

Algerian EFL Secondary School Teachers' Professional Development: an Institutional Obligation or a Personal Pursuit



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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating Algerian EFL secondary school teachers' professional development activities and whether they consider them as an institutional obligation or a personal pursuit. To reach this aim, a quantitative approach is adopted based on an online questionnaire, which was addressed to 40 teachers from different secondary schools in the districts of Constantine and Oum El Bouaghi via social media networks such as Facebook groups. The data obtained from the questionnaire revealed that the participants engaged in few professional development activities. They often practice self-monitoring and peer observation, and they sometimes use teaching portfolios. Moreover, workshops are the least practiced activities, yet teachers claim that they are good opportunities to discuss different issues related to their work. The findings also showed that teachers regard their professional development a personal pursuit rather than an institutional obligation. In short, professional development is considered a responsibility driven by personal motivation.

Keywords

EFL secondary school teachers;
Institutional obligation;
peer observation;
Personal pursuit;
professional development activities;
Self-monitoring;
Workshops.

الكلمات المفتاحية

معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ؛
لغة أجنبية؛
التزام مؤسسي؛
ملاحظة الأقران؛
سعي شخصي؛
أنشطة التطوير المهني؛
مراقبة ذاتية؛
ورش تعليمية.

التطوير المهني لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدارس الثانوية الجزائرية: التزام مؤسسي ام سعي شخصي

ملخص

يهدف هذا المقال إلى دراسة أنشطة التطوير المهني لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدارس الثانوية الجزائرية وما إذا كانوا يعتبرونها التزاماً مؤسسياً أو سعياً شخصياً. للوصول إلى هذا الهدف، تم اعتماد نهج كمي باستعمال استبيان عبر الإنترنت مصمماً في نماذج Google Forms تم توجيهه إلى 40 معلماً من مدارس ثانوية مختلفة في ولايتي قسنطينة وأم البواقي عبر الشبكات الاجتماعية مثل مجموعات الفيسبوك. كشفت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من خلال الاستبيان أن المعلمين يشاركون في عدد قليل من أنشطة التطوير المهني. فهم غالباً ما يمارسون المراقبة الذاتية والملاحظة بين الأقران في الأقسام التعليمية، كما يستخدمون أحياناً الملفات التعليمية. علاوة على ذلك تعتبر الورش التعليمية هي الأنشطة الأقل ممارسة، ومع ذلك يدعي المعلمون أنها فرص جيدة لمناقشة قضايا مختلفة تتعلق بعملهم. أظهرت النتائج أيضاً أن المعلمين يعتبرون تطويرهم المهني سعياً شخصياً بدلاً من كونه التزاماً مؤسسياً. باختصار، يعتبر التطوير المهني مسؤولية تتطلب دافعاً شخصياً قوياً.

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I- Introduction

Nowadays there is a universal demand for competent language teachers. Accordingly, there has been a recent tendency to invest in teachers as being important factors in the successful implementation of language teaching curricula. This investment is manifested in the teacher education programs that are developed and conducted all over the world in order to improve teacher quality. Since the need for change in teacher education is everywhere, there is an almost universal search for greater teacher quality and a quest for higher quality teacher education. In other words, since teachers are important factors in the success of any educational system, educational authorities all over the world have tried to improve teacher quality via teacher education programs to ensure quality assurance within the teaching profession.

A fundamental aspect of language teaching is professionalism since language teaching does not simply require someone who can speak English. It is rather a profession which necessitates a specific knowledge and skills developed through both training and practical experience. In addition, it is a field of work in which membership requires specific entry qualifications. In other words, teaching is a complex and demanding intellectual work, one that cannot be accomplished without adequate preparation. Research has indicated that the most effective method to improve teacher quality is to alter pre-service training and to modify the techniques to train in-service teachers.

Teachers should play an active role in their own professional development. In other words, effective teachers do not rely solely on in-service programs provided by educational institutions. They ought to take personal initiatives for planning for and engaging in other development activities.

An attempt to dig deeper on the EFL teachers' professional development activities is the focus of the present research paper.

I-1. Definitions

Different terms are used in the context of teacher learning to refer to what people do or undertake to become teachers or to prepare people to become so. Teacher education, teacher training, and teacher development are the most common concepts available in the teaching literature. Many people are likely to use the terms interchangeably, thinking that they mean the same because they may ignore the meaning and the scope of each concept.

I-1.1. Teacher Education

Johnson and Johnson (1998, p.345) define teacher education as all strategies that are planned to assist teachers to improve their teaching skills. These strategies differ from one country to another because teacher education programs should respond to the specific needs of each system. For examples, in any school or institution, there are teachers with different levels of experience, knowledge, skills and expertise. Besides, teachers have different needs at different times during their career, and needs of the schools and institutions in which they work change overtime.

I-1.2. Teacher Training

Richards and Farrell (2005, p.03) define teacher training as activities focused on a teacher's current responsibilities emphasizing the mastery of fundamental concepts and principles necessary for effective teaching. This training often prepares teachers for their initial roles or new responsibilities. Training means learning basic concepts and principles in order to apply them to teaching. It also involves trying out new strategies in the classroom. This happens under the supervision of a mentor who provides the trainee with feedback. The content of training is usually suggested by experts who set its goal and provide standard formats. (Gray, 2001).

Teacher training is often classified into pre-service training and in-service training. Pre-service training, which is also referred to as initial teacher education, represents the entry point into the profession. It is generally offered in colleges or universities and in special institutions. It aims at giving guidance to possible pedagogic choices, teaching strategies, L2 methods, course design and materials development, in addition to courses subject matter, i.e., content knowledge. In-service training, on the other hand, aims at updating, developing and bordering the knowledge teachers acquired during the pre-service training and/or providing them with new skills. Even if they have undergone a quality pre-service training, teachers need to be continuously trained during their career. In-service training includes activities such as conferences and workshops.

I-1.3. Teacher Professional Development

Richards and Farrell (2005) believe that unlike teacher training and education, teacher professional development is a continuous and comprehensive process aimed at enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills. Clarke (1990, p. 01) provides another definition, "any activity or process intended to change any combination of the following: teachers' beliefs and attitudes, teachers' knowledge and teachers' classroom practice". Thus, professional development involves exploring the different aspects of teachers' practice in a reflective way, so it is a bottom-up process which is contrasted with the training perspective which is rather a top-down process in which teaching can be broken down into discrete and tangible skills and techniques to be mastered by the teacher trainee. In other words, teacher professional development goes beyond those atomic dimensions of teaching to the beliefs, knowledge, and thinking processes that underlie actual teaching behaviors. Moreover, professional development is considered as an intentional, ongoing and purposeful process (Guskey, 2000). Thus, teachers are always reflecting on their practices, asking questions about how and why they teach the way they do in the classroom. In this way, they can grow as professionals who are able to take decisions in their teaching and who are constantly changing their classroom practices and exploring new trends in order to make their teaching more effective.

The term teacher professional development is frequently contrasted with teacher training and teacher education. Wallace (1991) cited in Johnson and Johnson (1998, p.318) explains: “the distinction is that training or education is something that can be presented or managed by others, whereas development is something that can be done only by and for oneself though not necessarily alone”. In other words, teacher education and training are institutionally based while teacher development is much more personal. Yet, the terms teacher education and teacher professional development are sometimes used interchangeably by some authors. Johnson (2003), cited in Mann (2005), argues that this is because professional development is perceived differently in Europe and USA. Europeans view professional development as personal growth that teachers themselves undertake and that is guided by the teachers concerned. North Americans regard it as usually conducted by a teacher educator and presented to the teacher.

Although professional development is a personal process, it happens with an institutional level since teachers do not work in isolation, but rather as a team in a school. Thus, there are different methods and procedures for professional development. It can be carried out individually; it can involve working with a colleague; it can be group based and; it can respond to an institutional directive. Richards and Farrell (2005, p.14) summarize the possible activities for professional development in the following table

Individual	One-to-one	Group-based	Institutional
-self- monitoring -journal writing -critical incidents -teaching portfolios -action research	-peer coaching -peer observation -critical friendships -action research -critical incidents -team teaching	-case studies. -action research -journal writing -teacher support groups.	-workshops -action research -teacher support groups.

Table1: Professional Development Activities (According to Richards and Farrell, 2005.p.14)

In what follows we will shed light on the most common activities that are done on an individual level since they represent teachers' personal reflection on their teaching practices. Thus, we will discuss self-monitoring, journal writing, teaching portfolios and action research which can be done not only individually, but with a colleague, a group or within an institution.

I-1.3.1. Self- Monitoring

Self-monitoring or self-observation refers to activities in which information about one's teaching is documented or recorded in order to review or evaluate teaching. It is a practical activity based on “observation, evaluation and management of one's own behavior in order to achieve a better understanding and control over the behavior.” (Richards and Farrell, 2005. p.34). Information can be gathered in three ways: lesson reports, audio recording a lesson and video recording a lesson. After information is collected, reflections are made through evaluation in order to better understand one's teaching and one's own strengths and weaknesses and to make decision about the problems encountered to improve one's teaching practices.

I-1.3.2. Keeping a Teaching Journal

A teaching journal is a continuing written account of observations, reflections and other thoughts about teaching. It takes the form of a notebook or electronic mode. It serves as a source of discussion, reflection and evaluation. It is used to record incidents, problems, and insights that happen during lessons. Keeping a teaching journal is very beneficial because it enables teachers to document teaching experiences as a way of reflection. It also provides information that can serve as a basis for conversation with a peer or supervisor. Thus, it promotes the development of reflective teaching. (Richards and Farrell, 2005)

I-1.3.3. Teaching Portfolios

A teaching portfolio is a collection of documents or other items that provide information about a teacher's work. It is used to document and describe teachers' practices in order to reflect on them as a way of professional development as a teacher. Thus, it is a self-appraisal and teacher-directed learning. Evans (1995) cited in Richards and Farrell (2005) defines a teaching portfolio as: a collection of documents that showcases various aspects of a teacher's work. It serves multiple purposes: documenting performance, and enabling reflection and review. It serves as a demonstration of the teacher's approach to his /her work, so it can be submitted to a supervisor as evidence of the teacher's performance. It is also a source of reflection and subsequent improvements to one's teaching practices. Besides, it can encourage cooperation with colleagues, i.e., receiving feedback from a peer who has reviewed and discussed the portfolio. Richards and Farwell (2005) distinguish two types of portfolios: a working portfolio and a showcase portfolio. The former includes items that show a teacher's progress to attain a particular goal while the latter is often submitted as a part of an appraisal or included in an application for a new teaching position or promotion, so it is well selected in order to show

the teacher's skills and competences. The above authors compare a teacher's portfolio to mirror and map. It is compared to a mirror because it reflects the teacher work through sample of his/her teaching practice that are to be reviewed for future improvement. It is likened to a map because it helps create a plan and set goals, i.e., after reviewing the content of the portfolio, the teacher can assess his /her teaching and decide subsequent modifications and innovations. In short, compiling a portfolio serves to document a teacher's strengths, skills and accomplishments, to trigger self-appraisal, to facilitate review and to help plan future improvements.

I-1.3.4. Action Research

Action research is research conducted by a teacher in a classroom with the purpose of clarifying and resolving teaching issues or problems. In other words, it is an investigation carried out in a classroom in a systematic way to illuminate a problem and improve teaching practice. Thus, it involves, identifying a problem, collecting information about it, developing a plan, observing effects, and sharing the findings with others. Action research is conducted during the process of teaching in order to improve it. It can be done individually or collectively. Besides, it often leads teachers to change their understanding of teaching. Moreover, an important aspect of action research is sharing its results with other colleagues. In brief, action research is a very practical way for the teacher to investigate his/her teaching in order to improve it. It is done in a systematic approach based on an identification of a problematic issue followed by planning, action, observation and reflection. It encourages teachers to become experts at investigating and reflecting on their practice and it enhances their professional development opportunities (Burns, 1999).

In short, professional development is the process by which a teacher develops his/ her expertise in teaching. It leads the teacher to develop his professional identity. Teacher education programs play an important role to prepare teachers for their jobs and to guide them while they are growing professionally. This institutional perspective can succeed only if teachers have a will to change and improve their teaching practices by means of continuous reflections on their classroom behaviors that can be realized by implementing one of the professional development activities mentioned above. In this way, teachers will deserve to be called professionals.

I-2. The Current Teacher Education Situation in Algeria

In Algeria, pre-service training is done in the teacher training schools that are higher education institutions which operate in accordance with the needs of the ministry of national education in order to cater for the shortage of teachers. Today, access to these higher education institutions requires "BAC +" corresponding to the length of the post baccalaureate study (UK NARIK report cited in Djouima, 2016). Thus, according to the ministerial decree of July 1999, to be a primary school teacher, trainees have to study three years, middle school teachers are required to study four years while secondary school teachers need to study five years to get the teaching certificates. It is worth mentioning that holders of (BA) and Master degrees can also enter the teaching profession after passing a competitive recruitment examination. After the examination, trainees receive a pre-service training that is planned by the ministry of national education so as to be certified as teachers (Djouima, 2016).

After the pre-service training, trainees need to spend a probationary period of one year during which they undertake subsequent evaluations through visits or inspections by supervisors, i.e., the beginning of the in-service training. Hence, it is the responsibility of schools and supervisors to provide opportunities for continued professional education and to encourage teachers to participate in them. Opportunities for in-service training are crucial to the long-term development of teachers as well as for the long-term success of the programs in which they work.

I-3. Previous Studies

The intent to engage in this research work has come as a result of the gap in the literature written about the professional development activities practiced by Algerian EFL secondary school teachers. Most of the studies are either theoretical or focus on the training aspect rather than the professional development perspective of teacher education.

Boudersa (2016), for example, stressed the importance of teacher training and professional development programs provided by educational institutions at all levels to equip teachers with the required knowledge and skills in order to develop professionally. Another study was undertaken by Fadel (2018) who reviewed the historical development of teacher training in Algeria over 50 years under two main institutions the Institute of Technology of Education and the Higher Teacher Education Institute.

Moreover, Hadi (2021) investigated the adequacy of the Algerian pre-service and in-service training programs which are regarded as important factors in the improvement of language education. Similarly, Ben Osman (2021) attempted to investigate the quality of the pre-service programs provided by the Algerian universities and recommended that potent policies and adequate practice are key factors for well-designed training.

Among the few studies about Algerian EFL teachers' professional development was the one conducted by Ziani (2020) who investigated how effective is continuing teacher training to teacher professional development using observation and interviews. The study revealed that teachers seldom reflect on their teaching nor monitor their professional development.

Another study which focused on professional development is the one conducted by Alshumaimeri and Almohaisen (2017) who explored the professional development activities that Saudi EFL teachers engaged in. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers who took part in their study were not satisfied with their professional development activities which include discussing lessons with supervisors and sharing ideas informally with colleagues.

The summary of research conducted on professional development provided a reason for the present study which attempts to investigate Algerian EFL secondary school teachers' professional development activities and how they perceive these activities.

II– Methods and Materials

To investigate EFL teachers' professional development opportunities, a descriptive quantitative analysis is used; a questionnaire is employed with the aim of exploring their professional development activities.

Population and Sampling

EFL secondary school teachers are chosen as a target population. The sample is made of 40 teachers from different secondary schools in the districts of Constantine and Oum El Bouaghi who answered the electronic questionnaire which was posted on their Facebook groups during the academic year 2023-2024 to check their perceptions about their professional development activities.

Aim of the Study

The present research aims at investigating EFL teachers' professional development activities. More specifically, it intends to check whether they consider their professional development as an institutional obligation or as a personal pursuit.

Research Questions

Which professional development activities do Algerian EFL secondary school teacher engage in?

Do they consider their professional development as an institutional obligation or as a personal pursuit?

Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is made up of 20 questions grouped under four sections. The first section is about teachers' background information. The second section deals with teachers' pre-service and in-service training. The third section aims at investigating teachers' professional development activities. In the fourth section, teachers are invited to add any suggestions related to the theme of the questionnaire.

III- Results and discussion

The obtained results will lead us to shed light on the professional development activities that teachers engage in and to explore their perceptions about these activities.

Analysis of the Results

Section One: Background Information

Q1. Degree held

- a. Licence in English ☐
- b. Master in English ☐
- c. Licence in English language teaching (ENS) ☐
- d. Others, please specify

Option	Number	Percentage
a	2	5%
b	18	45%
c	18	45%
d	2	5%
Total	40	100%

Table2: Teachers' Degree

The above table shows the different degrees secondary school teachers hold. 45% of the teachers have a master in English and the same percentage have a licence in English language teaching while only 5% of the participants have licence in English. Surprisingly 5% of the teachers hold a PhD degree, which may indicate that they got this degree after entering the profession. The variety in the degrees held will have an impact on their qualifications and their pre-service training.

Q2. Choice of the teaching profession

- a. I love teaching ☐
- b. For financial reasons ☐

- c. There are no other job opportunities ☐
- d. Others, please specify

Option	Number	Percentage
a	22	55%
b	6	15%
c	11	27.5%
d	1	2.5%
Total	40	100%

Table3: Teachers Choice of the Teaching Profession

Investigating teachers' reasons for their choice of the teaching profession, the findings indicate that the majority of the participants (55%) claimed that they love teaching. Besides, 27.5% of the teachers said that they had no other job opportunities. Moreover, for financial reasons is another factor that is chosen by 15% of the participants. Finally, one teacher (2.5%) opted for all the options. The results may indicate that most teachers are devoted to their job.

Section Two: Teachers' Pre-service and In-service Training

Q3. What type of pre-service training did you have?

- a-From a teacher training school ☐
- b-With a teacher trainer before entering the profession ☐
- c- Others, please specify

Option	Number	Percentage
a	17	42.5%
b	16	40%
c	7	17.5%
Total	40	100%

Table4: Teachers' Pre-service Training

This question aims at investigating teachers' pre-service training. The results show that 42.5% of the teachers graduated from a teacher training school, while 40% of the informants had their pre-service training with a teacher trainer before entering the profession. The remaining participants (17.5%) added other training methods; they include experience, taking private courses, self-education, one year training during the probation period and one month training during the first year of teaching. The results, which align with the question about the teachers' degree, reflect the importance of pre-service training to prepare the teachers for the profession.

Q4. Was it beneficial to prepare you for the teaching profession?

- Yes ☐ -neutral ☐ -no ☐

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	30	75%
Neutral	8	20%
No	2	5%
Total	40	100%

Table5: Teachers' perceptions about their Pre-service Training

The up mentioned question aims at investigating teachers' opinions about their pre-service training. A large proportion of the informants (75%) claimed that it was beneficial while only two teachers (5%) denied the fact and 20% of the participants remained neutral. So, one can say that most teachers are satisfied with the pre-service training they had.

Q5. Once you started teaching, what difficulties did you face? (you may tick more than one answer)

- a- Preparing lessons ☐
- b- Selecting teaching materials ☐
- c- Classroom management ☐
- d- Time management ☐
- e- Disciplinary problems ☐
- f- Others, please specify.....

Option	Number	Percentage
a	27	29.03%
b	13	13.97%
c	17	18.27%
d	22	23.65%
e	11	11.82%
f	3	3.22%

Table 6: The Difficulties Faced by Teachers

The above question seeks to investigate the difficulties teachers face when they started teaching. The findings show that the highest percentage (29.03%) goes to option (a) that is preparing lessons. Besides, option (d), i.e., time management receives 23.65% of the selections, while option (c), i.e., classroom management, receives 18.27% of the selections. Moreover, option (b), i.e., selecting teaching materials receives 13.97% while option (e), i.e., disciplinary problems, receives 11.82% of the selections. Finally, three teachers considered lack of teaching materials and administrative problem as other obstacles they faced. The results indicate that teachers confronted many difficulties when they started teaching.

Q6. How did you overcome these difficulties?

This open-ended question aims at investigating how teachers overcome the difficulties they faced. They mention the following ways:

- Through trial and error and reflecting on their practices.
- Reading books and searching.
- Having a strong will to change.
- Adapting materials.
- Applying strict classroom rules, setting appropriate sitting arrangement, building positive relationships with students and establishing reciprocal respect.
- Using praise and reward to motivate students.
- Using online resources and social media networks such as Facebook groups.
- Collaboration with colleagues and seeking help and feedback from experienced teachers and supervisors.

Q7. How often do you have coordination meetings with your colleagues?

- Often ☐ - sometimes ☐ - rarely ☐ -never ☐

Option	Number	Percentage
Often	9	22.5%
Sometimes	24	60%
Rarely	6	15%
Never	1	2.5%
Total	40	100%

Table7: The Frequency of Teachers' Coordination Meetings with their Colleagues

The question above seeks to investigate the frequency of teachers' coordination meetings with their colleagues. The results reveal that the majority of teachers (60%) sometimes have collaboration boards with their colleagues. Moreover 22.5% of the participants answered with 'Often' and 15% replied with 'Rarely' while only one teacher responded with 'Never'. The results indicate that these meetings are significant in teachers' work.

Q8. What do you often do during these coordination meetings?

The up mentioned question aims at investigating what teachers do during the coordination meetings in their schools. All the teachers replied that they typically discuss and prepare tests and exams. Moreover, they usually discuss lesson plans, share teaching strategies and collaborate to design teaching materials that align with syllabus objectives. Besides, they consider these meetings as an opportunity to discuss confronted difficulties and suggest solutions to face them. In addition, they often share new instructions, curriculum changes and discuss the progress in the syllabus and students results.

Q9. Is there a teacher trainer in your school?

Yes ☐ no ☐

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	19	47.5%
No	21	52.5%
Total	40	100%

Table8: The Existence of a Teacher Trainer in schools

The above table shows that 47.5% of the teachers have a teacher trainer in their schools while 52.5% of the participants do not. Teacher trainers are teachers who have an adequate teaching experience and who passed an official exam to apply for this position.

Q10. Whatever your answer, what are his/her duties?

Investigating the teacher trainer's duties, the findings show that they include organizing workshops, providing guidance and support to teachers and observing them while teaching to offer feedback. Besides, the teacher trainer facilitates collaboration among teachers through peer observation. In addition, s/he checks lessons, tests and exams to proofread them. Moreover, the teacher trainer's main duty is to train and accompany novice teachers. Finally, s/he supervises trainees from teacher training schools. In short, a teacher trainer functions as a mentor who guides the trainee teachers.

Q11. Do you and your colleagues attend each other classes?Yes ☐ no ☐

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	29	72.5%
No	11	27.5%
Total	40	100

Table9: Teachers Attendance to their Colleagues' Classes

The above question seeks to investigate whether or not teachers attend each other's classes. The results show that a large proportion of the teachers (72.5%) do observe their colleagues' classes while 27.5% of the participants do not. The findings suggest that peer observation is one of the main professional development activities that teachers often practice.

Section Three: Teachers' Professional Development**Q12. How do you develop your professional abilities?**

- a- By reading books and articles ☐
- b- By watching videos ☐
- c- Through trial and error ☐
- d- Through peer observation ☐
- e- Others: please specify

Option	Number	Percentage
a	22	21.56%
b	23	22.54%
c	28	27.45%
d	28	27.45%
e	1	0.98%

Table10: Methods used to Develop Professional Abilities

Investigating how teachers develop their professional abilities, the results reveal that teachers use different strategies to develop their professional abilities. 27.45% of the selections go to options (c) and (d), i.e., through trial and error and through peer observation respectively. Moreover, option (a), i.e., by reading books and articles receives 21.56% of the selections while option (b), i.e., by watching videos receives 22.54% of the selections. One of the participants added another technique that is using authentic teaching materials. The findings align with those of question 11, which showed that most teachers often observe each other's classes.

Q13. How often do you practice the following professional development activities?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
self- monitoring	25	13	2	0
journal writing	9	9	18	2
teaching portfolios	10	15	7	6
action research	6	20	12	2
peer coaching	8	10	19	3
peer observation	14	11	13	2
team teaching	7	9	10	12
Workshops	8	12	15	6

Table11: Frequency of Teachers Professional Development Activities

The above table displays the professional development activities that teachers practice. First, self-monitoring is the most frequent activity because 25 teachers often practice it and 13 teachers sometimes do. Second, only 9 teachers often and other 9 teachers sometimes keep a teaching journal while 18 teachers rarely do in spite of the benefits of this activity. Third, teaching portfolios are often practiced by 10 teachers and sometimes by 15 teachers because a teaching portfolio is very important since it is a collection of documents or other items which provide information about a teacher's work. Forth, 20 teachers claim that they sometimes conduct action research and 6 teachers often carry out classroom research though this activity involves, identifying a problem, collecting information about it, developing a plan and observing effects and sharing the findings with others. Fifth, on the one hand, 14 teachers often and 11 sometimes teachers practice peer observation which align with the results of question 11 which show that teachers (72.5%) do observe their colleagues' classes. On the other hand, 19 teachers rarely practice peer coaching because the latter is a form of peer observation, which involves that an experienced teacher works with a less experienced teacher in a mentoring role, aligning with the findings of question 9, which showed that not all secondary schools have mentors to train the novice teachers. Sixth, 10 teachers rarely and 12 teachers never practice team teaching, which is the process in which two or more teachers share the responsibility of teaching a class. This may reflect the situation in the Algerian schools where each class is taught by one teacher not more. Finally, although workshops are a good opportunity for teachers to acquire

specific knowledge and skills, 15 teachers rarely and 6 teachers never attend workshops. This is because a workshop is a short-term activity that is not scheduled very often.

Q14. How often do you have in service meetings/ workshops with your inspector?

- a- Once a year ☐
- b- Twice a year ☐
- c- More than twice ☐
- d- Others: please specify

Option	Number	Percentage
a	12	30%
b	11	27.5%
c	14	35%
d	3	7.5%
Total	40	100%

Table12: The Frequency of Teachers In-service Meetings with Inspectors

This question seeks to check the frequency of teachers' attendance of workshops. The results, aligning with those of question 13, show that inspectors invite teachers to workshops once, twice or more than twice year. Three teachers claimed that they have not attended any workshop this year. The findings indicate the importance of workshops for teachers' professional development.

Q15. What are the main activities done or issues dealt with during these meetings?

The up mentioned question aims at investigating the main activities done or issues dealt with during the in-service meetings. The findings show that teachers often review and discuss the schools progress and performance, share updates on educational policies and regulations and present new teaching techniques and materials. These meetings also focus on addressing any challenges faced by teachers and setting goals for the upcoming period. Some meetings include lesson demonstration, that is, lessons presented by some colleagues, and others are organized in order to train novice teachers. Concerning the issues dealt with, teachers reported discussing different topics including teaching the four skills, teaching grammar, assessment, preparing lesson plans and exams and classroom management. One can say that these meetings are good opportunities for teachers to discuss different issues related to their profession.

Q16. Do you often benefit from these workshops?

Yes ☐ neutral ☐ no ☐

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	25	62.5%
Neutral	10	25%
No	5	12.5%
Total	40	100%

Table13: Teachers Perceptions about the Inservice Meetings

The above question seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the in-service meetings. The results show that the majority of teachers (62.5%) assert that they often benefit from these meetings, only 12.5 of the participants denied while 25% of the teachers remained neutral. The results align with the findings of question 15 in which teachers listed the different activities and issues they often discuss in these meetings.

Q17. What is/ was your role during these workshops?

- a-An audience ☐
- b-An active participant ☐
- c- Others: please specify

Option	Number	Percentage
a	21	52.5%
b	14	35%
c	5	12.5%
Total	40	100%

Table14: Teachers' Role during the Inservice Meetings

This question aims at investigating the roles that teachers play during the in-service meetings they attend. More than half of the participants (52.5%) answered that they function as a mere audience while 35% claimed that they participate actively. 12.5% of teachers added other answers including asking questions or being both an audience and an active participant depending on the theme of the meeting. The findings may reflect the teachers' different personalities, experience or the diverse issues discussed during the meetings, which result in teachers playing different roles.

Q18. Do you consider your professional development as?

- a- an institutional obligation
- b- a personal pursuit

Option	Number	Percentage
a	6	15%
b	34	85%
Total	40	100%

Table15: Teachers' Perceptions about their Professional Development

The up mentioned question aims at investigating teachers' perceptions about their professional development. The majority of teachers (85%) perceive their professional development as a personal pursuit while only 15% of the participants consider it as an institutional obligation.

Q19. Whatever your answer, explain

Most teachers view professional development activities as personal pursuit because they allow them to continuously grow and improve as educators. They believe that by actively seeking out opportunities to learn new teaching strategies, attend workshops, and engage in collaborative learning with colleagues, they can stay updated on the latest educational trends and best practices. Teachers argue that the commitment to ongoing learning helps them refine their teaching skills, develop their expertise, adapt to the evolving needs of their students and maintain a devotion for teaching that contributes to their personal satisfaction and effectiveness as teachers. Besides, many participants argue that it is their duty to improve themselves as teachers, thus it has nothing to do with an institutional obligation. Moreover, some teachers think that it is must to be a well-developed teacher nowadays to fit the rapid progress of the world and be able to deal with the new generation learners. They believe that the more they develop their skills the more they enjoy their job. Furthermore, the participants assume that engaging in professional development activities is driven by personal motivation in order to explore new teaching strategies and integrate innovative techniques into their classrooms. These activities provide them with a chance to reflect on their teaching practices and make the necessary adjustments. Finally, most teachers believe that their professional development gives them sense of accomplishment and fulfilment and ensures that their teaching remains dynamic and responsive to both educational trends and the unique needs of their students.

Section Four: Further Suggestions**Q20. Please add any suggestions you think relevant to the aim of the questionnaire**

Few teachers completed the "further suggestions" section. They insisted on the importance of their professional development. They argued that it is only through continuous professional development that teaching becomes easier. Some participants believed that collaboration is always a key to professional development and added that teachers should work hard to develop their professional skills, which will positively affect their learners.

Discussion of the Results

The data obtained from the background information section showed that most teachers hold either licence in English teaching or Master in English. The results aligned with the ministerial decree of July 1999, cited in Djouima (2016), which explained the qualification requirements to enter the teaching profession. The findings also revealed that most of them entered the teaching profession because they loved teaching while some of them had no other job opportunities.

Concerning teachers' training, the results revealed that the participants had their pre-service training either from a teacher training school or with a teacher trainer before entering the profession and that, they considered it beneficial to prepare them for teaching. The results contradicted the ones of Ziani (2020) which displayed that teachers in the district of Relizane did not benefit from any pre-service training. This can be explained by the fact that all the teachers she interviewed had a BA in English and started teaching immediately after passing the national contest for teaching. Besides, when they started teaching, teachers faced many difficulties and used different ways to overcome them. Moreover, the findings displayed that most participants sometimes have coordination meetings with their colleagues in the same school to discuss different issues related to their work and most of them observe each other's classes.

As far as their professional development is concerned, the findings showed that the teachers develop their professional abilities mainly through trial and error. Besides, most teachers practice self-monitoring and peer observation, they sometimes carry out action research and use teaching portfolios. The least practiced professional development activities include peer coaching and workshops. Thus, to answer the first research question, the teachers have few professional development opportunities. The findings are similar to those in study of Alshumaimeri and Almohaisen (2017) which showed that Saudi EFL teachers engaged in few activities which include discussing lessons with supervisors and sharing ideas informally with colleagues. Besides, the results, aligning with the findings of Ziani (2020) which revealed that seminars are held once, twice or thrice a year, displayed that workshops are not organized frequently. Nonetheless, teachers claimed that these meetings were very beneficial for them because they are good opportunities for teachers from all the schools in one district to meet and discuss different issues. Most participants play the role of an audience and few of them actively participate during these meetings. Finally, and to answer the second research question, the findings revealed that though teachers practice few professional development activities, the majority of the participants (85%) considered their professional development as a personal pursuit rather than an institutional obligation. They insisted that these activities are the key to reflect on their teaching practices and refine them to adapt to the evolving needs of their learners and thus to make their job easier. In short, by engaging in such activities, they maintain a devotion for teaching that contributes to their personal satisfaction. These findings contradicted the ones in Ziani (2020) which revealed that

teachers are reluctant to taking any initiative for their professional development and that they depend on institutional initiatives for their training and development.

IV- Conclusion

The focal point of this study is to investigate teachers' professional development activities and whether they considered them as an institutional obligation or a personal pursuit. A questionnaire was handed to 40 secondary school teachers. The data obtained from the questionnaire revealed that the participants engaged in few professional development activities. They often practice self-monitoring and peer observation. Besides, they sometimes use teaching portfolios. Moreover, although workshops are not organized frequently, teachers claimed that they are good opportunities for them to meet and discuss different issues related to their work. Furthermore, teachers regarded their professional development as a personal pursuit rather than an institutional obligation. In short, even though teachers practice few professional development activities, they viewed it as a responsibility driven by personal motivation to develop their skills. Thus, engaging in these activities reflect their commitment to continuous growth, learning and improvement.

There is overwhelming evidence in the findings of the questionnaire supporting the importance of teachers' professional development. In other words, they align with the results of many researchers listed in the literature review concerning the need for teachers' continuous professional development.

Based on the findings and analysis presented in this study, some recommendations are proposed to enhance teachers' professional development. Coordination boards at school should be planned regularly to facilitate collaboration among teachers. They should not be restricted only to discuss exam questions; they are rather opportunities in which teachers discuss confronted challenges and suggest solutions, share materials and strategies and improve communication among teachers to enhance student success. Besides, the role of teacher trainers should be promoted because their ultimate aim is to foster a better teaching environment for both teachers and students. Their absence in some school will negatively influence the overall educational quality. Moreover, in-service meetings with inspectors foster collaboration and communication allowing inspectors to provide methodological support and guidance to teachers, which can inspire professional growth. Thus, teachers should take advantage of these opportunities because they allow them to express their needs while inspectors provide constructive feedback. This partnership can enhance trust and improve educational outcomes.

Hopefully the results of this study can raise the awareness of both teachers and educational authorities about the importance of teachers' professional development in improving teacher quality and thus enhancing students learning which is the ultimate objectives of any educational program.

Appendix: Secondary School Teachers' questionnaire

Section one: Background information

1. Degree held
 - a. Licence in English ☐
 - b. Master in English ☐
 - c. Licence in English language teaching (ENS) ☐
2. Choice of the teaching profession
 - a. I love teaching ☐
 - b. For financial reasons ☐
 - c. There are no other job opportunities ☐
 - d. Others, please specify

Section two: Teachers' Pre-service and In-service Training

3. What type of pre-service training did you have?
 - From a teacher training school ☐
 - With a teacher trainer before entering the profession ☐
 - Others, please specify
4. Was it beneficial to prepare you for the teaching profession?
 - Yes ☐
 - neutral ☐
 - no ☐
5. Once you started teaching, what difficulties did you face? (you may tick more than one answer)
 - Preparing lessons ☐
 - Selecting teaching materials ☐
 - Classroom management ☐
 - Time management ☐
 - Disciplinary problems ☐
 - Others, please specify.....
6. How did you overcome these difficulties?
.....
.....
.....

7. How often do you have coordination meetings with your colleagues?

- Often ☐ - sometimes ☐ - rarely ☐ -never ☐

8. What do you often do during these coordination meetings?

9. Is there a teacher trainer in your school?

Yes ☐ no ☐

10. Whatever your answer, what are his/her duties?

11. Do you and your colleagues attend each other classes?

Yes ☐ no ☐

Section three: Teachers' professional development

12. How do you develop your professional abilities?

-By reading books and articles ☐

-By watching videos ☐

-Through trial and error ☐

- Through peer observation ☐

-Others: please specify.....

13. How often do you practice the following professional development activities?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
self- monitoring				
journal writing				
teaching portfolios				
action research				
peer coaching				
peer observation				
team teaching				
Workshops				

14. How often do you have in service meetings/ workshops with the inspector?

-Once a year ☐

-Twice a year ☐

-More than twice ☐

15. What are the main activities done or issues dealt with during these meetings?

16. Do you often benefit from these workshops?

Yes ☐ neutral ☐ no ☐

17. What is/ was your role during these workshops?

-An audience ☐

-An active participant ☐

- Others: please specify

18. Do you consider your professional development as?

- an institutional obligation

- a personal pursuit

19. Whatever your answer, explain

Section four: Further Suggestions

20. Please add any suggestions you think relevant to the aim of the questionnaire

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