in school	1	2	3
46	Developing strategies to challenge able and high achieving students	1	2	3

47	Any other areas:
----	------------------

### **6. The ideal mentor**

- What kind of personal and professional characteristics do you feel the ideal mentor should have?
- What kind of support do you feel you need as a novice teacher?

**Thank you for your assistance.**

## Arabic Version of Teachers' Questionnaire

ترجمة استبيان المعلمين

ملفك الشخصي

جنسك؟

ذكر	أنثى
-----	------

مدة خبرتك في التدريس؟

سنة	سنتين	3 سنوات
-----	-------	---------

مدرستك في:

الريف	المدينة
-------	---------

تحصلت على الدرجة الخاصة بك من:

كلية التربية	كلية الآداب
--------------	-------------

التخصص

علوم اساسيه	علوم حياة	علوم اجتماعيه
علوم هندسيه	علوم اقتصاديه	لغات

للجزء التالي يرجى بيان موافقتك / عدم موافقتك مع البيانات عن طريق وضع علامة في الخانة المناسبة

1 تشير 'أوافق بشدة' و 5 تشير 'لا أوافق بشدة'

1. الدراسة السابقة

ر	الدراسة السابقة	'أوافق بشدة'	'أوافق'	لا أدرى	'لا أوافق'	'لا أوافق بشدة'
1	دراستي بالإضافة للعمل كانت مفيدة لي في التغلب على التحديات التي تواجهني كمدرس مبتدئ	1	2	3	4	5

5	4	3	2	1	دراستي بالإضافة للعملي ذات صلة باحتياجاتي كمدرس مبتدئ.	2
5	4	3	2	1	دراستي بالإضافة للعملي زودتني بالمعرفة الأساسية للتدريس.	3

## تعليقات اخري

## 2. دعم زودت به في سنواتي الأولى من ممارستي للمهنة

## 2. 1 بواسطة الموجه

ر	دعم الموجه	'أوافق بشدة	'أوافق	لا أدرى	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق بشدة
4	موجهي زودني بمقدمة عن نظام (قوانين) المدرسة وإجراءاتها.	1	2	3	4	5
5	موجهي زودني بالدعم المستمر من خلال الاجتماعات التي تعقد بانتظام.	1	2	3	4	5
6	موجهي قدم لي التشجيع في بداية السنة الدراسية.	1	2	3	4	5
7	موجهي قدم لي المساعدة في تطوير خطة نموي الفردية.	1	2	3	4	5
8	ساعدني موجهي في فهم التوقعات المهنية المتعلقة بممارسة المهنة داخل الصف والمسؤوليات المهنية.	1	2	3	4	5
9	ساعدني موجهي في إيجاد الحلول للمشاكل والمخاوف ذات الصلة بالمدرسة.	1	2	3	4	5
10	يسر موجهي إيجاد فرص التعلم بالنسبة لي	1	2	3	4	5
11	يسر موجهي لي مراقبة المدرسين ذوي الخبرة.	1	2	3	4	5
12	يسر موجهي لي العمل التعاوني مع الزملاء الآخرين	1	2	3	4	5
13	تعهد موجهي بملاحظاتي بانتظام في الصف وقدم لي معلومات قيمة بناء عن ملاحظاته.	1	2	3	4	5
14	ساعدني موجهي من خلال أحاديثي المنتظمة معه في المشاركة في تقييم نقدي لطريقة تدريسي.	1	2	3	4	5
15	ساعدني موجهي لوضع أهداف للنمو المهني المستمر.	1	2	3	4	5
16	ساعدني موجهي على إقامة علاقات عمل إيجابية مع زملائي.	1	2	3	4	5
17	ساعدني موجهي على تطوير مهاراتي الشخصية لإنشاء علاقات إيجابية والحفاظ عليها مع:	1	2	3	4	5
17أ	الطلاب	1	2	3	4	5
17ب	الآباء	1	2	3	4	5

5	4	3	2	1	الزملاء	17 ج
5	4	3	2	1	عمل موجهي كنموذج يحتذى به مهنيا	18
5	4	3	2	1	موجهي قبل بي كمعلم وكزميل للمهنة	19
5	4	3	2	1	موجهي خصص وقت لي عندما كنت بحاجة للمساعدة	20

5	4	3	2	1	زودني موجهي بالدعم المناسب والمساعدة ذات الصلة بالتدريس	21
5	4	3	2	1	موجهي استمع لمخاوفي ومشاكلي وساعدني على ايجاد الحلول	22
5	4	3	2	1	أبدى موجهي مرونة وانفتاحا في مساعدتي.	23
5	4	3	2	1	ساعدني موجهي في توازن حياتي الخاصة مع التدريس.	24

## 2.2 بواسطة المدير

ر	دعم المدير	'أوافق بشدة	'أوافق	لا ادري	لا'أوافق بشدة	لا'أوافق بشدة
25	قدم مدير المدرسة جلسة توجيهيه قبل بدء الدراسة	1	2	3	4	5
26	قدم مديري مقدمة للمعلمين التي هي مفاتيح للعمليات على مستوى المدرسة.	1	2	3	4	5
27	حضر مديري الحصة معي حوالي (اثنان، ثلاثة، أربعة مرات) خلال العام الدراسي	1	2	3	4	5
28	قدم مديري ملاحظاته عن زيارته والتي تشجع المعلمين الجدد لتحسين التدريس.	1	2	3	4	5
29	شجعني مديري على المشاركة المستمرة في أنشطة تنمية قدرات المعلمين والتي تهدف إلى تحسين العملية التعليمية	1	2	3	4	5
30	قدم مديري المساعدة لي لإدارة الصف عند الحاجة.	1	2	3	4	5
31	مديري متواجد دائما لمناقشة المسائل ذات الصلة بشواغل المعلم الجديد	1	2	3	4	5

## 3 المصادر

ر	المصادر	'أوافق بشدة	'أوافق	لا ادري	لا'أوافق بشدة	لا'أوافق بشدة
32	لدي الكتاب لتدريس المادة الدراسية (المنهج).	1	2	3	4	5

5	4	3	2	1	لدي وسائل تعليمية لتدريس المنهج	33
5	4	3	2	1	لدي غرفة مخصصة لطلابي لأخذ الدرس بها	34
5	4	3	2	1	لدي غرفة خاصة تستعمل كمعمل لسماع حوارات بين اناس يتحدثون الإنجليزية كلغة اولي.	35
5	4	3	2	1	الوقت المخصص للاجتماعات الرسمية الأسبوعية مع موجهي كافي	36
5	4	3	2	1	عدد الساعات المخصصة لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كافي	37
5	4	3	2	1	أستطيع القيام بأعمالي التدريسية وادارتها مثل: تحضير الدروس. التدريس. اعداد الامتحانات. وضع الدرجات. مقابلات. تفاهم مع اولياء الأمور. الخ	38
5	4	3	2	1	في كثير من الأحيان على بإكمال العمل في المنزل (تصحيح، تحضير دروس، الخ	39
5	4	3	2	1	انا مزودة بالدعم الإداري	40

4. الجوانب التي تحتاج للتطوير داخل الصف -

لا	احيانا	نعم	في اي جوانب التطور المهني الخاصة بك كمعلم كان دعم الموجه مفيدا لك بشكل خاص؟	ر
3	2	1	تشجيع الطلاب على الإبداع	41
3	2	1	إدارة السلوك الفوضوي في الصف	42
3	2	1	تحفيز الطلاب الذين تنخفض لديهم الرغبة في الدراسة	43
3	2	1	توظيف استراتيجيات التعليم والتعلم المناسبة لقدرات المتعلم الفردية	44
3	2	1	مساعدة الآباء لمساعدة أبنائهم بشكل جيد علي الدراسة	45
3	2	1	وضع استراتيجيات لتحدي الصعاب وزيادة قدرة الطلاب على التحصيل	46
			أي جوانب أخرى؟	47

- ما الخصائص الشخصية والمهنية التي ينبغي ان يتحلّى بها الموجه المثالي حسب رأيك؟

- ما الدعم الذي تحتاجه كمدرس جديد ؟



## **Appendix D : Interview questions**

### **Novice teachers' experiences**

- How would you describe your experiences as a novice teacher after having been in the job for one/two/three years?

### **Challenges**

- What challenges have you encountered during this time?

#### **Professional Practice**

- Which aspects of your classroom practice have you found most challenging?

#### **Strategies used to manage problems**

- How did you address these challenges confronting you?

#### **Concerns**

- What were your main worries during your first term at your new school?

### **Support**

- What types of supports have you received?
- What kind of support was available?
- What kind of support did you find most helpful?
- What kind of support did you find less helpful?
- Describe the role your principal has played with regard your classroom management?
- In what ways did your mentor provide support and encouragement during the first days and weeks of school?
- Describe the ways in which your mentor helped you to establish relationships with staff, students; and parents. ?
- When faced with a difficult situation at school, describe the level of assistance received from your mentor in identifying solution to your problems?
- What types of support and guidance have you received from your colleagues, and mentors with regard to becoming an effective classroom practitioner? How helpful has it been? How could it be improved further?

- What types of supports have you received from your colleagues and mentors to help you with time management? Is it helping? What could be more useful?

### **Pre-service/ preparation**

- How well prepared did you feel when starting teaching?
- How well, do you feel, did your university programme prepare you for EFL teaching?
- Please specify areas where you felt adequately prepared and areas where you felt inadequately prepared.
- Which aspects of planning, teaching, assessment, and class management have been key areas in your professional development?
- How well did their prior school, preparation, and experience help prepare you to effectively motivate students academically, behaviourally?

### **Induction**

- What kind of induction did you receive, if any?
- What role did your principal play in your induction and your early professional development?

#### **Work load**

- As a novice teacher do you have a reduced\_workload? If yes, please specify. ?
- How often do you take work home with you?

#### **Working environment**

- Were you supplied with adequate materials and resources to teach the curriculum?
- Were you allocated your own classroom?
- Have you been allocated a work space?

### **Relationship with the students**

- How would you describe your relationship with the students?

### **Confidence**

- How confident are you as a novice teacher when communicating with parents? (Orally and through written reports).

- How confident as a teacher do you feel now?

### **Integrating into the school community**

- Do you remember the first week or month in your new school? How did you feel?
- How would you describe your relationships with your colleagues and the principal?
- Are you involved in any collaborative activities involving colleagues?
- Do you meet with colleagues socially?

### **Mentor - novice teachers' relationship**

- Have you received any mentoring support? If yes, who has performed this role? How formal/informal was it?
- What role has mentorship played for you as a novice teacher? Would you change anything about the type of mentorship you received? If so, what?
- Did your mentor pose any challenges for you?

### **Main achievements**

- What have been your main achievements since starting teaching in this school?

### **Recommendations**

- What kind of support would have made your first year in teaching easier?
- How could mentorship be improved for novice teachers?
- Which aspects of your professional development do you feel require further development? Why?
- What kind of support would you like to be provided with?

### **Novice teachers' wish list**

- What would you tell a university graduate who considers teaching English in a secondary school in Libya?
- Do you feel that a formal induction programme would be of benefit to you?

- Do you feel that a professional standards framework for teachers would be helpful in developing competence and confidence?

## Arabic version of interview questions

- صف تجربتك كمدرس مبتدئ في سنواتك الأولى من التدريس؟

.....

.....

- ما هي الصعوبات التي واجهتك خلال تلك الفترة؟

.....

.....

- كيف تصدبت لهذه التحديات التي واجهتك؟ ..

.....

.....

- ما أنواع الدعم الذي تلقيت في سنواتك الأولى من التدريس؟

.....

.....

.. كيف شعرت بمدى اعدادك عند بدء التدريس؟

.....

.....

. كم لك سنه في التدريس؟

.....

.....

. اي الجوانب في التدريس داخل الصف اكثر صعوبة؟

.....

.....

. كيف تصف علاقتك مع الطلاب؟

.....

.....

. ما مدى ثققتك كمدرس مبتدئ عند الاتصال بأولياء الأمور؟ (شفويا ومن خلال تقارير مكتوبة).

.....

.....

. ما هو الدعم الذي كان متوافرا؟

.....

.....

. ما هو الدعم الذي كان أكثر فائدة؟

.....

.....

- ما هو الدعم الذي كان أقل فائدة؟

.....

.....

- ما هو الدعم الذي كان سيجعل سنتك الأولى في التدريس أسهل؟

.....

.....

- هل تتذكر أول أسبوع أو شهر في مدرستك الجديدة؟ كيف كان شعورك؟

.....

.....

- ما هي مشاغلك الرئيسية خلال الأشهر الأولى من او في المدرسة؟

.....

.....

. كيف تصف علاقاتك مع زملائك، ومع مديرك؟

.....

.....

. هل تشارك في أي أنشطة تعاونية مع زملاء؟

.....

.....

. هل تلتقي مع زملائك اجتماعيا؟

.....

.....

. هل تلقيت أي دعم توجيهي؟ إذا نعم، من ادي هذا الدور؟ هل كان رسمي / غير رسمي؟

.....

.....

. ما هو الدور الذي لعبه التوجيه لك كمدرس مبتدئ؟ هل ترغب في تغيير أي شيء في التوجيه الذي تلقيته؟ إذا كان الأمر كذلك، فما هو؟

.....

.....

. في أي النواحي قدم لك الموجه الدعم والتشجيع خلال الأيام الأولى والأسابيع الأولى من المدرسة؟

.....

.....

- كم عدد المرات التي زارك فيها الموجه خلال إحدى السنوات الماضية؟

.....

.....

. هل كان موجهك يشكل عائقا بالنسبة لك لعدم تواجده عند الحاجة؟

.....

.....

. كيف يمكن تحسين التوجيه بالنسبة للمعلمين الجدد؟

.....  
 .....

. صف الطرق التي تساعدك بها موجهك لإقامة علاقات مع الزملاء والطلاب، وأولياء الأمور.

.....  
 .....

. عندما تواجه وضعاً صعباً في المدرسة، صف مستوى المساعدة التي تلقاها من موجهك في إيجاد الحل لمشاكلك.

.....  
 .....

. صف تأثير التوجيه في تطورك في التدريس.

.....  
 .....

. كيف يمكن تحسين العلاقة بين المعلم والموجه؟

.....  
 .....

. ما هو الدور الذي قام به المدير في تطورك المهني؟

.....  
 .....

. صف دور مديرك فيما يتعلق بإدارة الصف.

.....  
 .....

. ما مدي إعداد الجامعة أو المعهد لك لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية نظرياً وعملياً؟

.....  
 .....

. حدد النواحي التي شعرت بانك فيها معد اعداد كاف والنواحي التي شعرت بانك فيها غير مهياً بصورة كافية.

.....  
 .....

- ما طول الفترة التي قضيتها في التربية العملي (المتصلة والمنفصلة) طيلة فترة دراستك؟ هل كانت كافية لإعدادك

اعداد جيد للقيام بمهمة التدريس؟

.....  
 .....

- ما مدي إشراف الموجهين والمشرفين؟ وهل كانوا من ذوي الخبرة في هذا المجال؟

.....

.....

-اي الجوانب الأتية (تحضير. تدريس. تقييم. ادارة الفصل) كانت اساسيه في تطورك المهني؟

.....

.....

. ما نوع الدعم والتوجيه الذي تلقيته من زملائك، وموجهيك لتصبح متمرس ودا فاعليه؟ ما مدي مساعدته؟ كيف يمكن تحسينه أكثر؟

.....

.....

كيف كان إعداد الجامعة لك سابقا وخبرتك من التربية العملي مساعدا لك لتحفيز الطلاب أكاديميا وسلوكيا؟

.....

.....

.. كمدرس جديد هل لديك تخفيض في ساعات العمل عن بقية المدرسين القدامى؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، فيرجى تحديد ذلك.

.....

.....

... كم مرة تأخذ العمل معك للمنزل اسبوعيا؟

.....

.....

. ما الدعم الذي تلقيته من زملائك وموجهيك لمساعدتك في إدارة الوقت؟ هل كان مساعدا؟ ما الذي يمكن أن يكون أكثر فائدة؟

.....

.....

. هل كنت مزودا بالمواد والموارد (مراجع. مكتبه اشراطه...) الكافية لتدريس المنهج؟

.....

.....

. هل كان لك فصل دراسي مخصص لإعطاء الدرس لطلابك؟

.....

.....

.. هل تم تخصيص مساحة للعمل بها (مكان للتحضير والتصحيح واللقاء بأولياء الامور؟) ؟

.....

.....

... ما مدي ثقتك كمعلم الآن بعد ان قضيت سنوات في التدريس؟

.....  
 .....  
 . ما هي إنجازاتك الرئيسية منذ بدء تدريسك في هذه المدرسة؟  
 .....

.....  
 .....  
 . ما هي جوانب تطور المهني التي تشعر بانها تتطلب المزيد من التطوير؟ لماذا؟  
 .....

.....  
 .....  
 . ما الدعم الذي ترغب أن تزود به؟  
 .....

.....  
 .....  
 . هل تشعر بأن وجود برنامج التربية العملي لمدة اطول وتحت الاشراف والتوجيه التام سيكون ذا فائدة كبيرة بالنسبة لك؟  
 .....

.....  
 .....  
 . هل تشعر بأن وضع إطار المعايير المهنية للمعلمين سيكون مفيد في تطوير الكفاءة والثقة؟  
 .....

.....  
 .....  
 . ماذا تقول لخريج جامعي سيقوم بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في إحدى المدارس الثانوية في ليبيا؟  
 .....

### Appendix E: Questions for the mentor:

1. Do you feel that novice teachers get enough support?

هل تعتقد أن المعلمين المبتدئين متحصلين على الدعم الكافي؟

2. Should novice teachers be entitled to support?

هل ينبغي أو يحق للمعلمين الجدد ان يدعموا

3. Should there be an induction programme for new entrants to the profession?

وهو عبارة عن برنامج بعد التخرج لتدريب المعلمين الجدد لمدة سنة تحت الاشراف الكامل والملاحظة التامة من الموجهين. وتوفير جميع التسهيلات لهم

4. Should newly qualified teachers be entitled to a reduced workload during their first year of service?

هل ينبغي أو يحق للمعلمين المبتدئين تخفيض عدد الحصص لهم خلال السنة الأولى من الخدمة؟

5. Do you think novice teachers would benefit from regular observation by a mentor?

هل تعتقد أن المعلمين الجدد سيستفيدون من المراقبة المنتظمة من قبل الموجه؟

6. Do you think novice teachers would benefit from observing more experienced colleagues?

هل تعتقد ان المعلمين المبتدئين يمكن أن يستفيدوا من ملاحظة الزملاء الأكثر خبرة؟

7. Do you think a professional standards framework would be helpful in assessing novice teachers' practice?

هل تعتقد ان إطار المعايير المهنية (درجات مثلا) ستكون مفيدة في تقييم اداء المعلمين المبتدئين من اجل تطويرهم وذلك خلال الشهور الاولى بعد التخرج؟

8. Should these standards be used to decide who can and who cannot be allowed to join the profession?

هل ينبغي أن تستخدم هذه المعايير لتحديد من يسمح له ومن لا يسمح له بالانضمام للمهنة؟

9. Why do many people enter the mentoring profession?

## بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

بكل الحب والتقدير أبعث لكم ما استطعت تحصيله في هذا المجال شاكرًا أرق مشاعركم وسماحة مقالكم املا لكم التوفيق والسداد والنجاح في خدمة الوطن والمواطن.

**-هل المعلمين المبتدئين متحصلين على الدعم الكافي من المعلمين الزملاء-الموجه-المدير؟**  
إذا أردنا ان نتحدث عن التعليم في ليبيا فقد يأخذ منا أمدا طويلا للتحدث ما ترغيبين الوصول إليه ولكن بكل إيجاز أقول إن الدعم الذي نتحدثين عليه ينطلق بدء من المعلم نفسه ومدى حرصه على تنمية قدراته العلمية والمهنية بالاطلاع المتواصل وارتياذ المكتبات والمحاضرات والندوات ورسائل التحصيل الحديث؛ حتى يمكنه أن يكون معلما ناجحا يفيد ويستفيد

أما من حيث دعم المعلمين القدامى للمعلمين الجدد يتوقف أولا على حرص المعلم المستجد ومدى قدرته على كسب المهارات من الجيل الذي يسبقه وفي كل الحالات هناك نوع من التعاون أما من حيث التوجيه فأقول ان تدني مستوى التعليم قد أثر سلبا على كل المستويات ولم يعرف بالدرجات ولا غيرها فالوهن الثقافي أصاب كل الشرائح دون استثناء بدءا من الطالب إلى المعلم الى الموجه إلى الإدارة وحتى قدرة المشرفين على العملية التربوية وصلت الى أدنى مستوياتها.

### **-هل يحق للمعلمين الجدد ان يدعوا؟**

كما ذكرت انفا بأن الأمر يتعلق بصاحب الحاجة وكما يقال

You can take the horse to the lake, but you cannot make him drink

نعم لأنه من الواجب والضروري دعم المعلم المستجد وإخضاعه الى عملية " تربص " لا تقل عن سنة دراسية؛ يتواجد المستجد فيها مع المعلمين القدامى لاكتساب المهنية اللازمة للتدريس؛ وعلينا كمسؤولين على العملية التربوية أن نجعل هذا البرنامج في حسابنا ومحطاتنا التعليمية لنحصل على معلمين قادرين على العطاء.

### **-هل يحق للمعلمين الجدد تخفيض عدد الحصص لهم في السنة الأولى من الخدمة؟**

كما أسلفنا لتتبعنا طرق التدريس الصحيحة وقمنا بإعداد معلمين قادرين على الانسجام في العملية التربوية بدء إخضاعهم لعملية التربص؛ بعدها يكون المعلم المستجد قد تعود على العطاء مع ضرورة تخفيض الحصص لهم بالقدر المناسب حتى لا يحدث الملل من أول الطريق.

-هل المدرسين الجدد يستفيدون من المراقبة المنتظمة من قبل الموجه؟  
ان الاستفادة قائمة يقدر تواجدها فهي من البديهيات بأنك كلما اجتهدت في المراقبة والمتابعة بطرق تربوية صحيحة كلما تحصلت على معلمين قادرين على العطاء وإذا توفر الموجه الواعي لمهنته؛ فلا شك بأن الفائدة ستكون كبيرة وفوائده بالقدر الذي يعطيه الموجه.

هل تعتقد ان إطار المعايير المهنية (درجات مثلا) ستكون مفيدة في تقييم اداء المعلمين المبتدئين من اجل تطويرهم وذلك خلال الشهور الاولى بعد التخرج؟  
لقد اتفق علماء النفس والقائمون على العملية التعليمية بأن التقييم، عملية مهمة لكل المعلمين وخاصة الجدد منهم، ويكون هذا بالدرجات حتى تحده عملية التقدم والنجاح أو الفشل، كما أن عملية التقييم بالدرجات تعتبر المرآة التي تحدد التقدم ونجاح عملية التقييم تعطيك فرصة لتغيير مسار التقييم من خلال ارتفاع الدرجات من انخفاضها. وهذا أسلوب متفق عليه في كل أنحاء العالم وحتى في غير العملية التعليمية فالدرجات هي المعيار الأمثل للتقييم وهذا يدفعنا الى الحديث عن عملية الترحيل في التعليم الأساسي والذي يشجع بعض المعلمين على التغيير بواجبهم الأمثل، لأنه لم يأخذوا بالدرجات كـمـيـار للتقـيـم

-هل ينبغي أن تستخدم هذه المعايير لتحديد من يسمح له ومن لا يسمح له بالانضمام للمهنة؟  
أما من ناحية صلاحية المعلم بناء على الدرجات فهي عملية نسبية لتحديد معايير النجاح. وان التدريب على هذه المهنة الإنسانية ينبغي ان يكون لمدة سنة كاملة كما هو معمول به في تونس. وكما اسلفت سابقا بأن المعلم المستجد يجب أن يخضع الى تقييم مستمر عن طريق التربص الذي أشرف اليه سابقاً، كما أن الفشل والنجاح عملية بديهية يمكن أن تحدث مع اي انسان وليس لنا سبيل لتحديد ذلك الا عن طريق الدرجات، ويقدر ما يحصل على الدرجات بقدر ما نحدد صلاحية الفرد للعملية التعليمية أولاً. وبهذا اقر بأن الدرجات هي الوسيلة التي تحدد مهنية المعلم من عدمها.

-إذا أردنا أن نتناقش العملية التربوية في ليبيا وخاصة في السنوات الأخيرة من التسعينات حتى إلي سنة 2010، فالحديث في ذلك يطول ولايسعه كتب أو مجلدات  
فالتسيب الإداري في جميع دواليب الدولة والمحسوبة والرشوة والوساطة وغيرها من الأمور الأخرى تأثر بها التعليم سلبا وفي كل المراحل منافيه الي تدني الرواتب الأهمال والتسيب والنهب المادي الذي أصاب كل الشرائح، كل ذلك جعل الكثير من المعلمين ينتقلون إلى التوجيه لكل الأسباب التي وردت في سؤالكم.

-ان الهروب من الالتزام الذي يجب أن يتحلى به المدرس كان سببا رئيسيا في التخلي عن التدريس حيث ان الموجه غير ملزم بأن يتواجد في ساعة محددة فهو الذي يحدد الوقت الذي يناسبه.

- إن تدني الرواتب كان سببا آخر، حيث أن الموجه أصبح سائق تاكسي وتاجر خضار وغيرها من المهن التي تدر عليه المال.

كما أن عدم الالتزام والرغبة وعدم جديده المقررات والمناهج وفراغها من المحتوى الثقافي والتوجه الي الفكر السياسي في كل شيء، جعل الكثير من المعلمين يهربون الي التوجيه لوجود فسحة من الوقت للهروب وعدم وجود الالتزام المهني الذي يجب أن يتوفر في المعلم.

إضافة إلى كل ما سبق لا تنسي الفراغ الثقافي والتحصيل العلمي المتدني لدي المعلمين وعدم قدرتهم في كثير من الأحوال التمشي مع المقررات الدراسية والتي لم توضع على معايير تربوية صحيحة وعلميه تتمشي مع قدرات الطالب والمعلم.

- الاتكالية وعدم الاكتراث وانعدام الحس الوطني الصادق والشعور بالمسؤولية الدينية والوطنية وما تقتضيه المصلحة العامة للوطن أو المواطن، جعل الكثيرين يلجئون إلى التوجيه كوسيلة للخلاص من الالتزام والتقيد.

- وكما أسلفت أن التعليم في ليبيا يعيش في مرحلة معتمه لا يمكن إصلاحها أو التخلص منها في مدة قصيرة، وأن الوهن والضعف الثقافي وعدم وجود مصادر التغذية الثقافي كالمحاضرات والندوات والدورات التثقيفية والبعثات ودور الكتب وغيرها من الأمور الأخرى-كالكبت النفسي والاحتقان السياسي وانعدام المسؤولية الأخلاقية والوطنية والمهنية التي يجب أن يتحلى بها المدرس كانت أسباب للتوجه إلى عملية التوجيه أو أي عمل آخر يدر مالا.

وختاماً لنا في هذا المجال الكثير من القول ربما طرق للإصلاح إذا وجدت الأذان الصاغية والإدارة الصائبة والأفراد الذين يقدمون مصلحة الوطن والمجتمع على مصالحهم الخاصة وهذا متوقع ومأمول في ظل ما حدث من تغيير في ليبيا.

نسأل الله التوفيق