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Improving ELT Teacher Training Practices through Planning, Design and Implementation of an ICT-supported INSET Programme

An Action Research Study in Qatar

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied
Linguistics



The Centre for Applied Linguistics

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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List of Abbreviations

ACET	The Association for Educational Communications and Technology
CfBT	Education Trust (formerly the Centre for British Teachers)
CPD	Continuing professional development
DfES	The British Department for Education and Skills
ELT	English language teaching
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
ICDL	International Computer Driving License
ICT	Information and communication technology
ictQatar	The Supreme Council of Information & Communication Technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
INSET	In-service education and training
LMS	Learning management system
MoE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Qatar)
NILE	Norwich Institute for Language Education
NPS	National Professional Standards (Qatar)
OECD	Organisation for Economic, Co-operation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Britain)
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PRESET	Pre-service teacher training and education
QNRF	Qatar National Research Fund
SEC	Supreme Education Council of Qatar
TESOL	Teaching English to speakers of other languages
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign language
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VLE	Virtual learning environment

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics. I declare that this thesis represents my own work and has been composed by myself, except where due acknowledgement is made. It has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

Abstract

This study investigates in-service teacher education and training (INSET) practices in Qatar, and employs action research (AR) as an investigative methodology. It is an attempt to improve the researcher's practice as a teacher trainer by exploring the local INSET setting and investigating an interventionist training programme. It had its origins in personal observation that local INSET is struggling to provide effective learning opportunities to teachers who generally engage in the minimal required INSET.

This study was conducted over a five-year period in three stages, with three different cohorts of in-service teachers of English language teaching (ELT). The three stages were needs analysis, implementation and reflection. The needs analysis stage aimed at gathering context information to inform the INSET design and delivery in the succeeding stages. The implementation stage consisted of three AR cycles. In the first cycle, the three-month INSET delivery involved 12 sessions, comprising 48 hours of face-to-face training. The second cycle involved around 25 INSET events for over one and a half months. In the third cycle, each of the three sessions and a demo lesson was delivered every other two weeks to allow for training input implementation and online collective discussion by trainees.

The quantitative and qualitative data were collected by means of multiple methods. Quantitative data were statistically analysed while qualitative data were thematically analysed. The findings of the study provided insights on the teachers' attitudes towards INSET, main challenges, perceived success factors, preferred training themes, engagement, and trainer role.

This study contributes to understandings of INSET in the Qatari context. It was conducted at a time of major reforms where INSET is seen as one of the main tools to address policy makers' concerns about the educational system. Albeit, minimal academic research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the teacher training programmes offered to TESOL practitioners in Qatar. The findings provide ways to improve INSET, shed light on how the role of a trainer can contribute to its success, explain why teachers in Qatar may not be motivated to take part in INSET, and propose a framework for INSET design and delivery in the Qatari and other ELT contexts.

Chapter One: Overview

This chapter outlines the study as a whole to orient the reader. It provides contextual information to set up the study including what was gained from preliminary interviews and school visits in helping focus the study. It also reviews previous experience of the INSET environment that the researcher had been working in. Finally, it introduces the reasons for investigating teacher education in Qatar, and outlines the design, purpose, and potential contribution of this study.

1.1 Introduction

Qatar is an Arabian Gulf State with a population that stands at 2.69 million and is going through unprecedented changes. Although a small peninsula state of 11,500 square kilometres, Qatar has massive gas and oil reserves which provided the necessary finances to support the reform initiative. The World Economic Forum ranks Qatar as the most competitive Arab economy, placing it 16th globally (Schwab, 2015) with the highest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in the world (McGann, 2019). Education is seen by the leadership of the country as key to Qatar's economic and social progress (Gonzalez, 2008). Long concerned that the national education system was not producing high-quality outcomes (Kamrava, 2015) and was 'rigid, outdated and resistant to reform' (Brewer et al., 2006, p. 3), the State of Qatar declared education reform a national priority and launched a comprehensive education reform initiative in 2001 (SEC, 2006, p. 11) which focused on English language and teacher education and was branded 'Education for a new era' (Palmer et al., 2016; SEC, 2006).

The reform declared education a national priority and launched an overhaul for public schools supervised by the RAND Corporation of America (Glasser, 2003; Palmer et al., 2016; Zimmerman et al., 2017). It aspired to create a modern, world-class educational system (Brewer et al., 2006; Nasser, 2017; www.sec.gov.qa) that is predicated on four main principles of autonomy, accountability, variety and choice (MacLeod & Abou-El-Kheir, 2017).

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoE) is the leading authority responsible for directing the nation's K-12 and higher education policies and

overseeing the implementation of reform initiatives. It was established in 1956 as the primary authority on education policy in Qatar. Qatari government schools operated under the supervision and financial support of the Supreme Education Council of Qatar until 2015 when the SEC was renamed Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The SEC had a Professional Development Office which was in charge of INSET in Qatari schools. The MoE PD Office is now affiliated with the MoE and is still the leading authority on the national teacher education programs. It is also in charge of teacher licensure and certification of English language teachers. Who take around 60 hours of mandatory INSET during their first year in service. Among others, this training tackles issues relative to teaching methodologies, ICT, reading, classroom management and teaching mixed ability classes.

The growing focus on INSET in educational reform initiatives is not unique to the Qatari context. There has been a burgeoning literature on teacher education around the world in recent years (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Lunenburg et al., 2014; Roberts, 2016; Russell & Korthagen, 2013). However, although many research studies are published every year, most of them have produced a ‘marginal’ improvement in the quality of professional development in schools (Sparks, 2002, p. 7). The unclear pathways in the education and licensure of teacher trainers coupled with the limited research on the impact of teacher education have led to a professional development system of teachers that is ‘by all accounts, broken’ in most contexts around the world (Hill, 2009, p. 471). Although research articles ‘trumpeting’ the success of a specific method or programme appear practically monthly, and practitioner magazines are full of accounts of the phenomenal improvements in teacher knowledge and skills, still ‘most teachers engage in only the minimum professional learning required by their institutions’ (Hill, 2009, p. 471). Teachers fail to see the impact of INSET because it fails to ‘connect with the essential moral purposes that are at the heart of their professionalism’ (Day, 1999, p. 49). Further research is needed to identify the reasons for this phenomenon and most importantly to bring about change.

Qatar’s unprecedented national reform of public schools (SEC, 2006, p. 11) considers teacher training and English language learning as the best manifestation of this reform. However, since the start of the reform in 2004, minimal academic

research has been conducted on the effectiveness of teacher training programmes offered to practitioners in Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). Ellili-Cherif et al. (2012, p. 471) is among the few studies that investigated teacher education and licensure in Qatari schools. They reported problematic issues in the system, and concluded that relevant policies ‘use ambiguous terminology and procedures, ignore local educators’ input, provide unrealistic expectations of society, lack consistency, and created resistance on the part of educators’. Their study was mainly descriptive and did not attempt to test actionable recommendations. These concerns remain unsolved nowadays.

INSET programmes are one way in which the skills and knowledge of teachers may be revitalised through enhancing their skills and knowledge on specific aspects. INSET courses are common in many countries where English is taught. Among the incessant calls is to capitalise on the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) in supporting the design and facilitating the delivery of INSET courses. Most countries in the world have developed policies to embrace technology in education and provided ICT teacher training in a variety of forms and degrees (Jung, 2005). In Qatar, there is also an increasing pressure from all parties to use ICT effectively in INSET and in the classroom to ‘upskill’ the future workforce.

Qatar’s programme of education reform is at a critical stage in its development. On the one hand great progress has been made in agreeing new priorities, both in terms of teaching methods and attainment targets, but on the other hand, the lingering presence of outdated methodologies and practices in the classroom is holding students back from achieving the best possible outcomes. English was made compulsory throughout Qatari schools, colleges and universities, and there has been an increasing emphasis on providing subject specific tuition in English as well as pure English language classes. Very recently, however, there has been a partial revision of this policy, with a new ministry decree encouraging some university courses to revert back to Arabic, and the likelihood that schools may follow suit (Fenton, 2012). There appears to be an on-going debate at the highest level in Qatar about the effectiveness of its English language provision, and its place in the education system. It is vital that the gap between Qatar’s ambitions for English language education and its current practice is understood. This understanding

should include the reasons why these problems remain, and potential solutions for addressing any deficiencies.

Action research was chosen as the investigative methodology for this study. This methodology has gained popularity in recent years (Strand, 2009) as a tool for critical investigation (Taylor & Medina, 2013), which usually results in impact on the area studied (Elliot, 1991). It provides teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their own practice to be the 'energy force' for change (Hansen & Nalder-Godfrey, 2004, p. 45). It puts the practitioner at the heart of the research process, enables an insider view of an appropriate methodology, and has a greater potential for a lasting impact. Because of its flexibility, AR can capture the complexity of teaching and learning (Poon, 2008).

This study was an investigation of the various dynamics involved in teacher education, its challenges, changes and implications in the context of the State of Qatar. It endeavoured to provide an in-depth examination of teacher training along with other related features. Since it is centred on Qatar, this study was significant because the Arab country has embarked on a revolutionary journey in education. As a result, several changes have been witnessed in the country's education system since the changes took effect. Far from a general exemplification of education in the oil rich country, the study provided real data on the changes incepted along with their results. Through this research, was possible to obtain information on the trends in education in Qatar, this is considered strategically important not just to me as a researcher but also to other players including government of Qatar, stakeholders in education, general public, students and the international community.

1.2 Structure of the study

There have been two structural approaches in theses that employed AR methodology. First, a narrative summary of each AR cycle along with the results of that cycle are presented together in a separate chapter for each cycle, and in chronological order, usually between the chapters on research methods and discussion. That is, no separate results chapter (e.g. Banegas, 2012; Benetou, 2013; Tanaka, 2015). Second, the narrative summary of all AR cycles is presented first in a separate chapter, followed by a chapter on the results of the analysis (e.g.

Edwards, 2013; Kimhachandra, 2010; Spinola, 2014). Table 1.1 illustrates the two options I considered for presentation of this study.

Table 1.1: Options for thesis structure relevant to this study

	Option 1	Option 2
Chapter 1	Overview	Overview
Chapter 2	Background and context	Background and context
Chapter 3	Literature review	Literature review
Chapter 4	Research methodology	Research methodology
Chapter 5	<i>Narrative Summary of AR stages and cycles</i>	=====
	Results	
Chapter 6 (or a separate chapter for each cycle/stage)	AR stage one results (needs analysis)	AR stage one <i>summary</i> and results (needs analysis)
	AR stage two results (implementation)	AR stage two <i>summary</i> and results (implementation)
	- First cycle results	- First cycle <i>summary</i> and results
	- Second cycle results	- Second cycle <i>summary</i> and results
	- Third cycle results	- Third cycle <i>summary</i> and results
Chapter 7 (or 6)	Discussion	Discussion

Option 2 was adopted for clarity purposes. The structure of the thesis will be as follows: Chapter 1 provides a general overview for the study, followed by an outline of the context and background of the study in chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents the literature review of the main topics related to teacher education and reflective practice. Chapter 4 outlines the design and methodology of the study. Chapter 5 reports on the needs analysis stage. Chapter 6 demonstrates cycle 1 while Chapters 7 and 8 present cycles 2 and 3 respectively. Chapter 9 outlines my answers to the study questions along with its limitations and contributions. Chapter 10 is an important chapter that concludes the study with a proposed framework for INSET design and delivery.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this AR study is to explore the INSET practices in Qatar. After that, I will use the findings from the exploratory needs analysis stage to improve my own INSET planning, design, and implementation through a three-cycle AR project.

Therefore, the main goals of this study are:

- To improve my practices in INSET planning, design, and delivery.
- To explore the TESOL INSET offered to teachers in Qatar.

- To provide a set of clear guidelines and principles for good INSET in a form of a framework informed by teachers' feedback.
- To evaluate the impact of a 3-cycle AR INSET project in terms of addressing current challenges and improving training practices.

1.4 Research questions

This study was conducted in three stages and informed by AR methodology. Each stage attempted to answer certain research questions.

These questions are slightly different from the ones submitted at the beginning of the study. Because of the iterative and emergent nature of AR, it was difficult to predict the precise nature of key research questions. Therefore, initial questions were indicative and represented the range of possibilities rather than any precise anticipation of sequential order. The final questions were informed by the implementation and progress of the study.

Stage one (needs analysis)

RQ1: What do teachers perceive as advantages and problems of the INSET offered to them?

RQ2: What are perceived by teachers as the main factors affecting the success and impact of INSET in Qatar?

RQ3: What training themes do teachers recommend for future INSET?

For the first stage, the research questions were intended to explore and describe the INSET practices in Qatar. RQ1 examined the attitudes and perceived values of INSET among TESOL teachers in Qatar, and their perception of the current issues. RQ2 and RQ3 identified possible success factors, strategies, and INSET themes to inform the design of interventionist INSET programmes in the second stage.

Stage two (AR cycles)

RQ4: From the perspectives of those involved in the AR cycles:

- To what extent are the INSET programmes in these cycles successful?
- Which training strategies are the most effective?

RQ5: What does the feedback by participants reveal about the role of the trainer in the success of INSET?

RQ6: As a teacher trainer, how can I measure the impact of the changes I introduced in the different cycles on teachers' classroom practices?

The second stage involved the use of the findings from stage one to improve planning and delivery of INSET programmes. An INSET programme was delivered in each cycle. RQ4 evaluated the effectiveness of these programmes to avoid undesired problems in the design of the next cycle. RQ5 examined the role of the trainer in the success of INSET, which was among the main themes in the second cycle. RQ6 identified ways to assess training impact during and after the training.

Stage three (discussion and reflection)

RQ7: How has my AR journey helped me to improve my practice as a teacher trainer in Qatar?

In this stage, I discussed and evaluated the whole INSET AR project after conducting the three cycles. Once the data analysis was completed and the findings were clear, I identified the main emerging themes across the whole study. Then I examined whether this study contributed to the enhancement of INSET practice in Qatar, and if so, how effective my role was in delivering such contributions. RQ7 also helped identify the key principles of a good INSET within the Qatari context.

1.5 Motivation for the study

This study was mainly motivated by my previous experience of the INSET environment I had been working in. There is a rich diversity of education in Qatar, including more than 180 government schools and a similar number of various private establishments. Some 90,000 students are educated in schools alone, and student teacher ratios are usually lower than international average (Supreme Education Council-SEC, 2013). However, the performance in key subjects has fallen below international average in recent years (Said, 2016). Since 2002, new international partnerships with British and American organizations have helped develop new benchmarks. Some of these benchmarks include the establishment of the education city with tens of university branches and the introduction of the

National Professional Standards, which I had been training teachers on. These developments bring extra pressure on teachers to reach the standards that have been set down as targets and teacher training provision is slowly gearing up to fit these new demands. One factor that may be affecting the quality of teacher education and by extension the quality of the teaching provision in Qatar is the relatively low level of awareness in schools of the importance of INSET (Nasser and Romanowski, 2011). Teachers view INSET as an appraisal requirement rather than a professional development opportunity. On occasions, teachers have such opportunities, and they take part enthusiastically in training, but there appears to be a problem with focus as noted by Nasser and Romanowski (2011):

Teachers are more concerned with mastering and refining teaching methodologies than with developing the thinking processes needed at times to understand the theory required to sustain real educational reform. (p. 166).

In effect, the lack of skills among teachers is what prevents the reforms from being as successful as they should be. I predisposed that the acquisition of skills is not sufficient to deliver reform, but that there is a need for teachers to become agents of change by embracing deeper theoretical and critical reflection skills. They need to know why INSET is important, and exactly how it can enhance their own and their student's learning. If teacher training can rise to the challenge of answering these questions, then Qatari teachers will be able lead reform from the inside of schools, rather than just follow directives from the government. INSET has an important role in improving the teaching and learning experience. However, local teachers' dissatisfaction with content, style, and timing, amongst other sorts of issues could impede the success of INSET implementation. I have always wanted to understand the situation better and, hopefully, provide possible solutions.

I have worked as a teacher of English language in Qatari Schools for five years and in Qatar University for six years. Over these years, I have attended hundreds of training sessions that ranged from 1 to 120 hours in length. Many of these courses were beneficial and engaging, but many were also unsuccessful and disengaging. One of the examples that I can recall is the professional licence training. This training lasted for years and was carried out by an Australian contractor for almost

15,000 teachers in Qatar, but only 16 teachers achieved the goals and obtained the licence by the end of the third year. The project failed and was discontinued (Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012). Another example was Moodle training given to a number of schools but was adopted by none of them.

When I became a teacher trainer for the Supreme Education Council of Qatar (SEC) in 2008 (now Ministry of Education), I wanted my trainees to have a better INSET experience than mine. I used to train teachers on several pedagogical topics, such as critical thinking, student autonomy, classroom management, teaching mixed-ability classes, learning styles, curriculum design, motivation, teaching reading, and ICT. While teaching these courses, I became interested in ways to make my training more effective and increase trainees' buy-in. I used a number of methods to achieve this goal, namely, games, group work, ice-breakers, pre- and post-tests, the six thinking hats, team building activities, individual and group competitions, trainee journals, alternative assessment exercises, personalised worksheets, social networking, blogs, forums, and other ICT tools. However, these efforts lacked underlying research or rigour.

When I became a teacher again in 2012, now in a university, my years of experience as a teacher trainer proved to be beneficial. For instance, I have learned the importance of providing clear instructions and relevant handouts. Handouts, email addresses, or web links are excellent tools to provide after-training support. Another lesson was not to give training with no or minimal assessment. I had to deliver some training programmes in the past with prescribed curriculum that lacked an assessment component, and I observed how this influenced the outcomes negatively. Trainee assessment has a role similar to student assessment in fostering trainee motivation and engagement. My experience detailed above has made me realise the importance of teacher training, and in particular, continuous in-service teacher training (CPD). My early experience as a schoolteacher, without proper INSET, was very different from my second teaching experience as a university TESOL teacher, with better INSET. Therefore, I developed a desire to research INSET to deepen my understanding of this realm and to identify success factors to share with colleagues in Qatar.

In addition, I have seen the value that technology can bring to INSET. If trainers fail to utilise ICT effectively, they will not be able to speak to teachers in the language of their age. Teachers in many contexts are attached to their mobile gadgets, which provide a myriad of professional development opportunities, such as webinars. Social media channels, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram, have taken over traditional ways of communication. Teachers in many contexts have their own online networks where they exchange news and professional ideas. Blended teaching is another effect of technology that has become a popular teaching mode in recent years (Bonk & Graham, 2012) and is increasingly seen as ‘one of the most important vehicles for education reform today’ (Picciano et al., 2013, i). If trainers lack proper skills to integrate ICT in their INSET, trainee motivation will be adversely affected. Hence, I aimed at using ICT as much as I could ‘to support’ the delivery of my AR cycles.

To sum up, my interest in exploring INSET stems from my experience as a teacher and a teacher trainer with a desire to improve my practice and learn how to make INSET more effective in my context. In addition, it stems from my belief that good INSET results in good teaching and trainers are responsible to make this happen.

1.6 Significance of the study

Qatar has embarked on a revolutionary journey in education. Several changes have been witnessed in the country’s education system since the reforms took effect. Among others, teacher training, English language and the utilisation of ICT were affected by this change (Alghazo, 2006). This study is strategic in the sense that it was conducted at a time of major reforms and on an important aspect of this reform, i.e. INSET. In addition to the contextual analysis, the findings recommend how INSET can be improved and explain, to an extent, why teachers in Qatar are not motivated to take part in INSET. However, far from a general exemplification of the INSET scene in the country, the study provides data on the changes incepted throughout the cycles, along with their results. In other words, the trends in INSET in Qatar are identified, which is considered strategically important. A clear understanding of the implications of the transformation in Qatar, particularly on INSET, will be considered significant to the Ministry of Education, school stakeholders, the public, students, and the international TESOL community.

To date, little research has focused on the evaluation of INSET programmes from the perspective of the trainee participants in Qatar. Thus, my study informs the local INSET context but might also contribute to a better understanding of the effectiveness of INSET training in general, such as by pointing out the aspects of INSET training perceived to be more beneficial. Such an understanding would be invaluable to future designers of INSET programmes and teacher trainers. On a methodological level, this study includes a number of improvements over previous works. For example, previous studies used researcher diaries to gather data from the researcher’s perspective on INSET training, whereas my research utilises data from trainee journals to explore the current INSET context in Qatar. Using journals in this manner allowed me to capture attitudes and opinions on local INSET. This perspective has been missing in previous research.

1.7 Preliminary work

Prior to commencing this study, a preliminary work was carried out and reported in the first panel report (see Table 1.2). The purpose of this step was to determine the context and potential participants before commencing the study.

Table 1.2: Summary of the preliminary work prior to the study commencement

Phase	Data collection methods	Occurrences (n)	Participants	Date/period
Preliminary work	Interviews	Two	School principals from government and private schools	Two days 1 May 2013 10 June 2013
	School visits	Two	Staff members and faculty members of grammar and average government schools	Two days 25 April 2013 4 June 2013
	Focus group	One	Teachers from an international school	1.5 hours 6 June 2013
	Informal interviews and dialogues	Ten	Staff members, subject coordinators, trainers, teachers	4 days

Preliminary work is an important exploration phase of any research endeavour. This work helped me refine the research purpose, design, and procedures of this study before conducting the actual study. Converse and Presser (1986) recommended starting out the preliminary phase by consulting two kinds of people with special

expertise, that is, experts and insiders. Viswanathan (2005, p. 391) argued that preliminary work is essential and can provide the basis to interpret the results and lead to an improved design. For Viswanathan, ignoring preliminary work is similar to putting all your eggs into one basket. The preliminary phase of this study had four main objectives: 1) to explore the context and understand the cultural and social phenomena in their natural setting; 2) to identify possible individual and school participants; 3) to build trust and confidence with practitioners; and 4) to validate further the research process through researching the phenomena in different phases of the project.

1.8 Results of the preliminary fieldwork

As seen in section 1.2 above the study consisted of a needs analysis stage to explore the local context. The needs analysis stage involved a brief preliminary fieldwork phase, which employed two school visits, two interviews, and a focus group. The interviews were conducted during the visits with school principals and teachers. The preliminary fieldwork helped in shedding light on INSET practices in Qatar and informed the main needs analysis stage. The fieldwork data were not analysed formally. Table 1.3 provides a summary of the fieldwork’s findings.

Table 1.3: Summary of data collection in the needs analysis fieldwork phase

Data collection methods	Context	Comments
Open interview 1	This was carried out with a private school principal. He has a PhD in Education and is in charge of two schools. Private schools follow the national curriculum.	Negative attitude towards ‘obligatory’ INSET imposed by the Supreme Education Council (SEC) coupled with a desire to change the situation.
Open interview 2	This was carried out with a government school principal. He has a BA in geography and has worked as a teacher for 10 years.	Mixed attitudes towards ‘obligatory’ training by the SEC. He acknowledged the shortcomings of the training but considered it a chance for teachers to meet teachers from other schools and ‘chill out’.
School visit 1	A government secondary school of around 600 students. The school follows the national curriculum.	Several issues need investigation in this school (e.g. the high absenteeism rate). The academic deputy complained about the training, and the teachers looked unsatisfied with their training.

School visit 2	A government military school. The school follows the national curriculum but with some modifications.	Positive feedback on INSET.
Focus group	Six teachers from an international school. The school follows the British curriculum and most teachers are from the United Kingdom.	Positive feedback on INSET.

Interviewing school principals was conducted to explore how the school leadership views INSET. Interviews with principals were constructive and helpful in this regard. The principals seemed to share common concerns over training being too demanding and unstructured. The first school that I visited was a private school that follows the national curriculum. The principal of the private school seemed more frustrated with the situation; he said he encourages his teachers to avoid attending INSET offered by the Supreme Education Council of Qatar (SEC) whenever possible. As a teacher trainer, I understand the principal's attitudes. This is because private school teachers must pay for the training and attend in the evenings, whereas teachers from government schools attend the training during working hours for free. The other school principal seemed less negative towards the mandatory INSET. Although he admitted that it was not a perfect situation, he complimented the networking opportunity it provides to his teachers.

The two visits to schools were helpful. The first school was a secondary government school. The staff seemed busy with end-of-year tasks; around half of the students were absent even though only two weeks were left until the school year would end. The academic deputy talked about INSET and educational reform in general. The other school was a military boarding school for cadets, which had an impressive level of organisation. The school had a total of 130 students, including students from other Gulf countries. Although the staff and faculty were from different cultural backgrounds, they looked happy and had a team spirit. Examples of my notes during these visits include: 'English is the medium of communication between staff and students during day and night simply because a few of the staff speak Arabic'; the 'staff wake student up and take them to classes'; and the 'school has a dedicated CPD (Continuing Professional Development) room equipped with [an] interactive whiteboard, wireless connection, computers, and teleconferencing

tools'. The teachers in this school are paid three times the average salary of other teachers in the country.

The last fieldwork method was focus group. I selected an international school for this purpose, and met with six teachers and coordinators. The teachers in this school seemed satisfied with the INSET they receive, as they seemed to have an influence on the way and when their professional development training is carried out. In Qatar, government and private schools share almost the same INSET calendar and must attend similar programmes offered by the SEC. The other categories are international and community schools, which have their own professional development plans. They only share plans with the government school programmes for Arabic and Islamic studies teachers.

Conducting fieldwork helped me focus the study at this stage. I could formulate a general view of INSET procedures in the different categories of schools in Qatar. Through fieldwork, I realised that government and private schools may have more INSET challenges than other schools in Qatar and could be a suitable context for this project. In addition, several informal exchanges were carried with a variety of stakeholders, including students.

Chapter Two: Background and Context

Understanding the context is vital in education research (Gibson & Asthana, 1998). This chapter describes the context in which this study was carried out. It introduces the setting of my investigation and sheds light on the main features of the Qatari context relative to ELT, INSET, the current role of ICT, and AR.

2.1 An overview of the current Qatari educational context

Independent schools are autonomous institutions financed by the government and operated by a Qatari principal. Currently, there are nearly 178 independent schools in Qatar after all the governmental schools were transformed into independent schools in the academic year 2010/2011. Table 2.1 below gives a summary of how the K-12 education picture in Qatar was in 2012.

Table 2.1 Overall numbers of schools, teachers and students in Qatar

	Schools		Teachers		Students		Average number of teachers per school	Average number students per school
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage		
<i>Independent</i>	178	60%	12358	62%	89200	45%	71	501
<i>Private Arabic</i>	19	6%	492	2%	6597	3%	26	347
<i>International</i>	77	26%	5433	27%	76826	39%	71	998
<i>Communities</i>	24	8%	1613	8%	23584	12%	67	983
<i>All Schools</i>	298	100%	19896	100%	196207	100%	68	658

Note. Source: Supreme Education Council-School and Schooling in Qatar, 2011/2012 Report, (2013, p. 1)

The curriculum standards and the professional standards lie at the heart of the educational reform; The National Professional Standards (NPS) for Teachers and School Leaders aim at creating benchmarks for learning and teaching. They describe the knowledge and abilities, which teachers and school leaders need to develop during their careers, to provide high-quality instruction and support improved student learning in the independent schools (NPS, 2007). The NPS aim at training teachers on how to implement the curriculum standards and ensure that teachers have mastery over their subjects and the school principals have the capacity to lead their educational institutions (Romanowski & Amatullah, 2014; Romanowski, 2014).

The 'Centre for British Teachers' CfBT developed the national curriculum standards in 2003 which are designed to serve as the academic goals and expectations for each grade level. The standards provide details about the language content and what knowledge should students demonstrate by the end of a certain grade (SEC, 2006).

The quote below illustrates the overall aim of the national curriculum standards:

The overall aim of the English standards is to enable students to develop skills in English that commensurate with requirements for further or higher studies or join a workplace where English is the medium of communication or instruction. (CfBT, 2004, p. 12)

The standards are focused largely on achieving skills and functional outcomes. The English standards are structured around developing word knowledge, listening and speaking, reading and writing. Systematic vocabulary development is an essential part of the standards. The standards also contain a guide to the number of active words students should acquire for each of grade. By the end of Grade 9, students should draw on a repertoire of at least 2600 key words. There is also an emphasis that teaching of language structures should be contextualised. Listening standards focus on comprehension, developing strategies for guessing and inferring meanings and responding appropriately to interact or demonstrate understanding. There is also a strong and increasing emphasis on literacy development across the grades. The Education Institute, a MoE Department, has developed curriculum standards in most school subjects.

The English standards draw on and apply ICT in a variety of ways like 1) the use of word-processing software for planning, composing, editing and presenting writing, 2) as a source of information via the internet, 3) for email communication, 4) as a reference system for dictionaries, thesauruses and spell checking. The standards recommend that ICT is to be used for class or group shared reading and writing exercises and/or independent or paired interactive games and activities (CfBT, 2004, pp. 11-20). The standards recommend weightings for each language skill in each grade level. For example, the reading skill is allocated 20% of the content and assessment for grade 12.

The higher education scene in Qatar has also witnessed rapid changes in recent years. Many elite international universities have opened satellite campuses in the country. The Education City in Doha has several campuses for renowned universities. Among others, Weill Cornell, Carnegie Mellon, Virginia Commonwealth University and Texas A&M University. However, Qatar University remains the only national university in the country and it usually enrolls the majority of public schools' graduates. It comprises eight colleges: Arts and Sciences; Business and Economics; Education; Engineering; Law; Pharmacy; Sharia and Islamic Studies; and Medicine. The university has added a wide range of new programmes over the years that are aligned with the growing needs of the labour market and the aspirations of the society it serves. It currently boasts a population of over 19,000 students and an alumni body of over 30,000. Qatar University's Foundation Programme is an academic bridge programme which aims at developing students' English language proficiency skills to a level that will allow them to succeed in the academic programmes of Qatar University. The Foundation Programme offers both Math and English courses to serve this purpose and employs approximately 145 ELT teachers. It offers several reading courses which introduce the reading skills with a step-by-step approach. Further reading outside class is encouraged through a graded reader programme, as well as optional timed readings and an online reading component.

Although the reform initiatives have revolutionised education in Qatar, they have brought several challenges. The SEC has depended upon international organisations to provide the necessary expertise for the independent school system. This has created a cultural challenge as these contractors depended on staff at their home locations, which were separated from Qatar by 'great distances and many time zones' (Brewer et al., 2006, p. 22). Lack of knowledge of the local culture among such organisations has caused cultural confusion in many cases. One example is the absence of coeducation in independent schools. I can recall several cases where the 'vendors' were surprised to know that their male staff could not go into schools because the teachers are all women there. The solution was to recruit female staff in a short time. This is a difficult situation for any training provider especially when it happens at the beginning of a school year and after moving staff to Qatar.

Moreover, the outcomes of the reform initiative have not yet met the nation's expectations. Qatar's decision to participate in international educational evaluation studies like TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA has raised several questions. Qatar's results were disappointing. Although most of these studies assess numeracy and literacy skills, they are indicators of the general education quality in Qatar. For example, PISA 2009 results showed that Qatar had the fifth lowest levels in mathematics science and reading in relation to other participating countries (see Appendix 1).

Qatar's results on PISA and other international studies have lead experts to question some of the strategies in the educational reform including INSET offerings, albeit these results have underscored the urgent need for reform. After years of huge financial investment in education, the results have shown little if no improvement. Qatar's students did not reach the average compared with other countries. In some cases, the results were embarrassing like the 2006 results of PISA where Qatar was just one place from the bottom of the list.

2.2 English language in the Qatari context

Reform initiatives in Qatar have linked Educational development to English, as it is the international lingua franca of research and science. It is seen by policy makers as door to modern world-class education. English is one of four core subjects along with science, math and Arabic at independent schools. It also has been the medium of instruction for Math and Science for the past ten years. This policy is undergoing serious revision to go back to the Arabic language medium after the low Qatari results on TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study). English language is taught as a foreign language in Qatar (EFL). It is the medium of instruction in international schools, and a compulsory school subject at independent schools from grades 1-12 where it is allocated more than 200 teaching hours for each grade per year. By grade 12, students are expected to have developed English language skills equivalent to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Competent User level 6. (English Curriculum Standards, 2004, pp. 12-13).

In the realm of higher education, English is the medium of instruction almost in all universities. Qatar University was an English medium university from 2004-2012. The policy was reviewed and the university reverted to an Arabic medium university.

However, science students are still required to achieve IELTS 5.5 as an entry requirement.

2.3 English language teachers in Qatar

Qatar is a popular destination for English language teachers in both K-12 and tertiary institutions. Teachers are intrigued by the competitive tax-free salaries, free accommodation, airfare, long vacations and the welcoming Qatari culture. The TESOL Community is mainly comprised of expatriates from all around the world. Table 2.2 below provides an overview of nationalities of English language teachers in Qatar according to their school type. This information is mainly anecdotal due to the lack of official data in this regard.

Table 2.2 Nationalities of school teachers in Qatar

School Type	Co-Education	Teacher nationalities
Independent (Government)	No	Qataris + Arab Nationalities (Egyptians, Jordanians, Tunisians, Syrians...etc.)
Private Arabic	No	Arab Nationalities (Egyptians, Jordanians, Tunisians, Syrians..etc.)
International	Yes	Mainly westerners (British, Americans, South African, Indians...etc.)
Community	Yes	Teachers from the country of the curriculum followed by schools (e.g. Egyptian Schools employee mainly Egyptian teachers)

As seen in Table 2.2 above, Qataris teach mainly in government schools. This is due to the high pay and other benefits for nationals in these schools. It is also noted that there are significantly more female Qatari teachers than males in schools. The Qatari education system has been suffering from a phenomenon that can be called “the missing boys.” For example, there were only 46 Qatari men with university education for every 100 Qatari women with equal qualifications (AlMisnad, 2012). Table 2.3 below shows how the gender distribution of teachers is significantly skewed in particular in primary schools.

Table 2.3 Gender distribution of school teachers in Qatar

	Teaching staff	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Primary education	male	1020	1377	1488
	female	9546	9300	8990
Preparatory education	male	1797	1948	1905
	female	2254	2246	2506
Secondary education	male	1759	1828	2041
	female	2089	2147	2246
Total	male	4576	5153	5434
	female	13889	13693	13742

Note. Source: Qatar Statistics Authority, Qatar in Figures (2015, pp. 20-22).

The gender gap illustrated in table 2.3 above is applicable to language teachers. For example, 100% of Qatari language teachers in schools are female. There is a dearth of male Qatari language teachers in Qatar to the extent that Qatar University closed its English department on the male campus in 1997. Table 2.3 below shows the distribution of Qatari and not Qatari teachers in schools in the 2014/2015 academic year.

Table 2.4 Qatari and non-Qatari teachers in Qatar

	Teaching staff	2014/2015
Primary education	Qatari	2246 (20%)
	Non-Qatari	8975 (80%)
Preparatory education	Qatari	660 (14%)
	Non-Qatari	3900 (86%)
Secondary education	Qatari	428 (10%)
	Non-Qatari	3953 (90%)
Total	20162	
	Qatari	3334 (16%)
	Non-Qatari	16828 (84%)

Note. Source: Qatar Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, Education in Qatar statistical profile (2017, pp. 28-43).

As seen in table 2.4 above, Qatari teachers are just 16% of the overall number of teachers in schools. In Higher education, the situation is also similar in most subjects and even more severe in TESOL departments. There are three main TESOL tertiary departments in Qatar, Qatar University's Foundation Program Department of English, Qatar Community College's English Language Unit and

Education City's Academic Bridge. None of these departments has Qatari English language teachers.

With regards to qualifications teachers are expected to have to work in schools, the requirements vary according to school type. Community schools usually adopt the same requirements in the country of the curriculum they follow. In most Arab countries, the minimum requirement is an undergraduate degree. International schools are English medium of instruction and they require a first degree and/or a practical qualification like DELTA. There are two main curricula in these schools, International Baccalaureate (IB) and International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). Government schools have an Arabic medium of instruction and require a minimum of a first degree in English language or literature for English language teachers. As most teachers in these schools are expatriate from other Arab countries, they are usually graduates from literature departments. Teachers with a master's or a postgraduate degree in education are shortlisted first. All undergraduate and postgraduate degrees have to be attested and articulated by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Expatriate teachers are expected to have 3-5 years of teaching experience and they usually have had several national licensure INSET programmes in their home countries. Nonetheless, they still have to obtain the Qatari national teaching license within 3 years in government and private schools that follow the national curriculum. Community and international schools have their own INSET pathways for new hires so do tertiary education institutions.

In higher education, a minimum of a master's degree in TESOL (or a related field) is required for a lecturer rank. Online and part-time degrees are not accredited by most higher education institutions including Qatar University. A minimum of three years of tertiary experience is also required by many institutions.

2.4 Teacher training in the Qatari context

Teacher education in Qatar is given importance by both educators and policy makers. Both parties realise the role it could play in the education reform. The PD Office at the MoE is overseeing INSET in all Qatari schools including private and international schools in the country. Private schools and international schools can do their own INSET without approval from the MoE. As for independent (i.e. government) schools, any INSET course should be approved by the PD Office in advance in order to cover the cost. There are certain INSET courses offered by the PD Office that should be taken by all teachers in the country regardless of their school type, e.g. ICDL and curriculum standards courses.

TESOL teachers in private and government schools Qatar have to take two curriculum standards courses; the Entry Curriculum Standards and the Proficient Curriculum Standards. Each one consists of 60 contact hours. The Entry Curriculum Standards programme should be taken in the first year while the Proficient Curriculum Standards course can be taken in later years. Both courses consist of 15 sessions of 4 hours each. The topics that are covered in these courses range from basic induction modules to advanced critical thinking modules. I started in 2008 as a trainer for the entry course, and in 2009 I moved to the proficient course. When the PD Office decided to recruit local trainers, I was in charge of this process and trained the first cohort of trainers in 2010 through a ‘Train the Trainer’ Programme.

TESOL teachers have other forms of INSET that are not organised by the MoE. These INSET opportunities include school conferences, departmental PD days, distinguished speaker events and visit exchanges. One of the main INSET events in Qatar is the annual QatarTESOL conference. It usually takes place in March and it attracts participants from schools, universities, training centres and other TESOL institutions in the country. Many teachers in Qatar go to another regional conference in Dubai called TESOL Arabia. In many institutions in Qatar, teachers can get conference sponsorship if they are presenting at an international conference.

The PD Office at the MoE considers ICT as an important element of teacher education. Teachers have to take ICDL training in their first year in service. Subject teachers receive specialised training in their fields like ICT skills for science.

English language teachers have to take ICDL training like other teachers in addition to many other specialised courses. Some of these courses include topics like using ICT to support standards, TESOL online resources and LMS training (Learning Management Systems).

Despite the efforts by the MoE to promote INSET in schools across the country, many teachers complain about INSET in Qatar. Anecdotally speaking, some of teachers' complaints include unsuitable content, timing and strategies. Much of the training used to take place in the evenings after working hours, which is unfavourable time for teachers. Teachers also complain that many of the training topics like Bloom's taxonomies, classroom management and differentiation are repetitive. Others criticise the traditional training methodology of little interaction and much lecturing. Teachers usually prefer hands-on training with practical samples and model lessons. On the other hand, the trainers blame teachers for lack of interest, dedication or innovative attempts to develop their methodologies. On several occasions, courses were cancelled because of the low turnout. It is hard to validate any of the claims above because of the lack of research studies in this field and most of this summary is based on anecdotal evidence.

Perhaps one of the main contributing factors to the claims above is the absence of teachers' voices in the planning, design and implementation of INSET in Qatar. Ellili-Cherif et al. (2012) conducted a questionnaire with 74 school leaders about teacher licensing. Probably one of the striking findings is that the reform is imposed on educators and that policymakers 'fail to take into account the input of stakeholders such as teachers, parents, school coordinators and even administrators' (p. 475). This is because policymakers in Qatar 'generally fail to consider the importance of educators as professionals capable of making decisions', according to the study (Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012, p. 475). Listening to teachers is valuable in program design (Roberts, 1998). However, negligence of teacher voice in INSET is an issue in other contexts. Gándara et al. (2005, p. 2) report that 'seldom are teachers invited to share their experiences and their concerns with those who shape education policy'. In this study, teachers' voice was sought in the needs analysis and considered in the design of the intervention. Since my study addresses INSET, it was not relevant to take into account the input of other stakeholders such as

parents. In short, the situation described above in addition to my personal involvement in INSET in Qatar have encouraged me to conduct this academic endeavour in hope to bring about change that meliorates the INSET scene in Qatar.

2.5 ICT in Qatar

The Arab world is usually classified relatively low when it comes to ICT in education. Despite the ‘digital divide’ which exists among the oil producing Arab countries in the Gulf area and the other Arab countries in Levant and Northern Africa (Jemni et al., 2016; Bontis, 2004), most Arab countries have launched a national strategy for ICT use (Dutta, 2003). Arab countries also have similar government support for ICT (Kaba & Said, 2014).

Qatar is one of the affluent Gulf states where ICT use is promoted in schools and universities by the government and through many initiatives. ICT use witnessed a rapid growth in recent years after the establishment of the Supreme Information and Communication Council (ictQatar) in 2004 where ICT is seen as a key to world-class education. According to published statistics by ictQatar, Qatari schools have an average of 12.7 PCs per 100 students. This is considered the highest in the Arab world and significantly higher than the European average of 12.1 (ictQatar, 2009).

Educational policy makers have invested heavily in ICT. The MoE aspires to make ICT an integral part of the Qatari education system hoping to encourage students to become motivated e-learners. Government support is visible through the various e-Learning projects that MoE runs in Qatari schools. Among others, a national LMS, a one-to-one initiative and a national e-Content.

As seen in the Qatari results in international assessments, these large investments have not come to the aspired academic fruition yet. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers are still reluctant to incorporate technology in classrooms and students use technology mainly for communication and sharing files. Most educational institutions lack long-term ICT plans and visions and there does not seem to be a culture of innovation and integrating ICT related initiative into a coherent methodology. One reason behind this situation could be the lack of proper in-service training for teachers. Furthermore, such projects are managed by

international private vendors, where the commercial imperative might encourage them to claim success without empirical evidence. The way these projects are implemented in schools could also be one area to be investigated; parents might not be adequately involved and school administrations may not have the encouraging culture or appropriate buy-in.

2.6 Research in Qatar

One of the declared national priorities in Qatar is promoting a research culture among students and practitioners. This is demonstrated through the allocation of 2.8% of the country's national income to research (AlJa'am et al., 2009). Research is also an integral dimension in Qatar 2030 vision. The establishment of The Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) in 2006 further consolidated the country's support for research. For an overview of the research funding programmes by QNRF and a list of the projects sponsored in previous cycles, see www.QNRF.org.qa.

AR is also being promoted at school and university levels where it is seen a key element of the educational reform. School professional development encourages the adoption of AR among teachers in a simple, level-appropriate way (Allen, 2008). This includes a 2008 agreement with the Open University in the United Kingdom to train teachers and students in all governmental schools on how to conduct AR projects (Gulf Times, 9 April 2008). MoE also hosts an annual AR conference. This conference is one of the channels which will be considered to disseminate the findings of my research.

This chapter presented the context of the study. It began by giving some background information about Qatar followed by an account of ELT, INSET, ICT and AR in the local context. This chapter forms a strong foundation for understanding the local context of this study. The next chapter will review the relevant literature.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of literature on in-service teacher education and training (INSET), with a focus on information and communication technology (ICT) as a supporting tool. It also reviews two of the themes that emerged in the implementation stage, that is, reading and reflective practice. Where relevant, I also point out how various bodies of literature shaped the nature of my AR innovation.

As noted above, the content and structure of the literature review chapter reflects not only the theoretical principles that shaped the design of this study but also key issues that emerged locally as I engaged with the teachers during the needs analysis and implementation phases. Due to the generative nature of AR, it was not possible to predict all literature themes at the outset of the study (e.g. reading comprehension). Therefore, this chapter was updated continuously as the study progressed.

3.1 Defining INSET

In recent years, the realm of education has seen a considerable change in all aspects. Educational policy makers in many countries have strived to cope with this change in every possible way. Among the main strategies policymakers have implemented is training teachers to keep them updated in the fast-growing world of education. INSET is considered among the main factors that affect the education process (Burns, 2010; Wallace, 1991). The British Board of Education's (1944) report is among the oldest documents tackling INSET; the report concluded that teacher training in the United Kingdom was not planned systematically, and majority of the schoolteachers had not pursued any course of professional training. Although there had been limited research on INSET until the early 1990s (Williams, 1991), it has recently gained a significant place in academic research (Hill, 2009), and has become an industry with its own providers and considerable financial turnover. The provision of INSET is an important element of quality education (Chedié, 2013), and an essential and a productive element in professional development of practitioners of Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and other professionals (Raza, 2010). However, research on effective programme design in INSET remains limited, as seen below in the review of Avalos (2011, p. 11) of the

top 10 thematic emphases of INSET research from 2000 to 2010. Although programme design is not on the list, these themes are related in a way or another to programme design and implementation.

Several terms have been used to refer to INSET, including teacher training, professional development, continuing professional development, refresher courses, and teacher education. However, Dean argued that these terms tend to be used interchangeably (as cited in Kshir, 1999, p. 41). Henderson (1978) defined INSET as 'structured activities designed, exclusively or primarily, to improve professional performance' (p. 12). Day's definition of INSET emphasised the authentic element and its impact on other stakeholders:

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities, which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group, or school and which contribute through these to the quality of education in the classroom. (1999, p. 12)

Wallace (1991) viewed INSET in TESOL as a process of exploration of the ways in which a reflective approach can be applied to a variety of areas of teacher education programme. These areas include, but are not limited to, microteaching and classroom. Unfortunately, the praised value of reflective practice (RP) in INSET is not always visible or consistent. Mann and Walsh pointed out the current challenges of reflective practice in INSET:

While reflective practice (RP) has established itself as a ubiquitous presence in professional education and practice, its current status is not supported by [a] detailed, systematic, and data-led description of either its nature or value. There are two responses to this. The first is to say that RP has become so bloated and so riddled with inconsistencies that it needs to be put out of its misery and left to rest in peace (RIP). The second is to take the position that it has [a] potential value but needs to deal with some of its problems and inconsistencies. (2013, pp. 1-2)

3.2 Teacher training and teacher education

It is hard to identify clear delineation in literature between the terms teacher training and teacher education as they overlap and are often used interchangeably because of the direct juxtaposition of the terms 'training' and 'education'. In the local Qatari context, the term teacher training is more common and used to refer to almost all INSET offered by the MoE while teacher education is used to refer to pre-service academic teacher programmes by Qatar University. MoE INSET is usually short and tackles issues like ICT skills. In contrast, Qatar University offers bachelor and master's degrees in education. Teacher training, as the term implies, is the training or skill development of teachers. According to Widdowson (1983), training refers to the 'imposition of conformity to the widely accepted and established behavioural patterns', whereas education 'seeks to provide for creativity, whereby what is learned is a set of schemata and procedures for adapting them to cope with problems, which do not have a ready-made, formulaic solution' (p. 19). The discussion above, along with anecdotal data, support my understanding that teacher training is more practical and skill-based INSET that is specific to classrooms real life issues, while teacher education is more academic and aims to develop teachers' abstract attitudes and knowledge. Therefore, teacher training is more relevant to this study since the proposed design calls for practical hands-on and transferable input. Teacher development is the development of a sense of strengths and weaknesses in a teacher, in a way that the resulting improved self-awareness helps the teacher identify better ways to teach others. Training and education are both means of teacher development. However, teacher development should not be confused with the general term of professional development that is used in teaching and non-teaching professions. Mann argued that teacher development is different in its nature from both teacher training and teacher education.

Professional development is career orientated and has a narrower, more instrumental and utilitarian remit. Arguably, teacher development is more inclusive of personal and moral dimensions. (2005, p. 104)

As seen above, the concept of second language teacher development requires a teacher to study and develop compatibility with different cultural factors that drive students' tendency to learn. This is because language is linked intrinsically and integrally to culture. TESOL INSET focuses on assisting teachers in reaching out to students both individually and collectively, so that they can understand the barriers they face while they develop their competence in the second language. Rossner listed several teacher development possibilities, including 'language development, counselling skills, assertiveness training, confidence-building, computing, meditation and cultural broadening' (as cited in Mann, 2005, p. 103).

3.3 The intersection of AR and INSET in this study

Action research was promoted in education in particular as being important and powerful in responding to teachers' INSET needs. Attraction of action research lies in its 'immediacy and relevance' (Blake, 1986, pp. 74). A good example of AR advocacy in INSET is Wyatt's (2010) argument that effective INSET courses should include an AR component to support teachers. For Wyatt, 'the inclusion, in course design, of extensive action research projects that encourage deep personal engagement can be beneficial, as can institutional support, in the form of reduced workloads' (p. 417).

However, AR advocates should be vigilant not to exaggerate the benefits of AR and neglect the value of traditional research. AR has often been described as 'unscientific' (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, 77), lacking of declared-in-advance theoretical frameworks (Blichfeldt & Andersen, 2006), and unsystematic (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). I believe that action research and traditional research should have a complementary relationship with each other and such disconnect is unconstructive. Both traditional and action research can contribute to our understanding of the educational issues. The choice of an appropriate methodology should be driven by the nature of the investigated issues rather than a personal inclination or perception.

Another observation about AR studies in INSET is the limited real 'first person' studies. Unfortunately, INSET researchers in many cases report on their teacher trainees' investigation of classroom issues rather than the trainers investigating their

own training. An example of this confusion is Stuart's (1991) pioneering AR study which was an account of an AR project carried out with teachers to help them reflect on the teaching and learning processes in the classroom and to change these as they thought appropriate. The study did not investigate Stuart's own practice but rather the practice of teacher trainees. Another example is Calvert and Sheen's (2015) study. Instead of investigating their own practice as the teacher trainers, the authors aimed at improving their teacher trainees' practice. The authors clearly declare that they 'designed this action research study to examine our teacher candidates' use of global education content to support our ability to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward its use' p.31

A clear confirmation of this observation was found in O'Sullivan's (2004, p. 589) argument that various pioneering action research studies conducted in both the UK and Africa involved the trainer in a collaborative or facilitator role, supporting teachers' efforts to conduct action research into their own practice. O'Sullivan (2004) conducted a study that differed from other AR studies in the sense that the author's use of action research had a different function. That is, to develop effective training strategies and cycles that led to improvements in the author's own practice as a trainer. O'Sullivan's study was a three-year AR study to support 145 teachers' efforts to implement reforms related to ELT learner-centred approaches. Unfortunately, such AR studies in INSET are not common. This phenomenon is also incompatible with the basic nature of action research as an investigation into one's own practice (Johnson, 2009).

Another trend in AR studies in INSET is to investigate how to incorporate AR into INSET programmes. For example, Ado (2013) studied how AR was used as a professional development tool by schools to better meet the teachers' needs. Another example was by Dikilitaş & Yaylı (2018) who investigated action research as a key professional development strategy for language teachers. The teachers in this study carried out a process of engaging in research over four years which was used by the authors to identify insights into how the professional identity of these teachers developed through action research. I believe what the INSET field needs is more studies of INSET educators using AR research to improve their training practices rather than studies on how to incorporate AR in INSET.

To this end, my study aimed at improving my practice as a TESOL trainer by using AR to investigate my own planning and implementation of INSET. In this way, I hoped to offer possible solutions to current problems in the Qatari context, by investigating the effectiveness of the INSET offered to TESOL teachers and reflecting on the impact of these programmes. AR was particularly relevant as it provides practitioners with an opportunity to study their own practices in the hope of introducing change (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

3.4 Good practice in INSET

INSET is intended mainly to improve teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes, thereby enriching their teaching. Perraton (as cited in Chediel, 2013, p. 3) claimed that a successful teacher education generally includes four elements:

1. improving the general educational background of trainee teachers.
2. enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach.
3. cultivating their pedagogy and understanding of students and learning.
4. developing their practical skills and competences.

Among the features of an effective INSET is the promotion of meaningful reflective practice. Freeman (1989) and Wallace (1991) argued that teachers learn how to teach by reflecting on their own experiences and applying what they have learned; in this way, they develop their professional abilities further. Reflection entails encouraging teachers to think beyond their teaching patterns or routines.

Unfortunately, reflection is often missing or minimal in local INSET. Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2010) investigated INSET in Oman and concluded that much of the teacher training syllabus was restricted 'with teaching methods being governed by the Ministry of Education and teachers being instructed to use the teachers' 'guide' (p. 53). Chapter 5 outlines several methods used in this study to promote reflection, including journaling in which teachers write a short reflection on the progress of the training session. This is in line with Ur's (1996) recommendation that journaling, coupled with training input and peer interaction, would serve as an effective INSET model.

Another feature of an effective INSET is the opportunity for critical thinking, which is also related to reflection. Critical thinking is a way to achieve the aims of INSET programmes. Goodall et al. (2005) believed that critical thinking could determine the level of effectiveness of INSET programmes. Zanting, Verloop & Vermunt (2003, p. 196) examined the way that student teachers learn from their mentors and lecturers. They concluded that the instruction given is often related to the methods of teaching but lacks explanation on the reasons teaching is conducted in a certain way. Literature also indicates that for INSET programmes to be successful, a teacher's voice must be heard and considered (Locke, 2006). Listening to participants would also strengthen their sense of ownership (Roberts, 1998).

The impact of INSET is not often as positive as it has been reported in previous studies. Major INSET challenges have prevented teachers to change the classroom conventional system (Thomas & Wright, 1999). Rose and Reynolds (2007) attributed the poor impact of INSET programmes to the narrow perception in the formulation of these programmes as a one-off event involving attendance of courses and conferences. Harris et al. (2006) questioned the effectiveness of continuous in-service teacher training (CPD) programmes, and discussed the inadequate evaluation on the effects of such programmes on students and the debatable impact of CPD in general on teachers' effectiveness. Thus, they suggested more support and training in schools to gain a better understanding and evaluation of CPD impacts. Waters (2006) argued that the design and presentation of professional training programmes greatly impact the effectiveness of the system. He revealed that the design of the course; the relationship between the trainers, trainees, and school; and the school-based follow-up on the programme are all critical aspects in determining the impacts of an INSET training programme. In Shah et al.'s (2011) study on Trained Graduate Teachers (TGTs), teachers who participated in INSET programmes showed more improvement compared with their counterparts who did not participate; this result explained the potential positive impact of such programmes.

To ensure the desired impact of INSET programmes, Waters (2009) suggested the use of innovations, or attempts to produce a change from outside the conventional setups by using innovative methods in teaching English. Wedell's (2005) study on

cascade models of in-service training revealed that the design of a cascade plan must be at the same level among all teachers and trainers. This means that to ensure the required impact, all trainers must be trained on a parallel basis, after which they will be required to translate the materials to students in classrooms. The impact of INSET is not dependent exclusively on one factor. According to Yadav (2012), INSET quality largely depends on the training package, physical facilities, equipment, and human resources. To sum up, there is a general agreement in literature on the value of INSET for teachers. However, the weak identification and poor adoption of ‘good practice’, undoubtedly, lead to an ineffective INSET (Kasule, 2003).

3.5 INSET models

As discussed in 3.1, the term INSET has been used interchangeably with several other terms. Nonetheless, the term INSET may have different meanings in distinctive contexts. For example, Chadiel (2013) observed that it could mean either the preparation teachers receive when they are hired or their pedagogy and teaching methods (p. 7), and discussed five models of INSET (p. 9).

- *Generational model:* in this model, first-generation teachers are trained or educated in a specific topic, aspect of teaching, or subject matter, and after a certain amount of time become the educators of second-generation teachers.
- *Coaching/mentoring/peer coaching model:* coaching is the process by which a colleague who is a ‘critical listener/observer’ asks questions, makes observations, and offers suggestions that help another teacher.
- *Apprenticeship model:* the mentor is the master teacher to be emulated.
- *Competence model:* the mentor relates training and assessment to pre-determined standards of practice.
- *Reflective model:* the mentor adopts the role of a ‘critical friend’ who assists in the evaluation of teaching.

Chadiel’s models seem to be more concerned with mentoring which is one kind of INSET. However, INSET could involve several types and forms of the natural learning experiences and planned PD activities as discussed by Day (1999).

Comparing Chediél's (2013) classification of INSET to the design of this study, competence and reflective models are relevant. The part related to competence model in this study included the interventions in which teachers received INSET in a form of workshops on several pre-determined themes. As will be seen in the discussion of the results in chapter 7, the study implementation involved elements that fall within the reflective model. Some related parts include the teachers' evaluations of the training sessions through their critical journal entries, and their reflective essay assignment on application of the workshop content in their classrooms.

Blended learning has been used increasingly as a learning model in educational institutions (Tinio, 2010) and INSET (Allan, 2007; Kocoglu, Ozek, & Kesli, 2011). It is a model of learning that combines e-learning solutions with the traditional classroom practice. In blended learning, students or trainees are assigned online and printed materials, have virtual education, and subscribe to an e-mail list. E-learning applications include, but are not limited to, e-examination, e-drills, e-counselling, and e-books (Yucel, 2006, p. 125). Blended learning was partially employed within the mode of delivery in the third cycle of this study, whereas face-to-face sessions were used in the first and second cycles. The training was delivered in a physical environment over a period of four weeks; together with the face-to-face sessions, an online channel was included to serve as a venue to communicate with the trainees and share training content and ideas. As this study sought to utilise ICT to support INSET, blended learning provided an opportunity to scaffold the content delivered face-to-face.

3.6 Programme design models

Several programme design models have been discussed in literature (van den Akker, 1999; van den Akker et al., 2006; Bannan-Ritland, 2003; Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006; Lijnse, 1995; Richey & Klein, 2007). Reeves's (2006) design was found to be informative when I first started this study. All four stages highlighted in Figure 3.1 were adopted at the outset of the project, starting with a needs analysis stage, followed by three cycles of AR and a final reflection stage. However, there was an overlap between both stage two and stage three below. The distinction

between development and refinement was not always fine-grained. Although several new workshops for the subsequent cycles were developed, the design principles remained the same.

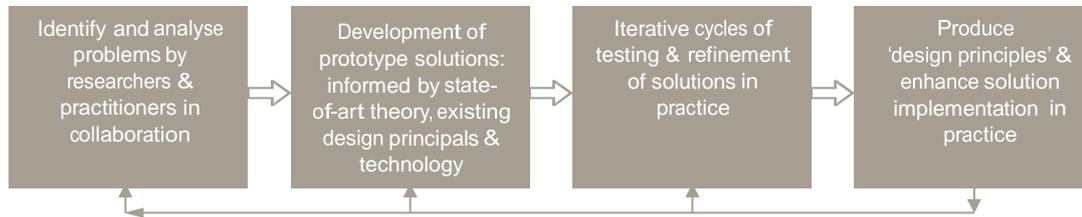


Figure 3.1: Reeves's design model (2006, p. 59)

Interestingly, several programmes tend to combine stages two and three into one stage. Bannan-Ritland summarised the common stages in the different models of programme design in literature (as cited in Plomp, 2009, p. 15):

1. Preliminary research includes needs and context analysis, review of literature, and development of a framework.
2. Prototyping phase involves an iterative design consisting of microcyclic iterations with formative evaluation. This is the most important research activity aimed at improving and refining the intervention.
3. In the assessment phase, whether the solution or intervention meets the pre-determined specifications is concluded. This phase often results in recommendations for improvement.

As illustrated in chapter 1, the implementation stage in this study was at the second stage, resembling the prototyping phase mentioned above. The implementation stage employed elements of competence and reflective models of Chediel (2013, pp. 7–9) and blended learning in the third cycle (Tinio, 2010, p. 4) through an online forum, an email list and a mobile WhatsApp group to facilitate networking during the training course. Plomp and Nieveen (2007, p. 20) concluded that a design research results in interventions, such as programs, products, and processes. As noted in the Bannan-Ritland's summary of design models (as cited in Plomp, 2009, p. 15), an intervention is the most significant part of any model, as it is the 'core component' that aims at improving practice.

3.6.1 Programme design principles

When putting together an intervention design, it is mainly based on the outcomes of the needs analysis stage (see section 5.1). However, it is also important for an effective design to be informed by the findings of past literature. Therefore, to guide my design, I collated several design principles in the first stage. Design principles are discussed usually in ‘educational design research’. According to Plomp and Nieveen (2007), an educational design research is perceived as ‘the systematic study of designing, developing, and evaluating educational interventions’ (p. 9). INSET programmes are one form of ‘educational interventions’ (Plomp & Nieveen, 2007, p. 20). Several studies have provided frameworks and understandings to guide INSET design (Birman et al., 2000; Blandford, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Grossman et al., 2009; Howey, 1996; Mann, 2005; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Warford, 2011).

Common themes characterise effective professional development interventions. Van den Akker et al. (2006, p. 4) reviewed the literature on professional development design and concluded that previous works have discussed five common characteristics (i.e. interventionist, iterative, process-oriented, utility-oriented, and theory-oriented). Desimone (2009, p. 185) argued that the core features of a successful professional development are ‘a focus on content, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation’. In the United States, the National Staff Development Council ([NSDC], 2011) published a guiding document on teacher professional development design that emphasised nine main characteristics.

Although the aims of these principles are comprehensive, they were useful in the development of the different workshops in my AR intervention as will be discussed in chapter 5. Another helpful guidance in the content design and delivery style of the study intervention was contained in Darling-Hammond et al.’s (2009, pp. 9–11) summary of the main themes observed across the literature on effective professional development. According to their literature review, an effective INSET must be intensive, focused on student learning, aligned with school improvement priorities and builds strong working relationships among teachers.

In addition to the principles discussed above, Table 3.1 summarises the guiding principles, which informed the design of the interventionist cycles in the implementation stage of this study. The relevant elements of literature are presented into two sub-categories ‘process-related’ and ‘content-related’ principles.

Table 3.1: Programme design principles

Area	Principles
	<i>Process-related principles</i>
Considering the context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers work in a larger sociocultural context. Understanding the social relationships, norms, and expectations is pivotal for the success of the programme. (Oliver & Dempster, 2003). ▪ ‘A higher level of success may be attained through an approach to course design, which draws on participants’ knowledge of the local learning/teaching situation’ (Wolter, 2000, p. 311).
Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ McKenney, Nieveen, and van den Akker (2006) referred to the notion of evolutionary planning of professional development, i.e. ‘a planning framework that is responsive to field data and experiences as acceptable moments’ (p. 84).
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaging trainee teachers as learners in professional development is a success factor according to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995). Gulamhussein (2013) argued that teachers’ initial exposure to a concept ‘should engage to increase their buy-in, and so they can participate actively in making sense of a new practice’ (p. 16).
Modelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is important to provide teachers with demonstrations of teaching strategies to help them grasp a specific strategy and understand its application. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) demanded access to successful models of practice and ‘provi[sion] of support through modelling, coaching, and the collective solving of problems’ (p. 3).
Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) argued that trainers must provide ‘opportunities to observe, assess, and reflect on the new practices, and teacher professional development must be ‘grounded in enquiry, reflection, and experimentation’ (p. 2). This concept will be more tangible in the discussion of section 3.6.
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional development is more effective when it creates collaborative and reflective learning communities. Borko (2004) reported evidence that ‘strong professional learning communities can foster teacher learning and instructional improvement’ (p. 6).
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interaction is pivotal for learning to take place. The lack of interaction in professional development may lead to boredom and negative attitudes. According to Desimone (2009), active learning and collective participation are among the core features of effective professional development (pp. 183–184). Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) pointed out that effective programs are ‘collaborative and involve the sharing of knowledge’ (p. 2).

Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The shortest period possible is ideal. Hill (2009) argued that too much INSET, in fact, can decrease instructional coherence (p. 472). Previous research has suggested a period of 14 hours or less has no effect on student learning (Wei et al., 2009). Although in this study the period of the first cycle started at 60 hour, this was shortened to 25 hours and a demo lesson in the second cycle, followed by eight blended training sessions and a demo lessons in the last cycle.
Participants' voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding participants and their needs is important for program success. The participants are the stakeholders who will implement the programme deliverables. Listening to their voice would provide 'design directions' and strengthen their sense of ownership (Wake & Mills, 2014, p. 1024). Reeves (2006) cautioned against the notion of researchers mandating procedures and processes for teachers to implement, 'Our goal should not be to develop esoteric theoretical knowledge that we think practitioners should apply' (p. 61). Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) called for teacher professional development to be 'participant-driven' (p. 2).

Content-related principles

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional development must be within a framework with 'defined goals' that are relevant to trainees' needs (Desimone, 2009, p. 181). ▪ Objectives must be SMART (i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound).
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An effective professional development must be relevant to teachers' practices (McKenney et al., 2006, p. 77). Professional development that exists only to 'fulfil licensure requirements' must be abandoned (Hill, 2009, p. 475).
Authentic training activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ McLoughlin and Oliver (2000) called for authentic materials to be used in designing learning interventions. It is important to provide trainees with real-life materials based on their context. This will help them understand training input and contextualise teaching strategies.
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gulamhussein (2013) recommended that '[t]he content presented to teachers shouldn't be generic, but instead specific' (p. 17). Respondents of the needs analysis survey and participants of focus groups drew attention to several preferred topics, such as teaching reading, ICT, and student engagement. The training should focus on these topics.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technology has facilitated our lives in several ways, and education has much benefited from the technological advances. Crow (2010, p. 10) discussed the potential of technology in supporting professional development through sharing resources, knowledge, and experience. Killion (2011) commented that 'Online professional learning has tremendous potential to expand access to professional development, enhance learning for educators, and produce significant results for educators and their students (p. 17).

The above principles are viewed as good practices for INSET programme design.

The purpose of the table above is to anchor each principle in relation to the relevant

literature. However, not all of these literature sources and principles have been discussed and referenced elsewhere in this chapter. The reasons behind this are 1) the design is mainly based on the outcomes of the needs analysis stage and 2) most of these principles were among the emerged themes in the needs analysis and implementation stages.

3.7 Reflective practice

Mann and Walsh (2017) note that ‘reflection and reflective practice continue to have a central position in professional development’ (p. 4). Reflection discourse was initiated in the works of John Dewey who attempted to understand how humans think. For Dewey (1933), ‘a being without capacity for thought is moved only by instincts and appetites’ (p. 15). Dewey was followed by Habermas (1971), who introduced the model of knowledge constitutive interests (KCI); Stenhouse (1975), who emphasised the importance of enquiry in professional development; and van Manen (1977), who stressed the practicality of INSET (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2009, pp. 24–35). Reflection received further attention in the work of Schon (1983) who developed practical applications of reflection in the field of professional development through his exploratory rather than finite process (Jackson, 2004). Calls for incorporating reflective practices in teacher education have been more pressing in recent years (Mann, 2005). However, very little empirical research is available about how teachers develop as reflective practitioners over time, and how INSET influences such development (Wyatt, 2010a). Copland et al. (2009) noted that ‘many apparently reflective opportunities do not lead to genuine reflection’ (p. 18). Therefore, one of the underlining beliefs throughout this study was that the onus lies on the teacher trainer to facilitate meaningful reflection. In the following sections, Dewey’s initial thoughts on reflection will be presented along with the contributions of other writers in the field.

3.7.1 Dewey’s views and their implications for INSET

Dewey contributed significantly to concepts related to reflection in the beginning of the 20th century when he first introduced his book *How We Think*. For Dewey, people’s beliefs always have a certain level of supposition. To say ‘I think so’ implies ‘I do not as yet know so’ (Dewey, 1933, p. 10). He argued that the process

of thinking is determined greatly by one's experiences. Therefore, one's current ideas are a consequence of one's past experiences, and these ideas form a basis for future reactions. According to Dewey, the way people think is highly predictable as their experiences lead to the construction of ideas that are aimed at resolving current issues. This process forms a chain such that one idea leads to the generation of a new one, which becomes the basis for the next idea. In the long run, the final decision will be made when the series of ideas generated is analysed altogether (Jones, 2010; Hietanen & Järvi, 2015). Dewey (1933) called for teachers to take reflective action that is opposed to routine and would entail:

active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusion to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought. (p. 6)

Dewey's insights are essential in guiding reflection for teachers because they note the distinction between routine and reflection (Farrell 2008). When teachers are driven by a certain routine, they operate in a way that the institution expects them to perform, without analysing critically the processes. They end up merely fulfilling institutional requirements without performing an analysis of their role in the teaching process (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008, p. 146) In contrast, reflection's active, persistent, and careful evaluation of any belief guide practice and establish whether the goals are met. Therefore, such a reflective action provides an all-inclusive way of managing problems, with the active involvement of reason and emotion (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Ottesen, 2007). Dewey (1933) believed that reason and emotion are involved in reflection and elaborated on certain qualities that are related to how one thinks. He identified three qualities for RP, that is, open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness (as cited in Rodgers, 2002, pp. 861–862) (see Figure 3.2).

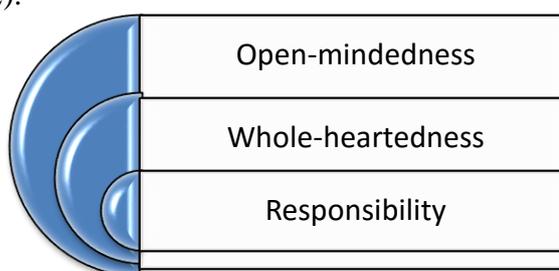


Figure 3.2: Dewey's main attitudes to the RP (as cited in Farrell, 2014, p. 2)

Open-mindedness prepares an individual to accommodate ideas from both sides of an issue and serves as the driving force for seeking appropriate options (Hare & McLaughlin, 1994). It is also a virtue that enables an individual to accept other people and their strengths and limitations. During the reflection process, there is space for questioning, challenging, and doubting views, and hence, the suggested interventions are supported by highest levels of evidence (Reushle, 2008).

Responsibility enables people to bear all consequences of their actions and adopt change where necessary (Robinson & Dowson, 2011). The ability to accept a wrongdoing is an appropriate beginning of solution-finding and adherence to proposed suggestions for better productivity. Teachers can assess their actions and consider their sources as being personal, academic, social, or political. Such evaluations have widened the scope of reflection for INSET to focus on not only the classroom environment but also other factors that affect the education system.

Wholeheartedness is the final drive that ensures that teachers implement the intended change after a critical analysis of the situation. It prepares the teachers to overcome fear and other 'stumbling blocks' towards ensuring that the evaluation of their actions relates to the change (Farrell, 2012, p. 15). Dewey (1933) viewed reflection as a mode of thought and identified five phases of thinking (i.e. suggestion, intellectualisation, guiding idea, reasoning, and hypothesis testing) when an individual corroborates or negates information (as cited in Farrell, 2012).

Although they support Dewey's point of view, Clark (2000) and Grossman and McDonald (2008) proposed that routine is also necessary in guiding our actions. Without routine, everyone will behave as they wish, and certain behaviours will be unmanageable. Routine also forms a basis upon which people are expected to act and react, and without it, the two actions will be inconsistent. Cohen (2007) reported a growing interest in recurring action patterns, such as routines and practices, in recent years. As Dewey derived the way humans think from daily activities, routine is an efficient platform for teachers to initiate their critical analysis skills. Therefore, routine forms the basis of thinking and leads to acceptance or rejection of the standards.

For the reflection process to be effective enough, Dewey believed that it must be systematic. 'Systematic reflection' assists in solving problems one after another

(Carol, 2002, p. 845). Social interaction is another means of developing an effective RP, as noted by Parsons and Stephenson (2005). It is also emphasised in chapter 8 as one of the principles of the proposed INSET framework. When student teachers interact with each other, they create an environment conducive to identifying their own common issues and reflecting on potential solutions. Peer visits and critical friends are good examples of how social interaction in the professional context can promote reflection. Reflecting on practice must be critical to be effective. Collin et al. (2013) argued that simply being instructed how to teach is contradictory to internalising and making sense of teaching. A critical reflection on practices is essential for student teachers who need support to translate a teaching practice into an effective one. Standards that do not deliver the expected outcomes must not be followed during practice.

In recent years, RP has become a common component of many INSET programmes. Chapter 5 illustrates how RP was incorporated in the design of this study while section 6.2 presents the findings of RP instruments. However, it is important not to impose reflection on teachers. Hobbs (2007) noted that despite the recent trend among training providers to include a required RP assignment, ‘the very notion of forced and evaluated self-exploration [raised] certain moral and practical issues that cannot be avoided’ (p. 405). Hobbs (2007) referred to research-documented hostile reactions to forced reflection. The same concept of teachers’ buy-in is emphasised by Vaughan (as cited in Collin et al., 2013), who described RP as ‘a state of mind that must be internalised by those who practise it’ (p. 21). Greene affirmed that reflection must not be based on procedures to which teachers must adhere (as cited in Zeichner & Liston, 2013, p. 10; St. Hill & Yazici 2014, p. 447). Reflection must be driven by the passion to make a change and ensure that the motive has been achieved. According to Greene (1986), emotion and passion are attributes that can transform significantly the education system through reflection.

3.7.2 Other views and models on reflective practice

Dewey’s writings formed a basis for subsequent scholars, including Donald Schon (Collins et al., 2010; Vachon et al., 2013). Schon defined the way professionals solve their work-related problems using two notions, namely, ‘reflection-*on-action*’

and ‘reflection-*in*-action’ (Schon, 1983, p. 102). The process of finding a lasting solution to a problem involves framing the problem and developing practical solutions to it rather than depending on theoretical frameworks. To a certain extent, the two notions tend to build on Dewey’s work, that is, a solution is based on past experiences. Reflection-*in*-action involves a situation whereby there is an individual interpretation of an immediate problem in one’s own context, for example, while teaching in the classroom. Connections are made through a reflection on the individual’s feelings and emotions. Individuals eventually develop a solution to the problem, by evaluating their past experiences, which they use to manage directly the immediate situation (Schon, 1983).

Reflection-*on*-action involves an analysis of an experience after it happens and then incorporates all reasons around such experience. The analysis is conscious and involves the feelings and reactions of a professional and the consequences of all actions that could follow or could have been taken (Attar, Shahabi, & Amlashi, 2016; Wasson et al., 2015). Reflection-*on*-action entails questioning the theories and underpinnings of what people do and looking for arguments to support their judgements. The essence is to explore all possible causative agents and the reasoning behind the actions (Moon, 2013; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). Schon’s (1983) presentation of his two types of reflection as separate processes was criticised by Moon (2013). Moon (2013, p. 43) identified confusing inconsistencies in Schon’s distinction and ‘woolly edges’ between reflection *in* and *on* action. She referred to the ‘stop and think’ example proposed by Schon in certain articles as reflection *in* action and in others as reflection *on* action. She concluded that reflection *on* action may occur ‘during’ action. She also criticised Schon’s model for excluding reflection before action. The pre-action stage is an important stage to anticipate potential problems and try to pre-emptively avoid them.

Schon used the notions of reflection *in* and *on* action to demonstrate that individuals begin to experience professional growth when they begin to analyse events critically. To a certain extent, this analysis may bring doubt, and reflectors may consider themselves the main causative factor of the problem, using the reflection-*in*-action concept. When individuals question their behaviour, they begin to consider it as a problem that does not meet the required standards of their practice

(Peltier, Hay, & Drago, 2006). However, reflection-on-action creates a scenario in which possible problems and their causes are eliminated. Therefore, an individual can settle, and doubts are removed if he/she is not part of the problem. The result of the elimination is that people can then contribute to the situation based on their knowledge. The contributions are expected to produce better outcomes, and ways of achieving them will be suggested (Schon, 1983; Kasturiratne, Lean, & Phippen, 2012). To conclude, Schon developed practical applications of reflection in the field professional development through his exploratory rather than finite process (as cited in Jackson, 2004). For Schon, ‘[an e]xploratory experiment is the probing, playful activity by which we get a feel for things. It succeeds when it leads to the discovery of something there’ (as cited in Jackson, 2004, p. 59).

Kolb (2014) developed Dewey’s ideas further into a more interactive cycle of experiential learning. His experiential learning theory (ELT) emphasises the role that an experience plays in learning, and provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multilinear model of adult development (Kolb et al., 2001, p. 227) (see Figure 3.2).

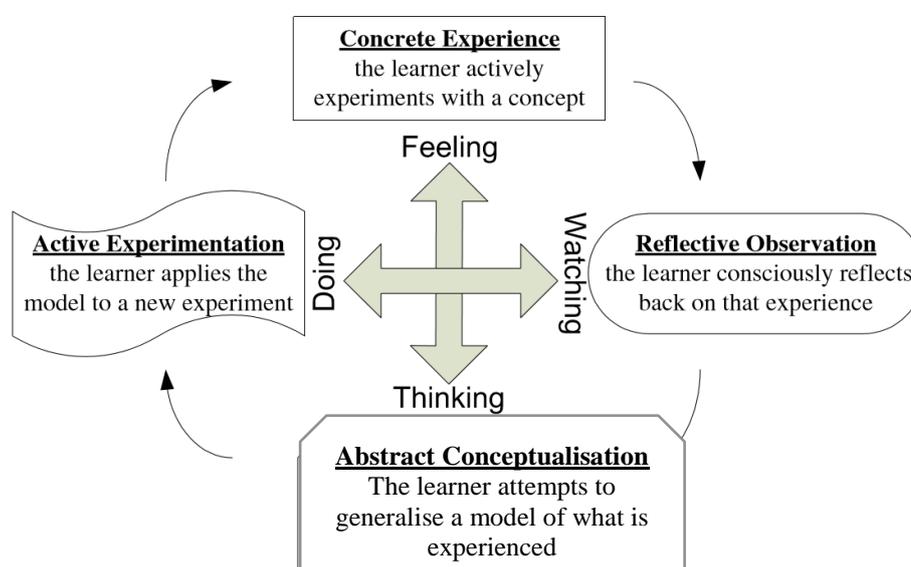


Figure 3.3: Kolb’s experiential learning theory (Konal et al., 2014, p. 13)

There are many applications of ELT. In INSET, experimentation can take place in the pre, during, and post stages. However, it is more important to undertake experiential activities in the delivery stage to engage participants and boost

interaction. Table 3.2 provides an overview of possible educational applications for Kolb's ELT.

Table 3.2: Applications of experiential learning theory

CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY				
Social Policy and Action	Competence-Based Education	Lifelong Learning and Career Development	Experiential Education	Curriculum Development
Access and influence on the symbolic/ technological culture for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Minorities — The poor — Blue-collar workers — Women — Developing countries — The arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Assessment of prior learning — Assessment centers — Competence centered curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The nonuniversity education industry — Adult development programs in higher education — Integration of learning and work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Co-op education — Internships — Simulations — Experiential exercises — On-the-job training/ learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Implementation of Bruner's manifesto: "Any subject can be respectably taught at any level."

Note. Source: Kolb (2014, p. 18)

Kolb's experiential learning partly inspired the development of Gibbs' reflective cycle, which places emphasis on both one's own and other people's perceptions (Gibbs, 1988). Gibbs's model (see Figure 3.4) relates to empathy because it enables one to have a first-hand feeling of other people's feelings and views on a certain experience (as cited in Quinton & Smallbone, 2010, p. 126). His model is in the form of a structured interrogation that involves six elements that aid in the reflection of a learning process (Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004). Having empathy makes people reason beyond their actions, incorporating how other people feel about their actions and the different perceptions they might be having (Hilden

& Tikkamäki, 2013).

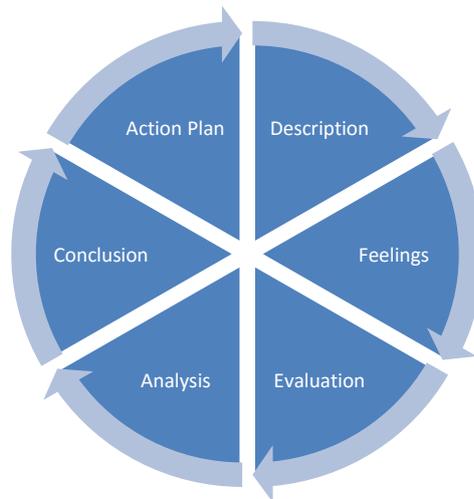


Figure 3.4: Reflective cycle model (Gibbs, 1988)

Lawrence-Wilkes’s REFLECT model is based on the word ‘reflect’, which is an acronym representing various procedures that can be used for reflection (Lawrence-Wilkes & Ashmore, 2014). The acronym consists of seven steps that offer a conclusive guide through reflection (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: REFLECT Model

Remember	Review past experiences to note those that were intense.
Experience	Give an account of whatever happened and note important happenings.
Focus	Identify who or what was involved, and where it occurred. Include roles of various participants.
Learn	Identify reasons for the experiences and the feelings they induced.
Evaluate	Recognise the outcomes of the events, including their strengths and weaknesses.
Consider	Assess whether there are possibilities for change.
Trial	Experiment on the proposed changes.

Note. Source: Lawrence-Wilkes & Ashmore (2014)

Borton's model offers a simplified learning cycle with a flexible RP protocol (as cited in Stonehouse, 2011; Jasper, 2003). His model involves three questions that guide reflection and ask the educator *what*, *so what* and *now what?* The teacher describes an event and his/her scrutiny helps articulate the implications of the event; after which, a way forward is generated. Therefore, ways of improving the consequences generated by the experience are reflected upon and implemented (Stonehouse, 2011).

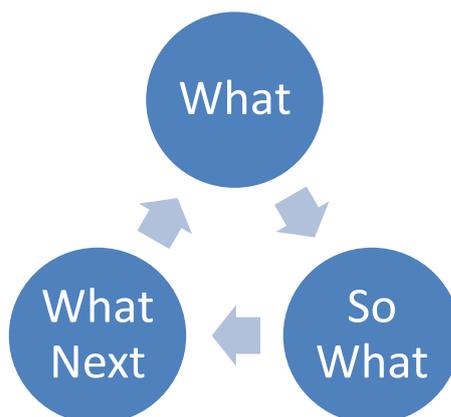


Figure 3.5: Borton's reflective model (as cited in Stonehouse, 2011, p. 300)

Reflection models were introduced in other disciplines, too. Johns (1995), a nursing professor, developed a reflection model that aids practitioners in comprehending their practice. Due to the nature of the health sector, the model emphasises the swiftness with which an experience becomes learned knowledge through collaboration with a colleague or a mentor. According to Johns (1995), it is easier for practitioners to transform an experience into knowledge when empirical methods are used.

The single- and double-loop learning models were developed by Argyris (1976). These models are mainly based on the processes around the recognition of an error until its resolution. In single-loop learning, an error occurs and is rectified, but current methods continue to be used when the problem resurfaces. In contrast, double-loop learning involves the invention of new strategies and policies to solve the problem when it reoccurs.

Finally, the RP models discussed above share a common emphasis on critical problem solving that is expected to improve practice. It is important to note the

intertwined relationship between AR and RP in these models. Leitch and Day (2000) posited the view that '[b]oth, in their various forms, are considered...critical dimensions of the professional development of teachers' (p. 179). Leitch and Day stated that the two came into this strong relationship through Stenhouse's (1975) notion of the teacher-as-a-researcher in which an educational AR was encouraged and held different kinds of reflection at its centre. Reason & Bradbury (2001) questioned an AR that does not involve reflection; they argued that an 'action without reflection and understanding is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless' (p. 2).

3.7.3 Sample reflective tools for teacher trainers

As discussed above, RP is viewed positively in literature. It is a helpful tool for teachers to self-observe their practice and evaluate their methods in order to bring about improvement. Wyatt (2010a, p.40) noted that 'if teacher education is to stimulate the capacity to reflect, various strategies might be employed'. In recent years, there have been focus on how INSET can improve the effectiveness of teaching and RP has emerged as one solution (Bedall, 2017). RP has become 'widespread and a ubiquitous part of the teacher education landscape' (Mann & Walsh, 2017 p. 4). Therefore, INSET programmes have employed several tools to promote RP among teachers. The list below, which is neither exclusive nor exhaustive, presents some of the common tools used in the context of this study.

- **Videotaping lessons**

Video recordings of classroom activities provide an opportunity for an 'evidence-based' RP (Dann & Richardson, 2015, p. 63). These tools enable teachers to consider every detail of the classroom activity and develop an account of the emotions, experiences, and consequences of various actions that have occurred during the lesson (Reitano & Sim, 2010; Welsch & Devlin, 2007).

- **Journals/Diaries**

Reflective journals can promote learners' self-assessment, collaborative critical skills, reflection, and decision-making (Epp, 2008; Rai, 2012; Sendall & Domocol, 2013; Woodfield & Lazarus, 1998; Zou et al., 2015).

- **Peer visits**

Peer visits create a mentorship programme in which teachers with similar aspirations share thoughts and experiences, and serve as avenues for critical analysis (Carson & Fisher, 2006; Robinson, 2010; Villa, 2010).

- **Follow-up visits/observation**

Follow-up visits reinforce the information acquired during training sessions. O'Sullivan (2002) pointed out that INSET without follow-up visits results in limited transfer of knowledge.

- **Self-assessments**

Self-assessment tests and tools provide a platform for self-evaluation, and occur in any stage of the training (McCombs, 2003; Ross & Bruce, 2007).

- **Portfolios**

Portfolios can serve as forms of both assessment and preparation for the profession. They include well-structured artefacts supported by critical evaluation (Calandra, Brantley-Dias, & McNeal, 2007; Mansvelder-Longayroux et al., 2007; Milman, 2005; Myers, 2013). They form a platform for teachers and students to demonstrate their cognitive knowledge and reflect on their practices. They may include lesson plans and reflective statements that represent the teaching philosophy.

- **Electronic dialogue journals and blogs**

Blogs can promote reflection through sharing of one's own thoughts and reflecting on readers' feedback (Hay, Peltier, & Drago, 2004). Bloggers are challenged to confront what they believe in and create an assessment of the interpretation and reflection of their views by the audience (Hulkari & Mahlamäki-Kultanen, 2008; Olofsson, Lindberg, & Trond, 2011).

Although video-taping, class visits and online forums were used in this study, journals were the main tool used in all the three cycles. In addition to the critical value of these tools, they provided the participants with a communication channel with the trainer. Listening to everyone was not possible at all times with more than twenty participants in most sessions. Other tools, e.g. class visits, promoted collaboration in the form discussion both before and after the lessons.

3.8 Previous action research studies in INSET

In the course of this study, I have come across several studies that have taken an AR approach to investigating and improving INSET. Few of these studies have been conducted in the local context while most of the previous studies were in contexts outside Qatar. It is also noted that both local and international studies have adopted AR for different functions in INSET.

One of the pioneering AR studies in INSET was a 1973 project called the Ford Project with school teachers in East Anglia, UK (Elliott & Adelman, 1996). The project was directed towards helping teachers to adopt and test AR strategies to resolve some of the persistent problems they faced. The project started with certain research tasks given to teachers to specify the nature of enquiry, diagnose problems and decide on strategies to resolve these problems. An organizational framework which would help facilitate the execution of these tasks was designed and teachers were trained on classroom strategies that would give students more autonomy and independence. Teachers were asked to meet regularly in teams to compare and contrast experiences. General meetings in the form of residential workshops were also conducted in the two-year lifespan of the project. The project found that teachers were unaware of the sorts of influence they tended to exert in classrooms. The study also concluded that teachers' AR projects should protect and foster autonomy and ensure interaction between action and reflection. Although this was labelled an AR project, it was not about improving the practice of the researchers, or trainers. As the authors phrased it, 'our action research is therefore logically dependent on that of our teachers.' Consequently, the outcomes of this AR project were more relevant to teachers' practices and classroom improvements.

Dependence on trainee teachers and their classroom projects has been a common feature in INSET studies that employed the action research methodology. Ponte et al (2004) conducted a study with seven groups of teachers at six schools who took part in a programme to gain professional knowledge through action research, and were facilitated by four teacher educators. The teachers worked with a plan of five steps (formulation of a general idea; exploration; planning, implementation and evaluation of concrete actions for improvement; and writing up of a case study on the teachers' own action research). Teachers also wrote up logbooks in order to

record and evaluate their action research and functioned as critical friends who helped each other to reflect on what they were doing and why. The theoretical framework of the study was based on the development of professional knowledge through praxis. The researchers gathered data at different times in the program using four different instruments: logbooks, fragment analyses, supplementary interviews and documents. Content analysis was adopted to identify common themes. The main conclusions of the study were that teachers themselves did not usually gear themselves to gaining insight into their current practice and the actual situation in which they were working. In addition, the findings highlighted that teachers lacked freedom of choice with their learning objectives which were set by the school/government. Finally, teachers appreciated the facilitation they received in conducting their action research projects by the four teacher educators and in particular the cyclic and process-oriented guidance. Similar to Elliott & Adelman's study (Elliott & Adelman, 1996), only one of the researchers was involved in the facilitation of the teachers. The action research project did not aim to improve neither the researchers' nor the trainers' skills. It rather aimed at improving trainees' classroom practices.

Conducting AR in INSET has a potential to foster networking and joint projects when multiple stakeholders are involved. A good example is a diploma programme in action research offered by Kingston University (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007, pp. 90-91). The programme was in partnership with local schools that wanted their teachers to research an area of their interest and work collaboratively with other colleagues in the development of these projects. Each project has a university-based internal examiner who acted as a critical friend. Schools contributed 85% of the diploma fees. When teachers investigated their own practices, they read relevant educational literatures and used a group to discuss their own research in relation to the work of others. The project was found to have provided teachers not only with academic support but also with emotional support. This project provides a good example how schools can cooperate with universities to provide more practical value to the academic research. When a university degree is directly related to one's own practice, the student researchers are expected to be more motivated and the theory-practice divide is expected to be minimal.

Another major category of AR is as part of a formal academic study program (e.g. Diploma or Master's courses). TESOL or language education courses highlight the trend towards including AR as a component of teachers' professional training (Burns, 2005, p. 63). Academic teacher pathways may also turn into action research projects, e.g. master's units reported in a study by Hine and Lavery (2014). The researchers are university professors who teach Action Research in Education modules at the University of Notre Dame, Australia. Their study sought to explore ways undertaking action research in schools can inform strategic planning. Data collection encompassed an examination of the experiences and reflections of three participant teachers who implemented action research projects at their schools. The three teachers formed three case studies that formed a collective case study structure. Three individual 40-minute semi-structured interviews were carried out to collect these data. The findings showed that the three participants viewed action research as a valuable process to investigate a critical issue of concern in their schools.

In Qatar, as discussed in chapter 2, the rich diversity of education has led to diversity in INSET opportunities. Since 2003, new international partnerships with British and American organisations have helped develop new benchmarks, and a public school system that has 'rank[ed] among the most transparent in the world' (Barber et al., 2007, p. 47). Examples of these benchmarks include the establishment of the Education City with many university campuses. These developments have brought extra pressure on teachers, e.g. in form of appraisal systems, to reach the standards that have been established as targets, and teacher training provision has geared up slowly to fit these new demands. Research in INSET in Qatar is limited, and thus makes the search for INSET studies from the academe difficult. Nasser's and Romanowski's (2011) study on INSET is among the few studies. They found the relatively low level of awareness of the importance of in-service professional development in schools to be affecting the quality of teacher education, and by extension the quality of the teaching provision in Qatar. According to their study, teachers view INSET as an appraisal requirement rather than a professional development opportunity, and although teachers are provided with such opportunities and participate actively in trainings, there appears to be a problem with focus:

teachers are more concerned with mastering and refining teaching methodologies than with developing the thinking processes needed at times to understand the theory required to sustain real educational reform. (Nasser & Romanowski, 2011, p. 166)

As for other AR studies in the local Qatari context, the few ones that could be found also focused on classroom practices. McNiff and McCourt (2010) published a paper which was a progress report of the first phase of an innovative action research professional education programme for teachers in Qatar (September 2009-June 2010). The programme is thought to have had considerable systemic influence in new thinking and practices in the Qatar and beyond. I remember that my first Action Research project was part of this programme and it was about teaching English in an Islamic context. I was then chosen to present my findings at the annual conference of the project. McNiff and McCourt used a self-study action enquiry to reflect on the project. They told the story of the project from their concerns while responding to the tender invitation to the issues they faced, and how they could have handled them better. McNiff's paper was a reflection account and was unusually interactive through the links to videos and a bulletin related to the project. McKniff (2011) was another publication about the same project.

There are other studies in the Qatari context that claim to have adopted action research to investigate teacher education but the methodologies and outcomes of these studies are more concerned with classroom students. For example, Ibrahim and Walters (2012) used Questionnaires given to students, as well as the classroom teachers, to investigate the impact of computer based literacy program on these English language learners' ability to read those selected elements more easily, the project was with kindergarten students and revealed a positive attitude toward using computer programs to teach decoding skills in English. Yet, the authors claim that 'the results from this case study/action research project' have the potential to overcome the challenge of local teacher preparation.

Fragments of AR can be found in other research studies in the Qatari context. For example, a research proposal for an action research project to investigate Qatar approach to bilingual immersion education was discussed by Troudi (2014). The

project was designed to enable teachers to develop the approach further and establish the effectiveness of their developments. The overall research design is of a case study with an element of action research. However, the project has not been completed due to funding issues. Another example was by Abu-Tineh and Sadiq (2018) who investigated the characteristics of effective professional development and effective models of professional development as perceived by school teachers in the State of Qatar. Their study was quantitative in nature and was conducted using a survey methodology. The researchers proposed INSET models to teachers to gain their feedback without implementing any of these models. Results of the study showed that teachers perceived mentoring as the most effective professional development model. It was unattainable to find other local AR studies that investigated INSET.

The studies discussed above approached the importance of action research in INSET from different perspectives. However, a common feature was the missing objective to improve the authors' own practices as teacher trainers or university academics preparing the future generation of teachers. In section 3.3, I discussed other studies that missed the 'first person' approach (i.e. Stuart, 1991; Calvert and Sheen's, 2015). O'Sullivan's (2004) was one of few studies I came across that investigated the author's own practice as a teacher trainer and aimed at its betterment. O'Sullivan collected data at various stages throughout the INSET programme to inform the action research cycles. Her eclectic approach to data collection used interviews, semi-structured and unstructured observations, lesson observations, assessment of learners' work, and an examination of documents. The 'trial and error' embedded in the different cycles for her project led to the development of effective learner-centred skills.

My study adopted an approach that is different from mainstream AR studies in INSET in the sense it aimed at improving my own practices as a trainer (see section 1.3). This study was motivated from its outset by my personal desire to improve my own training skills. My investigation focussed on issues within the INSET training rooms, e.g. trainee engagement and programme design, rather than issues within my trainee's classrooms. The findings of this study shed light on issues that are purely INSET focused like preferred modes of training, follow-up techniques, input

themes, trainer role and success factors (see section 5.2.3). It is hoped that such findings will provide insights that can bridge the gap in literature between INSET action research and trainer's own practice.

3.9 Conclusion

Chapter 3 provided a literature review of the main themes relevant to this study. It began by providing background information on INSET. Finally, RP was discussed as an emergent theme in the later stages of this study and previous studies were outlined. Chapter 3 forms a basis for understanding the main relevant concepts in this study. Chapter 6 will introduce this study's research methodology.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

This chapter describes in detail the research design for this study, including the data collection methods and data analysis process.

Introduction

Before introducing the research methodology, it would be useful to provide a chronological overview of the structure of the whole study. This study consisted of three stages, namely, needs analysis, implementation, and reflection. The needs analysis stage, which employed focus groups and survey as main instruments, was important in discovering the context, familiarising myself with the social elements within the context, and informing the implementation. The implementation stage was conducted over three AR cycles. Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this study discuss the results and emerging themes across the different cycles. Table 4.1 provides a visual summary of the entire study.

Table 4.1: Overview of the study

Stage	Actions		Data collection	Purpose/Focus
One March 2013- June 2014	Needs analysis	Preliminary work	School visits, informal interviews, lesson observations and focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore INSET in Qatar and inform the design of INSET in the implementation stage
		Main needs analysis	Survey Focus groups	
Two September 2014 – May 2016	Implementation/ intervention	First cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop evaluation forms Informal interviews Reflective assignment at the end of the training (lesson plan with a reflective essay on its delivery) Reflective journal entries at the end of each workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> INSET delivery (practices/strategies)
		Second cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaire Informal interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainer role
		Third cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups Workshop evaluation forms / exit slips Informal/formal interviews Reflective assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content, delivery, and trainer role
Three Sept- Dec., 2016	Reflection	Propose INSET framework		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on the study Outline limitations and future research Discuss contributions and draw conclusions

4.1 Action research methodology

This study adopted a participatory action research methodology. The investigative AR methodology employed surveys, interviews, focus groups, journals, email correspondence and field notes. Although classroom observations were conducted during the school visits and as part of the training follow-up, they were not a main tool in this study. This design enabled me to achieve an in-depth triangulated analysis of the social complexities inherent in INSET in Qatar. It also facilitated responding to perceived needs as the study progressed and adapting a methodology that is in view of stakeholder perspectives and changing circumstances.

This chapter, first, introduces the AR methodology and explains how such methodology relates to this study's research focus, and then discusses the research methods employed. Finally, it presents an overview of the implementation and outlines the procedures conducted.

4.1.1 Definition and rationale

There is a growing body of AR studies published all around the world (Strand, 2009). The approach, which started in healthcare (Lewin, 1946; Vivekananda-Schmidt, 2011), is now gaining preference with researchers in social and human sciences (Burns, 2010). It is often seen as a bridge between theory and practice (Rolfe, 1996), by breaking down the barriers between practitioners and researchers. Burns stated that AR is a practitioner-led methodology that serves as a primary 'vehicle for practitioners' personal and professional development' (as cited in Mann, 2005, p. 103). It is also a strategy for encouraging more reflective practice by prospective teachers (Gore & Zeichner, 1991). AR has moved toward increasingly collaborative, systemic, transformational change processes (Newman & Fitzgerald, 2001, p. 37). According to Burns (2005), the aim of AR is 'to provide rich descriptions and practical solutions that might have resonance for other practitioners in comparable situations' (p. 67). Placing AR within a paradigm is a contentious issue in research. Although AR is at times referred to as an example of a research methodology that is in agreement with the critical paradigm (Lather, 2006; Taylor & Medina, 2013), it must be recognised as a separate educational research paradigm

(Bargal, 2008; Pine, 2009). The paradigmatic status of AR is discussed in section 4.1.2.

AR has been praised for its social collaboration. Newton's (2006) definition of AR emphasises the participatory action change as 'a type of applied social research that aims to improve social situations through change interventions' (p. 3). Elliott (1991) referred to a similar view of AR and stressed the potential impact on quality 'the study of [a] social situation with a view to improving the quality within it' (p. 69). Greenwood and Levin (2007, p. 4) focused on the participation of stakeholders in AR as a key success factor in any AR project. Pine (2009) referred to AR from its collective epistemological feature as 'a paradigm that reflects the principle that reality is constructed through individual or collective conceptualisations and definitions of a particular situation requiring a wide spectrum of research' (p. 29). Writers often look at one perspective of AR. However, a commonly cited definition by Carr and Kemmis (1986) encapsulates the full picture of AR and describes it as

A form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out. (p. 162)

The definition above clarifies that the main goal of AR is to impact on practice. That is, 'the fundamental aim of action research is to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge' (Elliott, 1991, p. 49). AR refers to the conjunction of three elements: action, research, and participation. 'Unless all three elements are present, the process may be useful but it is not AR' (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, p. 6).

That is, AR bridges that gap between theory and practice, and provides a closer connection between action and reflection. This is why AR is the most common form of 'practitioner research' (Mann and Walsh 2017, p. 222). In the course of this study, the immediate relevance to the context was visible to my colleagues at Qatar University. One of my colleagues, who was doing his PhD at another British University, noted that he missed the context relevance in his PhD and appreciated my choice of AR. Greenwood and Levin (2007) praised AR for similar reasons, 'a research (AR) can help us build a better, freer, fairer society through collaborative

problem analysis and problem solving in context' (p. 3). Kemmis (2010, p. 417) argued that AR contributes to theory and, more importantly, history through its contribution to the action or 'happen-ness'. The terms 'intervention' and 'impact' are associated with AR and give researchers hope and hype to reach possible 'clinical-like' solutions for educational issues. In Qatar, AR has received attention and is often promoted among teachers, who view it as the long-awaited panacea of educational problems (see section 2.5). Lewin (1946, p. 47), who produced one of the pioneering materials on AR, also introduced AR as a 'panacea' of educational issues at the time. His chapter on AR was titled 'The Use of Clinical Methods in Social Psychology'.

Considering the strengths of AR and its theory-application potential praxis, I adopted it because of four main reasons. First, the educational system in Qatar has offered only teacher-centred classrooms that emphasise rote learning (Robinson, 2008; Romanowski & Nasser, 2012; Weber, 2010). AR is a vital tool to improve educational practice through practical actions and reflection upon the outcomes of such actions (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). It is 'a powerful tool for change and improvement at the local level' (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 344), as it creates an inquiry climate of critical, effective, and innovative practitioners. Researchers that use AR are motivated by their desire to improve practical situations (Cain, 2010). AR provides teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their own practice to become agents of change (Hansen & Nalder-Godfrey, 2004). Becoming part of the change has been the impetus of many critical studies and the demands for teachers to be responsible for the policies and practices in their classrooms (Hansen & Nalder-Godfrey, 2004, pp. 44–46). Second, there is a need for critical academic research in the Arab region (Bontis, 2004), and particularly in Qatar. Therefore, adopting the AR paradigm would facilitate the investigation and testing of ways to improve practice and teacher education in Qatar. The critical paradigm holds that 'researchers must uncover hidden assumptions' (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Critical paradigm helps researchers escape from 'irrational compulsions' of their individual history and their reliance on routinised behaviours through a process of critical self-reflection (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 138). Critical paradigm aims to transform education and is directed at educational change (Alvesson & Deetz, 1989; Bell, 2002; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; House & Howe, 1999; Richards & Lockhart,

1994). Thus, critical AR paradigm is compatible with the context and focus of this study, as it would help facilitate in-depth probing into the factors affecting INSET issues, provide analysis on the relationships among these factors, and simplify complex social phenomena. Third, I have been involved personally in INSET and aim to improve my own practices. As a teacher trainer, I train cohorts of trainee teachers on a regular basis and provide pedagogical support to them. AR was employed in this study so that I could reflect on my own practice to become an agent of change. The reliance of traditional educational research on outsiders to study learning and teaching does not fit with the aims of this study to investigate and test ways to improve practice and teacher education. As emphasised by Wadsworth (1998), AR involves others who are part of an inquiry. Researcher interventionist participation is among the core elements of AR. Greenwood and Levin (2007) clarified the importance of participation in AR:

Action research is social research carried out by a team that encompasses a professional action researcher and the members of an organization, community, or network ‘stakeholders’ who are seeking to improve the participants’ situation. AR promotes broad participation in the research process and supports action leading to a more just, sustainable, or satisfying situation for the stakeholders. (p. 4)

The definition above of AR refers to a professional researcher. In the case of my study, I played this role while working with the team of around 75 teacher trainees who participated in three cycles of AR. I led this study as an insider researcher to investigate my own practice as a trainer and help teachers improve their practice. Fourth, AR was adopted because of its methodological flexibility (Ferrance, 2000). AR provided flexibility in conducting the three-stage investigative cycle of this study. Several tools were needed in these stages; the first stage was an exploration of INSET issues in teacher training, followed by a cyclic design and implementation of an interventionist INSET.

Consequently, AR is more relevant to this study, which investigates areas of improvement in ELT INSET practices in Qatar, as it allows the exploration of personal interactions and interpretation of social complexities. Although problems

with teacher training are experienced by many teachers in Qatar, it was difficult to investigate the reasons for these issues and propose solutions through a numerically testable hypothesis. The purpose of this study was not to provide statistics on the training issues but rather explore the reasons for these issues and propose possible solutions, as it was important to explain this complex phenomenon through an insider perspective. The focus must gear toward the teachers' concerns to determine their motives, attitudes, and perspectives regarding this phenomenon. My action plan was influenced by teachers' input and aimed at influencing teacher actions. Collecting data at the start was needed, but the freedom to observe participants and interpret feedback and experiences was vital in the later stages.

To sum up, considering the contextual reality and personal perspectives outlined above, I realised that adopting AR as a methodology would better serve this study's purpose. First, teachers in Qatar tend to distrust outsider conventional researchers. Second, it was vital to establish trust with teachers from the start. Being an insider provided access to their daily practices and encouraged them to reveal their own beliefs. Third, being personally involved in the AR process helped me better interpret the teacher trainees' voices and design an effective intervention that would meet their needs. Thus, the contextual situation necessitated my choice of AR.

So far, I have discussed AR definition, strengths and the reasons why it was adopted for my research. Subsequent sections discuss AR paradigmatic status, the process, types, and characteristics of AR, and the validity and reliability of the methodology.

4.1.2 Situating action research in a paradigm

Situating AR in a certain paradigm can be problematic. Although more than 70 years have passed since Lewin (1946) tried to distinguish AR from other research methods, contemporary researchers still face the same issue. Kemmis argued that 'some of what passes for action research today is not action research at all but merely a specie of field experimentation' (as cited in Cain, 2011, p. 4). Burns (2005) tried to explain teachers' difficulty to 'disassociate approaches adopted by AR from those they believe should characterise research more generally' (pp. 59–60). She argued that AR is different from a research approach used in basic and applied studies because of its interventionist and subjective approach. Despite her

lengthy discussion on AR values and admitting the difficulty of situating it in a certain paradigm, Burns does not provide a clear verdict whether it must be considered a separate new paradigm or not.

Cain (2011) is not among the researchers who avoid defining the dichotomy between paradigms to which AR belongs. According to him,

there is widespread confusion and misunderstanding about whether AR belongs to a certain paradigm or being a separate paradigm. It is often wrongly assumed to fall into either positivist or interpretive paradigms (or perhaps a mixture of both) or to be critical. (Cain, 2011, p. 3)

Cain argued that common paradigms do not give adequate support for AR. For him, AR is necessarily subordinate to teaching, and researchers must work with teachers to determine methods that are congruent with the nature and ethics of teaching. Researchers who associate AR with critical theory paradigm are more vocal and probably have stronger arguments (Elliot, 1991; Taylor & Medina, 2013; Kemmis, 2007; Mills, 2003; Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007). Carr and Kemmis (1986) referred to AR as ‘the concrete methodological expression of the critical approach to the educational theory’ (p. 45). Lather (2006) considered AR as an example of a research methodology that is in agreement with critical paradigm. Zuber-Skerritt (2001) is nearly consistent with Lather (2006), and places AR in the newer, paradigm of reflective rationality. Ledwith (2007, pp. 597-600) discussed the ‘critical praxis’ of AR. Lincoln and Guba (2000) argued that AR’s strong connection with critical theory paradigm is explained by its critical subjectivity that implies reflexivity. My study was both reflective, as I tried to understand the complexities of the INSET landscape in Qatar, and reflexive in the sense that I wanted to improve my own practice as a trainer.

Unlike Burns (2005) and others who have linked AR to existing paradigms, some researchers argued that it is a separate research paradigm. According to Pine (2009), AR is more than a method and contains 12 features that makes it a new paradigm in research:

Reflexive critique and intersubjectivity, axiology, context, ongoing

tentativeness, recursion, dialectical critique, collaboration, risk, plurality, connotation, moral/political ethos and purpose, and embrace of emotion. (p. 29)

For Pine (2009), AR is a conceptual, social, philosophical, and cultural framework for conducting research, which embraces a wide variety of research methodologies. He believed that AR has enough ontological and epistemological foundations to be regarded as a new research paradigm. McNiff and Whitehead (2002) adopted the paradigmatic view of AR, and argued that AR is ‘a recognised valid form of inquiry with its own methodologies and epistemologies, its own criteria and standards of judgment’ (p. 1). Bargal (2008, pp. 17-27) stated eight principles of AR that qualify it to be a separate research paradigm.

The confusion about whether AR is a paradigm arises from its similarities with other research paradigms. Blichfeldt and Andersen (2006) conducted a critical analysis of AR and concluded that AR embraces a range of perspectives and research designs aiming at facilitated learning among participants. Ozanne & Saatcioglu (2008) argued that AR shares several ontological characteristics with other paradigms. Similar to interpretivists, action researchers assume that the social world is co-created, context bound, relational, and situated. They also share with critical theorists the assumption of social reality as historically constructed; and consistent with poststructuralists’ concern over the micropolitics of power that shape social reality. Cain (2011) argued that although AR is not generalisable, it is applicable to teachers in new contexts, considering that they recognise those contexts as similar to their own.

In short, it can be concluded that AR cannot be classified under any of the paradigms that shape contemporary educational research as it is conceived differently. There is no clear answer to the question whether AR is a new paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Based on the previous discussion of literature, AR has mainly an interpretive critical epistemology while it tends to combine methods from different approaches. Ascribing AR to an existing paradigm or theory is not as important as emphasizing its participatory critical problem-solving nature and this has the most relevance to this study. AR’s weak connections to existing paradigms

is a positive factor for this study as it meant more responsiveness to research issues and more flexibility than other approaches. Blichfeldt and Andersen (2006, p. 8) noted that a ‘declaration-in-advance of theoretical framework would hamper one of the key advantages of action research, i.e., theoretical flexibility’.

4.1.3 Main characteristics of action research

AR cannot be attached narrowly to a certain paradigm. Consequently, it entails a diversity of traditions, ideologies, and methodologies based on researchers’ perspectives. Therefore, discussing the common features of AR that have been adopted as intellectual underpinnings for this study is important. The distinctive features of AR can be identified through a discussion of its definition, nature, and value in literature (Burns, 2005; Cain, 2011; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Dick, 2009; Dörnyei, 2007; Elliot, 1991; Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Kemmis, 2010; McNiff & Whitehead, 2002; Somekh, 2006). As discussed above, participation is a main feature of AR. However, there are other features that distinguish AR and scaffold its ‘critical-reflective’ identity. AR’s key features, which have been discussed in literature and are most foregrounded in this study, are explained below.

Critical-reflective: Reflective practice is regarded as a vital feature of AR. In fact, AR has evolved in response to calls on educators to conduct critical studies (Hansen & Nalder-Godfrey, 2004), leading to inquiry-based research (McGee, 2008). Thus, AR has become a key element in professional development for teachers. Zuber-Skerritt (1992, p. 2) proposed a theoretical framework for an effective AR, called ‘CRASP model’, where the letter C stands for critical. His model is mainly concerned with AR studies as part of PhD degrees. Several of his arguments on the critical nature and other characteristics of quality AR were helpful materials at the beginning of this study.

Practical: AR bridges the divide between research and practice (Burns, 2005; Somekh, 1995). Research starts with a problem to be solved or an unanswered question to be answered. AR’s interventionist approach, in which answers are validated practically and solutions are tested, makes it unique. This feature has made medical therapists use AR to improve their

practice as a result of the shortcomings of research promoted into their field (Miller, 1998). In education, AR has been praised for its potential to foster educational reforms (Elliot, 1991; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; McNiff & Whitehead, 2002; Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008; Somekh, 2006). Somekh (1995) explained that the validity of AR is measured by deepening practitioners' understanding of complex situations to better inform their actions. Practicality is intricately related to criticality in AR. Practitioners are encouraged to critique their own practice and write narratives of their research work as argued by (Heikkinen et al., 2007). They propose five principles to evaluate the quality of AR which include reflexivity that results in useable practices.

Participatory: Participation of the researcher is a key feature that distinguishes AR from traditional research, which is conducted by those who are external to the research phenomenon (Cain, 2010; Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Miller, 1998; Wadsworth, 1998). The participatory nature of AR is often linked to the participatory worldview proposed by Heron and Reason (as cited in Snoeren, Niessen, & Abma, 2012, p. 190), and could lead to a developmental learning outcome for practitioners. 'Action research is often perceived by teachers as a valuable form of continuing professional development; as a way of promoting lifelong learning' (Cain, 2010, p. 20). Carr and Kemmis 1986 (as cited by Mackay, 2016, p.1) argue that for critical participatory AR to bring about change, it needs to reject the premise of objectivity whereby the researcher is viewed as a 'distant observer'. Kemmis, et al., (2013, p. 6) reiterate rejecting researcher objectivity and call for active and proactive notion of critical self-reflection, individual and collective, that 'interrogates the conduct and consequences of participants' practices.'

Cyclical: AR's cyclical nature is among its core elements (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). AR progresses through cycles of 'plan-do-review' (Baumfield et al., 2008, p. 5) in which each cycle informs the next stage of the research. This feature can be traced back to the work of Lewin (1947) when he proposed a cyclical diagram to conceptualise the nature of

AR (Cunningham, 2008). The cyclic nature of AR is viewed as a positive feature in literature, and provides the researcher with flexibility particularly in the early stages where interpretation influences the design of later cycles.

As seen in section 1.3, this study had an overarching pragmatic aim to critique practice in order to generate change. Chapter 5 illustrates the cyclical nature of AR and reports on the different cycles in this study. Finally, section 7.2.3 summarises how this study facilitated reflection among its participants.

4.1.4 Action research processes and models

The flexible nature of AR does not require a rigid model structure, as emphasised by researchers who have proposed the models below (e.g. Burns, 2005). The coverage of the basic stages is what matters, and the real value of AR must rely on its empowerment of participants and impact on practices. The cyclical nature of AR requires conducting at least one cycle in a study. Several models of AR have been formulated (Elliot, 1991; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; O'Leary, 2004). Most of these share Lewin's basic stages of 'plan-act-observe' (as cited in Cunningham, 2008, p. 4) and refer to the three elements of action, research, and participation (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, p. 6). Five main models informed this study.

The first model was proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) and referred to AR as participatory AR. According to these scholars, a spiral of self-reflective cycles include the following:

- Planning a change
- Acting and observing the process and consequences of the change
- Reflecting on these processes and consequences
- Re-planning
- Re-acting and re-observing
- Reflecting again, etc.

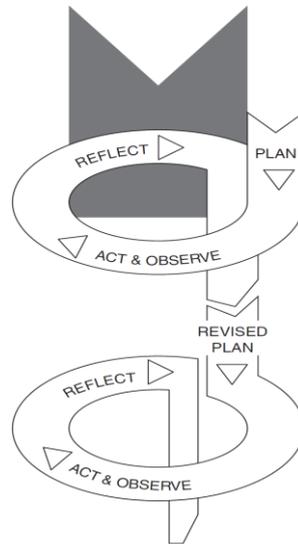


Figure 4.1: Kemmis and McTaggart's model (2000, p. 278)

I found this model appealing because of its simplicity. It incorporates all the essential characteristics of AR in three stages of each cycle. It provided me with the opportunity to visit the issue under study in the different stages of this study to deepen the understanding of a phenomenon under focus. This model was adopted in this study as a heuristic guide in the implementation of interrelated processes of AR where three cycles (plan-act-reflect) were implemented. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2000), their model indicates that a real process might not be as neat as this spiral and the process is likely to be more fluid, open, and responsive.

The criterion of success is not whether participants have followed the steps faithfully but rather whether they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their practices. (p. 278)

Burns (2005) proposed a similar model of cyclical interrelated practices, and argued that 'processes experienced by action researchers are best viewed as necessarily adaptive to the educational situations and circumstances of the participants' (p. 59). Her framework of AR consists of 11 steps (1 exploring → 2 identifying → 3 planning → 4 data collecting → 5 analysing / reflecting → 6 hypothesising / speculating → 7 intervening → 8 observing → 9 reporting → 10 writing → 11 presenting). Mann (2005, p. 103) noted that the main contribution of Burns's arguments on AR is putting the practitioner at the centre of efforts to understand and develop language teaching and learning practice.

Another model suggested was by Elliot (1991, p. 71); this model adds

‘reconnaissance’ to the AR process and emphasises the monitoring process along the different stages of the study. Reconnaissance refers to fact-finding and analysis within each stage of the AR. Other models refer to this stage as an exploratory stage that overlaps with Elliot’s model. This model is a detailed version of Kemmis and McTaggart’s (2000) model in which ‘reconnaissance’ is an implied action in their model. Elliot (1991) also added a third cycle, whereas Kemmis and McTaggart’s (2000) model can generate unlimited cycles.

Another model was proposed by O’Leary (2004, pp. 140–141) which emphasises cycles converging towards better understanding of the phenomenon and improved action implementation. O’Leary emphasises the evaluative nature of AR and seeks to introduce change through a critical continuous reflection. His model consists of four repetitive actions, that is, ‘observe-reflect-plan-act’. It is logical that O’Leary starts with observation, but his model implies a necessary need for a second cycle to reflect on the interventionist action introduced in the first cycle, which is rather demanding and time consuming. Evaluation in this study was critical due to its cyclical nature where results were needed immediately to inform the proceeding actions. Progress evaluation was in several forms such as participant feedback and lesson observations. Lastly, Stringer’s (2007, p. 8) model introduces a new spiral of three recurring actions, that is, ‘look-think-act’, and does not place evaluation in a separate cycle but rather is embedded in all the stages.

To conclude, while AR models share common components and features, they tend to place emphasis on different aspects. It is difficult to claim that a certain study purely belongs to a certain model.

4.1.5 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability in AR are complex issues (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Newton, 2006) that are connected to ethical questions stemming from the insider role of a researcher (Somekh, 1995). In AR, practitioners explore their own practices. This role may result in a narrow barrier between research and practice that may affect the analysis and interpretation of data. Although few writers have argued that AR is not qualitative (Greenwood & Levin, 2007), the mainly qualitative nature of AR methods adds to the complexity of validating AR studies.

The concept of validity is rooted in statistical scientific domains (Heikkinen et al., 2012) and may seem unclear to qualitative researchers. Richards (2006) argued that qualitative research is ‘soft’ because

its data sets have a plastic quality that yields to easy moulding. Far from making life easy for the researcher, this demands a particularly rigorous approach and constant vigilance in order to resist the seductive appeal of the superficial. At its worst, qualitative research does little more than state the obvious; at its best, it takes us close to the heart of things. (‘IATEFL Research Sig Newsletter’, para 1)

Such nature of qualitative research necessitates not only ‘adherence to correct procedures’ but also awareness of oneself as a researcher in terms of ‘how [he/she is] positioned in relation to the data and [his/her] analysis...and in respect of the craft skills [he/she is] continually honing’ (Richards, 2006, p.3). Other advocates of qualitative research, including Denzin and Lincoln, have argued to disregard the concept of validity in AR (as cited in Heikkinen et al., 2012, p. 6). Their stance is that AR’s validity is in its impact rather than in its statistics, which may not even exist.

A set of principles for validity and reliability in AR projects have been suggested by several writers. Regarding the validity of this study, the procedures suggested by Heikkinen et al. (2007; 2012) and Feldman (2007) were found useful. Heikkinen et al. (2012, p. 8) defined five principles of a quality AR, namely, historical continuity, reflexivity, dialectics, workability, and evocativeness. Feldman (2007, p. 21) criticised these principles as ‘insufficient’ and argued to accept the claims that AR is mainly qualitative. Within this qualitative approach, validity is considered a construct that evaluates the quality of qualitative research studies, including AR. He suggested four new principles that would strengthen the validity of AR studies:

1. Clear and detailed descriptions of how and why data were collected
2. Clear and detailed descriptions of how narratives were constructed from the data
3. Seeking other ways to represent the same data and to use them to critique the views that one owns

4. Providing an explanation on why the actions led to the results, and an explanation or theory of why it works and that must be subjected to critique

Richards (2006, para. 12) recommended Howe and Eisenhart's (1990) list as a succinct summary of the essential qualities of sound qualitative research:

- Data collection and analysis techniques must be appropriate to and driven by the research question.
- These techniques must be applied competently.
- Studies must be assessed in the context of current knowledge, and aspects of the researcher's subjectivity must be made explicit.
- An overall warrant for any claims must be established and will include consideration of disconfirming evidence and justification for the theoretical position.
- The researcher must be able to demonstrate an internal and external value. The former relates to research ethics, and the latter, to the relevance of the research to educational practice and its accessibility to actors in the relevant setting and to other researchers.

The validity of this study was achieved through the detailed accounts of how data were analysed and the continuous reflection on procedures and findings. The feedback forms, which were filled by the trainees and the latter's journal entries were also sources of data upon which I reflected to improve further my practice. Reliability was achieved through the selection of methods that are compatible with the goals and limitations of each stage of the AR cycle. For example, survey, focus groups, and interviews were selected for the planning stage; journals, for the intervention; and follow-up and interviews, for the evaluation. Triangulation was also employed by cross-referencing the data from different methods.

Triangulation is a valuable strategy in terms of validity and reliability of studies (Johnson, 2007). The variety of data collection methods, which were employed in this study, such as surveys, focus groups, and journals, strengthened validity through triangulation. A set of principles or key performance indicators (KPI) were defined from the start. As for member check or peer review, the procedures were reviewed regularly by my supervisor and at times checked by another fellow teacher

trainer from the College of Education at Qatar University. Field notes, interview scripts, and a research journal were used to provide a detailed description of the study procedures. Finally, McTaggart (1997) noted that establishing credibility among and between participants is one way of validating AR. The establishment of credibility was initiated by providing teacher trainees with thorough information and by facilitating their role.

As regards the external validity of this study, previous studies have mentioned that validity is probably the weakest aspect of AR because of AR's tendency towards small-scale projects that could not be generalised (Burns, 2005). To address such weak point, this study provided a detailed account of the procedures and session contents for accurate replication as seen in chapter 5 (e.g. Table 5.6, Appendix 5 and Appendix 6). The participation of several stakeholders in this study and the potential impact on their actions was the key factor of external validity. Greenwood and Levin (2005) noted that validity and reliability in AR are measured by the willingness of local stakeholders to act on the results of the AR study, thereby 'risking their welfare on the 'validity' of their ideas and the degree to which the outcomes meet their expectations' (p. 54). Trainee participants were asked to join 'willingly' this study and receive INSET on certain pedagogical issues related to ELT. Finally, construct validity was achieved through the selection of appropriate methods in the different stages of this study, employing both quantitative (e.g. survey) and qualitative (e.g. focus groups, interviews, and journals) methods. Greenwood and Levin (2007) argued that in AR, surveys, statistical analyses, interviews, focus groups, ethnographies, and life histories are all acceptable, 'if the reason for deploying them has been agreed upon by the AR collaborators and if they are used in a way that does not oppress the participants' (p. 5–6).

Reliability in qualitative research is synonymous with consistency. From these perspectives, qualitative research is considered reliable if the research findings can be replicated by another researcher (Lewis, 2009). Altrichter et al. argued that judging reliability in AR can only be carried out on a restricted basis as a result of the unique nature of any individual project (as cited in Turnock & Gibson, 2001, p. 471). Consequently, AR researchers have tended to focus on examining validity. Turnock and Gibson (2001) believed that AR reliability is achieved through a

detailed explanation of the researcher's role and leaving the judgment to the readers.

In this study, I maintained a detailed documentation of all research activities in the form of emails, journals, field notes, and computer files. Transparency was sought by offering the participants access to their own results and sharing with them research updates. Among other tools used in this study were email, social media, and a website dedicated to this purpose (www.manasreh.com). Unfortunately, the domain was discontinued after the implementation stage, and it has since been registered to another person. However, the screenshots in Figure 4.2 below were taken during the implementation stage.

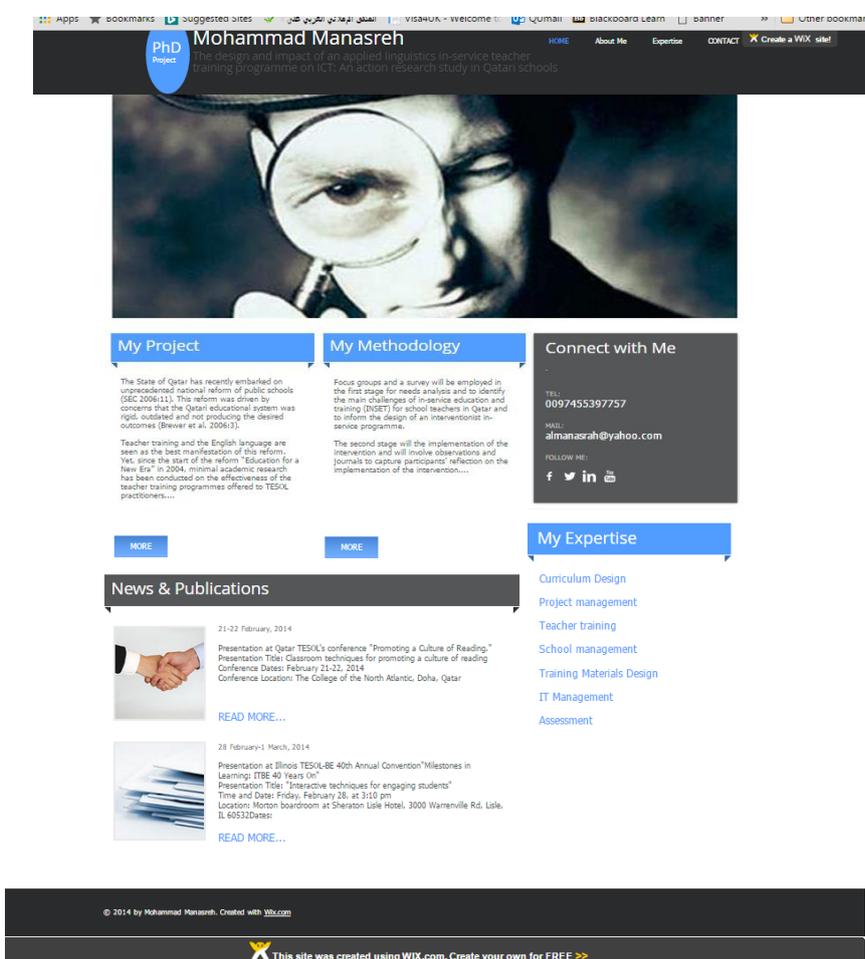


Figure 4.2: Screenshot of the study's website

4.2 Research methods

This section outlines the methods used in data collection. Focus groups and surveys were employed in the first stage for needs analysis, as well as to identify the main challenges of INSET for teachers in Qatar and inform the design of INSET programmes in the subsequent stage. The second stage, i.e. implementation, involved three focus groups, journals, emails and documents to capture the participants' reflection on the implementation of the INSET intervention. The cyclical nature of AR entails a multiple-method strategy to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and involvement in the design and implementation of a study. AR's flexible nature and action-related validity indicate less confinement to one form of methods. Although formal quantitative, qualitative, and multi-methods are appropriate to varying situations in AR (Greenwood & Levin, 2007), AR is largely dependent on qualitative methods (Miller, 1998). Taylor, Wilkie and Baser (2006) noted that as AR can be situated within the qualitative, interpretivist research paradigm, 'similarly, data-collection tools often sit within a spectrum, ranging from the quantitative, or structured, to the qualitative, which may be more open-ended and interpretivist in nature' (p. 32). This study rather employed a multi-method approach of AR, which offered additional benefits for understanding the phenomenon in question (Dornyei, 2007). Figure 4.3 illustrates the overall design of the study. A detailed account of the study structure is presented in chapter 5.

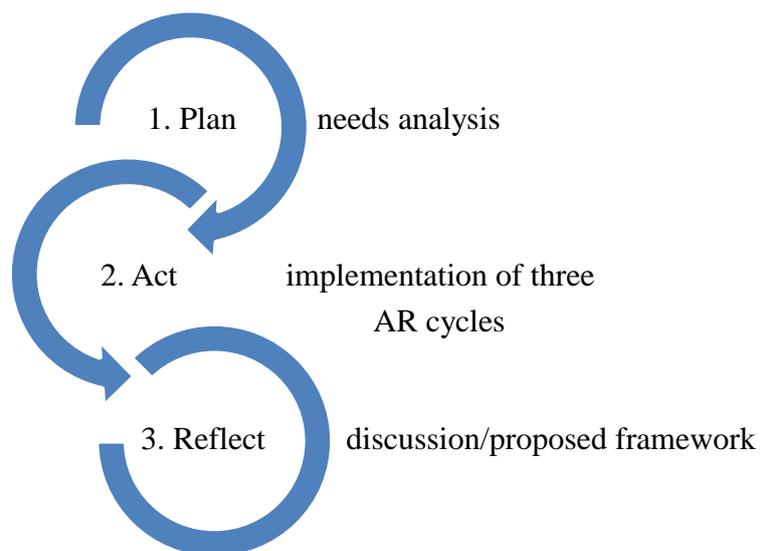


Figure 4.3: Overall study design

Although the discussion of the research methods below is general at this stage, it provides a brief description of the data collection tools/procedures in the context of this study. A description of each method's specific design, pilot, implementation and immediate value will be presented chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

4.2.1 Interviews

Interviews are the most 'frequently used method in qualitative research' (Mann, 2016, p. 2) and applied linguistics research contexts (Dornyei, 2007), because of its potential to provide in-depth information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints of a topic (Turner, 2010). The main purpose of the initial use of qualitative in-depth interviews in AR processes is to identify future directions that a study must take (Todhunter, 2003). In this sense, qualitative focus group interviews were employed in this study; they were conducted in the planning stage to identify directions for the intervention design, and in the implementation stage to explore the participants' experiences and uncover their perceptions. The initial focus group interviews were central to the study for the needs analysis and triangulation, and conducted following a survey to gather more in-depth information on themes that had emerged in the survey data. This strategy was recommended by McNamara (1999), Turner (2010) and Schatz (2012). The interviews in this study tackled the participants' personal experiences with INSET, they were an effective instrument to 'probe deep', as noted by Bertaux (as cited in Nilsen, 2008, p. 91). In this study, both semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were undertaken in the planning stage after the conduct of a survey.

The use of semi-structured and unstructured interviews in this study was conducted in all stages, although only selected ones were analysed formally. These types of interviews were selected because of the opportunity to flexibly select the time and topic of an interview, and for the interviewees to talk about their experiences without restrictions. In addition, I conducted many informal interviews with participants during the breaks and at social gatherings. For example, I used semi-structured interviews in the final stage to probe the themes that had emerged after the implementation. The nature of semi-structured interviews involves a series of predetermined open-ended questions; there was no fixed range of responses to each

question, as noted by Ayres (2008). Such flexibility was not achievable through structured interviews. Moreover, semi-structured and unstructured interviews matches the explorative and interpretive nature of this study. In this study, interviews provided me with insights about my own practice as a trainer which informed the design of the proceeding sessions.

4.2.2 Focus groups

Morgan et al. (1997) defined focus groups as group interviews that involve a group of ‘individuals who discuss a particular topic under the direction of a moderator who promotes interaction and ensures that the discussion remains on the topic of interest’ (p. 37). In this sense, focus group was employed because of its suitability to this study’s research design. It was relevant in gathering viewpoints that are not traditionally well-represented through the more conventional and common methods currently employed in research studies on English as a second language (ESL) (Ho, 2006). Focus groups as one form of interviews are ‘mundane and memorable, both ubiquitous and unique’ (Mann, 2016, p. 30). This study involved focus groups in the planning and implementation stages, the size of each group was between 6 to 10 participants. The participants were homogeneous groups of teachers. The reflective nature of focus groups made it suitable for the exploration of INSET challenges in the planning stage and to inform the implementation stage. They provided an opportunity to capture and give space to voice and interaction, as these are unattainable through the survey (Morgan, 1997). The use of focus groups in this study complemented the other methods adopted, and thus fall under the multi-method approach, which usually characterises AR. The focus groups in the planning stage involved listening to the participants’ opinions regarding the challenges they currently encounter in their INSET programmes. Participants were encouraged to explore the features of an ‘effective’ INSET course. The feedback obtained in this stage was used to design the interventionist INSET professional development programmes in the implementation stage. The focus groups also served a triangulation purpose, as they were conducted together with a survey during the initial needs analysis stage. In sum, focus groups were used in the planning and implementation stages when there was limited knowledge of the next steps and to triangulate findings from other resources (see Appendix 12 and

Appendix 13). For further details of the design and procedures of focus groups, please see section 5.3.2.

4.2.3 Survey

The AR nature of this study entailed multiple data collection methods at different stages, which is the norm of other AR studies (Ferrance, 2000). Using survey in AR has been recommended by several writers (Anderson & Herr, 2009; Koshy, 2005) and used in numerous studies (Gershuny & Rainey, 2006; Rachel & Sandra, 2005; Sowa, 2009). The role of the survey in the planning stage of Rowlands et al.'s (2007) AR was similar to the research design in this study. Rowlands et al. (2007) conducted the large-scale survey 'to investigate the issues raised in this initial benchmarking survey using [a] deep log analysis and qualitative methods' (p. 489). I adopted a survey that involved both qualitative and quantitative questions to gather both quantitative (participants' background) and qualitative (their experiences with INSET) information. The use of survey in this study was necessary in the initial stage to gather information on INSET challenges from a large number of teachers. The survey was followed by focus groups to probe certain recurring themes.

The survey in the planning stage was short and in a straightforward format, paying attention to details, such as sequential numbering, clear instruction, and font size, as suggested by previous scholars (Denscombe, 1998; Dillman, 2000). A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) was used to measure the quantitative items.

The use of survey at the early stage of this study enabled many teachers to contribute various perspectives (Denscombe, 1998). Moreover, it was important to eliminate research bias at this stage, as the findings would influence the design of instruments in the following stages. The survey is an objective data collection method because the minimal role of the researcher leaves the validity reliant on the honesty of the respondents. The survey was also the best option to achieve the purpose of this stage, that is, to explore the participants' attitudes, perceptions, and opinions (Black, 1999; Denscombe, 1998). For further details of the design and procedures of the survey instrument, see section 5.2.1.

4.2.4 Research journal

Trainee journals were used in this study for their own development and as a source of data during discussion. Recently, journals have gained popularity in qualitative research because of their potential to provide in-depth reflective information on sensitive issues. Vannini (2008) defined journals as ‘documents written by individuals to keep a record of ongoing events in their lives and in their surrounding social environment’ (p. 764).

In light of the advantages of journals, this study used trainee journals in the implementation stage of the intervention, as both data collection method (by the researcher) and data (by trainees). The participants were also asked to write a reflective account in an open format at the end of each training session. Pollard complimented this practice, stating that ‘reflective diaries are sometimes suggested as part of coursework, and might therefore be assessed by mentors or tutors and treated as documentary indications of a trainee’s thinking’ (as cited in Taylor et al., 2006, p. 12). The open format provides a greater opportunity to recode and analyse the data (Corti, 2003). Guiding questions were provided to the participants, including: what are the main things you have learned today; what went/did not go well; and what would you like to have in the next session? The choice of journaling at this stage of the study was pivotal to explore the participants’ experiences with the training. Journals allowed them to write freely about their attitudes and experiences in a personalised and self-paced mode. The themes that emerged from analysing the journals guided my reflection on the study progress and my plans for the next cycle. Corti (2003) proposed the ‘diary interview method’ in which an interview comprises detailed questions based on diary entries; he considered this strategy as ‘one of the most reliable methods of obtaining information’ (p. 69). Conversations between participants and myself after each training session were considered informal diary interviews that helped confirm my analysis of the journals.

To sum up, this study is framed as an AR study. Combining qualitative and quantitative data was most suited to explore the complexities of the INSET context in Qatar. It allowed for selecting the suitable qualitative/quantitative instrument that

would answer the study's questions. For example, it helped me identify the general contextual attributes through the needs analysis survey in the first stage and later focus on certain emerging themes in the proceeding stages mainly through interviews. The multi-method AR design was deemed the best pragmatic roadmap to achieve the study's objectives.

4.3 Ethical issues

The importance of gaining the participants' consent to take part in the research has been highlighted in previous studies. Israel and Hay (2006) reported that most ethical research guidelines typically require that consent must be both informed and voluntary. Informed consent entails informing the participants of the overall purpose of the investigation, main features of the design, possible risks and benefits from participating in the research (Kvale, 2007, p. 27), and their right to leave the study at any time with no penalty (Owens, 2010, p. 604). Several examples of consent letters are available in literature (Churchill & Sanders, 2007, p. 219; Balnaves & Caputi, 2001, p. 237). For this study, I sought the approval of the following institutions regarding ethical procedures and informed consent letters:

- Graduate Progress Committee at Warwick University.
- Supreme Education Council of Qatar (SEC) that represents the schools studied (see Appendix 2).
- Qatar University's Institutional Review Board (QU-IRB). As an employee of the Qatar University, I was required to obtain approval from QU-IRB regarding any research endeavours (see Appendix 3).

The consent forms used in this study started with a short introduction of the researcher, followed by an overview of the study, with an advance appreciation letter for their participation. The forms clarified the participants' rights, that is, the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences, the right to ask for any clarifications, the right to select certain questions to be answered, the right to access their own results, and the right to contact Warwick University to confirm my identity and purpose of this study. The consent letters also sought permission for future publication and indicated the expected time for participation, details of any risks or benefits and confidentiality procedures. Consent letters were used for all the

methods employed and on many occasions. Before the consent letters were distributed, I conducted preliminary meetings with the participants (e.g. staff members, school administrators, and teachers) to introduce this study to them. When online platforms were used to administer the surveys, there was an introductory section to serve as a consent form. (See Appendix 4 for a copy of the consent forms used in this study.)

4.3.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

Anonymity is the protection of a research participant's or a site's identity. Confidentiality is the safeguarding of information obtained in confidence during the conduct of the study (Wallace, 2010, p. 23). The result of losing confidentiality and anonymity is embarrassing for the researcher and participants alike. Boschma et al. (2003) explained that the drive to conceal the identity of the participants in certain qualitative research projects is to avoid embarrassment, hurt, betrayal, damage to a reputation, or even endangerment. Confidentiality and anonymity issues are sensitive in this study because of the mainly qualitative instruments employed. Unlike quantitative methods, data in qualitative research is usually in a form of statement and personal stories. Selecting what must be revealed and to whom could pose a dilemma to researchers. Wallace (2010) argued that the risk of losing anonymity increases in studies that use qualitative research methods, such as interviews and observation. Therefore, protecting the participants' identities and assuring them of the confidentiality of their data at the beginning and on a regular basis are important. O'Hanlon (2009) highlighted the sensitivity of ethical issues in AR, and emphasised that all participants must be informed of their confidentiality and anonymity concerns. Among the usual techniques in protecting the participants' identities is to identify them with pseudonyms or reference codes in the reporting phase. The protection of participants' identities is linked to the security of the data obtained from them, as the revelation of data entails the exposure of their identities. In addition to reference codes, I shared with the participants, orally and in the consent form, the procedures of storing and reporting their data. Their suggestions were elicited, first, to ensure that all means had been considered to observe anonymity and confidentiality, and, second, build trust with them by listening to

their opinions. Finally, wherever photos of the training are used in this thesis, participants' photos have been blurred to protect their anonymity (see section 5.4).

4.3.2 Role of the researcher

As for the role of the researcher, I took a participant role in the planning stage and the first and third cycles of the implementation stage. This role was necessitated by the nature of AR. Taking a participant role in these stages enabled me to acquire an insider perspective on the training experience and build trust with the teachers. In the second cycle of the implementation stage, I took on a semi-participant role and allowed another trainer to deliver most of the courses. The aim of taking a semi-participant role was to explore the relationship between me, as a researcher, and the trainee participants, and observe the impact of the intervention on teachers' practices. In addition, INSET by multiple trainers was considered varied and more engaging as indicated by the participants in the needs analysis stage, see section 6.1.2.3. This role conforms to the nature of the evaluation stage and did not affect my overall role in this study as a participant researcher.

The involvement of action researchers in the study, whether as insiders or outsiders, could raise important ethical risks of unequal relationships and patronising of participants (Löfman et al., 2004). In AR, researchers have often assumed a participant role at certain stages, in addition to their academic role; this practice was applicable to this study. I delivered most of the INSET programmes and served as the evaluator of its implementation. Therefore, as a researcher, I must respect the boundaries of the role set for each stage in this study. For example, the insider role in the implementation stage posed the risk of unconsciously influencing the participants' decisions without changing their attitudes; and thus, I must be aware of this risk and eliminate it. In the evaluation stages, an outsider role was assumed, posing the risk of bias; in this role, I must maintain neutrality or at least be reflexive about the way my assumptions and stances affect the data. In this regard, it was an important part of my role to establish trust with participants. Zeni (2009) noted that the special trust that teachers or other professionals must exercise in AR most clearly distinguishes it from traditional research modes. This is because the usual insider role of the researcher and the participatory nature of AR promote a sense of

ownership among participants. To achieve this in AR, Eide and Kahn (2008) emphasised the need to be present with others to convey that their experiences are important and convince them that this study is *for* them rather than *on* them. I tried to establish trust by conducting preliminary meetings, in which the study was introduced and their participation was appreciated. In these meetings, I also clarified my role as an academic researcher and assured the prevention of assuming any judgmental and evaluative roles. The assurances made in these meetings are important in the Arabic culture, where outsiders usually assume evaluation functions. I also explained the benefits of this study to participants in all stages to encourage them to participate and contact me once the study is finished. I offered incentives, such as the distribution of certificates in certain stages and hosting of lunch party (see Figure 5.1). On certain occasions, I gave simple gifts for trainees after a completion of a challenging activity, and wrote appreciation letters for teachers who participated in this study; these letters could be incorporated in their portfolios as proof of their community service.

4.3.3 Piloting

A pilot study refers to either a trial run of the major research study or a pre-test of a particular research instrument or procedure (Salkind, 2010, p. 1033). Because of the cyclical nature of AR, the first cycle served as a programme pilot cycle. Other specific research instruments (e.g. surveys, interviews, etc.) were piloted before their use. The pilot results of each instrument are reported in chapter 5.

4.3.4 Sampling

A sample is ‘a set of subjects selected from a population’ (Miller & Salkind, 2002, p. 51). In this study, the sample for all the tools involved teachers who are in service at a high school or tertiary level in Qatar. In qualitative research, it is important to choose the right sampling method at the right time and for the right purpose. According to Bloor and Wood (2006), sampling in qualitative research is the link between the study population and its generalisation to the wider population. The units of the analysis of a sample may be individuals, institutions, or communities. Daniel (2012), Henry (1990) and Miller and Brewer (2003) discussed the two main methods of sampling, that is, ‘probability’ and ‘nonprobability’ sampling.

Probability sampling is mainly used in quantitative research; it gives every element in the target population a known and nonzero probability of being selected. Nonprobability sampling does not give certain elements in the population a chance to be in the sample and is based on other reasons other than mathematical probability, such as time, purpose, and theory. Sampling in qualitative research could pose several representation issues. However, Rosaline (2008) clarified that the goal of qualitative sampling is not to produce a representative sample, but to reflect diversity and provide as much potential for comparison as possible. In this study, my sampling decisions were based on the nature of the instrument. Random sampling within the probability theory was adopted for the survey and non-probable sampling for the other methods. The survey aimed at providing information on the INSET landscape in schools in Qatar regardless of school type or a teacher's experience. As for the other methods, each had its own purpose that required the involvement of certain participants. For example, interviews determined the volunteer participants who could voice concerns and provide useful feedback on INSET. As for the other qualitative methods (e.g. interviews, focus groups, and journals), I used non-probable sampling based on research aims and convenience. The sample for participant journals included all the participants in the courses, and that for the focus group, teachers from several institutions. Regarding the AR cycles, sampling was both volunteer and snowball, depending on the availability of teachers. Teachers were mainly recruited through email invitations to their personal and school accounts. Other 'marketing' methods included announcing the events in school newsletters and word of mouth. In most cases, teachers signed up for the INSET events voluntarily and were invited to take part in the study. However, participants in the first cycle were nominated by their schools. The sample size in all stages was based on my preliminary work; the size aimed to be representative of the population at large to draw meaningful conclusions on INSET practices in Qatar.

4.4 Data analysis

Data analysis is the attempt to 'fully and accurately summarise and represent the data that has been collected' (Mills, 2003, p. 116). Data analysis highlights useful information that could help draw conclusions and understand interactional

complexities. In AR, the information gathered by action researchers is usually multifaceted and multi-perspective, and in many forms (Parsons & Brown, 2002). As AR methodology has the immediate goal to inform progress (Zeni, 1998), the purpose of its ongoing data analysis is to evaluate progress. Therefore, collecting data is a rigorous process that may last for a long period and take different paths.

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to gather information. This is typical in AR where multiple instruments and techniques can be involved (Mills, 2000), and result in massive amounts of qualitative and quantitative data (Koshy, 2009). Similarly, there is no single correct way to conduct data analysis in AR (Koshy, 2009). However, the role of the ongoing data analysis is pivotal, as findings impact progress. In this study, data analysis was administered immediately after the conduct of most of the data collection activities to inform the decision-making process. Lee and Fielding (2004, p. 533) referred to the ‘intertwined’ relationship between data collection and data analysis in qualitative research. In this section, the data analysis procedures that were used to analyse the various types of qualitative and quantitative data are discussed.

4.4.1 Overview of data analysis procedures

This section describes the data analysis procedures for the different data collection instruments employed in this study. However, before introducing the details of data analysis, it would be useful to explain the approach to data analysis between and across the stages/cycles and data sets. A chronological overview of the structure of the whole study along with data collection tools and data analysis procedures for each tool is provided in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Data analysis procedures across the whole study

Stage	Tool	Data Analysis Procedures
Needs analysis	Survey	The survey contained likert scale and an open-ended question. The likert-scale items were grouped under several categories, and the analysis of responses was linked to these themes. Quantitative data analysis procedures were employed for the numerical information generated from the likert scale items. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each item using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and reported in tables with information on percentages, mean, and standard deviation. The use of means and standard deviations was considered sufficient in most cases. Answers to the open-ended questions within the surveys were analysed thematically through a deductive content analysis. Within each category,

		responses were summarised and analysed for common and relative interpretations. Comparisons were also drawn in themes, such as attitudes, challenges, and perceived values (see section 5.2.3).	
	Focus groups	Inductive content analysis was employed for focus groups. Notes were taken during the sessions, and the discussions were recorded whenever permitted by the participants. A coding scheme of letters, numbers and colours was devised. Recurring ideas were coded and labelled to look for patterns and categories. Commonalities were tallied, and trends and curiosities were described to derive appropriate comparisons and reach valid conclusions and predictions. Visual representations were used whenever possible to illustrate the analysis results. However, not all the data provided by the participants during the focus groups were interpreted, as they included details that were not relevant to the questions. Decisions to include or exclude data in the analysis were based on the relevance of the data to the questions (see appendix 13).	
Implementation/ intervention	Cycle 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshop evaluation forms 	<p>Statistical analysis for numerical items with the results presented in tables.</p> <p>Thematic deductive content analysis for the open-ended question</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflective assignment at the end of the training (lesson plan with a reflective essay on its delivery) 	Inductive content analysis was also employed for the reflective assignment. Data segments were coded, labelled and organised in a logical way to facilitate retrieval and analysis. Then data were classified under three to four themes in a matrix with visuals and line numbers to help me assign a colour to each theme, and/or using mind mapping (see Appendix 10). Coded segments were read repeatedly to confirm emerging themes and sub-patterns (e.g. attitudes, values, challenges, and wishes) (see appendix 11 for a sample thematic map). A member-checking process was sought by involving certain colleagues from Qatar University.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflective journal entries at the end of each workshop 	Inductive and iterative content analysis was employed, with procedures similar to that conducted in the interview and focus groups. A coding system of letters, numbers and labels was devised. Content was coded in a clear way to avoid any ambiguity. I used my own codes (e.g. A, A1, B, etc.) and labelled the main themes and their subsets in the texts. Meaningful themes were eventually constructed out of these codes (see Appendix 12).
	Cycle 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questionnaire 	<p>Statistical analysis for numerical items with the results presented in tables.</p> <p>Thematic deductive content analysis for the open-ended question</p>
	Cycle 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus groups 	Same as focus groups in the first cycle (see above)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshop evaluation forms / exit slips 	<p>Statistical analysis for numerical items with the results presented in tables (e.g. see Table 8.4)</p> <p>Thematic deductive content analysis for the open-ended question (see Appendix 8).</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflective assignment 	Inductive content analysis was also employed using the same approach used for the reflective assignment in the first cycle.
	Formal interviews	Inductive content analysis was adopted. Interviews were rendered into a textual form. Transcriptions	

			were read multiple times and meaningful ideas were manually highlighted in different colours. Ideas were later analysed and coded. Codes were classified under heading and subheadings. The analysis sought relations, comparisons, and interpretations (see Appendix 13).
Reflec tion		Propose INSET framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No data analysis was involved

As seen above, the focus groups, which are a subgroup of interviews, were analysed in the same inductive content analysis approach adopted for interviews. The typical stages for analysing qualitative data included transcription, coding for themes, structured reflection, and drawing conclusions. The data analysis was carried out as immediately as possible following the focus groups to make the right decision at the right time. To conclude, data analysis in this study adopted mainly qualitative content analysis approach, that is, deductive for the survey open-ended questions and inductive for the focus groups, interviews, field notes and journals.

4.4.2 Qualitative data analysis

Data analysis in this study was mainly qualitative because of the mostly qualitative data collection methods used in AR studies. According to Greenwood and Levin (2007), AR reserves ‘the right and power to create the structures into which...social knowledge is put’ (p. 105). Noffke and Somekh (2009, p. 433) observed that qualitative analysis is dominant in AR because data analysis always occurs using a ‘researcher’s personal lenses’ through one’s identities and positions. AR data collection and data analysis provide an opportunity to be reflexive on what is at stake in changing interpretations, knowledge, and action as they intersect in AR projects. Greenwood and Levin (2007, p. 110) warned that this does not mean that action researchers must write up ‘endless stories’; the challenge is to create a persuasive connectedness between theory and practice.

Content analysis tends to be the prevalent data analysis approach in AR and in qualitative research in general; it offers a way to be more systematic. Lee and Fielding (2004) summarised the process of content analysis as follows:

a systematic, rigorous consideration of usually text-based data in order to identify themes and concepts that will contribute to our understanding of

social life. Themes and concepts that are identified and coded in one data source are then compared and contrasted with (any) similar material in other sources. New themes that emerge necessitate further consideration and analysis of previously coded data. (p. 530)

In this sense, content analysis in this study employed the inductive method of codes to concepts to categories to theory (Goulding, 2002, p. 74) with an open, an axial, and a selective coding (Lewins & Silver, 2007, pp. 84–85), and in an iterative approach (Bassett, 2010, p. 504). Data analysis is an ongoing process in AR to understand the complexities of a phenomenon in each stage and provide directions to the next stage. The iterative approach facilitates flexibility and change to meet the needs of the research design in response to new information as it is collected (Bassett, 2010). The analytical challenge in content analysis is not the coding process, but rather the identification of thematically similar segments of text across the available data (Lee & Fielding, 2004). Coding and decoding were used with the data gathered through interviews, focus groups, and journal entries. Creswell’s (2009) framework for qualitative data analysis and interpretation was useful in guiding the content analysis processes.

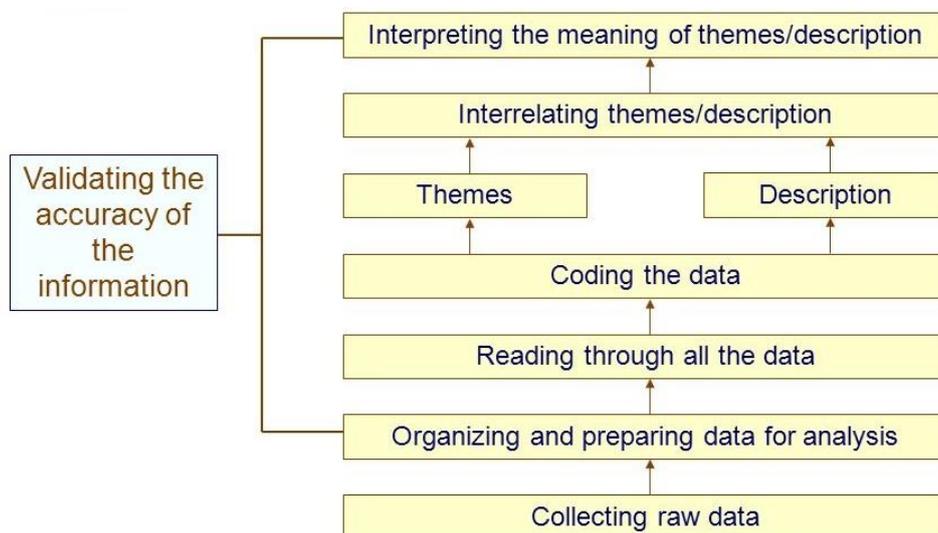


Figure 4.4: Qualitative data analysis framework (Creswell, 2009, p. 185)

Lee and Fielding (2004, p. 530) explained that the practical counterparts of content analysis are the labelling and subsequent retrieval of similarly coded segments with a reference to their original location. In the data analysis in this study, keen

attention was given to coding and labelling to look for patterns and categories. Commonalities were tallied, and trends and curiosities were described to derive appropriate comparisons and reach valid conclusions and predictions. Visual representations were used whenever possible to illustrate the analysis results. These functioned as a heuristic tool, but also played an important function in representing the data.

4.4.2.1 Interviews and focus groups

An inductive content analysis was conducted for the interviews. Interviews were rendered into a textual form. Transcriptions were read multiple times and meaningful ideas were manually highlighted in different colours. Ideas were later analysed and coded. Codes were classified under heading and subheadings. The analysis sought relations, comparisons, and interpretations (see Appendix 13). The initial plan was to use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS); Nvivo was used to analyse a few data sets. The purpose of using such technology was not to draw conclusions or interpretations, as this task is hard to be carried out accurately by a computer, and my role was to uncover the contextual human relations; it was to save time through retrieval of previously coded data. Holstein and Gubrium (2003) noted that the chief contribution of CAQDAS is automation of the retrieval of text segments. The other purpose was to confirm and triangulate findings. Despite the evident value of such software in literature (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; Lee & Fielding, 2004), I found it to be more suitable to studies with limited instruments compared with AR studies with multiple data collection methods. In addition to the immediate need of results in this study, every instrument had a different purpose and collective analysis through Nvivo was not the best option.

As for focus groups, there is limited information on how to analyse them (Wilkinson, 2004). Semi-structured focus groups require vigilance and care in analysis compared with completely structured ones (Patton, 2002), because of the resulting large amount of information, which could be challenging. However, the analysis burden is compensated by the depth of understanding usually achieved through the introspective analysis of semi-structured focus groups, which could not be achieved in any other way (Dornyei, 2007). The purpose of the focus groups in

this study was to gain understanding and reflection on INSET practices in Qatar; this guided the whole data analysis process. The analysis involved constant moving back and forth between the descriptions of the phenomena provided by the teachers and possible interpretations of those descriptions (Patton, 2002). However, not all the data provided by the participants during the focus groups were interpreted, as they included details that were not relevant to the questions. Patton (2002) noted that certain interview data enhance understanding and create context, rather than answering the questions. Subjectivity was important in making a decision on what data to include and exclude in the analysis. Such decisions were based on the relevance of the data to the questions rather than personal perspectives and favouritism.

The focus groups, which are at times categorised as a subgroup of interviews, were analysed in the same inductive content analysis approach adopted for interviews. The typical stages for analysing qualitative data included transcription, coding for themes, structured reflection, and drawing conclusions. Content analysis is usually carried out through identifying core themes and patterns. The categories of analysis 'are not predetermined but are derived inductively' in iterative qualitative content analysis (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 145). The content in this study was divided into emerging themes, and the transcriptions were examined and classified under these themes. Emerging themes of the data were based on the focus group questions and teachers' answers.

Coding was conducted in two stages, that is, initial and second-level coding, as suggested by Dörnyei (2007). Initial coding identified the themes, and the second level coding linked the data segments to these themes. For example, reflection was among the emerging themes, whereas reflection on oneself and that on the other were segments within this theme. Colours were used for clarity purposes. The data analysis was carried out as immediately as possible following the focus groups to make the right decision at the right time.

4.4.2.2 Field notes and observations

Inductive content analysis was also employed for field notes data. I used 'less structured' observations, and the level of analysis was dependent on the urgency

and significance of the instrument. For example, my notes during school visits did not require much analysis, whereas my microteaching observation notes required more attention. The observation forms were basic, with three to four areas of focus based on the training design and input; there were no tallies or statistical data sought. The observations were open to capture any relative data that could contribute to the understanding of the research topic. My notes and observations were read repeatedly to confirm the emerging themes, issues, or unusual findings (see chapter 7 for the results and appendix 10 for a sample thematic map). Unfortunately, video recording was used minimally because of the difficulty in obtaining the participants' permission, particularly the females. However, one of my demo lessons was videotaped. Written data were at times transferred to a digital form. In both the digital and hard copy forms, data segments were labelled and organised in a logical way to facilitate retrieval and analysis. Then data were classified under three to four themes in a matrix with visuals and line numbers to help me assign a colour to each theme, and/or using mind mapping (see Appendix 10). A member-checking process was sought by involving certain colleagues from Qatar University. Then emerging patterns were determined. This analysis was used to make interpretations and draw conclusions from journals and email correspondences.

4.4.2.3 Journals

Brewer argued that the text provides information on aspects of social reality that are external to the text rather than an end itself (as cited in Alaszewski, 2006, p. 86). The process was iterative and inductive, with procedures similar to that conducted in the interview and observation analyses. Corti (2003) described diaries as 'pictures of social reality from the actors' perspective' (p. 69). The diaries were in an open format to enable the participants to record activities and events in their own words, although guiding questions were provided to assist them in writing their entries. An apparent advantage of the free format is that it enables a greater opportunity to recode and analyse the data (Corti, 200). The participants were provided with notebooks, and asked to write a maximum of one page at the end of each session. This resulted in around 200 pages to be analysed. I encouraged the participants to structure their diary into topics so that they could be categorised into

a manageable number of themes for the analysis, in a way that it did not affect the open nature of the diary. Content was coded in a clear way to avoid any ambiguity. The coding system was devised after the first stage, once the main elements and objectives of the intervention were determined. I used my own codes (e.g. A, A1, B, etc.) and labelled the main themes and their subsets in the texts. Meaningful themes were eventually constructed out of these codes. Different coding was used at the different stages of this study.

4.4.3 Quantitative data analysis

This study's quantitative data were in the forms of surveys and end-of-session questionnaires. An exploratory survey was carried out in the initial needs analysis stage. The aim of the survey items was to determine the respondents' attitudes towards in-service professional development and the challenges they encounter. The survey was analysed statistically. The findings were tallied and reported in tables with information on percentages, mean, and standard deviation. The use of means and standard deviations was considered sufficient in most cases. Cronbach alpha reliability analysis was initially carried out. However, it was later removed, as recommended by my second supervisor. This is because when asking participants to rate the value of different INSET topics, their ratings for each topic are not expected to be more or less the same which is what an internal reliability analysis, Cronbach alpha, is designed to measure. SPSS package was also used for the needs analysis survey to conduct more tests. Despite taking intensive training for this purpose, I sought the help of the trainer on several occasions. The purpose of quantitative analysis was to examine the relationships. The survey items were grouped under several categories, and the analysis of responses was linked to these themes. Answers to the open-ended questions within the surveys were analysed thematically through a deductive content analysis. Within each category, responses were summarised and analysed for common and relative interpretations. Comparisons were also drawn in themes.

To sum up, data analysis in this study adopted mainly qualitative content analysis approach, that is, deductive for the survey and inductive for the focus groups, interviews, field notes and journals. The process was intertwined with data collection processes in the different stages of the AR study. Segments of data were

coded to indicate emerging ideas and interactional aspects. Codes were used to label similar data from different methods. Labelling was used to identify themes, concepts, and common categories. Conclusions and comparisons were finally drawn from the emerging themes.

4.5 Study participants

The participants of the study were mainly in-service teachers of English language from several Qatari high schools and tertiary institutions. For most of the INSET events throughout the study, an invitation was sent out to local high school teachers. In the first stage of the study, 80 teachers participated in the needs analysis survey and focus groups. In the second stage, more than 100 teachers participated in three cycles. The final stage was personal reflection and discussion of the data and did not involve any participants. The age range of teachers in Qatari institutions is 35 to 55 years. Although gender was not a particular area of analysis, teachers from both genders were involved in the study. Participants were from different countries and different cultural backgrounds.

4.5.1 Participants' affiliation

For this study, I have decided to invite high school and tertiary teachers regardless of their institutional affiliation for the following reasons: 1) participation was mainly voluntary, and I wanted to ensure that I have enough volunteers, and 2) all tertiary and high school teachers share a similar context with common needs. Qatar has a vibrant ELT community that serves similar clients with similar contextual characteristics and challenges. In addition, 3) it is a common practice in Qatar for teachers from schools, bridge programmes, and ESP units to get together at INSET events. The Qatari TESOL community has a number of professional networks that regularly organise INSET opportunities, e.g. QatarTESOL, the British Council's ELT Forum, and recently TEFL-Qatar. As such, practitioners from different institutions were invited to take part in the different cycles of this study.

4.5.2 Participants' details

Table 4.3 below provides an overview of the participant details for each phase of the research.

Table 4.3: Overview of the study participants

Stage	Actions	Participant details and demographics
One	Preliminary work	<p><u>14 teachers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From private, international and government schools - 25-40 years old - Both females and males - all have a BA degree in English language/English literature and some have a master's degree <p><u>2 school principals</u></p> <p>The first one was a Qatari male private school principal in his 50s. He has a PhD in Education and is in charge of two schools with more than 40 ELT teachers.</p> <p>The second one was a Qatari male government school principal in his 30s. He has a BA in geography and has worked as a teacher for 10 years. His school has around 15 ELT teachers</p>
	Main needs analysis	<p>80 teachers from different high schools (private, government, international and community) answered the survey. The survey was anonymous and demographic details of respondents were unattainable. However, item 1&2 of the survey show that 64% of the teachers have more than 6 years of teaching experience and most of them have attended more than 10 PDs in the last 3 years.</p> <p>As for focus groups, 20 high school teachers took part. They were all bilingual, 15 male and 5 female teachers from government schools. Some of them were teachers I have worked with before. All participants were expatriates mainly from other Arab countries who teach in Qatar.</p>
Two	First cycle	<p>22 high school teachers</p> <p>In this cycle, 22 teachers (8 females, 14 males) were recruited through the MoE high schools. Several of these participants were among those who completed the needs analysis survey and participated in the focus groups. All the participants speak Arabic as their mother tongue, and were from different countries with varying cultural backgrounds (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon). All of them had to take a 60-hour PD programme prior to the cycle. They were between 30-50 years old.</p>
	Second cycle	<p>75 tertiary teachers</p> <p>Almost equal distribution of males and females from the local ELT community. Most participants were from either the Foundation Programme at Qatar University or other local government and private high schools. Two participants were from other ELT tertiary institutions in Qatar. 6 to 25 attended each session. The total number of unique participants in all the sessions was around 75. Participants were both native and non-native speakers and came from many countries (America, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Maldives, Philippines, India, Pakistan and Arab World). The age range was from 30-60 years.</p>
	Third cycle	<p>27 tertiary teachers</p>

15 females and 12 males. The participants were from several nationalities: 8 native speakers and 19 non-native speakers. They were from Europe, Asia, and Africa. The third cycle participants were mainly teachers from the Foundation Programme at Qatar University, schools, and the one from the British Council.

4.6 Conclusion

This study was designed as mainly qualitative AR, with the purpose of exploring INSET in Qatar to improve my training practice. AR was used as an investigative methodology design, to address challenges through the interventionist training courses in the implementation stage. To achieve the aims of this study, I employed survey, interviews, focus groups, and journals as data collection methods.

Chapter 4 presented the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis, and explained why AR was adopted for this study. Chapter 5 illustrates the first stage of the study.

Chapter Five: Needs Analysis

This chapter presents a narrative analysis of the needs analysis stage. It provides chronological description of the instruments, which were employed in this stage, their design, pilot, and results.

5.1 Introduction

This study is a three-stage investigative AR project. The first stage was an explorative needs analysis stage on INSET in Qatar. The second stage constituted the cyclic design and implementation of an interventionist INSET programme in the form of three AR cycle. The third stage involved overall reflection on the study.

The two main instruments in the needs analysis stage were survey and focus groups, which aimed at identifying, describing, and exploring the current situation of INSET in Qatar. This included attitudes towards INSET, perceived challenges and success factors, preferred themes and delivery modes, trainer role, and impact. The overall aim was to gain insights that can inform all the three cycles in the subsequent implementation stage. The design and procedure of each instrument are presented followed by the results of both instruments. This study also involved a brief fieldwork phase.

5.2 Survey

5.2.1 Survey design and procedure

The use of survey (see Appendix 7) at this stage was intended for needs analysis and not based on any predetermined hypotheses. Using survey maximises the number of perspectives (Denscombe, 1998). Owing to the versatile nature of the survey, it was considered appropriate to the needs analysis objective of this stage. The survey was administered online through surveymonkey.com. Online surveys have become more popular for data collection and been preferred over traditional surveys (Pan, 2010) because they are inexpensive (Sheehan, 1999), convenient (Evans & Mathur, 2005), and provide a venue where respondents likely respond to sensitive and private questions (Ritter et al., 2004).

The survey consisted of 70 items distributed among seven categories, in addition to a final open-ended question for respondents' final comments (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Dimensions of the INSET needs analysis survey

Dimension	Number of items
Background information	1–3
Preferred professional development topics	4–17
Expected professional development outcomes	18–25
Preferred professional development delivery methods	26–40
Success factors	41–56
Statements concerning in-service teacher training	57–69
Preferred assessment tools	70
Final open-ended question	71

The design of the survey was based on the initial literature review and guided by the main aim of the survey, that is, to provide directions for the intervention design in the second stage. As discussed in chapter 4, for INSET programmes to be successful, teachers' voice must be heard and considered (Locke, 2006). Therefore, most of the survey items were intended to capture teachers' voice. Item nos. 4 to 40 elicited data on preferences of delivery methods, training themes, and assessment tools. Item nos. 41 to 66 sought to identify success factors that are relevant to the Qatari educational context, and focused on eliciting ideas for improvement rather than negative obstacles. Item nos. 57 to 69 were statements on various INSET issues, such as training strategies, characters of good trainers, and course design, and sought to identify the respondents' attitudes towards these issues. Item no. 70 asked the respondents about their preferred training assessment tools. The final item was an open-ended question for further comments or suggestions. The information obtained by this question was significant as it shed light on topics that the survey could have overlooked inadvertently.

The choice of survey items was planned to provide directions for the subsequent intervention design. For example, the items on preferred time and venue helped in selecting a place and time that would suit most participants to increase their buy-in. The same principle is applicable to their preferred topics, training strategies, expectations, length of the training sessions, and other information. A training follow-up was among the significant factors noted in the literature review. Leach and Conto (1999) argued that the provision of follow-up procedures after INSET is

necessary and sufficient to generate change. The survey identified what form of follow-up would best fit the participants through item nos. 57 to 69, which asked on school-based follow-up, transferability, and preferred follow-up methods.

5.2.2 Pilot survey

A pilot survey was conducted to address unnoticed problems related to the design and contents of the survey, and uncover implementation and procedural issues (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2004). Table 5.2 outlines the process of the pilot survey.

Table 5.2: Outline of the needs analysis pilot survey

Procedure	Date	Targets and contents
1st pilot	5 June 2014	4 teachers: survey
2nd pilot	16 June 2014	4 teachers: survey
Follow-up	22–25 June 2014	2 teachers: interview

The pilot survey was conducted twice with four teachers each time to check the validity and reliability of the instrument. The findings of the pilot survey indicated several ideas for improvement, such as modifying a few items and adding new ones. For example, the final open-ended question was among the outcomes of the pilot survey. After the two surveys were conducted, I had two interviews with two of the four teachers regarding the layout and contents of the survey. The respondents' suggestions included emphasising site training as a method of training, providing new statements or rephrasing of existing ones, and fixing technical glitches. Examples of the feedback obtained from the pilot survey are as follows:

If you're really interested in collecting feedback [on] what survey takers think [of] in-service training, you could consider adding a 'Please write additional comments here' box for each question that does not already have one. This will, of course, increase you[r] workload with respect to analysing the survey responses. (Teacher PA)

This survey is really comprehensive and almost covered all the components relevant to conducting ELT (English language teaching) training from both theoretical and practical perspectives. One major point you could have incorporated in your survey is school-based support, on-site mentoring and coaching, as it is claimed to be one of the most effective techniques of ELT training by a bulky recent research body. One more thing, [what] I really value

in this survey is that it is wrought for the targeted audience, ELT teachers, and tailored in a way that unfolds their concerns [on] ELT training. (Teacher AC)

5.2.3 Survey results

Survey data are presented in tables and/or charts using frequency, percentage, and mean scores. The number of responses for each item is variable and indicated alongside each chart or table.

As surveys are considered a quantitative research tool (Lin & Ryzin, 2012; Miller & Brewer, 2003), most of the items in the survey provided numerical information. Quantitative data analysis procedures were employed, through which descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated for each item using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

The survey was sent to 200 teachers; 80 responses were received and used in this study. The total number of responses represented 38.5% of the expected population. The reasons for refusal to participate were unknown. Of the 80 respondents, only 46 answered all the 71 questions in the survey. Therefore, the reported percentages corresponded to the total number of teachers answering the individual questions. The statistical significance of relationships among selected variables was determined using the Fishers exact test. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

Although it was not part of the purpose of this study, the background set of data was meant to describe general variables of the sample and assess any influence on the research findings. The background data consisted of years of experience and the number of training sessions attended over the past three years. Details of these data are outlined in the survey results section below.

5.2.3.1 Background information

Number of participants

Table 5.3: Number of teachers who have agreed to participate in this study

	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Yes, I would like to take part in this survey	78	97.5	97.5
Skipped question	2	2.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

Table 5.3 shows that 78 people agreed to participate in this study, resulting in a standard error, standard deviation, and variance of zero. This question was necessary in compliance with the ethical standards, which indicate that participation is voluntarily and participants must have the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Table 5.3 reflects the tendency of respondents to participate in this survey. All respondents agreed voluntarily to participate in the survey and provide their feedback on teacher education and training needs. It can also be deduced that the respondents understand the need for teacher education and training assessment.

Teaching experience

Table 5.4: Descriptive analysis of the number of years of teaching experience

	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
4–6	4	5.0	5.0
7–9	6	7.5	12.5
10–15	15	18.8	31.3
>15	26	32.5	63.7
Skipped question	29	36.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

Table 5.4 shows that 32.5% of the teachers have an experience of more than 15 years, followed by 18.8% in which the participants have experience between 10 to 15 years, and only 5% have an experience between four to six years. Based on these results, it can be inferred that the provided input from the respondents is highly useful as the majority of the respondents have more than 10 years of teaching experiences. Consequently, they are appropriate informants to participate in the survey, and their experience will be reflected through the feedback provided in the subsequent questions asked in the survey.

INSET courses

Table 5.5: Number of professional sessions that the teachers have attended over the past three years

	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
<10	8	10.0	10.0
10–30	22	27.5	37.5

30–60	9	11.3	48.8
60–100	6	7.5	56.3
>100	6	7.5	63.7
Skipped question	29	36.3	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

Table 5.4 and 5.5 show that most of the respondents have attended 10 to 30 INSET sessions over the last three years (27.5%), 10% have attended less than 10 sessions, and only 7.5% have attended 60 to 100 sessions. Based on these results, it can be highlighted that most respondents have attended 10 professional development sessions annually and with a minimum gap of 36 days between sessions. Even though most of the respondents have more than 10 years of academic experience, the attended number of INSET sessions is considerably low. Further investigation is needed to identify the reasons why teachers are engaged in minimal professional development. This could be out of volition or owing to the lack of adequate education and training, as discussed in other studies (Kirk, 2008; Mulkeen, 2010).

Table 5.6: Statistical analysis of INSET sessions in the last three years

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
How many professional development sessions have you attended in the past three years?	80	3.84	1.912
Total	80		

5.2.3.2 Items related to INSET planning and delivery

Satisfaction with INSET

Table 5.7: Teachers' satisfaction with the INSET they have attended in the past three years

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Very satisfied	3	3.8	3.8	3.8
Satisfied	32	40.0	40.0	43.8
Neutral/Not sure	2	2.5	2.5	46.3
Not very satisfied	8	10.0	10.0	56.3
Not at all satisfied	35	43.8	43.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 5.7, 43.8% of the respondents are satisfied with the professional development that they have had over the past three years. The percentage of teachers who are very satisfied with the professional development is 3.8%, whereas

that of those who are not sure is 2.5%. The results reflect that the majority were dissatisfied with the current level of INSET. In this question, 80 respondents participated and provided their feedback relating to the question. The majority of the respondents (53%) mentioned that they were not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the current level of professional development that they had obtained over the last three years. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the academic training and education, which are provided to teachers, are generally unsatisfactory to them. Table 6.7 provides statistical analysis of these findings.

Table 5.8: Statistical analysis of teacher satisfaction with INSET

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
How satisfied are you with the professional development that you have attended in the past three years?	80	1	5	3.50	1.476
Total	80				

Value of INSET topics

Table 5.9: How valuable INSET topics would be to English teachers

	N	Mean
Teaching vocabulary	50	3.80
Reading skills	50	4.20
Listening skills	50	3.88
Writing skills	50	4.18
Speaking and pronunciation	50	4.04
Classroom management	50	3.94
Teaching methods	50	4.00
Teaching grammar	50	3.54
Feedback and correction	50	3.92
Curriculum design	50	3.48
ICT for ELT	50	3.56
Learner autonomy	50	3.64
Assessment and evaluation	50	4.00
Lesson planning	50	3.78
Total	50	

Based on Table 5.9, most teachers feel that most INSET topics are valuable to them, except for teaching grammar and curriculum design, which were scored low by the respondents. All the other topics have a rating between 4 and 5. The top three topics

are reading, writing, and speaking, which received average ratings of 4.20, 4.18, and 4.04, respectively. Based on these results, it can be concluded that most respondents believe that the reading and writing skills are the two most valuable professional development topics, which are highly relevant and important for English language teachers. Reading and writing skills have gained popularity in recent times as many academic institutions have considered them as a way to improve the overall performance and effectiveness of teaching process (Ornstein et al., 2011). In addition, reading, speaking, writing, and reasoning are critical teaching skills attainable through INSET programs (Deneen & Catanese, 2011). This is more needed in K-12 education than in universities (Anstrom, 2009). Farrell (1999) puts forward that the framework of teaching objectives must encourage teachers' active involvement in the learning and teaching of both reading and writing skills. This result in particular provided an indication for the cycles' content throughout this study, as discussed in detail in chapter 5. The question is what does this finding meant to me as a teacher trainer?

Teacher training must ensure that teachers possess the skills to instil students with basic decoding and literacy skills, for instance, using vocabulary development (Proctor et al., 2007). Reading INSET must equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to differentiate different levels of support to be given to the students during the process of reading and learning to incorporate different comprehension skills in their reading (Gan, 2012). An effective reading comprehension training must ensure that teachers can build disciplinary and world knowledge among students. Based on the construction integration model described by Kintsch (2004), the immense knowledge of the reader, when interacting with the text, is critical to reading comprehension.

Expected outcomes

Table 5.10: INSET expected outcomes

	N	Mean
To understand theoretical ideas underlying practice	50	3.42
To receive help with specific teaching issues	50	3.80
To meet people who have similar problems	50	3.90
To receive an update on research in ELT	50	3.98
To understand better how to evaluate my own practice	49	4.10

To gain confidence	50	3.86
To understand the learning process better	50	3.92
To gain some practical ideas	49	4.35
Total	50	

Table 5.10 highlights the rating of outcomes expected by participants while attending INSET sessions. ‘To gain some practical ideas’ (4.35) was rated highest, followed by ‘to understand better how to evaluate my own experience’ (4.10); ‘to understand theoretical ideas underlying practice’ (3.42) was rated the lowest. The respondents provided mixed and different outcomes. For example, the option that received the highest rating average is related to preference for practical ideas. In this regard, it is relevant to contend that teachers look for outcomes that they can take into their classrooms and would impact on their practices. The option that received the least ranking underscores their negative attitudes towards theoretical input of INSET programmes. Teaching has become a dynamic issue that has been experiencing a constant change and development. As a result, it is highly important that participating in INSET sessions enables participants to understand their current teaching methods and align them with their students’ needs. Effective INSET in TESOL is expected to provide teachers with practical ‘do-it-yourself’ knowledge that is related to the classroom and facilitate their growth as practitioners (Wyatt, 2011, p. 1). As noted by McKenney et al. (2006), effective INSET must be relevant to teachers’ practices. Bademcioglu et al. (2014) observed that attitude is a behavioural reaction and experiences play a significant role in organising individuals’ attitudes towards INSET.

Preferred INSET delivery methods

Table 5.11: Preferred INSET delivery methods

	N	Mean
Lecturers	50	2.58
Demonstrations	50	3.86
Discussions	50	4.22
Case studies	50	3.76
Roleplaying	50	3.68
Simulations	50	3.82
Brainstorming	50	3.76
Games	50	3.84
Questions and answers	50	3.84
Reflections	50	3.86
Mentoring and coaching	45	3.84
Group problem-solving skills	50	4.08

	N	Mean
Project work	50	3.92
Handouts	50	3.30
Action research	50	3.70
Total	50	

Table 5.11 shows that lectures are the least preferred mode of delivery by teachers with a mean of 2.58, whereas discussions are the most preferred method with a mean of 4.22. Similarly, group problem-solving (4.08) received the second highest rating average, whereas handouts (3.30), the second least rating average. Most of the results obtained were skewed negatively, indicating that certain delivery methods are preferred over others. The attraction to problem-solving as a learning method could be attributed to the engaging nature of collaborative search for unanswered questions. When many hands are on track to achieve one goal, hearts become more bound. It is interesting that the top two preferred methods, i.e. discussion and problem-solving, are intertwined. Fox (2014) contended that numerous individuals engaging in a discussion will be in a better position to provide multiple solutions to an unconventional problem than a single person. Another reason could be that solutions reached through discussion are usually filtered through discussion and more dynamic (Fujishin, 2007, p. 91). However, problem-solving is not an easy and perfect recipe for understanding and resolving any issue, but it requires more than usual effort, energy, and time for reaching relevant and effective outcomes; in other words, out-of-the-box solutions will be the best outcomes that could be expected from the activity of group problem-solving methods. In the local context, there are several issues reported in literature about the educational system in general (Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012, p. 471) and TESOL in particular (Troudi, 2014). Language teachers are aware of these problems and of their responsibility in resolving them which might explain their interest in problem solving as a training method.

INSET success factors

The participants were asked to indicate which factors would more likely help a professional development programme to be more successful. They were asked to rate the factors on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the least important and 5, the most important.

Table 5.12: Teachers' responses on INSET success factors

	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Variance
Suitable time/date/venue	50	4.14	1.161	1.347
Good assessment and evaluation	49	3.90	0.918	0.844
Follow-up after training	49	4.24	0.969	0.939
Trainer-centred methods	50	3.50	1.374	1.888
Trainee involvement in the design and implementation	50	4.06	0.867	0.751
Small number of participants	50	4.04	0.989	0.978
Support from school administration	50	3.94	1.114	1.241
Relevant training topics	49	4.29	0.957	0.917
Qualified trainers	50	4.62	0.667	0.444
Conducting needs assessment before the training	50	4.28	0.904	0.818
Mentoring and coaching	49	4.02	0.946	0.895
Ensuring teachers' readiness for training	50	4.38	0.805	0.649
Creating an encouraging learning environment	50	4.36	0.749	0.562
Selecting appropriate training strategies	49	4.43	0.791	0.625
Ensuring effective transfer of training into practice	45	3.96	1.043	1.089
Free choice to participate in the training	50	3.70	1.282	1.643
Financial compensation for trainees	50	3.70	1.282	1.643
Total	50			

Table 6.12 enumerates the success factors of INSET programmes. Most teachers feel that 'having qualified trainers' is likely to make professional development successful, with an average mean of 4.62, whereas 'trainer-centred methods' had the lowest average of 3.50. The standard deviations for the responses were evenly distributed. 'Having qualified trainers' had the lowest standard deviation at 0.679. The second highest rated factor was 'selecting appropriate training strategies', with a mean of 4.43, whereas the second least rated factor was 'financial compensation for trainees and free choice to participate in the training', with a mean of which is 3.7. These results indicate that certain factors could impact on the success of an INSET programme more than others. Such factors include qualified trainers, selecting appropriate training strategies, and ensuring trainee readiness. Most teachers do not receive adequate education and training (Mulkeen, 2010). In addressing this gap, success factors must guide training to ensure the sustainability and quality of INSET programmes (Heshmati & Squires, 2013). INSET programmes are not useful until certain objectives are set, and deficiencies are

highlighted and investigated (Ecker, 2003; Grootings, 2005; Rhotom et al., 2001). For example, a lack of qualified trainers has widened the gap between the required level of INSET and the provided quality (Morris & Williamson, 2000).

Opinions on INSET

Table 5.13: How teachers agree or disagree with statements concerning INSET

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
A good professional development programme is collaborative.	50	2.24	1.559
A good professional development programme is research based.	50	2.60	1.229
A good professional development programme is specific to the classroom.	50	2.72	1.262
A good professional development programme has follow-up assessment.	50	2.14	1.229
A good professional development programme is as short as possible.	50	2.68	1.203
A good professional development programme is long and discusses details.	50	3.32	1.203
An effective trainer uses a variety of methods to present his/her message to his/her audience.	50	2.10	1.403
An effective trainer is fair and democratic.	50	2.02	1.407
A good trainer serves as a facilitator, rather than a teacher.	50	2.06	1.490
A good trainer has clearly defined goals, objectives, and agenda for the training.	50	1.90	1.403
A good trainer determines what the participants want to learn before designing the training.	50	2.08	1.368
A good trainer actively involves the participants.	50	1.98	1.491
Total	50		

Table 5.13 represents certain statements relating to INSET. In this table, the assessment measure is reflected by the statements receiving the maximum numbers. The table shows that none of the elements had a score above 4. The statement ‘a good professional development program is long and discusses in detail’, which had a mean of 3.32, obtained the lowest score. The statement ‘a good trainer has clearly defined goals, objectives, and agenda for the training’, which had a mean of 1.90, obtained the highest score.

Preferred assessment tools

Table 5.14: Assessment tools preferred by teachers

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid per cent	Cumulative per cent
Exam	4	7.7	7.7	7.7
Research paper	5	9.6	9.6	17.3
Observed teaching	18	34.6	34.6	51.9
Oral presentation	11	21.2	21.2	73.1
No assessment	10	19.2	19.2	92.3
Other	4	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.14 reflects the teachers' preferred assessment mode after their completion of an INSET programme. In this question, 52 respondents have provided their feedback. Of the total responses, 21.2% and 19.2% selected the options 'oral presentation' and 'no assessment', respectively; 9.6% and 34.6% selected 'research paper' and 'observed teaching', respectively; and 7.7% indicated other forms of assessment. Overall, most respondents supported the view that observed teaching remains the most effective method for assessing the performance of participants attending an INSET programme, whereas the least preferred mode of assessment is examination.

As seen above, the participants indicated that INSET assessment must have practical objectives. As seen above, they are in favour of observed teaching as a form of assessment that is 'for learning', which has a clear backwash impact on teaching practice. This is in consonance with Woodward's (2003, p. 301) 'loop input', which is 'a specific type of experiential teacher training process that involves an alignment of the process and content of learning'. Demonstrative activities and group discussion are integral components of loop input. Loop input is also thought to provide an experiential and collaborative approach to reflective practice (Mann and Walsh, 2017).

5.2.3.3 Further information

As indicated in the description of the survey instrument in chapter 5, the final item of the survey was an open-ended question, asking for any further comments or suggestions that the respondents might have and would inform the design in the

implementation stage. The table below provides a summary of the open-ended item responses.

Table 5.15: Number of respondents who answered the open-ended item

	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative per cent
Do you have any comments about improving the design, delivery and evaluation of teacher INSET (In-service Education and Training)?	10	12.5	12.5
Skipped question	70	87.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

As seen in table 5.15 above, only 10 people answered the open-ended question. However, only 4 of these responses were valid for analysis. The other 6 responses were just thank you statements as seen in table 6.15 below.

Table 5.16: Answers to the open-ended item and their categories

No	Response	Category
1	<i>no</i>	irrelevant
2	<i>no</i>	irrelevant
3	<i>thanks</i>	appreciation
4	<i>thanks</i>	appreciation
5	<i>big thanks</i>	appreciation
6	<i>good luck</i>	appreciation
7	<i>online training sessions can be useful</i>	ICT value
8	<i>I want to be real in my life. We do a lot of techniques but the ss aren't existed in the situation. I want to motivate ss to learn but they don't like learning. Be real Be successful.</i>	dissatisfaction with available INSET
9	<i>PD programs must be relevant to needs, provide follow up and further training. It is a cyclical process that is ongoing and developmental</i>	dissatisfaction with available INSET
10	<i>TTP or PD should be individualised not prescriptive and respect stage of career that a teacher is at. It should cater for all needs and a needs analysis be conducted before hand.</i>	dissatisfaction with available INSET

The reasons for the low response rate to this item were not investigated. Anecdotally, this could be attributed to the teachers' busy schedule or the inclusiveness of the survey with its 71 items as demonstrated in table 5.2.

The 4 valid responses highlighted several important trends relative to INSET in Qatar. 3 of the 4 respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the current provision of INSET; one of the respondents commented:

TTP (Teacher Training Programs) or PD (professional development) should be individualised not prescriptive and [the] respect stage of career that a teacher is at. It should cater [to] all needs and a needs analysis be conducted beforehand.

The comment above refers to several reasons for teachers' dissatisfaction. INSET is viewed to be prescriptive without considering the long experience of certain teachers. It also highlights the importance of the provision of differentiated INSET programmes tailored to individual needs and the conduct of needs analysis prior to implementation. Another comment by one of the respondents supports this view:

I want to be real in my life. We do a lot of techniques but they [do] not exist in the situation. I want to motivate [them] to learn but they don't like learning. Be real Be successful.

The respondents believed there is a missing link between INSET and students' real needs. They wished to have more practical sessions with transferrable input that would impact on their practices:

PD (professional development) programs must be relevant to needs, provide follow-up and further training. It is a cyclical process that is ongoing and developmental.

ICT was also commended as a useful tool that can support INSET delivery and contribute to its success. One of the responses particularly referred to blended learning 'Online training sessions can be useful'. Offering INSET online is a burgeoning trend that has a potential to attract teachers but still under-researched.

To conclude this section, the survey was a valuable tool to explore the teachers' preferences, their expected outcomes, preferred delivery methods, and perceptions of what success factors are. These findings provided directions to the intervention design. The survey was followed by focus groups, as recommended in literature, to explore the participants' experiences and uncover their perceptions (Fink, 2003; Schatz, 2012; Turner, 2010). McNamara (1999) argued that interviews are useful as 'follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires to further investigate their responses' (p. 1).

The following section presents the results of four focus group interviews that were conducted with selected survey respondents.

5.3 Focus groups

As discussed in section 4.2.2, focus groups were employed to explore the local situation and inform the design of an intervention. Focus groups were selected in the first stage because of their exploratory potential (Creswell, 2003). Conducting focus groups yielded more detailed information on teacher training and clarified certain findings of the survey. The use of both survey and focus groups served a multi-perspective purpose that is required in the needs analysis stage.

The design of the focus groups was informed by the following principles:

- The size of the group is limited to six to eight participants (Dornyei, 2007, p. 144; Krueger et al., 2001, p. 4).
- Semi-structured questions are used (Krueger et al., 2001, p. 55).
- The duration of each focus group is between one and two hours (Gibbs, 1997).
- As the participants had similar characteristics, three focus groups were conducted to ensure facts regarding any claims on the patterning of the data (Barbour, 2008, p. 59).

5.3.1 Procedures

Focus group participants were recruited through the Supreme Education Council of Qatar (SEC), consisting of five female and 15 male teachers from around 15 government schools in Qatar. Their participation was voluntarily. A brief introduction on the study and the survey link were sent to the participants two weeks prior to the scheduled focus groups, to provide them time to review the study purpose and decide on whether to participate or not. Focus groups were conducted in English as all participants were practitioners of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL).

Three focus groups were conducted at the Professional Development Office of the SEC. The participants were given a half-day day off on the day that the focus

groups were conducted, which served as compensation for participating in the focus groups. On the day the focus groups were conducted, hardcopies of the informed consent were distributed to and signed by then participants, and then collected by me. The participants were also presented with a short introduction on the project. A short time at the beginning of each focus group was allocated to check for questions or concerns that the participants might have regarding any aspect of this study. Each focus group comprised six to seven participants. The participants were homogeneous groups of high school teachers. Krueger and Casey (2009) noted that a successful focus group must 'have a homogeneous group in a permissive and non-threatening environment' (p. 189). The participants were encouraged to be open-minded towards each other's ideas and maintain mutual respect.

In past studies, there have been different perspectives on who must be the moderator. Krueger and Casey (2009, p. 185) recommend an 'outsider' other than the researcher. However, I decided to moderate these sessions, after consulting my supervisors and experiencing first-hand various social interactions. The rationale was that as a researcher, I possessed the required background to manage the discussion.

The articulation of the questions was also given due consideration to avoid leading participants to certain answers. Notes were taken during the sessions, and the discussions were recorded whenever permitted by the participants. Certain female participants did not give permission to audiotape their dialogues. This was overcome with detailed notes, which made reviewing the content later more manageable. Although confidentiality was assured, the participants asked to pause the recording at certain times of the focus groups, especially when they wanted to criticise certain professional development practices implemented by the SEC. All participants were expatriates, who teach in Qatar; this could explain their hesitance to record any criticism.

5.3.2 Design of the focus groups

The use of focus groups and survey in the planning stage was in line with the multi-method AR approach, which was adopted for this study, as clarified in section 4.2.4. In AR, using elements of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches

would impact positively on the breadth and depth of understanding (Dörnyei, 2007; Clark & Creswell, 2011).

Focus group questions were semi-structured, a recommended format for focus group interviews (Dörnyei, 2007). The flexibility of semi-structured focus groups was needed at this stage as varied answers were expected from the participants. Semi-structured focus groups also provided insight into the interviewees' attitudes and perceptions.

The questions were limited to 10 because previous research findings recommended a maximum of 15 questions for each focus group (Patton, 2002, p. 385). The initial questions inquired into the participants' backgrounds and attitudes towards INSET, and assisted me in identifying possible areas for further discussion with them. These questions served as icebreakers that promoted a comfortable group discussion and eliminated any factors that could inhibit communication (Krueger & Casey, 2009). The remaining transition and key questions were in open-ended format to provide the participants with freedom to express their personal thoughts and understanding of the topic. The questions developed smoothly into more critical and reflective ones. In general, the following pattern suggested by Krueger (2002, p. 4) was adopted: (1) Welcome, (2) Overview of the topic, (3) Ground rules, and (4) First question.

I prepared for the focus groups by examining the existing literature on good practices in focus groups. The following guidelines by Krueger (2002, p. 6) were helpful in phrasing and formatting the questions in this study:

- Use open-ended questions.
- Avoid dichotomous questions.
- The question why is rarely asked.
- Use 'think back' questions.
- Use different types of questions.
- Use questions that get participants involved.
- Focus the questions, sequence that goes from general to specific.
- Be cautious of improvisation.

The reflective nature of the focus group made it suitable for the exploration of INSET challenges in the planning stage. In fact, focus groups are often used for evaluative purposes to assess the effectiveness of a course or determine what is or is not working and why (Dornyei, 2007). Teachers' evaluations of their previous professional development experiences were important to inform this study. Therefore, the questions and discussions of the focus groups encouraged reflective feedback by asking for reasons and justifications.

To achieve the objectives of the focus groups, I decided to centre the discussions on the following trigger questions. These questions were based on this study's main research questions and the initial findings of the needs analysis survey.

1. Do you think teacher training is important?
2. What training experiences have you had so far? Discuss the training process, trainers, and its pros and cons.
3. What could have been done differently?
4. Do you remember any specific incidents that have shaped your attitudes towards training?
5. What training would be useful? Why and what is its form?
6. How would you describe a good teacher training programme?
7. What can be done to improve teacher training in Qatar?
8. What do you think must be avoided in the future design of teacher training programmes?
9. How do you think teacher training could achieve a more effective impact on teaching and learning?

The first question is a general opening question on attitude, to encourage all participants to speak at the beginning of the discussion and 'break the ice'. This question enabled me to explore their attitudes towards training. Questions 2, 3, and 4 are 'think back' questions, to take the participants back to their past experiences, or a form of reflection. The rest of the questions are more specific to training design and reflect those from the survey. At the end of the focus group, the purpose of the study was reviewed, and the participants were asked if anything was missed or if they wanted to add any other comments.

5.3.3 Ethical procedures in focus groups

The focus group questions and procedures were sent to the Research Office of the SEC for approval, in addition to a general approval of the study procedures and proposed tools by the Institutional Review Board at Qatar University. The IRB Board did not provide specific feedback. Other ethical procedures, including informing all participants in advance of the focus group's topic, purpose of this study, and their rights, were also observed. Consent letters were obtained, and the participants were assured of the confidentiality of their data and anonymity. The participants were also informed that all the recordings (if allowed) would be deleted upon completion of my PhD dissertation. Among the ethical issues faced was the amount of information to be afforded to the participants prior to the interview that would avoid any influence over their intended answers (Dornyei, 2007). To address this issue, the participants were given adequate information on the topic, purpose of this study, and logistics. The details of the questions were not shared with the participants prior to the focus groups to ensure that their feedback is truthful and not what they might consider as appropriate.

5.3.4 Pilot focus groups

A focus group pilot study was conducted to make sure that the semi-structured questions were not misleading, confusing, biased, or missing important themes (Dornyei, 2007). The purpose of the pilot study was to check whether the meanings of the questions are clear; terminologies are familiar to participants; a topic is tackled one at a time; and the questions reflect any hidden bias or lead the participants to a certain answer (Dreachslin, 1999, p. 228). Participants in the focus group pilot study did not take part in the actual focus groups. The questions had undergone four drafts; the final draft was used in the focus group pilot study. Based on the feedback provided during the review process of the questions, certain questions were deleted because they overlapped each other. Because exams were being held at schools during the pilot study phase, a focus group pilot study was not conducted to schoolteachers but to three colleagues from the Foundation Programme in Qatar University and an English-language specialist at one of the schools who was free at that time. All four participants had school teaching experience and were familiar with Qatar's professional development. Other

suggestions, such as the inclusion of a question on school coaching, were disregarded as they could lead the discussion to another direction.

5.3.5 Focus groups results

This section presents a descriptive summary of the results of the focus groups. The data were analysed thematically, and the results are presented by theme rather than question. Subsets of views and minor themes related to one of the themes are discussed under the main theme. For example, teachers' voice is a subset theme under success factors (see Appendix 13).

5.3.5.1 Attitudes towards training

The focus group discussions suggest that participants have generally positive attitudes towards training. There was a consensus that teacher training is important. Many highlighted the benefits of attending a training and how training had impacted positively on their practices. One focus group participant (F1P1) stated, 'I owe my experience to the training programmes, which I have attended inside and outside Qatar'. This positive acceptance of teacher training was also evident in the fact that most participants expressed their desire to have more training in the future; one focus group participant (F3P5) said: 'it (training) is very important as it is part of teachers' professional development. It must be continuous and not to have some training and stop'. Another participant expressed a positive correlation between their teaching experience and appreciation of training opportunities. F2P3 said, 'I think any training should be important because I believe [that] the more we teach, the more we need to learn'.

Certain focus group participants expressed their concerns over the assumption in teacher training that the 'problem' lies with the teachers, but they deemed that most of the educational issues in Qatar are related to students. F1P1 commented on student motivation: 'all training[s] [are] focusing on teachers...but the students also need training...all teachers here in Qatar complain about motivation. Students need to be trained also on the correct learning behaviour. Teams can go to school and train students'. Teachers view motivation as a common issue in schools in Qatar. Although this issue is not unique to the Qatari context, certain participants reported

that it was more common than in other contexts in which they had worked. F1P4 said that ‘the problem is not a matter of teacher training but student motivation’.

The criticism that training assumes the problem is with the teachers does not contradict the fact that most participants seemed quite happy with the training. These positive attitudes were linked to the perceived benefits of teacher training.

5.3.5.2 Perceived benefits of teacher training

Teacher training was seen as offering several clear benefits. Participants related several perceived benefits for attending teacher training. Some of these benefits were based on their personal experience, and others seemed part of their teaching philosophies. The main benefits discussed by the focus group participants are summarised in the list below with sample quotes:

- Sharing best practices: *‘I think training is an opportunity in which you can share strategies with other teachers, and you can learn from them to apply in our classes’* (F2P4).
- Self-development: *‘Training is important as everything changes here, and we have to improve ourselves and our strategies’* (F3P2).
- Impact on teaching philosophy: *‘Sometimes training alters your perspective to teaching itself’* (F1P 3).
- Help for new hires: *‘Yes, I think teacher training is very important especially for those who are newly appointed’* (F1P4).
- Familiarity with the local context: *‘Continuous training [is important] for teachers because standards may change from country to another. All of us when we looked at the standards because they are different, and training clarified things’* (F2P3).

5.3.5.3 Features of good INSET and perceived success factors

The participants of the focus groups mentioned many important features of what they consider a good training programme. One of the suggestions was that training programmes must be differentiated. When experienced and novice teachers are attending the same sessions, different tasks should be assigned to these two different groups of teachers. F1P4 commented, ‘We have different teachers with different abilities, and training must meet the needs of the teachers, so it can be

fruitful for the teachers'. Other teachers added that differentiation in training also involves trainees learning styles, such as using more auditory forms of teaching other than visuals (F3P2), conducting many activities (F3P3), and solving classroom problems (F3P2).

A significant theme that the discussion covered was the qualities of a good trainer. Teachers appreciated having skilful trainers who provide training related to classroom issues rather than theoretical training on irrelevant topics. 'Most of the trainers...forget the actual situations of the real classrooms, and the real situation of the unmotivated students', F1P5 commented. Having more than one trainer was among the changes proposed by other teachers. F1P6 stated, 'different trainers for the same course. I went to a 32-week course with one trainer, how come!' Although among the recommendations was to invite international trainers, F2P2 said that 'we need experts from abroad with good background in education and experience in training'. Other participants suggested recruiting local trainers to oversee the training provision in Qatar.

The preferred input was not among the key questions in the focus groups because it was covered in the survey. However, there was a consensus that teaching strategies must be given priority. One of the participants reported that teaching strategies are the main aspect he had gained from training. F3P3 said, 'they (training sessions) should provide the teachers with the techniques and strategies on how to apply them'. Another recurring training element in teachers' discussions was the need to have microteaching in training. This is among the techniques used in training in Qatar in which teachers deliver a mini lesson for 15 minutes in front of their colleagues. F2P2 commented, 'I like the training that has microteaching because it allows us to share experiences; even when I see my colleagues present simple ideas, this will add to my knowledge'. The reason for the popularity of microteaching, which is a form of experiential learning, was clarified in a comment by another teacher; F2P5 stated, 'microteaching is very important because we are seeing something that's happening in the classroom and how teachers are implementing things'. In general, participants favoured enjoyable topics that are transferrable into the classrooms. F3P5 explained that 'a good teacher training programme... should be a simulation and a mirror to what the teacher exactly experiences inside the

classroom'. F1P4 shared the following anecdote with the group: 'I went last month to a workshop on teaching through drama at the British Council and the trainer was a writer. The workshop was effective because it makes student want something new that makes them learn and enjoy'.

Many participants complained about having too much theory in the training. They preferred practical elements. According to F3P2, practical training 'gives me answers to the problems I face inside the classroom'. This is further clarified by a personal anecdote by F3P4: 'I have attended so many training sessions...Unfortunately, most [of them] focused on the theoretical part of the learning process rather than the practical one'. Teachers consider a training to be fruitful when it is 'concentrated on the real practices inside the classroom' (F3P2), and provides a model that can be transferred into their classrooms. F3P3 recounted a session that he went to three years ago at the British Council:

Three years ago, we were trained by a British trainer who came for two days, and the workshop was in a hotel. It was very long, for eight hours a day, and he trained us on what is called Cagan Strategies...I remember everything that went there because everything was practical. He gave us the instructions and we did everything. The strategy was applied [to] the workshop, not only reading and writing...Because it was practical, we participated each step. Until now I can remember everything that happened, and the trainer was skilful, and the school paid a great amount of money to him and he deserved that.

One example of practical techniques mentioned by the participants was to 'use modelling, [i.e.] to watch a lesson by a skilful trainer' (F3P2). However, having a balance between practical and theoretical input was also appreciated by another participant. F3P1 stated, 'a good training programme is balanced, not only theoretical and not only practical'.

Another feature of a good training programme, which was discussed by the participants, was catering to the needs of teachers and students, and engaging them in active training. F2P3 explained, 'the ideal training is like an ideal lesson...the trainees should be the centre of the training...they should be active trainees'. For the participants, one way to engage trainees was through solving their problems and

meeting their needs. F3P2 commented, ‘they should give me answers to the problems I face inside the classroom’. Trainers must ‘avoid repeating the same thing’ (F3P3). Selecting a suitable time is also important to engage trainees. F3P2 highlighted the importance of time, ‘when you pick me from school after two of three periods [and] I have piles of work’. Moreover, the time spent in a workshop must be compensated by gains in a way that ‘should polish and enrich your backgrounds’ (F3P3). F3P3 added that training ‘must add to you more than it takes from your time’. F3P2 clarified the engagement factor:

I remember when I was in Bahrain, I attended a lot of workshops on teaching for learning, which put the students in the centre of the learning and the teaching process, and the workshops were assimilations of the classroom environments, which means the trainers start and end their training programmes like teachers. It means they give a starter activity, they share the objective and have a closure, and that was useful because we could transfer it and it had a lot of ideas.

Another key feature of a good training reported by the participants was the attitude change it can introduce. F1P1 commented, ‘sometimes I want to change, but I don’t know how to change and that’s the importance of training’. The participants argued that attitude change is a pivotal success factor. F1P2 explained: ‘The key word is attitude; if the workshop succeeds in changing attitudes, I will transfer what I have learned into my classroom. If I don’t change my attitude, I will not change my behaviour’. F1P3’s anecdote explains the importance of a positive culture for training success:

Once I graduated, I was concerned with what to teach, the bulk of vocabulary and grammar, and I imagined the students as a vessel to fill. But After 25 years of teaching and a lot of training, now how to teach is the most important thing not what to teach. I think this is the impact and effect of training on me.

Finally, teachers expressed their wish to have their voice taken into consideration in the design and planning of future training. F3P6 said that ‘[t]hey should give an opportunity to teachers or at least some teachers to take part in the planning especially for the central programmes’. Teachers view themselves as the real practitioners who are in contact with the students on a daily basis. They are the ones

who can ‘innovate and improve learning’ (F3P2). Unfortunately, their voices are usually unheard, and the decisions taken on their behalf are in most cases inappropriate. They wanted to engage in training policy, being active in rather than obliged to fit in with the decisions made by others who might be from outside the discipline. ‘I think policymakers need to be trained as well...I want them to let us teach, but we don’t have time because we are always busy’, said F3P2. This comment is similar to the findings of another study in Qatar (Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012, p. 471) that policies in Qatar ‘ignore local educators’ input...and created resistance on the part of educators’.

Participants demanded that their INSET providers and trainers listen to their voice confirms that their voices are often unheard. This leads to much of INSET input being based on conditions applicable only to ‘some of its audiences’, and describes strategies that are ‘effective under a particular set of circumstances’ (Roberts, 2016, p. 163). The value of the participants’ voice was anecdotally identified in my early years as a teacher trainer and was observed in this study. Teachers are more connected to the real world of their classes, and in a better position to provide valuable input on training style, topics, success factors, and preferred follow-up methods. By listening to teachers, this will result in having a sense of shared responsibility over the design of the study and/or the fact that the participants were less likely to scrutinise their own recommendations in the implementation stage.

The rest of the comments of the focus group participants were about minor themes, that is, the importance of having a proper venue, suitable time, free refreshments, same gender sessions, and free choice to attend. The following quotes are indicative of the more minor success factors discussed by the teachers:

- 1) Reasonable length of INSET: ‘Avoid long periods’ (F2P3).
- 2) Engaging venue and facilities: ‘We need better venues’ (F1P6).
- 3) Respecting cultural norms: ‘Avoid mixing teachers, as some ladies don’t like to go to [a] training with male teachers’ (F3P3).
- 4) Having the choice not to attend: ‘Making training optional’ (F2P5).
- 5) Free refreshments: ‘Providing foods and meals...as [f]ree food is a perfect way to the mind’ (F1P1).

- 6) Social extras: 'Field trips' (F2P3), and '[t]ravel to another native country' (F2P2).
- 7) Multiple trainers for the same course: 'Having different trainers for the same course' (F1P6).
- 8) Considering the school calendar: 'Not too many trainings around the same time' (F3P1).

5.3.5.4 Views on training assessment

Focus group participants showed awareness of the need for assessment and its role in improving the training. F1P4 stated that 'it is important to have a tool or technique to measure the change'. However, they seem to be in favour of 'assessment for learning' tools, which have a clear backwash impact on their teaching. F3P2 suggested the following: 'I would recommend field training where the trainer goes to the field, and [then] observes and trains people, and gives them feedback in the field itself; [the trainer does require] teachers to come to a training centre and go back without follow-up'. Training follow-up was discussed enthusiastically by participants. 'Training needs following and the trainer must follow up the trainee', explained F3P5. Although there are several forms of follow-up, teachers commented on class visits by trainers. F3P5 commented, 'why trainers don't visit us in our schools...these visits should take place during the training'. Lesson observations were viewed by the participants as a form of alternative assessment to replace the traditional tests and training assignments in measuring the impact of training. F1P4 suggested: 'a follow-up after the training to see how the strategies and behaviour of the teachers have changed, and this [was] done in the training we attend[ed] at the British Council'.

5.4 Conclusion and insights for the first cycle

The findings of the focus groups and survey in the needs analysis stage informed the three cycles of this study. When the Survey findings showed that reading was the most needed and preferred topic of respondents, the focus of the three cycles had to be reading. Also, the main motivation for teachers was found to be gaining practical methods that can be transferred into classroom teaching methods. Consequently, cycle one included microteaching and cycles two and three had demo

lesson. Reflection opportunities on classroom implementation were also incorporated in the design of all cycle. In addition, needs analysis showed that lectures are the least preferred mode of training by teachers. Therefore, sessions were delivered through interactive tasks, e.g. ice-breakers, games and competitions, as much as possible. Respondents also associated defined goals with successful training. To address this, training goals, objectives and agendas were shared and discussed with trainees at the beginning of all cycles and sessions. Pre and post tests were also dropped in all cycles in response to teachers' criticism of these components. Finally, listening to and appreciating teachers' voice was praised in the needs analysis and captured in the design through good-bye letters, exit tickets and informal interviews. In short, the needs analysis stage shaped INSET design in the three cycles. The design was further fine-tuned through the ongoing feedback from participants in the delivery stage.

Chapter Six: Cycle One

This section reports on the first cycle of this study. It presents the structure of the cycle, its delivery, description of the instruments and their results. It concludes with implications for the second cycle.

6.1 Introduction

The initial needs analysis validated a common concern in Qatar regarding teachers' disengagement and continuous complaints on PD, that is, their lack of interest in PD, which is not uncommon in other contexts (Hill, 2009). The needs analysis stage also yielded several findings regarding teachers' attitudes towards INSET in Qatar and its success factors. More importantly, the survey and focus groups identified certain trainer merits that were usually appreciated by trainees and linked to an effective training. The needs analysis was a good starting point for this study. The next task was to incorporate these findings in the subsequent training assignment, which was the first AR cycle. The overall aim of this study was to improve my own teaching practices as a teacher trainer and, by extension, enhance the learning experience in the classrooms of my trainee teachers. Cycle one was an opportunity to experiment certain improvements based on the needs analysis stage. Table 6.1 provides an overview how the design of cycle one was informed by the findings of the previous needs analysis stage.

Table 6.1: Overview of emerging insights from needs analysis that informed subsequent cycle one

Stage One (needs analysis)		Cycle one
Survey findings showed that reading was the most needed and preferred topic of respondents.	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The first cycle had two sessions on reading (including one microteaching reading session).
Survey and focus groups highlighted that the top expected outcomes from attending INSET are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To gain some practical ideas. ▪ To understand better how to evaluate my own practice. 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Microteaching was included ▪ Teachers had to write a reflective assignment in the to help them evaluate their own teaching practices.
Survey and focus groups showed that lectures are the least preferred modes of delivery by teachers, whereas discussions and group activities were the most preferred delivery methods.	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All sessions delivered by me were through interactive tasks. ▪ All sessions started with ice-breakers. ▪ Most of my sessions included games and competitions.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than 20 books were distributed as gifts to winners of competitions in my sessions.
Survey results about success factors for INSET programmes showed that most teachers feel that having qualified trainers is likely to make professional development successful, whereas trainer-centred methods had the lowest average. The second highest rated success factor was ‘selecting appropriate training strategies’.	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers were asked about their preferred training strategies in the focus groups and through goodbye letters at the beginning of all cycles. These strategies (activities) were used throughout the training. ▪ Teachers were asked to share their strategies through microteaching.
Survey and focus groups showed that ‘A good trainer has clearly defined goals, objectives, and agenda for the training’.	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training goals, objectives and agendas were shared and discussed with trainees at the beginning.
Focus groups showed the significance of listening to teachers in the design and delivery of INSET.	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sessions included end-of-session evaluation forms to gain trainee feedback and act upon that in the following session. ▪ Informal interviews were held to inform progress.
Survey and focus group findings about trainer merits (e.g. active, collaborative, engaging, fair and democratic and recognises the value of trainees’ experience).	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As a trainer, I observed these merits in my practices through appreciating their input, bringing their daily classroom experiences to the training, and asking for their opinions throughout the training.
Some comments indicated that INSET must be individualised not prescriptive.	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Several changes in the content and delivery of the sessions were made.
Survey and focus groups indicated that teachers are not in favour of the pre- and post-tests.	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paper tests were dropped and replaced by reflective assignment.

As seen in the table above, the needs analysis stage shaped what INSET was about and how it was delivered in the subsequent cycle one.

6.2 Context and structure of the cycle one

As a teacher trainer, I train cohorts of teachers regularly for periods ranging from one to four months for each course. Although attendance is often optional in these courses, trainee teachers are at times requested by their schools to attend as part of their INSET requirements. Typically, teachers come from more than 10 schools in every cohort. Also, I deliver short training courses a few times a year as part of in-house INSET or when invited by schools and other institutions. At times, I take part in the design of these programmes. In this study’s first cycle, the participants came from more than 10 schools and attendance was required by their schools. The 60-hour course was a common training programme, which I and other fellow trainers designed. The participants were mixed gender and were all TESOL teachers, and because of the latter, English was used in the programme.

Often in AR, the pilot cycle is considered the first cycle. A pilot study refers to either a trial run of the major research or a pre-test of a research instrument or procedure (Salkind, 2010, p. 1033). Although this cycle was planned initially to be a pilot, it was later decided to be the first cycle, following several previous AR studies (Banegas, 2013; Flornes, 2007). The purpose of this chapter is to report on the trial run of the whole training programme rather than a pre-test of the multiple research tools, e.g. questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews, which were employed throughout this study. Nevertheless, a pre-test pilot was conducted for each instrument to check its accuracy, clarity, validity, objectivity, and format, as well as the administration time needed.

The first cycle is an important stage in AR. By planning, acting, observing, and reflecting in the first cycle, the process in next cycle can be modified (Gore, 1991). As the first cycle happens before other cycles, unknown phenomena can be explored in this cycle before the main study. On a similar vein, Teijlingen and Hundley (2004) pointed out that a pilot study uncovers local politics or problems that may affect the research. Once the first cycle of action is activated off, any circumstance or issue is depicted more clearly (McKernan & McKernan, 2013).

In this section, an overview of the cycle structure is presented in Table 5.4, followed by a description of the design, participants, data collection procedures, and results.

Table 6.2: Steps of the first cycle

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will the trainees be more engaged in the training if they could influence or make a decision about the training? - How can I break the ice with the trainees and encourage them to take an active role in the training? - Can asking the trainees to share their experiences via microteaching make the training more engaging? - How can I obtain reflective feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the training from the trainees? - What will be the impact of the first cycle on the trainees' teaching skills?
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Plan	<p>A) Identify the trainees' expectations of the current training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The trainees were asked to write reflective goodbye letters at the beginning of the training. (Trainees were asked to imagine as if it was the last day and write a letter about what they would have had gained from the INSET course). - Informal interviews were conducted with the trainees. <p>B) If necessary, modify the techniques accordingly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a trainer, I had the liberty to make changes in the training content within the stated themes. However, no major changes in the content were deemed necessary at this point. <p>C) Formulate a plan for out-of-training follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal emails were collected and shared among trainees, and teachers were encouraged to communicate with each other. - Discussions were held at the beginning of each session to share feedback on the techniques discussed in the previous sessions. Teachers were encouraged to share their experience on what they did in their classrooms and how it went. <p>E) Attempt to visit some of the schools.</p>
Act	<p>Deliver the training and pay attention to the following outcomes of the needs analysis stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trainer-appreciated merits (e.g. active, collaborative, engaging, fair, and democratic; recognises the value of trainees' experience). - Preferred training methods (e.g. demonstrations, discussions, games, simulations, etc.). - Success factors (e.g. suitable time, trainer-centred, good assessment, small numbers, etc.).
Observe/Evaluate	<p>An ongoing assessment and reflection was achieved through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussing the findings with a supervisor, colleagues, and friends. - Keeping a research reflective diary. - Making field notes during the school visits. - Distributing a questionnaire at the end of each session. - Conducting regular informal interviews with the trainees. - Giving a reflective assignment at the end of the training (a lesson plan with a reflective essay on its delivery). - Asking the participants to keep reflective journal entries at the end of each session.
Reflect	<p>Reflect and amend the plan for the second cycle.</p>

The design of the training programme in the first cycle was set by the Professional Development Office of the SEC (see Appendix 5). I was part of the team that developed the programme design. Although trainers had the liberty to modify the design according to their needs and cohort dynamics, there were no major changes made to the content of the programme in the first cycle because of the following:

- The current cycle served as a pilot study, and further data were required before undertaking substantial changes.
- At this stage, the focus was on the delivery rather than the content.
- The main preferred topics identified in the needs analysis stage, i.e. reading, ICT, and writing, were already incorporated in the design.
- Most concerns and feedback from the needs analysis were related to trainer merits, delivery methods, and success factors rather than training themes.

However, the following minimal changes were made to the programme owing to practicality:

- The paper test was discontinued at the end of the training, as it was not recommended by the participants in their survey answers and informal interviews.
- The goodbye letter was introduced in the first session to determine the participants' expectations.
- Several games and activities were introduced to make the workshops more interactive.

6.3 Participants in the first cycle

The participants in the first cycle were from several high schools in Qatar. The professional development programmes at SEC usually have 20-30 teachers. In this cycle, 22 teachers (8 female, 14 male) were recruited. Several of these participants were among those who completed the needs analysis survey and participated in the focus groups. All the participants speak Arabic as their mother tongue, and came from different countries with varying cultural backgrounds. All of them had to take a 60-hour programme.

6.4 Data collection

Parsons and Brown (2002) commented that 'the information gathered by the teacher as action researcher can take many forms' (p. 24). During this key stage of the study, data were collected in several forms, such as a researcher journal and field notes/observations, short surveys, which were administered at the end of each session, and the participants' reflective journals. Finally, the participants were asked

to design a lesson plan connected to the training, and deliver it to their own students and write a reflective account on the experience. Although this process posed a challenging analysis task, the data collected provided a rich source of information for the next cycles.

6.5 Reflective practice in the first cycle

Reflective practice is among the ways to improve professionally (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 1998; Langley, 1999; Miettinen, 2000; Tillema, 2000). Collecting reflective data during the different stages of AR and adapting progress accordingly are important. Table 5.4 indicates the two main methods, namely, training journals and the reflective assignment, used in gathering reflective information from the participants in the first AR cycle. A training journal was kept by the participants at the end of each session and an assignment was due at the end of the programme. Reflection is a manual for planning and, in this study, reflection by teachers participating in the training aimed to gain insights on their presumptions and contexts to inform future actions.

6.6 Journaling in the first cycle

The training participants were asked to write their reflection on the outcomes of each session at the end of the session as part of their journal; in this task, they were instructed to discuss what they have gained and how they plan to implement such ideas in their classrooms. Journal entries were a good opportunity for the trainees to express their thoughts and concerns. Often, I provided comments to the journal entries, answering their questions and clarifying their concerns. In this way, keeping a journal provided a written form of interaction between the trainees and myself. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) noted that journals provide insights into social interactions owing to their deeply reflexive nature. This value, however, depends on how and why journals are used. I used the journals to learn about trainees' personalities. The semi-guided format of the journals provided the participants with an opportunity to reflect on their attitudes and experiences in a personalised way and at their own pace. In writing the journal, no fixed format was specified and writing a journal entry after each session was not compulsory. However, many often wrote an entry. The following guiding questions were provided:

- What do you think went well today and why?
- What do you think went wrong today and why?
- Which activities do you find most effective for your students and why? How could you adapt/use these activities in the classroom?
- Which activities generated the most discussion?
- What would you change in the session if you were to be the trainer?
- Would you like to attend further sessions about today's topic and why?

As evident in section 6.2.1, journal entries provided a valuable source of the participants' reflective comments on the immediate training programme and on INSET context in general.

6.7 Cycle one results

The purpose of this AR study is to improve my practice as a teacher trainer by exploring the effectiveness of teacher training practices in Qatar. In this chapter, the findings of the initial needs analysis stage have been presented, which informed a second stage of implementation. The implementation was conducted in three AR cycles whose structure was outlined in chapter 5. This section presents the findings from the three cycles in the implementation stage.

In the first cycle, I used a researcher journal, field notes, and informal interviews. However, the main instruments were the short surveys at the end of each session, along with the participant journal entries. Teachers were also asked to design a lesson plan connected to the training, deliver that with their students, and then write a reflective account on their experience.

6.7.1 Findings based on the journal entries

Apart from the end-of-session survey (see Appendix 8), all the other data were qualitative; thematic analysis was employed to draw conclusions. By utilising thematic analysis, it was possible to connect the different ideas and feelings of the trainees, and contrast these with the information that has been assembled in various circumstances at different times of the study. Namey et al. (2008) noted that 'thematic moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases, and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas' (p. 138). The prescribed

structure of this cycle was changed minimally. The next part of this section presents a summary of the themes that emerged mainly from the journal entries.

Trainees were asked to give feedback on each of the 12 workshops, including their delivery and content. This was in addition to a short end-of-workshop survey that aimed to evaluate the whole workshop, which usually lasted for four hours. The analysis of the entries showed that most trainees had a positive experience during the training. One of the participants wrote in his journal after the first workshop, ‘the start was smooth and nice. The day passed quickly and the session was of great success. I have got a clear overview [of the training].

The same attitude was maintained towards the end of the training. After workshop 11, another participant wrote, ‘it has been an interesting workshop that I always enjoy to attend...thank you!’ A similar comment was written after workshop 10:

Today's workshop was great. We have learned a lot of things [sic] about reading, the aims and the skills. Also, we learned that we red[sic]for different purposes

The above quotes display that participant engagement was maintained throughout the course of the study.

Regarding the content of the workshops, respondents reported that the sessions met the stated objectives; ideas were organised and coherent during the sessions. One participant commented, ‘the real situation example [that] the instructor gave made it easier for me to understand’. A participant added, ‘I have acquired a lot of things from this session’. Another participant showed similar attitude:

Today's workshop is a very valuable one as I recognized the importance of the programme, and what it is going to add to my experience.

It can be concluded that the teachers were more engaged when they realise the significance of INSET. The teachers were also more motivated when they are aware of the expected gains. There are certain factors that facilitate motivation when training on specific themes as seen in the comment below:

Discussing the reading skill gives me more insight on staging reading sessions, and choosing appropriate activities that suit the different stages.

Discussion is complimented in the quote above as a delivery method. This was also confirmed in other comments. The quote also refers to how the session can impact on teaching.

Data from most of the sessions show that several participants expressed their wish to have practical ideas during the training. An example of such comment is as follows: 'I would like to go through more practice'. This was taken into consideration later in the training. Other relevant comments emphasised that participants are looking for techniques and strategies that they could take back to their classrooms. An example by one of the teachers reads:

[T]he workshop is very valuable to me as I learned so many techniques and strategies that I can use in my reading lessons.

The theme of transferability of training was common in journal entries. The quote below shows what this theme meant to the participants:

[T]he starter activity 'find someone who' is very appealing [and] helps a lot in memorising our colleagues' names. I think I will try to use it in my classes.

Participants usually praised the activities conducted during the sessions. One participant commented that '[t]he session was great...the session began with an ice-breaker which gave the chance to know my colleagues by name'. They were more appreciative of the interactive tasks. One comment stated, 'the part when we worked as a group and drew a picture representing one standard was an exciting step'. This comment shows that teachers appreciate sharing their experience through interaction because of the potential impact on their classes. Transferability also emerged in the comments from the workshops, as observed by one of the participants in workshop 11: 'I personally benefitted from my colleagues' experience and the techniques they follow in their lessons'.

Feedback on the trainer shows that the trainer was communicating effectively, had sound knowledge and understanding of the topic, and addressed trainees' concerns and questions effectively. One journal comment reads, '[T]he trainer is a very polite and helpful man. I wish him good luck'. Similarly, another entry appreciates the trainer's role in promoting interaction, stating that 'the trainer allowed sufficient

opportunity for interaction and participation. [He] was informative and added to the session from his personal experience as a teacher’.

6.7.2 Reflective assignment findings

Participants were asked to design a lesson plan, incorporating one of the teaching strategies from the training, and then write a reflective entry of 200 to 300 words regarding its delivery. The assignment was due towards the end of the training. An example from previous cohorts was shown to the participants. It is worth noting here that the participants reported that they were already using elements of RP in their contexts. For example, their appraisal systems required a reflective narrative on professional development. Informal interviews with participants showed that they enjoyed the assignment because it was a practical implementation of the training and because of its connection with their teaching. Connectivity with students was among the emerging themes in the participants’ reflections on their lessons in their assignment as seen in the quote below:

I feel totally satisfied with my performance in this lesson and even my students had the feeling of achievement. Many of them started reading problem page from the same site I used.

In their reflection, trainees discussed several other themes. One of the recurring themes is the strategies they used in the lesson. One trainee described some of these strategies:

The lesson was moving smoothly for many reasons. First, the lesson objectives were SMART and student-friendly. Also, the choice of displaying a song about the importance of eating apples as a starter served the topic of the lesson. It met the criteria of fun, and attracted the students’ attention. Questions preceded the display of the video made my students watch it with a task in their minds could be considered as a starter and a warm-up activity as well.

One of the teachers found the group work effective in her lesson: ‘Furthermore, the use of co-operative groups with different levels helped the students depend on each other and encouraged all members to work’. Another example was about the starter activity: ‘the starter activity was interesting, the students identified a face among

coffee beans, and the one who discovered it first had a present'. Such activities were a good way to overcome lesson challenges as seen in this comment: 'the task of retelling the story was interesting and high achievers found it nice to retell a story from the [first-hand] point of view. This left a good impression, which compensated the previous feeling of failure'.

Several teachers reflected on what they would do if they would redeliver the lesson. One wrote, 'I should have given clearer instructions and hand[ed] the students a task to do during the video'. Other teachers echoed the importance of clarity in giving instructions: 'I should have explained the instructions clearly before allowing them to start the task, as the result was some students had a difficulty in answering'. Another teacher gave the lesson with a fellow colleague and wrote in her reflection, 'I liked my lesson, but next time I would do it differently, because I have to do it alone and not with my colleague. So, I may use different techniques to help my SS (students) practice'.

Finally, the sample entry below shows how reflective practice on one's own teaching may lead teachers to solve their problems on their own:

Actually, the lesson started well; the video, I played, related to the lesson, but I felt that [the] students didn't enjoy it, so I stopped it before it was finished... During the pair work I discovered some mistakes, so I stopped and explained again. In fact, the task took more time than the fixed one and I shouldn't have done that because this affected the rest of the lesson.

I had a problem in closing the lesson as time has passed quickly and I wasted a lot of time in the first [period]...The idea of dividing one task among students in several parts was a successful one. I will try it again in long tasks as it is a good way to save time.

The theme of the transferability of INSET emerged from the content analysis of the results across the needs analysis stage. Several headings of the participants' data have been linked to these themes. These headings refer to, among others, classroom activities, the practical value of INSET, demo lesson, impact, and follow-up. Although transferability could mean different concepts to different practitioners, the participants in this study viewed transferability as 'the INSET impact on practice

through the possibility of going back to the classroom with new practical skills or knowledge'. In the needs analysis stage, the participants reported several issues with INSET. Their negative stigma was demonstrated in the focus groups' themes and survey comments. They often blamed the lack of INSET transferability for their frustrations. Teachers also reported that being able to take training input back to the classroom is among the main advantages of a successful INSET. However, the lack of transferability was viewed as among the current challenges for most INSET programmes offered to teachers. As seen in the focus groups data, several teachers linked the lack of INSET transferability to motivational issues in their classrooms.

6.8 Conclusion and insights for the second cycle

Chapter six attempted to provide a narrative account of the first cycle linked to the study methods. The first cycle was an opportunity to implement a design informed by the needs analysis, reflect on my training practices in terms of delivery, gaining insights on improvement, and networking with other colleagues in the field (see Figure 6.1). This cycle also provided insights into what constitutes a good teacher education programme in terms of impact and how INSET can be engaging. However, investigating the impact of the role of a trainer could not be achieved in this cycle because of limited time and the cycle's focus on the INSET success factors. Therefore, cycle two aimed at investigating this role.



Figure 6.1: Participants of the first cycle gather at the end of the training.

Focusing on trainer role in cycle two is significant not only to the study, but also to INSET literature due to the rarity of studies in this regard. Koster et al. (2004) conducted a pioneering study on determining the competencies of teacher trainers; they concluded that there was limited knowledge on the competencies of teacher trainers owing to their lack of formal education. The next chapter presents the design and findings from the cycle two.

Chapter Seven: Cycle Two

This section reports on the second cycle of this study. It presents the structure of the cycle, its delivery, description of the instruments and their results. It concludes with implications for the third cycle.

7.1 Introduction

The AR methodology enabled me (as a trainer) to undertake modifications to reflect on my plans in conducting INSET programmes. Feedback from the trainees in the first cycle (see chapter 6) indicated that the delivery of the programme was successful. For example, one journal comment reads, ‘the trainer allowed sufficient opportunity for interaction and participation. [He] was informative and added to the session from his personal experience as a teacher’. However, it could not be verified whether their feedback, which could have been influenced by my role, was accurate. Did the participants express views that they thought would please the trainer? Did the trainer’s relationship with the trainees play any unintended role in leading their answers? To achieve more of an ‘objective’ assessment before proceeding with this study, a co-trainer was employed in the second cycle.

Involving a co-trainer did not mean that I assumed an inactive role. In AR, practitioners and participants take an active part in the action (Kemmis et al., 2013). In many ways, my aim was to boost the collaboration and participation. During the needs analysis stage and AR pilot cycle, I had extensive interaction with the participants. Such interaction was significant to gain a proper understanding of the social setting in this study and was maintained in later cycles. For example, in the second cycle, I conducted two of the training sessions. In addition, I oversaw the evaluation process, and led the entire training, but with a semi-outsider perspective. McNiff (2013) referred to generative AR nature as the adaptability feature that enables a researcher to deviate from the original plan in light of the research progress and participants’ feedback.

The data from this cycle indicated that involving a co-trainer impacted negatively on the participants’ engagement. The co-trainer largely failed to be interactive and provide relevant tasks. The results of the survey administered after each session and

my observations showed considerable concerns related to the co-trainer’s skills, such as having an inadequate information on context prior to the programme and her use of a teacher-centred style of training. These concerns emerged while the ‘intervention’ was running. To address these concerns, at one point, I considered discontinuing the training. Based on the views of my supervisor and in view of the logistics, the second cycle was continued with the help of the co-trainer. At least it would provide a comparative perspective on other AR cycles. Table 7.1 below demonstrates how the design of cycle two is based on the findings of cycle one and indicates which changes were implemented to reflect this impact.

Table 7.1: Overview of emerging insights from cycle one that informed subsequent cycle two

Cycle One		Cycle Two
Trainer role was overpraised and could not be evaluated		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A co-trainer was introduced
Participants wanted to have more input on the design of the the programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting with potential trainees was conducted to discuss programme design and delivery ▪ School visits were conducted to gain teachers insights ▪ Open Q&A with teachers ▪ Good-bye letters were used at the end of sessions
Two sessions were on reading. Participants wanted more input on reading		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The whole cycle focused on reading including all sessions and events
Focus group results emphasised practical gains as a motivation for teachers to attend INSET	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demo lessons were included in the second cycles.
Training transferability was a common theme in journal entries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Several lesson observations were conducted ▪ School visits were introduced ▪
Having a qualified trainer was identified as a success factor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A trainer with international reputation was invited from overseas
Replacing pre- and post-tests with the reflective assignment had a good impact in cycle one.	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The reflective assignment was dropped alos in this cycle in order not to overburden participants.

As seen in the table above, the cycle one shaped what INSET was about and how it was delivered in the subsequent cycle two. Trainer role was the focus of cycle two that lasted for one month.

7.2 Context and structure of the cycle two

The design of the training programme delivered in the second cycle (see Table 7.2) was informed by the outcomes of the first cycle, literature review, and needs analysis stage. The main content focus of the second cycle was reading.

Table 7.2: Design of the INSET programme in the second cycle

Phase One (Plan)				
	10:00–11:00	11:00–12:00	13:00–14:00	14:00–15:00
Wednesday, 1 July 2015	Meeting with potential trainees to discuss programme design and delivery			
Thursday, 2 July 2015	First session of the programme (The art of teaching reading) By: Mohammad Manasreh			
Phase Two (Act): Four-week Training				
Week 1 (October 5-8, 2015)				
	10:00–11:00	11:00–12:00	13:00–14:00	14:00–15:00
Monday	Teachers meet and greet with trainers		School visits to introduce the co-trainer to local context	
Tuesday	Workshop: Reading instruction strategies (By: Co-trainer)		Workshop: Reading instruction strategies (Repeat)	
Wednesday	Workshop: Reading instruction strategies (By: Co-trainer)		Workshop: Reading instruction strategies (Repeat)	
Thursday	Open Q&A with teachers		Focus group with teachers	
Week 2 (October 11-15, 2015)				
	10:00–11:00	11:00 – 12:00	13:00 -14:00	
Sunday	Lesson observation	Lesson observation	Lesson observation	
Monday		Workshop: Engaging students in reading (By: Co-trainer)		
Tuesday		Demo reading lesson (By: Co-trainer)	Open Q&A	
Thursday		Demo reading lesson (By: Co-trainer)		
Week 3 (October 19-21, 2015)				
	10:00–11:00	12:00–13:00	13:00 -14:00	
Monday	Workshop: Effective games for reading instruction (By: Co-trainer)		Workshop: Effective games for reading instruction (By: Co-trainer)	
Tuesday		Demo lesson (By: Co-trainer)	Demo Lesson (By: Co-trainer)	
Wednesday			Effective games for reading instruction (Repeat)	
Week 4 (October 25-29, 2015)				
	8.00–9:00	10:00-11:00	13.00 -14.00	
Sunday	Lesson observation		Open Q&A with participants	

Monday	Lesson observation	Workshop: Reading instruction issues (By: Co-trainer)	Reading instruction issues (Repeat)
Tuesday			Reading demo lesson (Repeat)
Thursday		Demo lesson (By: Co-trainer)	
Phase Three: Training Evaluation			
06 Nov., 2015	A survey was administered to the teachers for an evaluation of the programme.		

As shown in Table 7.2, the second cycle started with an initial preparatory period for two days, from 1-2 July, 2015. The purpose of these two meetings was to familiarise myself with the potential trainees and to gather information for the co-trainer. The core part of this cycle, that is training, was conducted for almost a month, from 5-29 October, 2015. There was a gap between the preparatory period and main part because of the summer break and the need to finalise the training design between the two trainers. Most of the sessions were delivered by the co-trainer. I delivered the initial two sessions in the planning stage and two demo lessons.

As discussed in chapter 4, teachers appreciate it when their views are considered and valued in the decisions on their INSET. During the initial planning phase of this study, the teachers' input was captured and the training workshops were designed in accordance with their views. For example, the teachers' request for practical samples of teaching, rather than theoretical lecturing, was accommodated through the delivery of six demo lessons in this cycle; two of the six were delivered by me. These lessons were delivered with real students, and 10 to 15 teachers often attended these lessons and took notes (see Figure 7.2).

Trainers' knowledge of the local context is an important success factor as illustrated in table 3.1. Although I was familiar with the local context in Qatar, the other trainer came from a different context. She was provided with the opportunity to familiarise herself with the local context through an initial meeting with the teachers. She was also introduced to the textbooks used by the teachers and attended several lesson observations to align her input with the teachers' expectations.

Finally, the whole cycle was centred on reading. Reading was not initially planned to be the content focus of the cycles at the outset of the study. Initially, I thought ICT would be the most preferable INSET topic by teachers. However, the survey

results in the needs analysis stage showed that reading was the top recommended topic. Consequently, three of the twelve sessions in the first cycle were dedicated to reading, and most of the sessions and demo lessons in the second and third cycles were reading-focused. As

Reading INSET is both valuable and stimulating as perceived by the participants of this study. It plays a significant role in upskilling TESOL teachers to improve the reading skills and understanding of a language among L2 students (Reinders & Loewen, 2013). Thus, reading INSET must focus on classroom instructional strategies (McNamara, 2011), and be delivered in an engaging and transferable mode (see section 6.3). Coaching is among the recommended methods that foster teacher's retention of reading INSET (Philips et al., 2016). Relevance to practice (Khan, 2012) and reflection in the teaching process (Hong & Lawrence, 2011) can also impact significantly on the effectiveness of reading INSET.

Choosing reading was linked to the participants' needs and based on their input. This approach promoted a comfortable training environment, which maintained participant engagement and provided them with relevant and transferable learning opportunities. My experience made me realise that when we, as language trainers, provide our participants with an engaging training experience, we set the whole programme to succeed. Keeping a positive attitude in learning, as noted by Offner (1997), is more important than any immediate results.

Finally, among lessons in this study was the importance of providing participants with the opportunity to have a say on the content of their INSET. Incorporating their voice would make them share the ownership and believe that the training is worth their time and investment. I did not expect reading to emerge as a top preferred topic, but I had to adjust my content to meet the expectations of my participants and keep both of us tuned in.

7.3 Participants in the second cycle

Findings from the needs analysis stage showed that teachers prefer optional INSET. In the first cycle, all participants taught high school classes because the invitations were sent through the schools. There was almost a one-year gap between first and

second cycles. In the second cycle, I sent the invitation to the local ELT community and an open access policy was adopted. However, most participants were from either the Foundation Programme of Qatar University or other local schools. Two participants were from other ELT tertiary institutions in Qatar. Male and female participants were present in the training; English was used as the training language. Although the participants were encouraged to attend all the sessions, they were given the option to attend certain sessions only. The number of participants in attendance for each session ranged between 6 and 25. The total number of unique participants in all the sessions was more than 75. I decided to move the training venue from the traditional SEC Centre, which was an old school and not preferred by the trainees, to the Foundation Program premises, a university building with better facilities and is more appealing to the teachers. This decision made the logistics more manageable for me.

7.4 Cycle two results

Feedback from the participants on the INSET events in the second cycle was obtained through end-of-session short surveys and a main survey after the completion of the training. This cycle involved 28 different INSET events and around 75 participants (see Table 5.6).

7.4.1 Survey design

The survey was used to gauge teachers' feedback on the whole programme. It was designed in a straightforward and simple way so that respondents would more likely answer (Dillman, 2000; Denscombe, 1998). Most questions were in Likert scale, and the average number of respondents for all the questions was 53.9. The questionnaire consisted of 10 statements, and required the participants to choose between different ordinal response possibilities for each statement: (1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 4 = disagree; 5=strongly disagree). At the end of the questionnaire, an open-ended question was given to provide the participant with a venue to express any final remarks. Answers to the survey are presented and discussed in the subsequent sections.

7.4.1.1 Answers to the statements

Table 7.3: Answers to the statement questions in the final survey

Statement 1. During this professional development event, I learned something I can use in my teaching.	Answer	N	%	M	SD
	Strongly agree	5	9	2.58	0.92
	Agree	26	46		
	Disagree	14	25		
	Strongly disagree	12	21		
Total	57	100			
Statement 2. The presentations were conducted well.	Answer	N	%	M	SD
	Strongly agree	8	14	2.38	0.93
	Agree	28	50		
	Disagree	11	20		
	Strongly disagree	9	16		
Total	56	100			
Statement 3. The speaker had a good understanding of the topic(s).	Answer	N	%	M	SD
	Strongly agree	16	29	2.14	1.00
	Agree	24	43		
	Disagree	8	14		
	Strongly disagree	8	16		
Total	56	100			
Statement 4. The level of the presentations was appropriate.	Answer	N	%	M	SD
	Strongly agree	6	11	2.47	0.90
	Agree	26	47		
	Disagree	14	25		
	Strongly disagree	9	16		
Total	55	100			
Statement 5. The venue for the presentation was appropriate.	Answer	N	%	M	SD
	Strongly agree	12	21	2.09	0.82
	Agree	31	55		
	Disagree	9	16		
	Strongly disagree	4	7		
Total	56	100			
Statement 6. The trainer's rapport with teachers was...	Answer	N	%	M	SD
	Very good	22	40	1.80	0.76
	Good	22	40		
	Fair	11	20		
	Poor	0	0		
Total	55	100			
Statement 7. What is your preferred duration for a similar programme in the future?	Answer	N	%	M	SD
	1 Week	20	45	1.84	1.01
	2 Weeks	17	39		
	3 Weeks	1	2		
	4 Weeks	6	14		
Total	44	100			
Statement 8. How would you rate the demo lessons?	Answer	N	%	M	SD
	Very useful	1	2	3.26	0.80
	Useful	8	16		
Somewhat useful	18	36			

	Not useful	23	46		
	Total	50	100		

Statement 9.	Answer	N	%	M	SD
How would you rate the information you received regarding the trainer's background, qualifications, and expertise?	More than sufficient	4	7	2.61	0.86
	Sufficient	22	41		
	Insufficient	19	35		
	Very insufficient	9	17		
	Total	54	100		

Statement 10.	Answer	N	%	M	SD
How would you rate the information you received regarding the scheduled events during the programme?	More than sufficient	10	18	2.25	0.94
	Sufficient	31	55		
	Insufficient	6	11		
	Very insufficient	9	16		
	Total	56	100		

Statements 1 and 2 in Table 7.3 show that 46% of the respondents did not learn something that they could use in their teaching, and 36% did not think that the training was conducted well. After four weeks of training workshops, approximately half of the teachers reported that they did not come away with useful ideas that they could use in their teaching. Statements 3 and 4 show that although 72% respondents thought that the trainer had a good understanding of the topics, 41% considered that the level of the presentations was inappropriate. This indicates that knowledge is only one part of trainer competency; it must be coupled with good delivery skills to achieve a successful training.

Statement 5 shows that participants were satisfied with the venue (76%). This is a good indicator that the decision to move the training to better venue was appreciated. Statement 6 also shows positive feedback on the relationship with the trainer; 80% thought that the trainer's rapport with teachers was either 'very good' or 'good'.

In statement 7, most teachers were not in favour of the one-month length of the programme, and preferred a shorter period, that is, one or two weeks (84%). This cycle had 28 different events. Although these sessions were optional, many teachers were keen to attend all the sessions, which might have caused fatigue.

Most teachers were not impressed by the trainer's demo lessons as seen in statement 8. Nearly half of the respondents (46%) thought the demo lessons were not useful. The demo lessons were an attempt to satisfy a request by teachers in the needs analysis stage and cycle one, for practical teaching models to address the gap

between theory and practice in education, which is a theme reported in other studies (Broekkamp & van Hout-Wolters, 2007; Gardner & Miller, 1999; Vanderlinde & van Braak, 2010). Demo lessons with students are not usually a common component of INSET programmes, because of the risk that these lessons might not be successful. Failing to show the teachers successful examples of the training input would risk teachers' buy-in. Nevertheless, I decided to include demo lessons; this was supported by teacher's recommendations in the needs analysis stage. In addition, I believed that if trainers fail to provide a good model of teaching, this might strengthen teachers' confidence in their own skills. Several teachers commented after going to a number of the demo lessons that they were pleased to know they could teach better than the trainer could.

Statements 9 and 10 show an information management issue. Several teachers indicated that they did not obtain enough information on the programme. More than half of the respondents (52%) reported that the information they received on the trainer was either 'insufficient' or 'very insufficient', whereas 73% said they received sufficient information on the scheduled events. Information management is among the success factors. Information on the programme's structure, time, content, trainer and goals must be shared with potential participants well before the start of the programme.

7.4.2 Answers to the survey's final open-ended question

Comments by those who answered the final open-ended question suggested serious issues with the trainer role. For example, participants demanded that trainers with a stronger background in teaching English as a foreign language must be recruited:

All style and no content. [trainer's name omitted] is a skilled public speaker, but it was clear that she had no background in teaching English as a foreign /second language.

Several comments indicated a sense of dissatisfaction with the demo lessons, which the trainer delivered. The example below shows that the participants believed that the demo lessons did not demonstrate an understanding of learner-centred teaching methodologies:

[trainer's name omitted] teaching methods are outdated and her lesson did not meet the needs of our students or the teachers who observed her. True, she is a very kind person and I actually spent a good amount of time with her outside the observations/demo lessons, but that does not mean she is qualified to be a model teacher.

Moreover, teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the information provided to them with regard to the content of the sessions. For instance, one teacher noted that the titles of the training workshops were unclear and that no description of the content of these sessions was provided. Thus, it was difficult for teachers to gauge the relevance of these sessions to their own teaching:

[T]he workshop titles were not clear and no explanation of content was supplied. Although some of the fun activities which were introduced were useful, I felt there was no explanation of the 'usefulness' to our students or for us.

The results indicated that to gain reliable feedback from the participants, it is essential to provide them with as much background information as possible. The concept of insufficient information surfaced in the second cycle, and the participants drew my attention to the inadequate details that they had received regarding timings, venues, and trainer profile. This was considered a drawback for the training. In the third cycle, this was addressed through providing participants with the training syllabus, schedule and updates.

Transferability is among the key features that teachers look for in INSET, as seen in the needs analysis findings. Unfortunately, this was not well-exhibited in the training events in this cycle:

[T]eachers participated in a series of activities, with no attempt to practically link them to our classrooms. In addition, the demonstration lessons were demonstrations of bad practice, as one of the trainers lectured...for most of the lesson.

Further reservations were expressed regarding the degree that many of the trainer's suggestions, training workshops, and demo lessons were relevant to the different contexts that participants have in their classrooms. Comments in this area pointed out that many of the training sessions appeared more suitable for smart students and

that there was limited effort from the trainer to relate the content of many of the sessions to the teachers' classrooms. The feedback below shows dissatisfaction:

The demo lessons delivered by the trainer were disastrous. For one thing, lessons were 100% teacher-centred. Another thing, {Trainer} didn't relate chosen topics and material to our students. In addition, she [neither] modelled any of the exercises she administered nor check[ed] to see if the students had understood what they had been asked to do. The students seemed completely lost. She asked and answered the questions herself and sometimes spoon-fed the answers to the students, and then she would utter rehearsed and seemingly insincere remarks about how smart she thought they were and how proud of them she was. What is more, she mostly addressed the higher-level students in the group and ignored the rest, who were the majority.

Although the whole training was supposed to use smart technologies to support the workshops on reading, the trainer failed to incorporate technology. Another comment stated, 'finally, she did not integrate any smart classroom features into her lesson'. This is a key point to be addressed in the third cycle.

However, several teachers indicated that they were already familiar with the training topics. One teacher noted, 'much of this feedback [by the trainer] could be classified as information that we were already aware of, but it is always nice to have this impression confirmed by someone else'.

In the digital world, technology has become an essential element of INSET (Li & Hart, 2000). It is often used to support the delivery of INSET programmes. As noted by Jung (2005), it can provide more flexible and effective ways for teacher education, and connect teacher to the global teacher community. It also saves time by administering a variety of learning materials, discussion questions, and tests online. It is reasonable to assume that the methods teachers themselves find most beneficial during their training will inform their own further learning and, indirectly, their teaching approaches. However, for ICT INSET to succeed, it is important to seek teachers' feedback on the design and implementation (Krish and Zabidi, 2007). Another factor is the technical skills of the trainers of ICT programmes that were reported to be as important to the success of ICT

implementation as those of teachers (Cañado, 2009). Trainers' limited awareness of the potential of ICT and their poor technical skills can impede INSET. Technical skills alone are insufficient; teachers must know why technology is important, and exactly how it can enhance their own and their students' learning. If teacher training can rise to the challenge of answering these questions, then teachers will be able to lead a reform from the inside of schools, rather than only follow directives from policymakers.

Despite the general negative feedback, teachers indicated that the trainer had given them some useful suggestions and observations related to teaching materials. Feedback from the teachers highlighted that the trainers made several interesting observations related to the content of their textbooks and the local teaching context. These observations included the fact that there appear to be large gaps between the level of their teaching materials and their students' needs.

The programme was indeed a contribution to our professional development, and we were engaged in multiple forms of activities such as workshops, PD (professional development) sessions, and teaching demo. I have found some of the sessions useful, [whereas] some were geared more towards theoretical ideas. The input the trainers have delivered has helped many teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice, and I think some of the teaching tips and activities can be taken into our classrooms. The session on using newspapers in language teaching, for example, seemed interesting, and I would try it in my class. However, the programme was a bit long, and it came at a time when teachers [had been] busy with teaching and assessment.

The excerpt above further confirms that trainers must make the link between INSET and practice as visible as possible. It also indicates the importance of taking into consideration other environmental and social factors, such as calendar events in schools, in facilitating a successful INSET.

Finally, teachers were generally satisfied with the trainer's demeanour, personality, and presentation skills. Teachers also appreciated that the trainers agreed with many of their concerns regarding the lack of enough support for teachers, and the need to

work more closely with fellow practitioners from other schools to better meet our educational objectives.

Although the feedback was negative, it did help bring into focus several insights for the third cycle. It confirmed that the trainer role is a critical success factor and highlighted certain trainer merits that teachers expect in an effective trainer, such as empathy and cultural sensitivity. The feedback also brought into focus the value of teacher voice in the design of INSET and the significance of hiring trainers who are good teachers. Finally, content relatedness to teachers' needs was what kept teachers engaged.

7.5 Conclusions and insights for the third cycle

The second cycle revealed serious concerns by the participants. Several teachers were not satisfied with the information given prior to the training. Others reported a mismatch between the input presented in the training sessions and the teacher-centred demonstration lessons delivered by the trainer in the second cycle. The transferability of the training contents was also questioned. For example, the reading activities given by the trainer were more suitable for kindergarten and primary school students while the participants were mostly from secondary and tertiary institutions. Most of the negative feedback was related to the co-trainer's skills. Although efforts were taken to pre-emptively address potential problems, e.g. by moving the venue and introducing demo lessons as a practical illustration (see Figure 7.2), the role of the trainer was inadequate and there was a risk to undermine the whole programme. The teachers perceived the first cycle as successful despite problems with the venue and logistics, and the second cycle as unsuccessful because of trainer issues. In the third cycle, these issues in the design, trainer role and delivery of the training programme were addressed, and the success factors were incorporated.



Figure 7.2: Demo lesson

In short, chapter 7 shared the findings of a cycle, which did not go as expected because of the trainer role. The next chapter discusses the findings from the third cycle, which aimed at addressing the issues faced in the first and second cycles through an enhanced design of INSET.

Chapter Eight: Cycle Three

This section reports on the third AR cycle. It presents the structure of the cycle, its delivery and results. This cycle was given more space in implementation and discussion because it, as the last cycle, was informed by outcomes of the whole study.

8.1 Introduction

In the previous sections, the first and second cycles have been discussed. Feedback in the first cycle was positive, particularly regarding the trainer. Journal entries and session evaluations were reassuring that the trainer was successful. This trend in the results was of concern because I wanted to make sure that trainee participants were telling the truth. My impression was based on my knowledge of the local culture, and my informal communications with the trainees. As illustrated in 5.3 above, another trainer gave most of the workshops in the second cycle. Trainee feedback in this cycle revealed dissatisfaction with the training. In consultation with my supervisor and in view of the circumstances, it was not recommended to stop the training or change the trainer midway. In this cycle, I decided to take the lead again and be the sole trainer.

The decision to deliver the training on my own is based on anecdotal and research data. One of the insights gained from the previous survey, which I carried out in the needs analysis stage and has been reported in chapter 3, is the pivotal role of the trainer as a success factor for training (see also Gauld & Miller, 2004). According to Murray, this role has often been overlooked in teacher education literature in favour of other themes, such as programme structure, expectations, and curriculum (as cited in Lunnanberg et al., 2014). There are several factors that might have contributed to the current teacher educator's 'marginal status', as observed by Loughran (2013, p. 10). Lunnanberg et al. (2014) mainly pertain this to a common misconception that teacher educators' role is simple and straightforward:

the work of teacher educators has been superficially perceived as relatively straight forward and easy to understand. As a consequence, the purpose of

teacher education, the sophisticated knowledge, skills and ability necessary to do that work well, are either overlooked or, sadly, ignored. (p. vii)

Despite being overlooked in research, the significance of teacher educators is enmeshed in the important role they play in education systems around the world. Such roles are multifaceted, and they are among the main dimensions apt to determine the impact on student teachers. Lunnanberg et al. (2014) referred to a ‘general consensus that, to a large degree, teacher educators determine the quality of teachers’ (p. 1). For Loughran (2013), the role teacher educators play ‘determines the impact on candidates’ (p. 10). Ben-Peretz et al. (2013) echoed Loughran’s conclusions and noted that the ‘single most important factor’ (p. 1) in improving education is linked to teacher education. They clarified that teacher educators function as role models who must be familiar with teaching strategies suitable for adult and young learners.

In addition to the decision to return to delivering this cycle’s training programme in light of the arguments discussed above, this cycle has another major change demonstrated in the use of blended learning through an online forum for participants. As the programme has one session every week, the forum was designed to foster communication between sessions. Blended learning is being increasingly used as a learning model in the educational institutions (Tinio, 2010; Yucel, 2006). Table 8.1 below shows which changes were implemented in cycle three to reflect the outcomes of cycle two.

Table 8.1: Overview of emerging insights from cycle two that informed subsequent cycle three

Cycle two		Cycle three
Participants showed a negative attitude towards the external trainer	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I decided to train on my own in cycle three
Participants indicate training was not practical and was not conducted well	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More interactive techniques were introduced ▪ All sessions started with ice-breakers. ▪ Most of my sessions included games and competitions. ▪ More than 20 books were distributed as gifts to winners of competitions in my sessions. ▪ Teachers were asked to share their strategies both online and during sessions.
Feedback valued reflection opportunities	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More opportunities for reflection were offered ▪ The reflective assignment was revived

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication between sessions was encouraged to share experiences and reflect on implementation ▪ Goodbye letters technique was used at the beginning the cycle.
Most teachers were not in favour of the one-month length of the programme, and preferred a shorter period.	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The new design offered three sessions only with multiple activities in between
Most teachers were not impressed by the trainer’s demo lessons as seen in statement	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A more interactive demo lesson was offered
Several teachers indicated that they did not obtain enough information on the programme	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The design of cycle three was shared with participants in a focus group prior to the programme and was modified based on their feedback ▪ An online forum was created to facilitate dissemination of information ▪ Training goals, objectives and agendas were shared and discussed with trainees throughout the cycle.
Transferability is among the key features that teachers look for in INSET	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflection on implementation was conducted at the beginning of each session. ▪ A follow-up component was introduced
Feedback reported that cycle two did not integrate any smart classroom features	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An online forum was introduced ▪ A session on ICT tools for reading teachers was introduced
Participants praised certain trainer qualities	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As a trainer, I observed these merits in my practices

8.2 Structure of the cycle three

The design of the third cycle is based on the outcomes and lessons learned in the previous two cycles, as seen earlier in Table 8.1. Having focused on how to improve training delivery and trainer qualities in the first and second cycles, consecutively, the third cycle must incorporate all of these themes together with a clear focus on the trainer’s role as seen in Table 5.7 below.

Table 8.2: Overview of the third cycle

Objectives/questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What role must I as a teacher educator perform? - What trainer features would trainees associate with training success? - How can I help trainees network with each other and share best practices? - What difference would the online forum bring to the training? - What reflective feedback from trainees can I get about strengths and weakness of the training? - Would the changes recommended after the second cycle better align the training to trainee needs?
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Plan	<p>A) Need to identify trainees' expectations of the current training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two focus groups at the beginning of the training. - Design check by a critical friend. - Participants conduct a writing activity at the beginning of the training about their expectations (postie-postie or goodbye letters). <p>B) If necessary, modify topics and techniques accordingly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One session was added after the focus groups on reading assessment. - The ICT session was distributed over two sessions. - One demo lesson was added to provide an example. <p>C) Using blended learning as a training method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A forum designed to allow trainees to communicate and share best practices between sessions and after training. <p>D) Encourage networking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide interaction opportunities to participants who come from different schools and from the Foundation Program at Qatar University. - Personal emails were collected and shared among trainees, and teachers were encouraged to communicate with each other.
Act	<p>Deliver the training and pay attention to the following outcomes of the needs analysis stage during delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs analysis findings on trainer appreciated merits (e.g. active, collaborative, engaging, fair and democratic and recognises the value of trainees' experience). - Needs analysis findings on preferred training methods (e.g. demonstrations, discussions, games, simulations, etc.). - Needs analysis findings on success factors (e.g. suitable time, trainer-centred, good assessment, small numbers, etc.). - Needs analysis findings on preferred topics (reading was most preferred).
Observe/Evaluate	<p>Ongoing assessment and reflection was achieved through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus groups at the beginning of the training programme. - Session evaluation forms at the end of each session. - Exit slips at the end of each session. - Informal interviews with participants after each session. - Discussion of findings with supervisor, colleagues, and friends - Keeping a research reflective diary. - Reflective assignment by participants at the end of the training programme. - Interview with some of the participants after the completion of the cycle.
Reflect	<p>Reflect and discuss recommendations for possible future training</p>

In the 'Act' stage of this cycle, a training programme was designed and delivered to teachers. The design of this programme was informed by the following:

- Outcomes emerged from first and second AR cycles
- Insights obtained from the needs analysis stage which are reported in chapter 6
- Results of the two focus groups which were held prior to the delivery of the training programme (e.g. extra session on reading assessment)

For an overview of the design of third cycle training programme, see Appendix 6. As shown in the design, the focus of this cycle was the role of the trainer in an interventional training programme on reading that promotes reflection and incorporates blended learning.

8.2.1 Online forum

The design of the third cycle training programme features an interactive online forum where programme participants can register for free and post their thoughts on topics relevant to teaching reading. Initially the following tools were piloted (muut.com, nabble.com, proboards.com, quicktopic.com, lefora.com, phpbb.com, zetaboards.com, freeforums.net). Freeforums.net was found to be more user-friendly than the other websites, as it does not require pre-registration and allows non-members to comment on threads. Participants were provided with a handout on how to use the forum and the registration steps. The screenshots below show the main features of the forum:

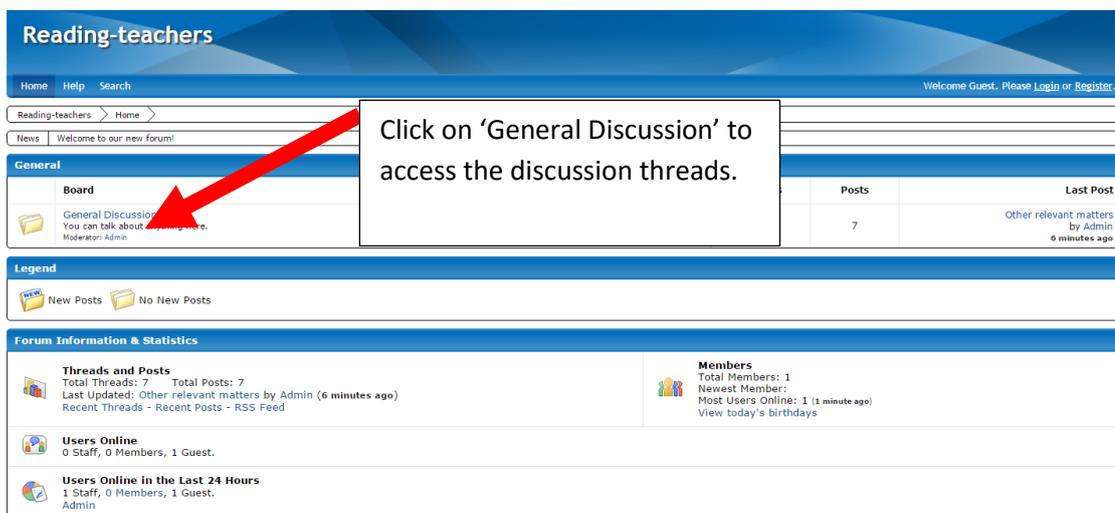


Figure 8.1: Homepage of the online forum

When participants click on 'General Discussion' (as indicated by the red arrow in Figure 8.1), the forum will open-up into a new page (Figure 8.2) that features discussion 'threads' on themes, such as best practices in teaching reading, participants' thoughts on reading, and any questions that pertain to reading.

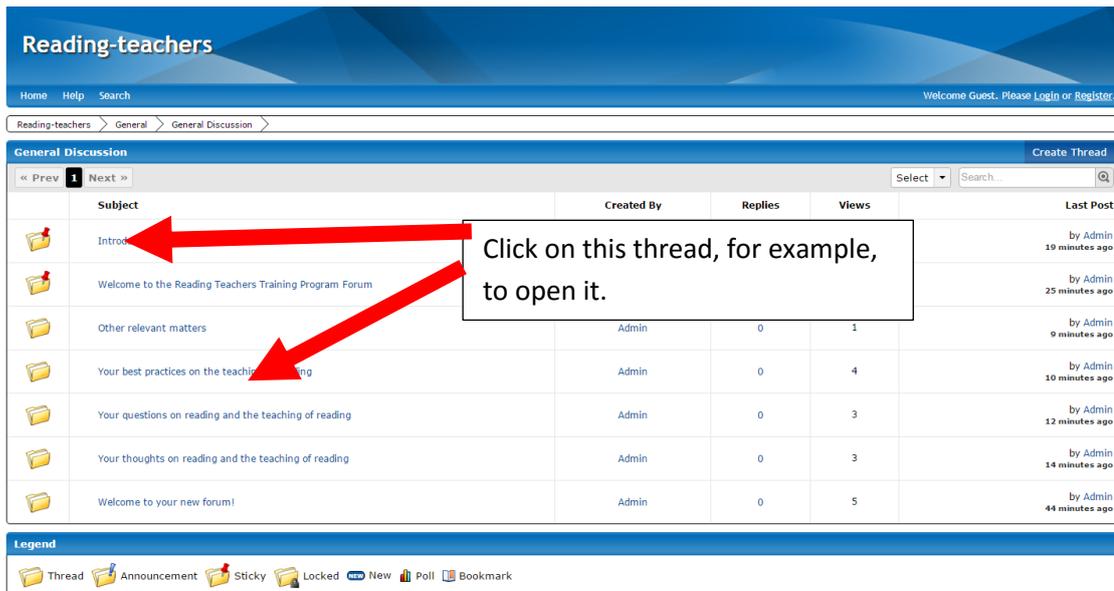


Figure 8.2: Discussion threads inside the ‘General Discussion’ tab

Once the participant has accessed the discussion threads in the General Discussion tab, they can click on any of the discussion threads (e.g. Introduce Yourself); doing this will open the thread, which will appear as Figure 8.3.

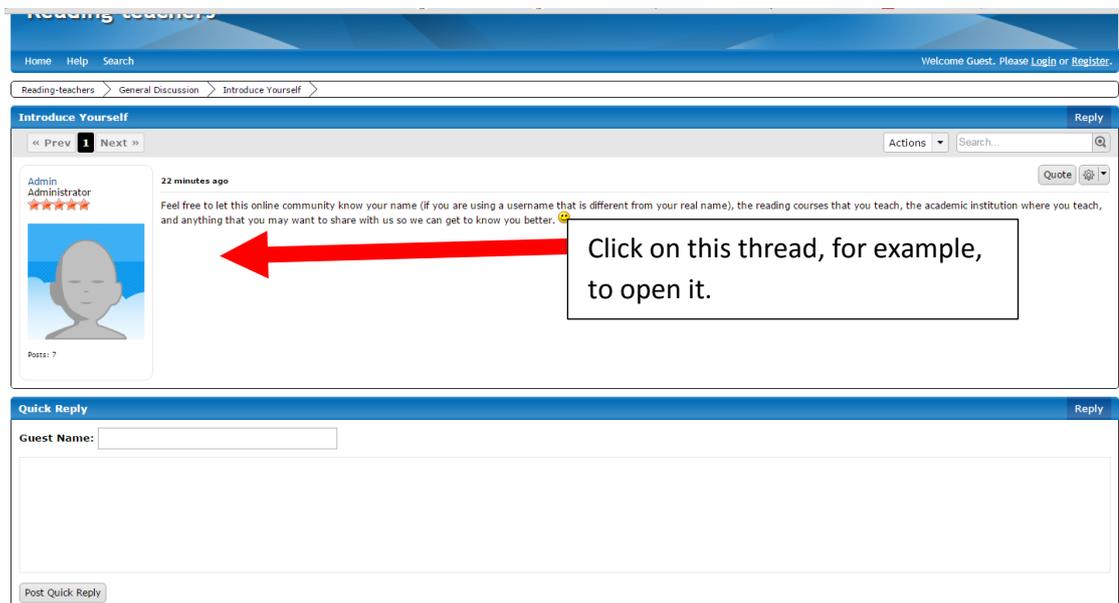


Figure 8.3: An example of a discussion thread

If the participants would like to share any thoughts relevant to the theme of the discussion thread, (e.g. Introduce Yourself), they can simply write their texts in the Quick Reply text box, and then click on ‘Post Quick Reply’ to post them.

Alternatively, participants can click on the 'Reply' button, which is located on the upper-right hand corner of the Quick Reply box. See Figure 8.4 for screenshot.

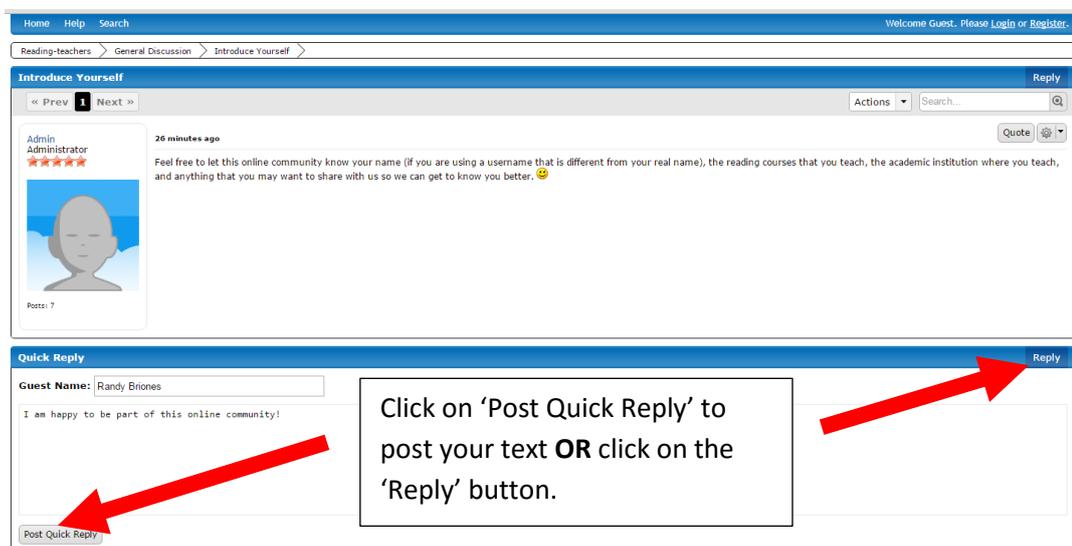


Figure 8.4: Replying to a thread

Several discussion threads were created on best practices in the teaching of reading, teachers' thoughts on reading, teachers' questions about the teaching of reading and the reading process, and other matters relevant to reading. In addition to the forum, participants created a common WhatsApp group on their own. They also used Facebook to communicate and share ideas.

8.3 Participants in the third cycle

The trainee cohort of the third cycle consisted of 27 teachers, 15 female and 12 male. The participants were from several nationalities: 8 native speakers and 19 non-native speakers. They were from Europe, Asia, and Africa. The third cycle participants were mainly teachers from the Foundation Programme at Qatar University, schools, and the one from the British Council. As a trainer, I train ELT teachers from different institutions in Qatar. The Foundation Programme is an academic bridge programme that prepares high school students for their university degrees. When students usually finish high school, they spend one year in the Foundation Programme before they join their colleges. The training was an opportunity for participants to share their experiences, and network between schools and the Foundation Programme.

8.4 Cycle three results

The third and last cycle lasted for one month and included three workshops, a demo lesson and an online forum to facilitate communication between the workshops. Prior to the workshops, two focus groups were conducted. In addition, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire after each workshop. Data from the focus groups were analysed thematically, whereas the responses to the workshop questionnaires were analysed statistically. The use of means and standard deviations was considered sufficient for participants' feedback on workshops. The narrative account of the third and last cycle is given more space than the previous two cycles. This is because the last cycle involved more actions to address the issues which emerged in the first and second cycles.

8.4.1 Focus groups design

This cycle involved two focus groups at the beginning of the cycle. The main purpose of the focus groups was to obtain specific feedback on the proposed design. The first focus group was held on Thursday, 31 March 2016, with eight Foundation Program teachers; the second one was held on Thursday, 7 April, with seven schoolteachers. At the focus groups, I shared the design of the training programme with the participants (see Appendix 6), and they were asked to answer several questions to obtain their feedback on the design and their expectations. I served as the moderator. The questions below guided the focus groups:

- Would you be interested in attending a training programme on reading and why?
- How would you imagine an ideal reading training program?
- How effective do you think the current four-week design?
- How can this design be improved?
- What other methods would you suggest to promote networking and experience sharing?

8.4.2 Focus groups results

Discussing the design with expected participants was informative. Most focus group participants expressed interest in attending a training on teaching reading. They

deemed this as an important pedagogical area to be explored. Participants mentioned several reasons to attend the training. One of the focus group participants expressed expectations to learn new teaching strategies:

I am interested in a reading training because I want to learn a lot about different types of reading strategies, to convey them to my staff [who can also] benefit from [such training] and use them inside their classrooms [to] make their lessons interesting and engaging. Moreover, [a] strategy instruction is particularly needed and effective for those students who are struggling most, namely, those with less domain knowledge or lower reading skills.

The discussion revealed that the interest in attending such a training programme on reading stems from the challenges associated with teaching reading in Qatar, as noted by the participants. One of the participants commented:

I am really interested in training on reading, as engaging students in reading activities is a challenge that needs a wide record of strategies. Besides, literacy is an issue in Qatari schools; so, further training might contribute to solving it.

The excerpt below is more direct, and expresses a common challenge in the way reading is being taught at the moment in the teacher's context:

Students have problems...reading. They tend to just 'hunt and pick' for the answer rather than process what they read. How can we move them away from JUST SCANNING to actually reading when an important strategy that we teach is skimming and scanning?

Other students' challenges were revealed during the focus groups. One commented that the students lack the skills of 'how to effectively use annotation, [that is], write in the margin for each paragraph'. Another piece of advice was to 'ask [their] students what they want and what their problems are in reading to identify their challenges and concerns accurately'. Teachers discussed possible roots for reading issues. One possibility is their 'students' educational background within this culture', as noted by one teacher.

Regarding teachers' view of an ideal training programme on reading, they would hope to have 'something different'. They would also expect a 'competent delivery'

to characterise a good programme. Questioning techniques and student-centred reading were among the possible topics to be explored. Techniques, such as Jigsaw reading and reading circles, were also recommended. Participants also emphasised the role of a professional network in INSET where teachers could share what they do throughout the semester. The participants noted that they already have swap shops in their institutions.

At this stage, the third cycle design was based on AR cycles 1 and 2. However, it was passed around for suggestions for improvement. In general, the design was well-received by the participants. The topics were complimented as relevant to the teachers' needs and within their expectations:

The workshop topics are engaging because we will be trained on using reading strategies and a variety of ICT tools to support teaching reading; this makes training enjoyable and beneficial, as using ICT breaks out the boredom of any workshops...it is better for the lecturer to give a lesson at one school and invite teachers [for a] practical training; this is the best type of training.

The participants provided informative comments and suggestions. Several participants proposed adding a session on reading assessment that would demonstrate certain tools on how to assess for comprehension and leaning. This was considered, and the session was added. The distribution of ICT tools for reading session over two weeks and combining it with the other sessions were also suggested. Teachers hoped to acquire ideas on how to start with their students at the word, sentence, and paragraph level because greater student understanding of sentences would prove beneficial. The online component of the training was found agreeable by the participants. Educause.org, which is an American INSET platform, was suggested by one of the participants as a good source of information on online training. Another suggestion was to deal 'with the explicit teaching of reading strategies'. Other participants suggested using flip lessons by giving them materials to study before the sessions. Finally, participants found the proposed assessment of the training through exit notes, surveys, and lesson observations to be reasonable and reflective. The importance of linking the training to the contexts of the participants is evident in the following comment:

The topics are very engaging, as they are very practical and they deal with teaching reading in the Qatari context, which again gives it a local touch. The demo lessons will be very useful and the follow up of training impact in classes is a cornerstone in measuring the training feasibility and relatedness to teachers' needs.

The theme in the quote above emphasises the significance of 'usable knowledge' in INSET as far as reflective practice is concerned. Johnson (2009) clarified the role of usable knowledge: 'More importantly, usable knowledge in teaching requires knowledge about oneself as a teacher, about the content to be taught, about students, about classroom life, and about the contexts within which teachers carry out their work' (p. 10).

Focus group participants exchanged contact details. The email below from one of the participants to other participants was an example of sharing resources. It also shows a positive sense of engagement in the training.

Dear Colleagues,

Further to our meeting, please find attached the short Teaching Reading book (49 pages, but consist of big font and spacing, easy read)...The 'Reading' book focuses on the following...

After the focus groups, the design was slightly modified to reflect the feedback from the focus groups, namely the following changes were introduced:

- New session on how to assess reading was added.
- Two sessions were deemed unnecessary and were dropped.
- Certain workshop times were modified to accommodate schedules.
- Exchange of contact details of participants to foster communication.

As mentioned above, the cycle was delivered over three workshops. The results of these workshops are presented chronologically in the next sections.

8.5 Delivery of the training

The training was delivered over three sessions. The sessions were in a workshop style. Teachers had to conduct several activities and were encouraged to contribute actively to the discussion.

8.5.1 Workshop one

The first workshop discussed the ‘challenges in teaching reading in Qatar’, and was held on Thursday, 21 April, 2016. Participants brainstormed the challenges they face and shared ideas on how to address them. Participants discussed articles about the educational system in Qatar, and the results of Qatar in an international study (PISA). Qatari students performed at a low level on this study, and it was attributed to their poor reading skills. The session was delivered by me and I used several interactive activities and games during the session. Finally, I presented the online forum and showed the participants how to post threads and share ideas on teaching reading. The photos below were taken, with permission, during the session:



Figure 8.5: Brainstorming activity to identify challenges in teaching reading in the local context

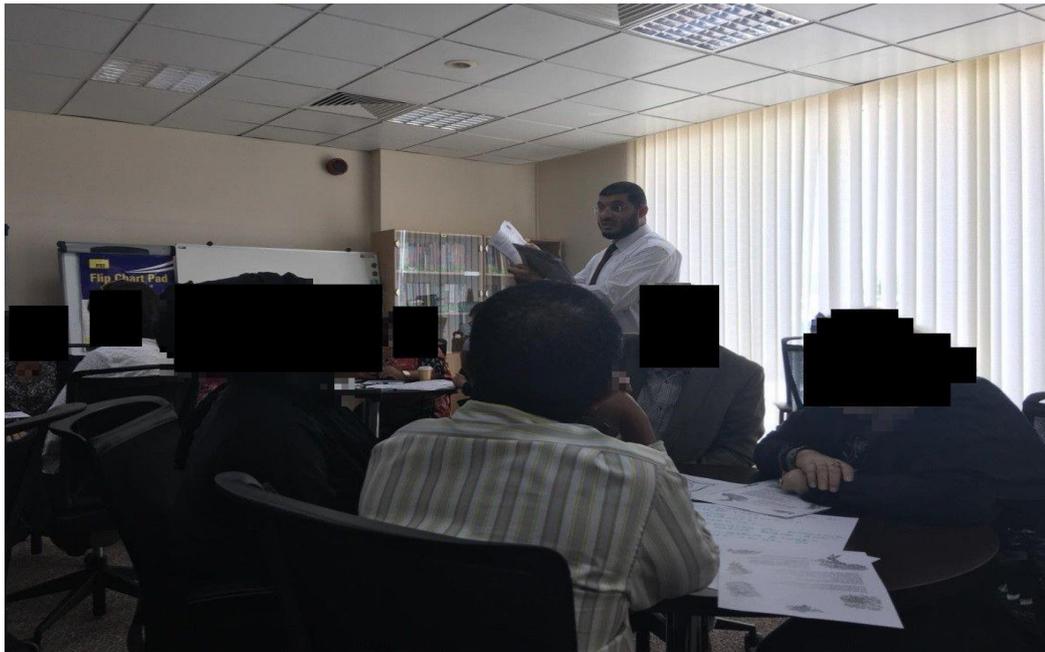


Figure 8.6: Discussing Qatari students' results in international reading assessments

8.5.1.1 Workshop one results

The workshop was evaluated through an evaluation form, which contained an exit ticket for participants to write their comments on the day's session. Data from the evaluation forms show positive feedback. Table 6.18 summarises the participants' feedback on the first session from the evaluation forms.

Table 8.3: Summary of session one evaluation

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N	M	SD
Objectives and purpose were communicated clearly.	22 (91.6%)	2 (8.3%)	0	0	24	3.91	0.27
Presenter showed a good understanding of the topic.	23 (95.8%)	1 (4.17%)	0	0	24	3.95	0.19
Workshop was done in a way that engaged the audience.	23 (95.8%)	1 (4.17%)	0	0	24	3.95	0.19
Trainer responded effectively to questions and comments.	23 (95.8%)	1 (4.17%)	0	0	24	3.95	0.19

I have gained teaching skills and knowledge from this presentation/ training session.	18 (75%)	5 (20.8%)	1 (4.17%)	0	24	3.70	0.53
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Table 8.3 shows the responses of the 24 participants to the evaluation statements using a four-point Likert scale. According to the analysis, more than 95% of the participants strongly agreed that the presenter displayed a good understanding of the topic presented; the workshop was engaging for the audience; and the trainer was effective in responding to the questions and comments from the audience ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.19$). The results also showed that more than 90% of the respondents strongly agreed that the objectives and purpose of the session were clearly communicated to the audience ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.27$); 75% of the participants strongly agreed, 20% agreed, and only 1 disagreed that they have gained teaching skills and knowledge from the session presented ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.53$).

Evaluation of the participants' exit ticket comments revealed that the session was 'very informative', 'full of fun', 'interesting', and it addressed the 'challenges' in the reading classrooms. Several respondents mentioned that they were 'looking forward to the next session'.

Thus, the analysis of the overall data indicates that the presentation was successful in terms of setting up objectives, engaging the audience, and training people on a topic, that is, reading in language teaching.

8.5.2 Workshop two

Workshop two was about 'interactive techniques and ICT tools to teach reading', and was held on Tuesday, 26 April, 2016. It was moved two days earlier as I had to travel to Japan at the following weekend to present at a conference about my PhD study. It started with the participants' feedback on the previous workshop. Participants were asked to discuss their experiences in groups, and one member must report to the other groups. Several participants reported positive outcomes after trying some of last workshop's ideas in their classes. Other participants said that they did not have the opportunity to practice the ideas with their students. After that, several pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading techniques were presented, including jigsaw reading, paired reading, charade, and graphic

organisers. Participants had to work in groups and share ideas with other participants. As an assisting tool, ICT was of significant value throughout the study and served several purposes. In the initial stage, online survey was used to collect data, and a website was used to facilitate communication. In the implementation stage, PowerPoint and smart screens were also used to present the contents of the different sessions and to facilitate INSET follow-up through email.



Figure 8.7: Paired-reading activity

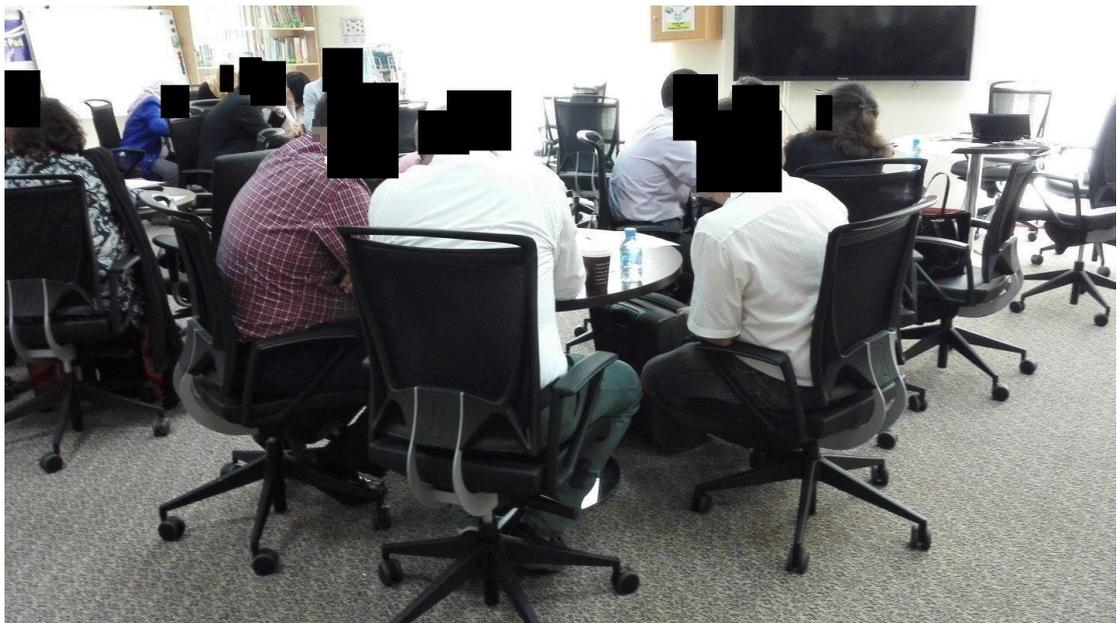


Figure 8.8: Jigsaw reading activity

8.5.2.1 Workshop two results

The session was evaluated by the same evaluation form used in session one (see appendix 8A), which contained an exit ticket tool. Table 8.19 below summarises the evaluation forms' results.

Table 8.4: Summary of session two evaluation

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N	M	SD
Objectives and purpose were communicated clearly.	16 (94.1%)	1 (5.8%)	0	0	17	3.94	0.23
Presenter showed a good understanding of the topic.	16 (94.1%)	1 (5.8%)	0	0	17	3.94	0.23
Workshop was done in a way that engaged the audience.	16 (94.1%)	1 (5.8%)	0	0	17	3.94	0.23
Trainer responded effectively to questions and comments.	16 (94.1%)	1 (5.8%)	0	0	17	3.94	0.23
I have gained teaching skills and knowledge from this presentation/ training session.	16 (94.1%)	1 (5.8%)	0	0	17	3.94	0.23

Table 8.4 illustrates the responses of the 17 participants to the evaluation statements using a four-point Likert scale. The analysis of the overall results shows that around 95% of the participants strongly agreed that the objectives and the purposes of the session were clearly communicated to the audience; the presenter displayed a good understanding of the topic presented; the workshop was engaging for the audience; the trainer was effective in responding to the questions and comments from the audience; and they gained teaching skills ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.23$).

The comments in the exit ticket section of the workshop evaluation forms were in general positive. One participant mentioned that 'teaching skills are gained through teaching not attending PD (professional development) skills', and found the last statement on the evaluation form to be questionable (i.e. I have gained teaching skills and knowledge from this presentation/ training session). Another respondent

wanted the professional development session to be more ‘aimed at [their] teaching situation’:

Great! Learned a lot. Perhaps a bit more aimed at our teaching situation.

Teaching reading to students who are late, without materials, repeaters, etc.

Students with very low levels of motivation

Comments by other participants were all positive, stating that the session was informative, fun, and useful.

To conclude, the second workshop was successful as evident in the questionnaire responses. The feedback on ‘actions’ taken in classrooms after the last session was encouraging. However, the participants did not use the online forum effectively despite using other tools among themselves to network and share resources (e.g. email and WhatsApp). Reasons for low motivation to use forums could be among the topics to be highlighted in the final discussion.

8.5.3 Workshop three

Workshop three was delivered on Thursday, 5 May, 2016; it concerned ‘assessing reading in the language classroom and further ICT tools to teach reading’. This is the last workshop in the series. The topic of this workshop was based on a recommendation by some of the participants of the focus groups. Tools and ideas to assess the reading skill in the classroom were discussed along with samples. Most of these tools were in alternative assessment activities that would promote assessment for learning. An example was a class competition in which different groups of students write questions regarding a reading text for the other groups in class. Another activity involved asking the participants to read instructions on building a free-standing paper tower and giving them five minutes to build the tower in groups, thus, using application to evaluate their comprehension.

Participants were also given a text with a scenario of a plane crash, and they were asked to classify 10 items in order of their importance for survival in a desert. In this case, the reading comprehension is assessed through students’ ability to solve a problem and think critically. In addition to that, several ICT tools to assess reading were discussed. One example was using a jeopardy online game template. Teachers

may prepare questions about the reading text with point weightings. Students can choose and answer the questions in teams and win points for each question. Other tools were kahoot.it and socrative.com, which are interactive mobile learning tools. They come with a teacher and student versions. Teachers create a classroom code and share it with the whole class; within seconds, the whole class will be online doing pre-designed comprehension and vocabulary activities.



Figure 8.9: Tallest free-standing paper tower activity (assessment of reading through application)



Figure 8.10: Tallest free-standing paper tower activity (assessment of reading through application)

The third cycle was probably the most successful cycle. It was an improved INSET experience. In this cycle, I tried to incorporate all the lessons I earned in the previous two cycles. The Demo lesson was the last activity in the third cycle.

8.5.3.1 Workshop three results

Finally, the workshop was evaluated by the same evaluation form used in the previous two cycles, in addition to informal interviews after the session.

Table 8.5: Summary of workshop three evaluation

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N	M	SD
Objectives and purpose were communicated clearly.	12 (85.7%)	2 (14.3%)	0	0	14	3.85	0.36
Presenter showed a good understanding of the topic.	14 (100%)	0	0	0	14	4	0
Workshop was done in a way that engaged the audience.	14 (100%)	0	0	0	14	4	0
Trainer responded effectively to questions and comments.	14 (100%)	0	0	0	14	4	0
I have gained teaching skills and knowledge from this presentation/ training session.	13 (92.8%)	0	1 (7.2%)	0	14	3.85	0.53

Table 8.5 illustrates the responses of 14 participants to the evaluation statements using a four-point Likert scale. The analysis of the overall results shows that all of the participants strongly agreed that the presenter displayed a good understanding of the topic presented; the workshop was engaging for the audience; and the trainer was effective in responding to the questions and comments from the audience. More than 85% of the participants also strongly agreed that the objectives of the session were clear and helped them gain teaching skills and knowledge from the presentation. In the exit tickets, one participant mentioned that the presentation helped them ‘build community relationships, group work, and competition among the colleagues’. Another teacher noted that the session enabled them to consider ‘adding [a] variety and [an] instruction pattern’ to their teaching.

To sum up, the third and last workshop, which was about assessment, was a bit challenging to prepare because assessment is not usually an engaging topic for teachers. However, the feedback from the participants shows high levels of satisfaction with the content and delivery of the workshop. I also conducted informal interviews with two of the participants after the workshop. Both interviewees were contented with the workshop outcomes and appreciative of the delivery style. During this workshop, the participants reported several success stories trying the techniques they learned from workshop two in their classes. As seen in appendix 6, the cycle had a one-week interval between workshops. The purpose of this design was to give teacher participants enough time to implement the workshop content in their classrooms and report back on their experiences at the start of the proceeding workshops. Their anecdotal accounts included examples of how they used these techniques and in particular their impact on student engagement. Lastly, the demo lesson concluded the delivery of this third cycle.

8.5.4 Demo lesson

The demo lesson was a follow-up on the three training workshops. The purpose of conducting a demo lesson was to show the participants an example of how to implement some of the ideas during the training in a real lesson. The feedback during the needs analysis stage from the survey and focus group participants indicated that trainees appreciate real-life examples that show the implementation of the training input. This was also confirmed during the focus groups at the beginning of this cycle and the idea of practical input was noted in the workshop evaluation forms. One of the respondents mentioned: ‘We need more workshops that provide practical suggestions for teaching reading’.

Transferability was also an emergent theme across the other stages of the study. Survey responses identified it as a prerequisite success factor, and the focus group participants viewed it as an outcome for which they look when they attend INSET. Initially, the participants in the first cycle were suspicious of the transferability of the proposed training. During our informal interaction, they seemed sceptical and argued that it is a rarity in INSET. I respected their views and found them justified by their anecdotal experience with INSET that had limited impact. Bademcioglu et al. (2014) observed that attitude is a behavioural reaction and experiences play a

significant role in organising individuals' attitudes towards INSET. In the second cycle, weak transferability was among the reasons for the negative feedback. Teachers found the sessions demotivating simply because they could not pick up techniques or ideas to take back to their classrooms despite the research background of the trainer. In the third cycle, transferability fared better. The participants reported many stories of how the training impacted on their classroom practices. Their overall satisfaction was evident in the evaluation data. This shows that their INSET experience in this cycle was positive and different from their initial negative expectations.

The lesson is that even though transferability is not an explicit part of INSET and usually achieved in the post training phase, it is an important factor for participants' engagement. INSET is viewed as the result of harnessing formal and informal learning opportunities (Richter et al., 2011). Throughout the study, the design of the AR cycles sought to facilitate transferability vis-à-vis reporting on classroom implementation between the sessions. However, ensuring transferability was not an easy objective to achieve. This is because student profiles vary from one class to another and the participants had different views on what would qualify as being transferable. The fact that transferability takes place outside the training without the trainer's presence increased further the challenge for trainers. Overall, INSET transferability is indeed what keeps the participants rejuvenated and in touch with their classroom world.

The demo lesson was given on Monday, 23 May, 2016, with my 8:00 a.m. foundation females class. Despite giving several demo lessons in the past with school students with whom I was not familiar, this demo lesson was delivered to my own students because most schools were preparing for the final exams. In addition to that, I wanted to eliminate any anxiety on my part. I sent the invitation for the demo lesson to all participants. Unfortunately, only five teachers turned up on the day of the demo lesson. This could be attributed to the early morning time of the lesson and/or because most teachers would be teaching at this time.

I informed the students about the visitors and the lesson went well. The students were engaged. Some of the activities and techniques that were demonstrated during the workshops were delivered. Participants were given evaluation forms to fill in

and were asked to write a short reflective feedback on the session. Most comments were positive, and showed that the lesson achieved its objectives. The respondents appreciated the opportunity to see an example of the training application.

8.5.5 Overall evaluation of the third cycle in the reflection assignment

Part of the assessment of the third cycle was asking the participants to write an optional critical reflection (maximum of 250 words) on the whole cycle and its transferability into their classrooms. Assignment comments by the participants show general satisfaction with the programme and its different components. One of the participants' comments indicate success in creating an impact on teachers' practices in their classrooms:

I distinctly remember the important issue we discussed as a group regarding the need for reading to become a bigger part of the local culture and how reading needs to be encouraged, especially by parents starting to read to their children from the time they are very young. We also shared how very important that reading for pleasure is an integral part of developing one's own culture of reading and the mastery of it (increasing both fluency and accuracy). I was also very impressed by all the many different activities we did as a PD (professional development) group in all three sessions. We use[d] a variety of different reading strategies that I have also used with my students, such as skimming and scanning, reading for main ideas, inferencing, [and] using competition in reading assignments, etc. I also enjoyed when you would line up all of us teachers into two lines and have us compete against each other—highly interactive and fun! All these things made me reflect on my practice, and hopefully I'll be able to continue to apply the many different issues we discussed in my classroom teaching.

The account above was a summary of the whole cycle. The participant's use of the personal pronoun 'we' and the phrase 'as a group' signalled the significance of professional communities in INSET. Participants appreciated sharing best practices and exchanging accounts of classroom impact. It is interesting how the participant linked interactive INSET to reflecting on his practice. In this case, sharing practices could have led some participants to compare these practices and reflect on their own. Another point in the quote above was teachers' belief that parental support 'at

home' is a significant factor in fostering students' reading culture. Other participants had similar views on the overall value of the training. Some thought that the training was useful because it 'provided opportunities for practitioners to discuss lingering problems, dwell on possible solutions, and engage in a constructive conversation about reading'. Another participant enjoyed the training because of its contextualised input:

I have been teaching reading for at least 15 years...This is one of those reading workshops which I deem as very useful because it touched on the very issues that inform the teaching of reading in Qatar and anywhere else: issues, strategies, and assessment.

The impact of these workshops is evident in the participants' comments. One participant wrote, 'I have tried jigsaw reading on several occasions. I think students had the opportunity to learn from each other, negotiate meaning, and be in charge of their own learning'. Another participant also found jigsaw reading an effective activity:

One particular strategy of interest is the 'Jigsaw Reading' activity which when modified properly can actually be an integration of ALL the language macro-skills. I have used it in my class, with minor modifications, and I have witnessed students applying the [four] skills in the process.

Another participant complimented the training in the reflective assignment: it provided 'an opportunity to validate my teaching pedagogy, investigate others' methodology and reflect on the effectiveness of different technique'. Other participants thought that certain sessions were more enjoyable than others. One of those who liked the first session on reading challenges in Qatar wrote:

I think I have enjoyed talking about the problems that faced teachers in the current context. I also enjoyed discussing corresponding solutions to those problems because it provided me with ways to tackle reading in my classrooms.

For another participant, the most enjoyable was the second workshop on strategies to teach reading. The ICT tools, which were demonstrated in sessions two and three, were appreciated as well:

[T]he creation of an online reading forum can also be used in my future classes because this can be an avenue for increased student engagement with the text through their post-reading insights, and can also be an opportunity for students to raise issues with their colleagues and instructor while helping ensure that students also learn other global skills in IT and in social responsibility.

Education and technology are ‘inseparable’ in the modern world (Jadhav, 2011, p. 64). ICT is viewed to have a transformational power and a potential to enhance the quality of education (Albion et al., 2015; Jarvis, 2014). The quality of teacher education is linked to ‘the extent of ICT integration in teacher education programmes’ (Bhattacharjee, 2016, p. 1). ICT has become a component of almost every INSET programme nowadays, as either a) a training content or b) an assisting tool (Usun, 2009). This is similar to the ICT’s two main functional roles in education as a subject of study or an assisting tool. ICT was used in my study mainly as an assisting tool to support INSET delivery, communication and data collection.

Most participants expressed their willingness to attend similar workshops, and they would attend voluntarily. One of the participants mentioned: ‘owing to the success of these workshops, I hope that more of these can be done in the future. All in all, I am thankful for being a part of this workshop from its conception to its completion’.

The participants’ feedback also contained important insights that would definitely inform future workshops on reading:

having workshops related to specific skills like predicting, summarizing, paraphrasing, cultural differences in reading texts, extensive reading, bottom up, and top down processing. I also suggest that there would be a workshop for [teaching] beginner readers

The quote above provided a number of sub-themes within reading that could be handled in future reading INSET. Similarly, the suggestion in the quote to have INSET designed specifically for teachers who have beginner readers was based on the very low reading levels among students in Qatari schools as seen in the assessment results discussed in chapter 2. Some of the techniques we discussed in

the training required basic student reading skills but teachers from some schools reported beginner ESL literacy among their students.

Another participant wanted an investigation into the effectiveness of the current practices in teaching reading from the students' perspective:

Even though we discussed a comprehensive range of topics, one thing that could have been included was the students' take on the effectiveness of reading teachers' practices in class. This would have included all stakeholders and given a complete picture of the reading teaching-learning scenario.

The quote above demonstrated an important data source to evaluate the effectiveness of reading teachers' practices, which is often overlooked both in literature and in practice. Student voice has been found to play a role in educational reform (Mitra, 2008), educational sustainability (Pleasance, 2016) and motivation (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). However, there is little research about the value of student voice in the effectiveness of reading teachers' practices. Unfortunately, it was not within the scope of this study to explore the students' side of the story but this will be one of the possibilities of future follow-up studies.

Regarding the trainer role, the attitudes in the teachers' comments were positive and encouraging. Several participants wrote 'keep up the good work'; another participant wrote, 'I think the trainer is engaging and fun. I have had the opportunity to use some of the tools he used in the workshops for teaching my classes'. One more commented, 'I personally like such trainings where there is plenty of room for discussion to stretch the topic through as many approaches and scenarios as possible'.

8.5.6 Overall evaluation of the third cycle based on interview comments

In addition to the reflective assignment above, I conducted few informal interviews and a formal interview in cycle three. The comments showed noticeable engagement and positive attitude towards the content of the reading sessions, as noted below by one of the participants in an interview in cycle three:

I personally believe that graphic organisers are a very important and fun way to help students think critically, as they are often daunted by the various texts they are required to read throughout any given semester. This makes reading tasks less challenging and more manageable.

Selecting reading was based on participants' ranking in the needs analysis stage. This experience confirmed my conclusion from the needs analysis results that readiness is key success factor. Attitude and awareness of one's needs can significantly impact on both effectiveness of INSET (Maliki, 2013) and teacher reflection in INSET (Farrell, 2014). It is important that trainers capitalise on any prior willingness of a participant to learn and his/her preparedness to engage in certain themes. The quote below from the third cycle interview shows how teachers' unpreparedness may impede their implementation of INSET content:

Unfortunately... As some people were bogged down with work, they did not yet have the opportunity to try these out, but said they would in the future. I am one of these.

In addition to readiness, teachers generally liked the training techniques, which were employed to introduce some strategies to teach reading (e.g. line-ups, exit tickets, paired reading, jigsaw reading, etc.). '[Reading games] were extremely engaging. The teachers became very competitive, so, it was clear [that] they were really enjoying themselves. People love games!' The data from the first and third cycles showed that these techniques resulted in a generally positive atmosphere, which was conducive to learning, as seen in the quote below on Jigsaw reading from the third cycle interview:

It was a very effective way to cut up large amounts of text into digestible sections. It makes it less stressful for students, especially local students who are often very reluctant to read lengthy texts. A jigsaw reading task is far more interactive and enables student to decipher meaning and report on what they've read. This type of information-sharing works very well with students in this culture.

The quote above illustrates how interactive and stress-free activities could foster engagement. The participants also complimented the competitive activities and

deemed that these are suitable for the local culture, as seen in the quote below from the third cycle interview:

We played charades as well. Another extremely popular and very engaging activity... Competition has been strongly promoted in this culture in the past 15 years as Qatar wants worldwide recognition for its sports events. This culture of competition has filtered down into the educational system. This activity clearly showed us that games and interactive activities work well.

The quote above shows how the local context can influence small classroom activities, such as competitions. In the second cycle, traditional techniques resulted in a rather passive atmosphere. Towards the end, my research seemed to have achieved the objectives related to reading INSET, as described in the quote below in an interview after the last workshop in the third cycle and in this study:

The presenter himself was very engaging: positive, dynamic, and always encouraging. He made everyone feel at home and welcomed. This sort of warm friendly atmosphere is something we all need to strive for and we had a great role model for that. Basically, I found all of these workshops really worthwhile. Some of the workshops here in our department are pretty boring, but this series on reading was both valuable and stimulating. I think all the participants came away with some useful ideas and best practices. I certainly did.

Teachers work in a larger sociocultural context and ‘no model of good teaching can be framed in terms of an individual teacher abstracted from social context’ (Roberts, 2016, p. 163). Understanding the social context is pivotal for the success of the programme (Oliver & Dempster, 2003). Teachers’ sense of needs is influenced by the social, political, and economic climate. INSET effectiveness ‘often depends on this following wind of change’ in these contexts (Roberts, 2016, pp. 225-226). In this study, contextual influence, either positive or negative, was felt by the participants in all stages. Often, students were reported to ‘have had a lot of inconsistencies in their schooling’, as seen in the quote below from an interview after cycle three:

Contextual factors influence INSET and teacher attitudes. Most of us felt that because of the constantly changing educational policies, Qatari students have

not benefitted from these educational transitions. They've (policies) resulted in a lot of problems, particularly language issues.

Similarly, within a bigger picture, reading was viewed by the participants as: 'students don't read in their own language, so, reading in a second language is seen as a burden'. They also perceived reading as an outcome of societal factors where 'traditional practices based on conversation and discussion leave little time for reading [and] young people prefer to communicate via social media'. Therefore, the participants believed that the solution to reading issues must be addressed on the cultural level, as seen in the quote below from an interview in the third cycle:

In groups, we discussed the need for reading to become a bigger part of the local culture and how reading needs to be encouraged, especially by parents reading to their children from the time they are very young. This is something new to the local culture.

I conducted the reading INSET sessions with different cohorts of teachers over the four years of implementation. Every group of teachers had its own needs related to reading INSET. For instance, the group in the first cycle wanted to learn how to teach reading, whereas those in the third cycle wanted to learn the design of reading assessment. I found it necessary to adjust my methods and content according to the needs of my trainees to facilitate the effectiveness and sustain their buy-in.

Online communication, such as that occurring in an online forum, was used to promote a sense of community among participants and to discuss the classroom impact (see section 8.2.1), as seen in the quote below from the third cycle:

We were shown how to post threads and share our views on teaching reading. It was interesting to learn what other people thought. Some views were quite surprising. The discussion that followed was also stimulating.

In retrospect, ICT served the targets that I set in my study. The participants reported their appreciation of its educational potential, as seen in the quote below from the third cycle interview:

We talked about interactive web-based learning tools, such as Kahoot.it and Socrative, which can be accessed by students from their mobile phones. Most

teachers were familiar with these applications and commented positively on their usefulness.

However, on certain occasions, ICT was partially embraced by the participants. For example, the interactive online forum was used to encourage communication in the third cycle, but I struggled to promote it among teachers who preferred other forms of communication. This is consistent with what participants themselves reported about the local context: ‘young people prefer to communicate via social media websites like Snapchat and WhatsApp’.

At the outset of the study, ICT was expected to be the top preferred training topic. However, the participants voted for reading. After one of the workshops in the second cycle, one of the participants reported that ‘the trainer failed to incorporate technology’. Despite common beliefs in the value of ICT, it was not clear for the trainer and teachers when to integrate ICT and how to capitalise on its value. Another comment from the second cycle stated: ‘Finally, she did not integrate any smart classroom features into her lesson’. Anecdotal data from my experience with teachers in the local context involves counter-productive outcomes, owing to technical issues or the lack of proper infrastructure. In fact, combining new technologies with effective pedagogy has become ‘a daunting task for both initial teacher training and in-service training institutions’ (Jung, 2005, p. 94). Moreover, ICT confusion seemed part of a bigger educational confusion during the early stages of the national reform, as seen in the quote below from the third cycle interviews:

Qatar has been undergoing great educational changes, from an Arabic-medium educational system to the incorporate[ion of] an English-based CLIL curriculum in some subjects. This started around 2001... Then, after the Arab Spring of 2011, many nationals clamoured for the reintroduction of Arabic as the primary language of instruction [that] the educational system reverted back to Arabic. This has caused confusion in schools and among educators... It sort of came [into] full circle. As a result of all these changes, [the] Qatari students have had a lot of inconsistencies in their schooling.

To conclude, despite the research-evidenced potential of ICT, such potential cannot be realised easily (Dawes, 2001; Ghavifekr et al., 2016). Balanskat et al. (2006)

argued that although teachers appear to acknowledge the value of ICT in schools, they continue encountering obstacles during the processes of adopting these technologies into their teaching and learning. The pedagogical use of ICT in education, i.e. training teachers on how to integrate technologies in their teaching (Jung, 2005), was outside the core scope of the study.

8.6 Conclusion and insights for future INSET

Among the main challenges, I have faced in my job as a teacher trainer, and in this current study is how to design effective INSET and how to motivate participants. The first two cycles in this study contributed to the understanding of the trainer’s role as perceived among ELT teachers in Qatar. This cycle helped me verify my conclusions on how this role must be performed. I have learned that to engage participants, it must be visible to those teacher participants what they can take back to their classrooms and how. As seen in the findings in section 8.5, the third cycle was successful in its design and delivery. When I first embarked on this study, my prime objective was to improve my own practice as a teacher trainer. The results of this study impacted on my training offerings and informed my outlook on INSET. This cycle was a good opportunity for me to reflect further on my training practices and gain insights from multiple sources to guide the design and delivery of my future INSET. The lessons learned from this study will hopefully contribute to the literature on INSET and AR, and will be beneficial to future practitioners.

The previous four chapters provided a narrative summary of the entire research process and a brief chronological history of its progress from needs analysis to conclusion. They outlined the structure of the cycles, including data collection instruments in each stage and their results. Table 8.6 below provides an overview of the three cycles in this study.

Table 8.6: Comparison between the three AR cycles in the implementation stage

First (pilot) cycle	Second cycle	Third cycle
- Focused on how to deliver INSET effectively.	- Focused on the role of the trainer	- Focused on the content, how to deliver INSET, and the role of the trainer

- Used a common programme design set by the Supreme Education Council (SEC) for all teachers in the country	- Used a modified design that had been informed by the first-cycle participants' input	- Used a modified design that had been informed by the participants' input and findings obtained from the previous cycles
- One trainer	- Two trainers	- One trainer
- 12 weekly sessions without a follow-up	- One month with 28 different INSET activities	- One month (3 workshops, 1 demo lesson, and an online forum)
- No impact assessment	- Used alternative assessments, such as class observations, to evaluate impact	- Used an assignment, journals, a survey, class observations, and a focus group to evaluate impact
- No contact between trainers and trainees' students	- Several demo lessons delivered by the trainers	- One demo lesson delivered by the trainer
- Compulsory attendance	- Optional attendance	- Optional attendance
- No online forum	- No online forum	- An online forum was employed to maintain communication between trainees and the trainer outside the training

Chapter Nine: Reflective Discussion

The previous chapters presented the story of this study as well as an analysis of its findings. This chapter presents answers to the research questions, study limitations, contributions and suggestions for possible future research.

9.1 Introduction

As stated in chapter 1, the overarching purpose of this study was to improve my practice as a teacher trainer. In doing so, it was necessary to investigate the effectiveness of INSET in Qatar. Prior to the three cycles of AR, an initial needs analysis was carried out, which sought to describe the status, identify the perceived good practice, and diagnose the preferences relevant to topics, assessment, and delivery style. The three cycles constituted the implementation stage and involved several actions and significant data analysis, which provided insights on several emerging themes.

The study employed multiple data collection methods to better understand and inform the developments in its different stages and cycles. Chapter 4 presented a summary of all the different tools I used throughout the study (see table 4.1) while chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 presented the results of this study. These tools yielded a significant amount of data. On certain occasions, the analysis had to be conducted within a short period or even immediately after running the instrument. For example, training sessions started with a short activity about the participants' expectations. I had to act promptly to observe if the results corresponded to my predetermined agenda. If they did not, I needed to make whatever modifications deemed necessary and move to plan B immediately.

This chapter presents answers to the research questions that guided my investigation, to see to what extent I could answer them. Below is a recap of the questions:

Stage one (needs analysis)

RQ1: What do teachers perceive as advantages and problems of the INSET offered to them?

RQ2: What are perceived by teachers as the main factors affecting the success and impact of INSET in Qatar?

RQ3: What training themes do teachers recommend for future INSET?

Stage two (AR cycles)

RQ4: From the perspectives of those involved in the AR cycles:

- a) To what extent are the INSET programmes in these cycles successful?
- b) Which training strategies are more effective than others?

RQ5: What does the feedback by participants reveal about the role of the trainer in the success of the INSET?

RQ6: As a teacher trainer, how can I measure the impact of the changes I introduced in the different cycles on teachers' classroom practices?

RQ7: How has my AR journey helped me improve my practice as a teacher trainer in Qatar?

The study sought to employ these questions to examine the INSET practices in Qatar in terms of attitudes, perceived values, trainer role, and current issues. The findings helped me identify possible success factors and INSET themes to improve my INSET planning and delivery in the implementation stage, and outline key principles for good INSET within the Qatari context. The discussion below will be in the same order of the questions above.

9.2 Stage one questions

9.2.1 RQ1: What do teachers perceive as advantages and problems of the INSET offered to them?

As seen in chapter 5, the needs analysis results showed a positive attitude towards INSET among TEOL teachers in Qatar. This was reported in particular in the focus groups results where there was a consensus among teachers that teacher training is important as seen in section 5.3.5.1. (Attitudes towards training). Many respondents also highlighted the benefits of attending a training and how training had impacted positively on their practices in section 5.3.5.2 (Perceived benefits of teacher training). A good example was a quote by one of the teachers who took part in the

focus groups and said that ‘I owe my experience to the training programmes, which I have attended inside and outside Qatar’.

However, the majority of the respondents (53%) to one of the survey questions mentioned that they were not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the current level of professional development they had obtained over the last three years in Qatar. Such mismatch between teachers’ awareness that INSET is important and their dissatisfaction with their INSET could be attributed to the problems they reported in section 5.3.5.3. These problems included lack of differentiation in training, theory-practice gap in the content and ignoring teachers’ voice. One of the respondents referred to the theory-practice gap as being the source of most problems with INSET in the following anecdote from stage one focus groups by F3P4: ‘I have attended so many training sessions. Unfortunately, most [of them] focused on the theoretical part of the learning process rather than the practical one’

9.2.2 RQ2: What are perceived by teachers as the main factors affecting the success and impact of INSET in Qatar?

Success factors were investigated both in the survey and focus groups in the needs analysis stage. Teachers reported their views on INSET success in table 6.9 when they identified their goals behind attending INSET. Effective delivery techniques were also viewed as a success factor and reported in table 5.11 according to their preference by teachers. However, a summary of success factors was presented in table 5.12 (Teachers’ responses on INSET success factors) where the top three success factors ranked by teachers were having qualified trainers, selecting appropriate training strategies, and ensuring trainee readiness. In Table 5.13: further success factors were reported with a statement ‘a good trainer has clearly defined goals, objectives, and agenda for the training’, obtaining the highest score.

Teachers’ views on INSET assessment and programme delivery and follow-up in section 5.3.5.4 and table 5.14 also provided further ideas which could contribute to INSET success. Such views were also confirmed in the focus group results reported in section 5.3.5.3 (Features of good INSET and perceived success factors) where teachers referred to similar success factors like transferability, personalised input, having qualified and multiple trainers, engaging INSET, logistics and cultural sensitivity.

9.2.3 RQ3: What training themes do teachers recommend for future INSET?

One of the goals of the need analysis stage was to identify teachers' preferred themes for INSET. Initially, I thought ICT would be their recommended theme. However, the survey results presented in table 5.9 showed that reading was the top professional development topic preferred by teachers followed by writing. These topics either stemmed from their knowledge of their pedagogical needs or were perceived to be more interesting than other topics. Also, reading and writing skills are highly relevant to the local educational context and have gained popularity in the local context due to Qatar's low scores on international reading assessments as reported in appendix 1. These results led to several national initiatives to promote a reading culture.

In addition to specific themes, the data results yielded insights about the features of effective INSET content in general. Teachers' comments on the need for transferrable input and content that they 'can apply' (see sections 5.2.3, 5.3.5.3, 6.7, 7.4 and 8.4) indicate that INSET content is intertwined with INSET engagement. The same concept was emphasised by Buczynski and Hansen (2010), who found that teachers were more appreciative of practical ideas and foundational knowledge of how students learn. Wyatt (2010a, p. 237) noted that 'teachers' practical knowledge grows throughout their careers, as they move through stages of development'. Content themes influence teachers' choice of the available INSET opportunities and failing to provide teachers with relevant and enjoyable input may result in disengagement. McKenney et al. (2006, p. 77) pointed out that 'effective professional development should be relevant to teachers' practices'. Hill (2009) took a stronger stance and argued that irrelevant professional development that exists only to fulfil licensure requirements must be abandoned. Wolter (2000, p. 311) clarified the impact of relevance on programme success, stating that 'a higher level of success may be attained through an approach to course design, which draws on participants' knowledge of the local learning/teaching situation'.

The participants' desire to learn topics associated with their immediate classroom needs is understandable and justified by their search for transferable content. Therefore, the onus is on trainers and training providers to identify these topics prior to training and be willing to modify INSET content if it does not correspond

with trainees' expectations. This study sought to select topics that interest participants in all its three cycles. These topics were identified through the initial survey and the subsequent needs analysis actions, to capitalise on their readiness to learn these topics. The implementation results reported in sections 8.5 showed that the participants enjoyed the topics, which they recommended, and remained highly engaged during these sessions.

9.3 Stage two questions (AR cycles)

9.3.1 RQ4: From the perspectives of those involved in the AR cycles:

- a) To what extent are the INSET programmes in these cycles successful?
- b) Which training strategies are more effective than others?

With regard to part A of RQ4, the results from the three AR cycles (see sections 6.7, 7.4, 8.4 and 8.5) indicated successful implementation of the cycles one and three in terms of design and delivery. However, the delivery of cycle two was challenging as seen in section 7.4. In cycle one, journal entries showed a positive attitude towards the training programme and the trainer throughout the raining. Teachers were engaged and complimented the delivery techniques. Their reflective assignment entries also showed that they used some of the content in their classrooms and found the experience enjoyable. Their comments also showed the development of their reflective skills (see section 6.7.1). In cycle two, answers to the survey in section 7.4.1.1 showed disengagement and low satisfaction. For example, 46% of the respondents did not learn something that they could use in their teaching and early half of the respondents (46%) thought the demo lessons was not beneficial. In cycle three, the participants found the training 'engaging, as they are very practical and they deal with teaching reading in the Qatari context' as illustrated in section 8.4.2. The comments and ratings from the questionnaires of the three workshops also demonstrated high satisfaction and appreciation. In general, teachers' comments were positive and encouraging about both the design and the trainer.

As for part B of RQ4, training strategies were one of the factors that contributed to the success of the cycles. In the needs analysis stage, the participants indicated a preference for certain training methods, such as discussions, games, demonstrations,

and group problem solving activities; their least preferred training method was lecturing (see Table 5.11). There were also calls for personalised and engaging INSET methods (see section 5.3.5). These preferences were considered in the design of the subsequent three cycles, and. For instance, sessions usually started with an icebreaker and included several activities, games, competitions, and simulations.

Interactive techniques were employed throughout the study; the participants appreciated the active role they were given through these activities. They commended the social perspective of collaborative training and viewed it as an added value for professional development. Their initial negative concerns over training diminished as the training progressed, and they became more engaged. The evaluations of the three cycles (see sections 6.7, 7.4, 8.4 and 8.5) showed that incorporating effective training strategies brought about increased engagement, which impacted positively on attainment and training overall effectiveness.

The results relative to teaching methods in the initial survey (e.g. section 5.2.3) underline the significance of the way by which any INSET programme is delivered. Having a well-designed content is insufficient if it is not matched with effective methods. Successful trainers need both the ‘what and how’. Anecdotally, training providers in the context of my study, and probably elsewhere, tend to focus more on the content of their programmes than the delivery methods. Trainers are often provided with training toolkits and packs, with minimal guidance on delivery, and left on their own to decide their training methods. The situation described above resembles Hill’s (2009, p. 470) depiction of ‘broken’ INSET in which good research-proven programs are compared to ‘boutiques’ that serve a handful of fortunate teachers while the vast majority of their counterparts are ‘Wal-Mart’ shoppers.

Although some trainers may manage on their own to adopt effective strategies and engage participants, many others fail. Unfortunately, the latter situation is more prevalent. Hill (2009, p. 470) concluded that ‘most teachers receive uninspired and often poor-quality professional development’. The same conclusion was reached by Harris and Sass (2011, p. 798), who revealed that that there is no ‘consistent

relationship between formal professional development training and teacher productivity'. This situation might be exacerbated by the fact that effective training methods vary from one context to another and from one cohort of teachers to another. As adults have different learning styles, desires, and needs (Brookfield, 1986; Jarvis, 2012; Merriam & Bierema, 2013) and training methods have their own pros and cons, it is important to select a method that best suits the immediate context and situation. Ideally, they must be methods that capture attention and sustain engagement.

9.3.2 RQ5: What does the feedback by participants reveal about the role of the trainer in the success of the INSET?

When this study started, my anecdotal data indicated that the participants were more interested in certain INSET opportunities than others because of the names of their trainers. The results of the needs analysis stage consolidated these observations further. Having qualified trainers was ranked as the most important success factor by in the needs analysis survey (see table 5.12). Focus groups (see section 5.3.5.3) also demonstrated participants' belief that trainer role was significant and they praised certain trainer characteristics. One participant summarised the general feeling, 'most of the trainers...forget the actual situations of the real classrooms, and the real situation of the unmotivated students'. For other trainers, the qualities appreciated by the participants included empathy with trainees and the ability to link INSET to their individual needs.

In the needs analysis stage, having more than one trainer was among the changes proposed by other teachers: 'Different trainers for the same course. I went to a 32-week course with one trainer, how come!' They also recommended inviting international trainers, 'we need experts from abroad with good background in education and experience in training'. With limited literature on the value of having multiple trainers, the idea was explored in the second cycle where the training was run by two trainers. Results from the second cycle exhibited dissatisfaction with the trainer role. The participants reported that the trainer was disengaging and teacher-centred. About 36% of the participants did not deem the training to have been conducted properly. At one point, the whole cycle was at risk because of the trainer role and I considered stopping; however, after a professional consultation, I decided

to proceed and learn from this experience for the third cycle. The story began with the results from the first cycle, which contained overt compliments of the trainer role that I assumed. In the second cycle, I decided to involve a secondary trainer with to ascertain the significance of the role and compare the impact on training. Based on the data from end-of-session surveys and my observations, the results related to the new trainer were different from what was initially expected. The trainer was expected to be interactive and to provide relevant tasks, but participants comments in the end-of-cycle survey described trainer's teaching methods as 'outdated', 'demonstrations of bad practice', and '100% teacher-centred'. The participants reported that the trainer 'failed to incorporate technology' and 'did not integrate any smart classroom features into her lesson'. This experience enabled me as a teacher trainer to be more reflective on my own role in general and in the third cycle in particular.

In the literature review related to the study context it was found that teachers' voice was absent in the planning, design, and implementation of INSET in Qatar (Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012, p.475). This is similar to findings in other contexts (Valli, 1997). Among my stated commitments when I started this study was to explore trainees' voice and consider it in the design of the intervention. The results of the multiple focus groups and feedback sessions with the participants, along with the actions I took in response, showed how far my research could deliver on this commitment. The same data results also demonstrated how much influence on engagement listening to participants' voice could have.

Through my experience in this study, I came to realise that the trainer plays multiple and complex roles. A good trainer must be a good listener who is willing to adapt, familiar with the participants' context, and sensitive to their individual needs. To engage participants, multiple participant-centred strategies must be used, and personalised input that is conducive to learning should be provided. To achieve buy-in, it is essential to be empathetic and appreciate the skills and experiences of the participants. To ensure continuity, trainers must promote sharing best practices through social networking. To facilitate positive impact, it is expedient to use examples from the real life of the participants' classrooms. Being a good reflective learner is a prerequisite to being a successful trainer.

Teachers view trainers as model teachers and expect them to excel in the training room the same way teachers are expected to excel in the classroom. Having a kind personality and good public speaking skills '[do] not mean that [a trainer] is qualified to be a model teacher', according to one of the participants in the second cycle (see section 6.3.2). Although limited research has attempted to understand how trainer characteristics influence training outcomes, Harris et al. (2014) concluded that training satisfaction and transfer can be explained by considering both trainer and trainee characteristics in tandem. The instrumental role of the INSET trainer was confirmed in the findings of this study. In the second cycle, the participants questioned the whole value of the training because the trainer did not 'attempt to practically link [activities] to [their] classrooms'. One of the comments also mentioned that the trainer failed to lead by example and her 'demonstration lessons were of bad practice' (see section 6.3.2). The proceedings and subsequent findings in the other two cycles confirmed the participants' impression that the trainer is the strongest link in the INSET chain, and the success of a given INSET programme depends heavily on the trainer role; thus, the whole programme could be jeopardised if the trainer role is not performed well.

The trainer role is sensitive since many trainers may, at the same time, assume other roles, such as an assessor (Roberts, 2011). This is not uncommon in the local context of my study where INSET could be part of teachers' appraisal, and school supervisors are expected to combine teacher education with teacher evaluations. The participants' comments indicated that the INSET, which is free from trainer bias, is less stressful and more effective. Roberts (2011, pp. 158-159) provided several tips to add levity to the job of trainers, who have multiple roles, such as quality communication, flexibility, and awareness of one's own theories. The complexities of the in-service educator's role are not only unique to the local Qatari context. In a study on the trainer role in a language school in Turkey, O'Dwyer and Atlı (2015) reported multiple and complex trainer roles. Kolb et al. (2014, p. 204) identified four roles for teacher educators, namely, 'facilitator, subject expert, standard-setter/evaluator, and coach'. They proposed a self-assessment instrument called the Educator Role Profile to help educators understand their use of these roles.

9.3.3 RQ6: As a teacher trainer, how can I measure the impact of the changes I introduced in the different cycles on teachers' classroom practices?

INSET impact on classroom practices was one of the major goals of this study. Several actions were taken to assess what and how has my INSET impacted on teachers classrooms. The first action was to identify participants desired impact through asking them about their expected outcomes in the needs analysis survey as seen in table 5.10. The survey also explored their preferred form of assessment. Overall, most respondents considered observed teaching remains to be the most effective method for INSET assessment as seen in table 5.14. The respondents also called for practical input that would that provides *follow-up and further training*. In general, participants showed awareness of the need for assessing the impact as seen in section 5.3.5.4 (Views on training assessment). They wanted a tool or technique to measure the change and recommended follow-up as the best method to measure the impact as stated by one of the focus group participants in the needs analysis stage, 'Training needs following and the trainer must follow up the trainee'.

Follow-up was identified in the literature review chapter (see section 3.4) as a key INSET success factor where the provision of follow-up procedures after INSET is necessary and sufficient to bring about change (Leach & Conto, 1999; Waters, 2006). INSET follow-up took several forms in my study. For example, school visits were carried out in the first stage, and a reflective assignment on the implementation of a lesson plan was required after the first cycle. The second cycle had class visits in the final week to follow up on the implementation; in the third cycle, the participants were required to give presentations on their classroom implementation, and then I invited them after the training to meet again to observe a demo lesson together. Results relevant to the follow-up activities in the implementation cycles showed appreciation of having a follow-up component in the training.

Another method to assess the impact was reflective practice, participants were provided with opportunities for reflection and encouraged to practise it (e.g. reflective assignment in cycles one and two, focus groups). This was an opportunity for me to identify the impact INSET has brought about in their classrooms. These

tools also provided a variety of direct/indirect and formal/informal reflective opportunities. The value of such tools was praised by the participants who reported several accounts of their gains out of these tools.

Research findings in other studies have noted the value of INSET follow-up. However, it is the implementation of follow-up that was a challenge in my study. Identifying follow-up methods that would work for both the trainer and participants could be a hard task. Joyce and Showers (2002) argued that INSET follow-up is an integral part of training, and if this is not provided by schools, it should be built in any training programme. On-site hands-on follow-up was also appreciated by the participants in this study and even called for at certain stages. Joyce and Showers (1988) reported that INSET, which has a follow-up coaching component, increased the teachers' successful implementation of the new knowledge by 90%; if follow-up coaching was not present, it would only increase by 5%. Unfortunately, it was out of the scope of this study to measure the impact of follow-up on productivity, but this would be a significant theme for future research in the Qatari context. Edwards and Burns (2016) conducted a research on how to sustain the impact of AR INSET; they found that possible follow-up support methods may include peer mentoring, curriculum development, and teacher engagement in research projects. Martin (2010) identified 13 follow-up techniques, which include communication and coaching, that trainers can use. Again, follow-up is not only about identifying effective methods in literature, but rather about implementing these methods.

To conclude, follow up is an 'indispensable catalyst of the change process' (Schifter et al., 1999, p. 30). Unfortunately, most training programmes lack a 'systematic' follow-up to gauge the performance of their trained teachers (USAID, 2006, p. 50). Over the past years, the main criticism of INSET programmes has been the lack of follow-up (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Therefore, follow-up must be promoted by trainers and supported by management.

9.3.4 RQ7: How has my AR journey helped me improve my practice as a teacher trainer in Qatar?

RQ 7 was an overarching question for the whole study. This study was mainly motivated by my personal experience as a teacher trainer in Qatar and by my desire to improve this experience. Prior to commencing this study, I had worked as a

teacher trainer for more than two years. Over these years, I faced several challenges in motivating my teachers. Although I strived to provide them with engaging INSET programmes, I was not always successful. I wanted to know what they want and how to give it to them. This study was an opportunity to answer these questions in a structured academic way. Without researching my own practice, I cannot back up my assumptions or make sound claims.

This study was not only an opportunity for me to explore a field of personal interest; it gave me a deeper understanding of the teachers' INSET experience in Qatar. It was an endeavour to explore teachers' thinking and aspirations relative to INSET. It provided me with an opportunity to connect with more than 150 teachers, who took part in the study at different stages, and provided these participants with an opportunity to share their best practices with me and with each other.

My personal and professional development journey over the course of this study made me discover several success factors. However, I realised that the significance of three main ones; considering trainees' voice, INSET follow-up, and the need to transfer training into classrooms as soon as possible to make it impactful and effective. In short, this study helped me grow as an INSET practitioner. Those who will have access to the findings of this study will hopefully take lessons back to their classrooms. I believe that good INSET should result in impact and we, as trainers, should help teachers utilise training opportunities for the best interest of their students. It is the responsibility of trainers and academics to unite efforts and provide teachers with proper training that can be transferred into successful teaching strategies.

9.4 Emergent themes

Several themes emerged from the data over the different stages. These themes centred upon transferability, INSET methods, INSET content, teachers' voice, follow-up, trainer role, reflective practice, ICT INSET, and reading. The discussion of all of these themes was incorporated into the separate stages/cycles in the form of short sections. However, only reflective practice could not be discussed thoroughly in the previous chapters as it emerged and was addressed almost in all cycles/stages.

RP literature review was presented in section 3.7. The section below will shed light on its relevance to this study.

9.4.1 Reflective practice

Reflective practice (RP) has a central role in INSET (Mann and Walsh, 2017) and is intertwined with AR (Leitch and Day, 2000). As stated in section 3.7, RP was not among the initial foci of the study. Initially, the study sought to identify direct programme design principles, such as preferred topics and methods. RP emerged in the implementation stage through specific training activities (e.g. journals, demo lessons, and microteaching), and the literature review was updated accordingly. A major post-delivery finding was that RP has multi-faceted value in INSET. RP was beneficial for both the trainer and the participants. Several reflection tools were used throughout the study. These included, among others, the trainee journals, researcher diary, exit tickets at the end of sessions, focus groups, presentations, and reflective assignments on lesson delivery. These tools provided a variety of direct/indirect and formal/informal reflective opportunities. The value of the RP tools, which I employed, was praised by the participants who reported several accounts of their gains out of these tools. The general positive feelings towards RP in the participants' accounts reflected positively on the participants' general engagement in the study.

As a trainer, I found RP a useful method to check progress and inform future directions. By relying on the participants' regular feedback and my own observations, I could identify areas for improvement and mitigate potential threats. For example, the reflective feedback at the beginning of the third cycle resulted in dropping two sessions and adding a new session on reading assessment. Another example was the participants' comments on the theory-practice gap and their concerns on the applicability of certain INSET input. I decided to answer their concerns through a demo lesson. By teaching a lesson with real students, I could show the participants how reading techniques and ideas can be implemented.

RP has become 'widespread and a ubiquitous part of the teacher education landscape' (Mann & Walsh, 2017, p. 4). It enjoys 'a relatively high level of acceptance and status' (Mann and Walsh, 2015, p. 351). Nonetheless, there were

participants who found certain RP tasks not as enjoyable as others; an example of these RP tasks was writing a reflective account at the end of each lesson. However, the comments regarding the value of these tasks were generally positive. RP put participants at an advantage as it provided all of them with an opportunity to share observations and put forward ideas for the betterment of the future INSET programmes. Another advantage of RP was emotional. It contributed to building trust between the participants and myself by giving them the freedom to criticise and share concerns, an opportunity that the participants appreciated. Although RP still lacks sufficient knowledge base regarding its implementation, my findings were consistent with that of Mann and Walsh (2005) that effective trainers can incorporate RP successfully in INSET. Teachers reported that they were already using elements of RP in their contexts, and it was supported by their school leaderships. For example, the appraisal systems in most of the schools had a reflective task. In addition to all that, participants viewed RP as a professional learning tool. In line with the study of Mann and Walsh (2013) that called for a concrete, systematic, and data-driven application of RP, trainers must be careful not to impose RP on teachers. The outcomes of such policy could be counterproductive and more research must explore this grey area. Finally, the participants perceived RP as a tool that facilitates awareness and understanding of practitioners' own professional practices; this perception is in agreement with other studies on the value of RP in professional advancement (Moon, 2004).

The journals were probably the most prominent reflective tool used in my study. They are reported in literature to be a common RP tool in teacher education programmes (Majid, 2016; O'Connell & Dymont, 2013; Pavlovich, 2007). According to Erginel (2006), journals were found to provide opportunities for an insider look where first-hand information is obtained on teachers' experiences and helps to hear teacher voices. Similar to my study, Erginel provided teachers with guidelines to help them reflect upon their experiences in the form of guiding questions. In this study, the participants found an opportunity to express their views on progress and recommend changes in these tools. Journals also maximised the communication between the participants and me. I could read their reflections after each session and provide my feedback. This gave me access to their personal perceptions and at times undisclosed attitudes towards the training, leading me to be

more understanding of their needs and empathetic with their challenges. I had initial thoughts on using online reflective journals. However, I was concerned about the logistics, as technical issues might put participants off. Moreover, research on e-journals was not encouraging. Killeavy & Moloney (2010) employed online journals in their study and found little evidence of the development of a more reflective approach attributable to e-journals.

However, online communication is another reflective channel that was employed in this study. It provided a channel for both the trainer and participants for reflective interaction that is not restricted by time or venue. Online communication took place mainly by email (see section 8.4.2), along with other platforms throughout the study. These platforms included an online forum (see section 8.2.1), WhatsApp groups, and a website dedicated to the study in the initial stage (see section 4.1.6). Unfortunately, the online forum and website were not used as expected. The participants preferred email and WhatsApp. Postings on these platforms were related to several themes, such as INSET logistics, follow-up questions, assignment enquiries, concerns, and sharing best practices. Several studies reported similar findings on the reflective value of online communication for INSET (e.g. Andrusyszyn & Davie 2007; Whipp 2003). In the early days of email, Barnes (1998) found that electronic communication could be an effective tool for promoting reflection in an initial teacher training course at Warwick University. Guldberg and Pilkington (2007) and Maor (2003) came to similar conclusion and emphasised the role of the instructor in the effective utilisation of online channels. Bower et al. (2011) employed an online video reflection system in their study and reported positive impact on teacher development. Erginel (2006) found that the use of emails was effective in supporting reflection, and emails promoted experiential inquiry, as they had monologic and dialogic qualities and fostered cognitive and personal reflections. Unfortunately, the reflective value of online communication was not within the main scope of this study. This area can be explored in future studies.

The data analysis of the participant entries in the RP tools, such as journals and exit tickets, revealed useful insights and confirmed other findings. The participants expressed mainly their personal views on INSET in general and their immediate

programme in particular. In the needs analysis stage, the reflective discourse of the focus groups voiced concerns over transferability, engagement, and quality. In addition, it provided several useful thoughts about training content, design, and delivery (see section 5.2 and 5.3). In the implementation stage (see section 6.7), the participants maintained their critical voice, but showed more interest and less boredom. I noticed in this stage that they refrained from talking about general issues and their previous negative experiences. Their entries focused on the sessions' content and the impact on their classrooms. On many occasions, they were critical of certain parts of the content and reported on making certain modifications in the content to address the challenges in applying it to their classrooms. This could be attributed to their closer connection with the immediate training. In general, I observed that the participants had more confidence at this stage. This is also evidenced in the participants' discourse.

In reflection, guidance is important (Parsons & Stephenson 2005; Russell 2005). In fact, Dewey (1933) viewed reflection as a learned process that requires guidance. In INSET, the onus is on the trainer to provide the participants with RP guidance, encouragement, and scaffolding, and to avoid imposing it. In my study, the participants were provided with guidance in a form of sample accounts and guiding questions. For example, they were shown sample journal entries from previous cohorts. It was stressed that these were only samples to clarify the expectations, but not to be copied. Journals and exit tickets at the end of sessions had brief purposeful questions to promote reflection and keep answers on topic. The participants also appreciated other forms of formal and informal encouragement in our discussions during and outside the sessions. Indeed, RP has a potential that can be unlocked through meaningful and systematic guidance. Finally, the confidentiality and anonymity of the data collection tools, such as surveys, were appreciated and promoted the generation of reflective insights on sensitive issues, including personal issues of other participants.

RP and AR are intertwined. Both concepts 'have captured the imagination of the educational community in the last 60 years... and are considered to be critical dimensions of the professional development of teachers' (Leitch & Day, 2000, p. 179). Both AR and RP are reflective in nature and aim at improving practice

(McIntosh, 2010); moreover, through AR, one can have reflective practitioners (McNiff, 2016). The use of an AR approach as the investigative methodology in my study facilitated RP. As discussed in section 4.1.3, the participation of the researcher is a key feature that distinguishes AR from traditional research. Through AR, both the participants and I assumed a collaborative role in the study, which necessitated our constructive reflection on its progress during its different cycles and stages. The generative attribute of AR also allowed me to act on their comments and make changes accordingly. In addition to that, AR involved several data collection instruments across its cycles, which maximised the opportunities for RP for both the trainers and participants. Finally, the active role and involvement of the trainer in AR meant that I could provide guidance to the participants on RP whenever necessary.

To conclude, the aim of this study was to improve my practice in my immediate setting, and this was the rationale behind adopting AR. Avison et al. (1999, p. 94) pointed out that AR ‘combines theory and practice (and researchers and practitioners) through change and reflection in an immediate problematic situation’. AR provided me with a unique opportunity to reflect on my own practice and improve my INSET offerings. As noted by Reason and Bradbury (2001, p. 2), ‘action without reflection and understanding is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless’.

9.5 Study limitations

One of the limitations of this study is its validity. As seen in section 4.1.6, Validity and reliability in AR are complex issues (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Newton, 2006) hard to measure. The insider role of the researcher along with the mainly qualitative nature of AR methods makes it difficult to validate AR studies in the common sense of validity which is rooted in the statistical scientific domains (Heikkinen et al., 2012). Validity in this study remains unclear and the findings cannot be proven neither generalizable nor statistically unbiased. This is despite taking several actions in this study which are recommended in research and clarified in section (4.1.6). Moreover, since AR’s validity is argued to be in its impact rather than in its statistics, chapters 6, 7 and 8 along with section 9.7 provided a detailed account of

this impact.

Another limitation of the study is the participants' composition. Different cohorts of teachers took place in the three cycles. Ideally, having the same participants in all the cycles allows for reliable feedback and more generalisable results. However, since the implementation stage of the study lasted for around 5 years, it was unattainable to conduct the three cycles with the same participants. Instead, an invitation was sent to a large number of the targeted audience and participation was optional. Overall, having different participants in each cycle did not impact significantly on the validity of the results because the focus of the study was the practices of the trainer rather than the trainees.

The scope of the study was also one of its limitations. For example, the study involved interaction with teachers throughout the cycles and influenced their classrooms but it was not within its scope to investigate the nature of this interaction. Were teachers satisfied with this interaction? Was there any correlation between the interaction and effectiveness? Which interaction methods were more effective than others? Unfortunately, all these questions remained unanswered. Another area that could not be investigated was culture and identity. The study involved participants and trainers from different cultures. Does the cultural background of the teachers impact on their INSET engagement? Does culture play a role in attitude? Unfortunately, I could not investigate these issues and I had to keep the study on its track due to the time and scope limits

My study is a story of my attempt to bridge the gap between INSET theory and practice by bringing about change into my own pedagogy. It was not within the scope of this study to explore the impact of a successful INSET on student attainment. Although there is inconsistency in literature on whether INSET may influence student academic performance (e.g. Cordingley et al., 2003; Siegle & McCoach, 2007) or may not have a significant impact (e.g. Harris & Sass, 2011), the scope of this study was restricted to trainee teachers. This is because my role as a teacher trainer does not entail direct communication with students. However, the participants indicated in their journals that student attainment mattered to them and was a motivating factor to engage in 'transferable' training. The INSET impact on

student academic attainment could be the focus of a fourth cycle or a different future research project.

ICT has become a common component of INSET programmes. There have been two main uses of ICT, that is, it is either a tool or a pedagogy. ICT was used primarily throughout the cycles as a tool to assist in the implementation of the study. As the focus of this study was to improve design and implementation of my INSET, I could neither duly explore how ICT can be utilised as a pedagogy nor identify success factors for ICT use. I believe that ICT in INSET is under-researched and a future study may consider proposing a theoretical framework for ICT pedagogical use in INSET.

Finally, the participants' feedback in the needs analysis stage called for more networking and indicated that it was a motivating factor for them to engage in INSET. I capitalised on this call through promoting connecting and sharing practices in the different cycles. Among the side outcomes of this study, that is, my attempt to improve INSET in the local context, was the formation of a national network for TESOL practitioners in Qatar (www.teflqatar.org). However, the focus of this study was not to explore how networking can advance INSET. Networking is an interesting area of research, which could not be investigated in my study. The impact of networking and how it can be duly promoted and utilised by participants could be the rationale for a new AR cycle based on the results of this study.

9.6 Future research ideas: what remains unanswered?

As discussed in section 7.3 above, the scope of the study restricted the areas I could investigate and the depth of any investigation I could carry out. However, the findings could form bases for new avenues of research. I would suggest the following future directions:

1. The findings of the second cycle indicated that cultural differences between the trainer and trainees might affect effectiveness. Future research may explore how these differences may influence perceptions, expectations, and buy-in.

2. The literature review and the findings of this study suggest that teachers' voice is often 'unheard' in the design and implementation of INSET. My anecdotal observation is that teachers often contribute to this situation when they assume a passive role. Critical INSET is one realm that I hope to explore in a future research.
3. INSET trainer/trainee interaction and how this contributes to the success of INSET is another area that I intend to investigate.
4. Some INSET topics have been identified to be more preferred by teachers. However, it is not clear whether they are equally preferred by both female and male teachers or not.
5. The study was conducted mainly with participants from tertiary institutions and state schools. Qatar has three strata of schools (state, private, and community). It would be helpful to compare the INSET offerings in these schools and see to what extent they differ and how these differences might impact on good practice.
6. The study participants were both experienced and new teachers. It would be interesting to conduct a longitudinal study to see how teachers perceived value of INSET changes over time.
7. The findings of the study, which were partially shared with INSET policymakers in Qatar, could guide the current research efforts to review INSET practices and policies.
8. Online INSET is gaining grounds and teachers are turning to it because of several reasons (e.g. availability, cost, quality, etc.). Although my cycles involved elements of online INSET (e.g. forum, my personal website, etc.), it was beyond the scope of this study to investigate its impact and compare it with traditional INSET in terms of perceived values and effectiveness. online INSET. Also, it would be interesting to deliver the same INSET both online and face-to-face and conduct a comparative study.
9. Engagement was identified as a key success factor. Future research could examine the role of engagement on INSET impact.
10. Findings have showed that teachers were not in favour of traditional assessment methods in INSET. Peer assessment could be an assessment tool that teachers may find less inhibiting and more practice related. Further

research could examine the value of peer assessment in INSET in validating its impact and promoting networking.

9.7 Contributions of my study

The contributions of this study can be classified under two main categories, practical and general contributions to INSET knowledge. As for the practical contributions, my study is local in nature and may not have changed the INSET scene in Qatar in radical ways, yet it has contributed to ongoing developments towards tangible change. It provided a better understanding of what may compose the basis of a successful INSET in the local context in terms of design and delivery. It also provided insights into how to propel teacher engagement in future INSET implementations locally and beyond as educational reform initiatives are relying more and more on INSET to achieve their desired goals. The study results are expected to be of interest to INSET teacher trainers in particular. Some of the results have already been shared at local conferences and forums while the full study will be available online through TEFL-Qatar's website and a summary will hopefully be published in one of the academic journals.

This study also raised some valid questions about whether INSET should be optional or required for teachers. Both approaches were adopted in this study, i.e. the first cycle was required while the second and third cycles were optional. Teachers' buy-in is pivotal for positive impact on teaching and imposing INSET on teachers is disconcerting. Even with required INSET, trainers can introduce some optional elements. If teachers are not democratically involved in INSET and their input is not valued by trainers, they are going to regurgitate these practices with their students.

This study generated potential solutions to the practical INSET problems identified throughout its cycles. For example, low teacher engagement was improved through involving teachers in the design and capturing their voices during implementation. Ineffective INSET impact on classroom teaching was enhanced through INSET follow-up tools. Such ideas to address INSET issues were conceptualised and summarised in a proposed INSET framework, which can be a starting point to

develop a practical guide for other fellow trainers in the local context (see section 8.2).

This study explored the value of ICT in INSET. ICT was used primarily throughout the cycles as a tool to assist in the implementation of the project. Although it was unattainable to explore how ICT can be utilised as a pedagogy, this study identified good practices for ICT-assisted INSET. Actions to utilise ICT in the three cycles have resulted in useful insights on the role of social media in fostering trainer-trainee and trainee-trainee communication (see section 8.2.1). Other practices involved making training content available online and creating a common online space for participants to share ideas and updates on implementations. Mobile tools, e.g. clickers and Kahoot, appeared to be more appealing than traditional ICT tools because they can be accessed by students from their mobile phones and provide personalised learning options (see section 8.5.3).

This study raised awareness about several issues related to INSET effectiveness, such as the role of the trainer and the value of participants' voice, and provided guidance on effective implementation of INSET. As will be seen in the chapter 8, this study showed that INSET effectiveness is not limited to the delivery phase of a certain programme. Effectiveness rather starts in the pre-stage, with good planning, needs analysis, trainee voice and even logistics, and continues in the post-stage with effective follow-up. Post-INSET follow-up could take several forms but it is more effective when it is practical and linked to teachers' immediate context, e.g. through demo lessons and class visits.

Another contribution of the study is the utilisation of demo lessons in AR, which were delivered by the trainer and reflected upon by teachers. They provided real-life implementation examples of the INSET input. They also contributed to building trust between the trainer and trainees which facilitated the successful execution of this study. Their rationale in this study was to bridge the gap between theory and practice and this is the core merit of AR in all contexts.

Finally, as will be seen in the Afterword section, this study helped me as a practitioner improve my practice and help my trainees improve their teaching. The main question of this study was 'how can I improve myself as a teacher trainer?'

Throughout the study, I asked myself many questions and tested several possible answers in an attempt to provide better INSET to fellow teachers in my context. While this section provided an overview of the main contributions, the next chapter will discuss in detail a proposed INSET framework.

In addition to the practical and professional contributions outlined above, this study has several contributions to the knowledge and literature. As seen in the discussion of previous AR studies in INSET (see sections 3.3 and 3.8), most of previous AR studies in INSET focused on improving the classroom teaching practices of the trainee teachers taking part in INSET programs (i.e. Stuart, 1991; Calvert and Sheen, 2015). Improving the trainer's own practices is a missing objective in INSET research (O'Sullivan, 2004). This study focused on improving the trainer's practices which entailed investigating issues within the INSET training rooms, e.g. trainee engagement and programme design, rather than issues in the trainees' classrooms. Therefore, this study's approach to improve my own practices, as a trainer, is a contribution to INSET AR literature.

Another contribution was the utilisation of data from trainee journals to explore the current INSET context in Qatar rather than investigating participants' perspectives on the immediate INSET/classroom experiences as commonly seen in literature (Blair-Larsen & Bercik, 1992; Jeffrey, 2004; Malmberg & Hagger, 2009; Numrich, 1996). In this study, trainee feedback in the journals provided information about the bigger picture inclusive of contextual challenges, hopes and even the school appraisal system.

In addition to the two methodological contributions to existing INSET literature outlined above, the findings of this study provided further understandings to the available literature on certain research interests in INSET. For example, this study provided insights about success factors (see table 5.12 and section 5.3.5.3), preferred themes (see table 5.9), delivery methods (see table 5.12), trainer role (see section 7.4), teacher attitudes towards INSET (see section 5.3.5.1), teacher voice (see section 5.3.5.3), reflective practice (see section 9.4.1) and the value of follow-up (see section 5.3.5.4). Some of these areas, e.g. trainer role and INSET follow-up,

and still under researched and it is hoped that my findings will contribute to bridging this gap in literature.

9.8 Conclusion

When I first embarked on this academic journey, I wanted to explore solutions for my immediate INSET issues as a teacher trainer. INSET had challenges for both participants and trainers in my context. Although it was evident that teachers were exposed to a significant number of PDs, it was apparent that most of these were not consistent with their expectations. Trainers often struggled to keep participants tuned and teachers struggled to engage in the mandatory INSET programmes. Teachers' buy-in is important so 'they can participate actively in making sense of a new practice' (Gulamhussein, 2013, p. 16). This chapter summarised my efforts to provide successful INSET. It outlined my answers to the research questions, study limitations, its contributions and relevance to reflective practice. The section about possible future follow-up research shared many questions that are still unanswered. Chapter 10 presents an INSET framework based on these findings to offer other teacher trainers in the local context with a practical and transferable summary of this study.

Chapter Ten: Proposed Framework for INSET

This chapter presents a proposed framework for INSET, which is an outcome of my experience during this AR project and based on the findings of the study. It outlines several recommended actions to follow in the pre, while, and post stages of INSET.

10.1 Introduction

Despite the increasing international focus on teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Lunenburg et al., 2014; Mann, 2005; Roberts, 2016; Russell & Korthagen, 2013), limited literature is available on INSET frameworks (Cambridge English, 2016). In the same vein, available INSET frameworks are concerned with subdomains, such as integrating peer assessment (Sluijsmans & Prins, 2006), reflection (Reiman, 1999), ICT INSET (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Unwin, 2015), ESP INSET (Pham & Ta, 2016), blended learning (Stenalt & Nielsen, 2016), planning (Roberts, 2016), and subject-related INSET frameworks (Bodkin, 2013). The rarity of INSET frameworks and low relevance of the available ones have resulted in a vague INSET landscape. Current INSET programmes in this landscape are characterised with considerable variability (Munday, 2016), inconsistency (Carter, 2015), and are geared towards preservice teacher training (LaBoskey, 2003). As noted by Kennedy (2014, p. 689), literature on teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a whole 'is partial in its coverage, is fragmented and is under-theorised'.

One of the most cited reviews of frameworks in literature is by Kennedy (2005, pp. 236-237) who identified nine models for CPD: (1) training; (2) award-bearing; (3) deficit; (4) Cascade; (5) standard-based; (6) coaching/mentoring; (7) community of practice; (8) action research; and (9) transformative model. When these models were first introduced 15 years ago, they were well received in literature owing to the paucity of literature on the spectrum of CPD models. However, the Kennedy's models were revisited repeatedly over time in many articles (Kennedy, 2014). Moreover, these models did not provide practical details, which we, as trainers, can use to inform the design and implementation of CPD/INSET programmes. As clarified by Kennedy (2014, p. 690), they were meant to develop a sophisticated but

accessible means of understanding CPD more deeply. Therefore, they were more relevant to theory rather than the practice.

Another common recent training framework is the Cambridge English Trainer Framework. This framework was developed in collaboration with the Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE) to support trainer training and trainer development. The framework encapsulates the key knowledge and skills for effective training at a variety of stages and in different contexts. It was developed owing to ‘the absence of research into English language teacher training’ and the very few standards to work with (Cambridge English, 2016, p. 2). Although the framework is comprehensive and provides a valuable tool for trainers to design and deliver TESOL training, it looks at training from the trainer perspective and overlooks other non-trainer factors, such as training design and delivery methods, which could be pivotal for successful training.

Another framework was devised by the British Council (Mann & Walsh, 2017). This framework consists of four stages of professional development (awareness, understanding, engagement, and integration). The framework identifies twelve professional practices which are subdivided into several elements for each of them. Teachers might find this framework more useful than trainers, as it is based on teaching and provides little guidance on CPD design and trainer roles. Before presenting my proposed framework, comparing available frameworks provides a clear overview of their potential and limitations. Table 10.1 below compares the CPD Framework for teachers by the British Council and the Cambridge English Trainer Framework:

Table 10.1: Comparison between BC and the Cambridge English Trainer frameworks

	BC Framework	Cambridge Framework
Approach	Teacher-centred	Trainer-centred
Structure	Four stages of teacher development 12 practices	Three stages of trainer competency 42 components
Point of reference	Practice	Experience
Value to trainers	Provides principles (collaboration, reflection, etc.)	Provides a practical self-assessment tool for trainers

10.2 Structure and theoretical underpinnings of the proposed framework

As seen in Figure 8.1, this proposed framework for design and implementation of INSET programmes is compatible, in regard to INSET design, with the training model in Kennedy's classification (Kennedy, 2005, p. 237). The training model generally holds a standards-based view of teacher development in which INSET provides teachers with 'delivered' opportunities, such as workshops, to update their skills to demonstrate particular competences specified in a nationally agreed standard. Despite being effective, universally recognisable, and dominant in INSET (Kelly & McDiarmid, 2002 as cited by Kennedy, 2005), the training model has drawn criticism about its lack of connection to the classroom context in which participants work (Kennedy, 2005). That said, such criticism is also applicable to INSET in general (Day, 1999; Hill, 2009). Connecting INSET to a classroom context is addressed in the proposed model by focusing on the impact and providing specific actions pre, while, and post INSET delivery. Examples of these actions implemented throughout this study included needs analysis interviews, demo lessons, microteaching, class visits, and sharing feedback on implementing specific techniques. In terms of INSET delivery, the proposed framework draws on elements of Kennedy's mentoring/coaching model as it emphasises the professional relationship with trainees. It also contains elements of Kennedy's community of practice model as it is situated within the sociocultural theory of learning and encourages participants' networking. As Kennedy noted, her models are not necessarily 'exhaustive or exclusive'. They rather identify the key characteristics of different types of CPD, and knowledge acquisition is not situated exclusively in a particular context (Kennedy, 2005, 237).

Although the literature review of this study (see chapter 4) has been taken into consideration, the proposed framework below is mainly based on my experience throughout this study. I have worked with more than 150 teachers over the past six years of my PhD study and delivered more than 250 hours of TESOL training, which is mostly to schoolteachers. This experience has helped me form a contextualised understanding of what constitutes sound training and identify common training pitfalls and drawbacks that many trainers might experience. In addition to that, and as seen in the discussion above, most of the available models

focus on either teaching or one aspect of INSET. I struggled to find practical models, which provide applicable knowledge that INSET practitioners can use to inform effective design and implementation of INSET programmes.

As seen in Figure 10.1 below, the framework encapsulates the actions of the three usual stages in any training (pre-while-post). It describes the actions which are recommended to be taken in each stage and clarifies how that can be implemented to maximise the potential for success. As noted by Martin (2010), proper conduct of any program builds on good training design. Factors that are not specific to training (e.g. taking attendance) have been left out deliberately to make the framework more adaptable in different contexts. Figure 10.1 below provides a visual illustration of the proposed framework.

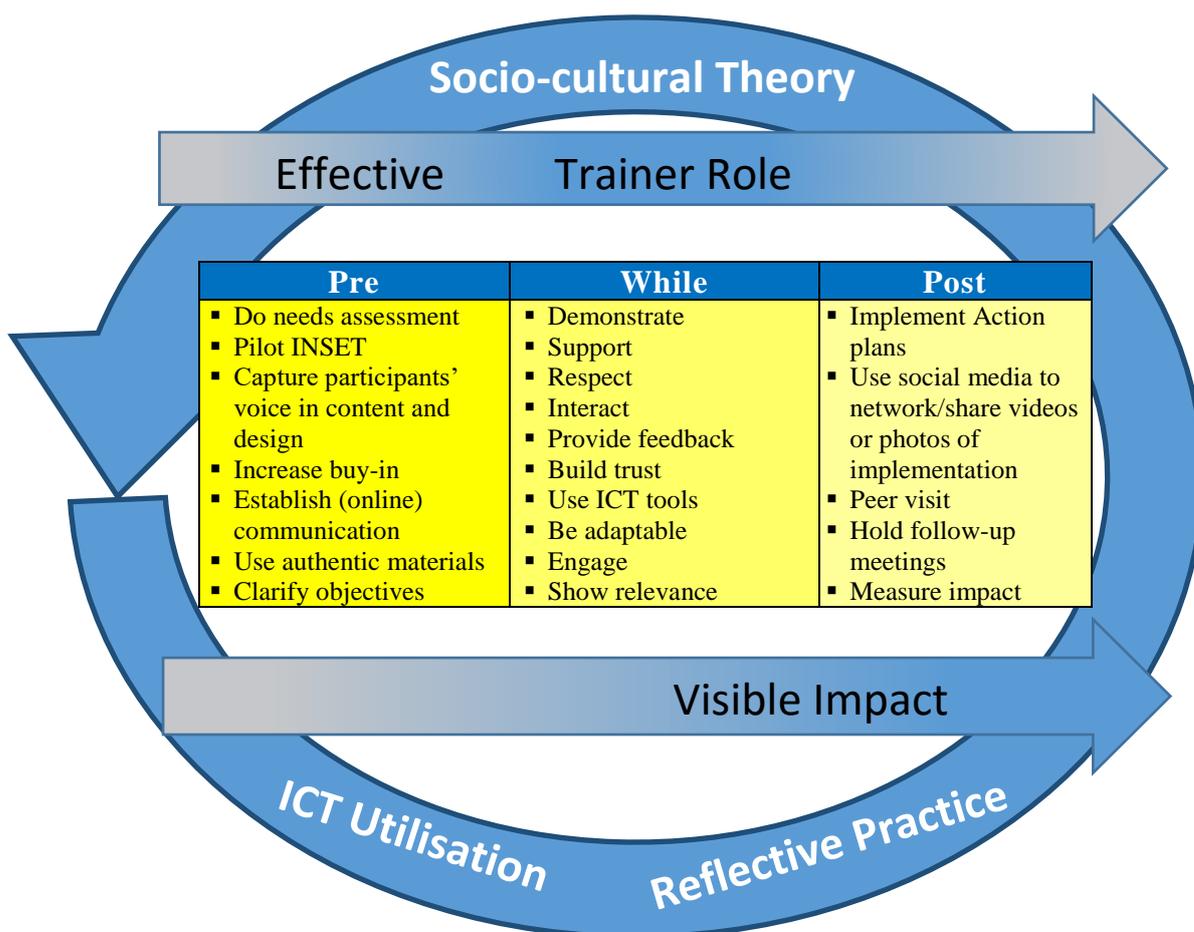


Figure 10.1: Proposed INSET framework based on this study

As seen in Figure 10.1, the arrow underneath the three stages represents impact. Participants in this study emphasised transferable input that they can take back to their classrooms (see 8.2.1.1). However, impact becomes more significant during the while and post stages, as illustrated by the darker blue arrow colour under these two stages. Any INSET programme must have a ‘visible’ impact. There are different interpretations of impact (Kennedy, 2014) and how it may be measured (King, 2014). For participants, it is the value they gain out of INSET programmes whether it is related to their professional skills (Evans, 2002; Day et al., 2007) or their students’ academic performance. The term ‘visible’ has been consciously used. Some INSET programmes might be effective, but this effectiveness may not be visible to teachers. For example, policy makers may deem certain themes (e.g. assessment) important and necessary, whereas teachers may find such topics disengaging and repetitive. Anecdotal observations indicate that it is important for teachers to see the connection between INSET and their classrooms: the more practical INSET is, the more visible the impact will be. Teachers and teacher trainers in the model above have different relations with INSET impact. Teachers tend to look for improvement and development in their classroom practices, whereas teacher trainers seek twofold impact on teachers and on their students. As Kennedy (2014) noted, CPD frameworks should be teacher and student driven. Effective INSET impact is achieved during the training, amplified by longer time intervals between sessions and/or follow-up after the training.

The arrow on top of the three stages in the Figure 10.1 emphasises the trainer role. This role becomes critical in the while stage (darker blue colour). In recent years, the trainer role has become pivotal owing to exponential developments in teaching and in INSET, in which trainers are expected to prepare teachers for multiple challenges (see section 8.2.2). However, the trainer role could be pivotal or detrimental. As seen in chapter 4, trainers’ professional and interpersonal skills play a significant role in achieving success. As noted by a participant in the third cycle, teachers look for a presenter who is ‘very engaging himself: positive and dynamic and always encouraging... This sort of warm friendly atmosphere is something we all need to strive for and we had a great role model for that’. A good example of the potential detrimental role of the trainer took place in the second cycle when the trainer made counterproductive changes that put the entire cycle at risk. As seen in

Figure 10.1, the proposed framework highlights the trainer role in the while stage more than the pre stage (darker blue arrow colour). The reason is because the pre stage in many contexts is pre-designed by a provider and requires minimal preparations by the trainer. The while stage of any INSET programme tends to be the most critical (Lunnanberg et al., 2014) because this is when a trainer can step in to fix a poor design issue, or fail to deliver a well-designed training. In addition, in the while stage, the trainer–trainee relationship is formed, and the nature of this relationship will influence the programme buy-in as well as the effectiveness of the subsequent follow-up stage.

The circle arrow around the visual in the Figure 10.1 illustrates that the proposed framework is situated within socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which states that learning is expected to take place through social interaction and people are ‘formed through their interactions with each other in social contexts’ (Ernest, 1994, p. 69). Training participants co-construct the knowledge while engaged in activities (Ellis, 2000; Johnson, 2009). INSET in the proposed framework is viewed as a tool that should help teachers move up within their Zone of Proximal Development to unlock their potential. This can be achieved through an active trainer role that scaffolds the professional development of teachers in a collective ‘socio-cultural perspective’ (Kelly, 2006, p. 506). Examples from this study about the role of social interaction in INSET are given in sections 6.4 and 7.2.1.2.

The circle arrow around the three stages also illustrates the value of technology in the proposed framework in the three stages. For example, ICT can be used in the pre INSET stage to communicate objectives and pre-tasks to participants. During the implementation stage, ICT can serve as a learning platform for sharing content and discussing progress; social media can be used in the post stage for networking and sharing updates on implementation. ICT has a potential to improve the delivery of INSET (Enochsson & Rizza, 2009). There are several ICT tools that can enhance social collaboration in INSET. Integrated platforms, with frequently updated information, are conducive to learning as they facilitate communication and feedback (Daly et al., 2009; Venkatesh, Croteau & Rabah, 2014). Finally, e-learning applications include but are not limited to e-examination, e-drills, e-

counselling, and e-books (Yucel, 2006, p. 125). ICT was used to support the delivery of this study.

A form of ICT utilisation in INSET is seen in blended learning, which is increasingly used as a learning model in educational institutions (Tinio, 2010). It combines e-learning solutions, as a mode of learning, with traditional classroom practice. In blended learning, students or trainees can be assigned online as well as printed materials, experience virtual education, and be subscribed to an e-mailing list. The first and second cycles of my study were mainly face-to-face; the third cycle employed blended learning. The training was delivered in physical environment over four weeks, and it included an online channel between the face-to-face sessions to communicate with trainees and share training content and ideas. Examples of blended learning use to support the delivery of the third cycle are given in section 5.4.

The arrow circle also shows that reflective practice is proposed in the framework as an encompassing element for the three stages. Reflection has gained emphasis over the last few decades throughout various fields of professional practice and education (Finlay, 2008). Reflection has been defined from different perspectives. Copland, Ma, and Mann (2009, p. 18) viewed it as ‘the ability to analyse an action systematically and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the action in order to improve practice’. Teacher reflection is not limited to a certain phase or procedure of teacher education. It goes beyond routine actions and takes a holistic approach of meeting and responding to problems; this is what defines being a teacher (Dewey, 1933). As noted by Larrivee (2000, p. 293), ‘unless teachers develop the practice of critical reflection, they stay trapped in unexamined judgments, interpretations, assumptions, and expectations’. Reflection received further attention in Schon (1983), who differentiated between reflection *in* and *on* practice. With reflection *on* practice, teachers review past experiences to gain insights for future directions, whereas reflection *in* practice is an on-going practice during INSET and requires examining practices and being responsive to problems. Both types of reflection are supported in the proposed framework. Reflection can happen *in* the training and *on* the training. See sections 3.8 and 7.2.3 for further discussion of RP in this study.

Below is a short list of possible reflective actions that can be taken in the proposed framework.

Table 10.2: Reflective practice opportunities

Pre	While	Post
Focus groups Discuss syllabi Mind maps	Trainee journals Recording lessons Peer observations	Action plans Trainer observations Follow-up meetings

Experiential learning (section 3.6.3) is promoted in the proposed framework, and it is intertwined with reflective practice (Maudsley & Strivens, 2000; Miettinen, 2000). Experimentation falls within Dewey’s criteria for reflection (Rodgers 2002). For Dewey, reflection must contain action, as ‘reflection that does not lead to action falls short of being responsible’ (Rodgers, 2002, p. 255).

Finally, follow up is a necessary undertaking in the post-training stage in the framework. The application of specific follow-up activities in the post stage is critical to success (Martin, 2010). Training follow-up has the following purposes: 1) to ensure the implementation of the training outcomes, and 2) to evaluate the impact of the training. Saks and Belcourt 2006 (as cited by Martin, 2010, p. 254) reported that organisations rarely incorporate follow-up activities into their training programmes; many organisations are unsure how to accomplish effective training follow-up. Martin (2010, p. 254) recommended several follow-up activities with proven usefulness, such as ‘action plans, performance assessment, peer meetings, [and] supervisory consultations’. Anecdotally, I have found that action plans represent a good self-planning tool that promotes a sense of responsibility over impact among the participants. Although action plans are generally developed in the while stage, they are meant to be implemented in the post stage. They comprise a good tool to connect while and post stages; teachers can be invited to share the outcomes of their action plans after the training. Furthermore, peer meetings offer excellent opportunities to reflect on the application and share success stories and solutions to obstacles. See section 7.2.1.5 for further discussion of the role of INSET follow-up in this study.

10.3 Conclusion

There is no perfect model or framework that can be a panacea for INSET challenges. Criticism of current models for CPD/INSET has acknowledged the need to have more practical models that provide applicable knowledge. My proposed framework is based on my INSET experience during the six-year course of my study. It is purely an attempt to put together a contextualised but brief overview of how INSET may be carried out effectively. This attempt is subject to further development and review. In adopting socio-cultural theory as a guiding scheme, the framework emphasised the role of interaction. Meanwhile, ICT was believed to facilitate communication and content delivery. The framework assertively called for the provision of reflective opportunities in the different stages. It was argued that for any INSET to have a lasting impact, it should build on reflective practices. Finally, as noted by Schostak (2009, p. 72), there is no 'single, singular or correct way of doing CPD'. The content, context, and processes chosen for any INSET programme should be based on the needs, learning styles, and personal preferences of participants.

11. Afterword

When I started this study almost six years ago, I wanted to improve my own practice as a language teacher trainer and help other practitioners in the local context. My interest in this study was stimulated by anecdotal data on teachers' low motivation and minimal engagement in INSET. I sought to gain a deeper understanding of the INSET world around me, which led me to experimenting on potential solutions in a three-cycle AR journey.

In bringing this study to its conclusion, I find it imperative to recognise the role of AR in facilitating its design and implementation. I have always believed that collaboration with practitioners in the field, combined with reflection, can bring about change. Therefore, I was confident, at the outset of my research, that AR was the most appropriate methodology for my investigation. I gravitated to AR because of its reiterative and participatory nature. Together with the teacher participants in my three cycles, we identified how we can improve our practices, implemented our solutions, and reflected on the impacts together. AR offered me a unique opportunity to play an active insider role in my study. This role meant that I was responsive to predictable and unpredictable developments. I was able to direct my research in the proper direction to answer my study's overarching question, 'How can I improve my practice, as a teacher trainer, to enhance INSET in Qatar?'

As fulfilling as AR was, it entailed employing several tools at each stage. Immediate data analysis was often necessary to inform the next actions. This necessitated working on the data and preparing for the subsequent sessions at the same time. At times, I found this hard to manage with my full-time employment status. Undoubtedly, my decision to work on my PhD part-time paid off in spades for me during this stage. In addition, the adoption of inductive content analysis approach in data analysis facilitated the tracking of the emerging themes across the different stages and cycles of the study.

My involvement in INSET on a national level resulted in several media appearances. In addition, this study entailed liaising with several institutions and many teachers. As seen in the description of the cycles in chapter 5, the study involved networking and sharing best practices across the different events of the

study. Towards the end of the study, I founded a local network (www.TEFLQatar.org), which has now more than 400 members from all the TESOL institutions in Qatar. The network is an IATEFL associate and is managed and led by practitioners (see Appendix 15). Finally, and towards the end of this study in 2018, Qatar's MoE has decided to rewrite the English language standards and contracted Cambridge Assessment to carry out this task. I was contracted by MoE as a quality assurance expert to review the new standards and provide feedback on the type of INSET they require. The preliminary results of the study were also presented at two international conferences in Japan (May 2016) and England (April 2018). The above highlights are not mentioned here for self-publicity but rather to illustrate how my PhD has honed my INSET experience and facilitated my contributions within the local context. Needless to say that further actions will be taken to disseminate the findings of the study in the local context and beyond. Among others, I will give copies of my thesis to the local stakeholders and will seek to publish the findings in a reputable journal.

The scope of the study was the INSET practices in the Qatari context. Such practices were vague and under-researched when I first embarked on this academic endeavour. It was evident in the results of the study that the local context had several challenges with its INSET programmes. To my knowledge, this work is the first AR study to investigate INSET in Qatar. I hope the results of my research will provide grounds for future studies in the local context.

The results gained in this study are similar to the findings of other studies in the field. However, the proposed framework was an attempt to provide trainers in the local context with a clear guiding tool that could inform their practices and assist them in capitalising on my findings. The overall hope is to offer teachers with better INSET opportunities that align theory with practice.

Adopting AR for my study meant interacting with more than 150 participants. Through this interaction, I was able to explore their views and witness their commitment to the betterment of their teaching skills. Indeed, this was an enlightening experience for me that made me realise how vital our role as trainers is. After all, teacher education is parallel to teaching, and if we, as trainers, fail at

improving teachers' skills, then we fail at improving our students' performance. INSET should encourage innovation rather than address deficits in teachers' skills and knowledge. Therefore, it is imperative that INSET trainers perform their role effectively to ensure that they are preparing teachers to fulfil their duties efficiently. I hope that my experience will encourage other INSET practitioners to explore, reflect on, and improve their practices.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: World Education Ranking (2009)

World education ranking (2009)			
Country Name	Reading score	Maths score	Science score
OECD average	493	496	501
Shanghai-China	556	600	575
Korea-South	539	546	538
Finland	536	541	554
Hong Kong-China	533	555	549
Singapore	526	562	542
Canada	524	527	529
New Zealand	521	519	532
Japan	520	529	539
Australia	515	514	527
Netherlands	508	526	522
Belgium	506	515	507
Norway	503	498	500
Estonia	501	512	528
Switzerland	501	534	517
Poland	500	495	508
Iceland	500	507	496
United States	500	487	502
Liechtenstein	499	536	520
Sweden	497	494	495
Germany	497	513	520
Ireland	496	487	508
France	496	497	498
Chinese Taipei	495	543	520
Denmark	495	503	499
United Kingdom	494	492	514
Hungary	494	490	503
Portugal	489	487	493
Macao-China	487	525	511
Italy	486	483	489
Latvia	484	482	494
Slovenia	483	501	512
Greece	483	466	470
Spain	481	483	488
Czech Republic	478	493	500
Slovak Republic	477	497	490
Croatia	476	460	486
Israel	474	447	455
Luxembourg	472	489	484
Austria	470	496	494
Lithuania	468	477	491
Turkey	464	445	454
United Arab Emirates	459	453	466
Russian Federation	459	468	478
Chile	449	421	447
Serbia	442	442	443
Bulgaria	429	428	439

World education ranking (2009)			
Country Name	Reading score	Maths score	Science score
Uruguay	426	427	427
Mexico	425	419	416
Romania	424	427	428
Thailand	421	419	425
Trinidad and Tobago	416	414	410
Colombia	413	381	402
Brazil	412	386	405
Montenegro	408	403	401
Jordan	405	387	415
Tunisia	404	371	401
Indonesia	402	371	383
Argentina	398	388	401
Kazakhstan	390	405	400
Albania	385	377	391
Qatar	372	368	379
Panama	371	360	376
Peru	370	365	369
Azerbaijan	362	431	373
Kyrgyzstan	314	331	330

Countries are ranked in descending order of percentage of 15-year-olds at Levels 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
Source: OECD PISA database 2009. www.OECD.org

تسهيل مهمة القائم بالبحث الميداني في المدارس

المحترم

السيد : مدير المدرسة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

نود إحاطتكم علما بأن الباحث / بصدد إجراء دراسة ميدانية في مدرستكم وبياناتهم كالتالي :

- جهة البحث : - جامعة ووريك البريطانية (الباحث محاضر في جتمععة قطر)
- عنوان البحث : تصميم وقياس مدى تأثير برنامج تدريبي لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية- مشروع بحث إجرائي في المدارس القطرية (رسالة دكتوراة)
- هدف البحث : سيكون له الفائدة في الوقوف على أهم تحديات التطوير المهني لمدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية في قطر والخروج بتوصيات ومعايير لنجاح البرامج المقدمة مستقبلا.
- عينة البحث : مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس المستقلة
- التاريخ: 1/12/2014-1/12/2015

عليه ، يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحث ، علما بأن البيانات ستكون سرية ولأغراض البحث العلمي ..

مع شكرنا لحسن تعاونكم معنا

د. عبدالعزيز علي السعدي

مدير مكتب تحليل السياسات والأبحاث

من الكواري
نور

Appendix 3: Ethical Approval from Qatar University



Qatar University Institutional Review Board
QU-IRB

November 16, 2014

Mr. Mohammad Manasreh
Department of English
Foundation Program
Qatar University
Tel.: 55397757
Email: m.manasreh@qu.edu.qa

Dear Mr. Mohammad Manasreh,

Sub.: Research Ethics Review Exemption

Ref.: Project titled, "The design and impact of an applied linguistics in-service teacher training programme on ICT: An action research study in Qatari schools"

We would like to inform you that your application along with the supporting documents provided for the above proposal, is reviewed and having met all the requirements, has been exempted from the full ethics review.

Please note that any changes/modification or additions to the original submitted protocol should be reported to the committee to seek approval prior to continuation.

Your Research Ethics Approval No. is: **QU-IRB 385-E/14**

Kindly refer to this number in all your future correspondence pertaining to this project.

Best wishes,

K. Alali

Dr. Khalid Al-Ali
Chairperson, QU-IRB



Appendix 4: Informed Consent Forms



SCHOOL CONSENT FORM

*Centre for Applied Linguistics
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK*

**Researcher: Mohammad Manasreh
Warwick ID number: 1165368**

Project title: Improving ELT teacher training practices through planning, design and implementation of an ICT-supported INSET programme: An action research study in Qatar

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the project that the Warwick PhD student, Mohammad Manasreh, will be conducting with teachers attending in-service training. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.

I agree to confer the student-researcher the permission to conduct his research with teachers at the school.

I understand that my information will be held and processed for the following purpose:

- To be used anonymously for a PhD project and submitted for assessment.

I understand that the researcher role in the planning phase is to observe English classes for research purposes without any evaluative aims.

I understand that the researcher in the intervention stage will deliver a training session to teacher participants and will observe lessons to evaluate the impact of the training.

I understand that the data collection methods will be through teachers' journals, a survey, interviews, focus groups, and classroom observation.

I understand that participants will be informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures to be followed, the main features of the design of the study including methodology and data collection tools and any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project.

I understand that the fundamental rights and dignity of participants will be respected without any discrimination.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

School principal

Mohammad Manasreh
Researcher
University of Warwick

Date: _____



TEACHER CONSENT FORM FOR OBSERVATION

*Centre for Applied Linguistics
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK*

**Researcher: Mohammad Manasreh
Warwick ID number: 1165368**

Project title: Improving ELT teacher training practices through planning, design and implementation of an ICT-supported INSET programme: An action research study in Qatar

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the project that the Warwick PhD student, Mohammad Manasreh, will be conducting with teachers attending in-service training. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.

I agree to confer the student-researcher the permission to observe some of my English language classes in which I am a teacher.

I understand that my information will be held and processed for the following purpose:

- To be used anonymously for a PhD project and submitted for assessment.

I understand that the researcher role is to observe the lesson for research purposes without any evaluative aims.

I understand that the data collection methods in this study will be through teachers' journals, a survey, interviews and focus groups and classroom observation.

I understand that participants will be informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures to be followed, the main features of the design of the study including methodology and data collection tools and any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project.

I understand that the fundamental rights and dignity of participants will be respected without any discrimination.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Observed teacher

Mohammad Manasreh
Researcher
University of Warwick

Date: _____



TEACHER CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN TRAINING

*Centre for Applied Linguistics
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK*

**Researcher: Mohammad Manasreh
Warwick ID number: 1165368**

Project title: Improving ELT teacher training practices through planning, design and implementation of an ICT-supported INSET programme: An action research study in Qatar

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the project that the Warwick PhD student, Mohammad Manasreh, will be conducting with teachers attending in-service training. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.

I agree to take part in the training course that will be offered by the student-researcher. I agree to confer the student-researcher the permission to use the training materials including my daily journals for research purposes.

I understand that my information will be held and processed for the following purpose:

- To be used anonymously for a PhD project and submitted for assessment.

I understand that the training will consist of 48 training hours.

I understand that the data collection during the implementation of the intervention will be through teachers' journals, a survey, interviews and focus groups.

I understand that participants will be informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures to be followed, the main features of the design of the study including methodology and data collection tools and any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project.

I understand that the fundamental rights and dignity of participants will be respected without any discrimination.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Teacher trainee

Mohammad Manasreh
Researcher
University of Warwick

Date: _____



TEACHER CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

*Centre for Applied Linguistics
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK*

**Researcher: Mohammad Manasreh
Warwick ID number: 1165368**

Project title: Improving ELT teacher training practices through planning, design and implementation of an ICT-supported INSET programme: An action research study in Qatar

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the project that the Warwick PhD student, Mohammad Manasreh, will be conducting in the Gulf Training Centre with teachers attending in-service training. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have.

I agree to take part in the training evaluation interview. I agree to confer the student-researcher the permission to use the interview data for research purposes.

I understand that my information will be held and processed for the following purposes:

- To be used anonymously for a PhD project and submitted for assessment.

I understand that the interview will be audio taped and that my identity will be confidential.

I understand that all the information I provide will be safely stored in a password protected folder and only the researcher and his supervisor(s) will have access to it.

I understand that I have the right to revise the transcript of the interview and I will have access to the final report.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Teacher interviewee

Mohammad Manasreh
Researcher
University of Warwick

Date: _____

Appendix 5: Overview of the Training Programme in the First Cycle

Course title	Professional Development for Teachers of English
Name of trainer (s)	Mohammad Manasreh
Dates and time of programme	Wednesday, 10 am–2:00 pm September 2014–January 2015. 12 workshops x 4 hours = 48 hrs
Level	Proficient Level / ___22___ School teachers
Course objectives	The course should enable teachers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement relevant experiences for individuals and groups of students based on the Curriculum Standards. • Incorporate information on the background, prior learning, learning needs and special learning requirements in the design of the learning experiences. • Use a variety of strategies that develop critical thinking, decision making and problem solving within English lessons. • Plan and present a range of effective listening, speaking, reading and writing activities, enabling students to engage fully to achieve the objectives of the Curriculum Standards. • Discuss and Learn the Etiquette of Peer Observation
Course Outline	12 Workshops ➔ English Curriculum Standards <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Big Picture of the Proficient Level course. 2. Curriculum standards learning objectives embedded in lesson planning. 3. Strategies for developing thinking skills. 4. Peer Observation and Effective feedback 5. Teaching and learning strategies : Listening 6. Micro-teaching: Listening skills 7. Teaching and learning strategies: Speaking 8. Micro teaching: Speaking Skills 9. Teaching and learning strategies: Reading 10. Micro-teaching: Reading skills 11. Teaching and learning strategies: Writing 12. Micro-teaching: Writing skills
Course Requirements	For the successful completion of the course, participants have to meet the following requirements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Attendance</u>: (At least 80%) Participants will have to attend at least 10 out of 12 sessions. In fact, trainees have to attend all the sessions, and if they need to miss a particular session, they have to inform the PD office and provide legal justification of their absence. However, they should not miss more than two workshops under any circumstances. 2. <u>Punctuality</u> All sessions start at 10 a.m. sharp and finish at 2 p.m. Participants have to be on time either at the beginning of the session and/or after the break.

	<p>Mind that arriving more than 10 minutes late or leaving 10 minutes early for two consecutive times will be considered as one-day absence.</p> <p>3. <u>Assignment:</u> Participants will have to prepare a lesson plan and write a reflection on its delivery (handwritten) ranging from 200 to 300 words. Assignment rubrics will be handed to participants in workshop 2 and the assignment should be submitted to the trainer in week 6 in <u>only hard copy</u>.</p> <p>4. <u>Journals:</u> Participants are required to write a reflection by the end of <u>each</u> workshop. Journals will be collected at the end of <u>each</u> workshop. The trainer will read <u>all</u> the journals but will randomly choose five to six journals to comment on every week.</p> <p>5. <u>Post-test:</u> Participants will have to do a post-test in <u>week 10 or 11</u>. Participants will have to score no less than 60 % of the total mark to meet the passing score requirements.</p>
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Source: Supreme Education Council Curriculum Standards Office

Appendix 6: Overview of the Training Programme in the Third Cycle

Programme Title	Promoting Innovation in teaching reading: The current landscape in Qatar
Trainer	Mohammad Manasreh
Duration	One month (3 workshops + Demo lesson + Online Forum)
Participants	20-25 secondary school/tertiary teachers in Qatar.
Venue	Qatar University-Foundation Programme
Objectives	The course will enable teachers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss common challenges in teaching reading in Qatar. • Identify possible solutions for common challenges in teaching reading in Qatar. • Share a number of strategies for teaching reading. • Use a variety of ICT tools to support teaching reading.
Pre-training	
Thursday, March 31 & April 7, 2016	Focus groups with potential trainees to introduce the training programme design and obtain their feedback on the structure, curriculum, and expectations of the programme
Training	
Thursday, April 21, 2016	First session (Challenges in teaching reading in Qatar) By: Mohammad Manasreh
21 April–April 26 (Online Forum- participants interact and share best practices)	
Tuesday, April 26, 2016	Second Session (Interactive techniques and ICT tools to teach reading) By: Mohammad Manasreh
April 26–May 5 (Online Forum- participants interact and share best practices)	
Thursday, May 5, 2016	Third session (Assessing reading in the language classroom and further ICT tools to teach reading). By: Mohammad Manasreh
May 5–May 23 (Online Forum- participants interact and share best practices)	
Monday, May 23, 2016	Demo lesson on Reading (evaluated by exit tickets and a short survey)
Post-training	
Assessment	A) Reflective essay assignment: Due by the end of programme Participants will write a 250 word reflective essay about the training. They might choose a teaching strategy or an ICT tool

	<p>which they will have used in their classroom and reflect on its application. An example will be shown to participants.</p> <p>B) Presentation: Due at the beginning of each session</p> <p>At the beginning of each workshop, groups will discuss the content of the previous workshop and what they might have applied in their teaching. Group members will choose a spokesperson who will report on their discussion to the other participants.</p> <p>C) Lesson observation: Optional</p> <p>At the end of the training programme, participants will be asked to invite the trainer to observe a lesson. Participants are expected to use one of the strategies or ICT tools, which will have been introduced during the course. This task is optional.</p> <p>D) Survey sent out to teachers at the end of each session.</p>
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<p>Programme outcomes</p>	<p>By the end of the training course, participants will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design an engaging reading lesson plan. • Use a variety of strategies to engage students in reading classes. • Use effective ICT tools to teach reading. • Identify possible solutions to common challenges in teaching reading.
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Appendix 7: Needs Analysis Survey (Administered Online via SurveyMonkey)



Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral degree project to investigate the effectiveness of In-service Teacher Education and Training (INSET) offered to English language teachers in Qatari schools. I would appreciate it if you could help in this research study that is designed to deepen our understanding of INSET in Qatar and to identify, implement and evaluate ways in which INSET can be improved.

It is highly appreciated if you could complete the questionnaire below. It is expected to take 10-15 minutes to finish. I will be happy to share the survey results with you if you wish.

Please note that the information you provide will be completely confidential and the results of this questionnaire will be presented in anonymous form without identifying participants. The questionnaires will only be reviewed by the researcher and only for the purposes of the research. For any enquiries, please email me at m.manasreh@warwick.ac.uk or visit the study's website www.manasreh.com

If you agree to take part in this study please indicate this by placing a cross (x) in the box below.

I agree to take part in this study

Yours sincerely,

Mohammad Manasreh

Data Protection Act:

Kindly note that this questionnaire is part of a doctoral degree at Warwick University in the UK which is obliged to abide by the Data Protection Act of 1998. As such, the information contained on the attached questionnaire will be processed in accordance with the University's ethical regulations and current data protection legislation. Returned questionnaires will be confidential to the researcher and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third party.

Please indicate the number of years of teaching experience you have...

Years	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-15	More than 15
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How many professional development sessions have you attended in the past three years?

Number of training courses	Less than 10	10-30	30-60	60-100	More than 100
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How satisfied are you with the professional development sessions have you attended in the past three years?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not at all satisfied
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1. Please indicate how valuable you believe these professional development topics would be to English language teachers. Please rate each topic on a scale of one (1) to five (5). One (1) being the least useful; five (5) the most useful.

	Least Useful				Most Useful
Topic	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching Vocabulary					
Reading Skills					
Listening Skills					
Writing Skills					
Speaking Skills and Pronunciation					
Classroom Management					
Teaching Methods					
Teaching Grammar					
Giving Feedback and Correction Techniques					
Curriculum Design					
ICT for ELT					
Learner Autonomy					
Assessment and Evaluation					
Lesson Planning					

2. Please rate the outcomes you expect from attending professional development on a scale of one (1) to five (5). One (1) being the least important; five (5) the most important.

	Least Important				Most Important
Topic	1	2	3	4	5
Understand theoretical ideas underlying practice.					
Receive help with particular teaching issues.					
Meet people who have similar problems and share with them best teaching practices.					
Receive an update on research in ELT.					
Understand better how to evaluate my own practice.					

Gain confidence.					
Understand the learning process better.					
Gain some practical ideas.					

3. Please rate your preferred professional development delivery method on a scale of one (1) to five (5). One (1) being the least preferred; five (5) the most preferred.

	Least Preferred				Most Preferred
Training method	1	2	3	4	5
Lectures					
Demonstrations					
Discussions					
Case Studies					
Role Playing					
Simulations					
Brainstorming					
Games					
Questions & Answers					
Reflection					
Group Problem-solving.					
On-site Mentoring and Coaching					
Project Work					
Handouts					
Action Research					

4. Please indicate which factors would more likely help a professional development programme be more successful. Rate the factors on a scale of one (1) to five (5). One (1) being the least important; five (5) the most important.

	Least Important				Most Important
Factors	1	2	3	4	5
Suitable time/date/venue					
Good assessment and evaluation					
Follow-up after training					
Trainer-centred methods					
Trainee involvement in the design and implementation					
Small number of participants					
Support from school administration					
Relevant training topics					
Qualified trainers					
Conducting needs assessment before the training					

Ensuring teachers' readiness for training					
Creating an encouraging learning environment					
Selecting appropriate training strategies					
Ensuring effective transfer of training into practice					
Financial Compensation for trainees					
Free choice to take part in the training					

5. Below are some statements concerning PD (Professional Development). Please read them and indicate how strongly you agree with them using the provided scale.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A good PD programme is collaborative.					
A good PD programme is research based.					
A good PD programme is specific to the classroom.					
A good PD programme has follow-up assessment after the end of the training session to measure the level of attainment on the trainees' side.					
A good PD programme is as short as possible.					
A good PD programme is long and discusses details.					
An effective trainer uses a variety of methods to present their message to their audience.					
An effective trainer is fair and democratic.					
A good trainer serves as a facilitator, rather than a teacher.					
A good trainer recognises the value of experiences and knowledge participants bring to the training.					
A good trainer has clearly defined goals, objectives, and agenda for the training.					
A good trainer finds out what the participants want to learn before designing the training workshop.					
A good trainer actively involves participants.					

6. What kind of assessment do you prefer at the end of a professional development programme?

- a. An exam
- b. A research paper
- c. Observed teaching
- d. Oral presentation
- e. No assessment
- f. Other kind of assessment (Please specify)

7. Do you have any comments about improving the design, delivery and evaluation of teacher INSET (In-service Education and Training)?

Appendix 8A: Sample Workshop Evaluation Form the Third Cycle



PD Committee

Workshop Evaluation Form

Presenter: Mohammad Manasreh

Date: April 21st, 2016

Topic: Challenges in Teaching Reading

Please respond to the following statements by using the 4-point rating scale shown below to indicate (✓) the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

4= Strongly Agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree

	4	3	2	1
1. Objectives and purpose were communicated clearly	✓			
2. Presenter showed a good understanding of the topic	✓			
3. Workshop was done in a way that engaged audience	✓			
4. Trainer responded effectively to questions and comments	✓			
5. I have gained teaching skills and knowledge from this presentation / training session.	✓			

6. Comments:

Very informative. Highlighted issues surrounding our challenges that we often forget in the classroom.

Appendix 8B: Sample Workshop Evaluation Form from the First Cycle



English Curriculum Office

Training Session Evaluation Form	
Session Title: <i>writing skill</i>	Date: <i>10/9/2015</i>
Module: <i>11</i>	Trainer: M.
Participant's name (optional): [REDACTED]	

Using the rating scale below, please indicate the level of agreement with the following statements about the training session you have completed.

4= strongly agree	3= Agree	2= Average	1= disagree
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Evaluation statements	4	3	2	1	Additional Comments
1. The session met the stated objectives.	✓				
2. Ideas were organized and coherent.	✓				
3. The facilitator was effectively communicative.	✓				
4. The facilitator has sound knowledge and understanding of the topic.	✓				
5. The trainees' concerns and questions were addressed.	✓				
6. The use of technology was of benefit to the session.	✓				
7. The facilitator allowed sufficient opportunity for interaction and participation.	✓				
8. The facilitator was informative and added to the session from his personal experience as a teacher.	✓				
9. The content covered was relevant to my needs and added to my knowledge.	✓				
10. I will recommend this session to others.	✓				

General Comments:

Appendix 9: Sample Analysis of Participant Reflection on a Demo Lesson

Demo reflection by M.A (Male of FIP)
40 yrs
Pseudonym R003
PD Committee

Demo Lesson Reflection Form

A2 Role of professional networking in sharing best practices and training success

Teacher: Mohammad Manasreh
Date: May 23rd, 2016

Attending demo lessons is always rewarding and beneficial. Every teacher has their own way even if the activity is the same. I have come out of this demo with ideas that I can implement in my class (as always). The lesson was informative to me, especially in using games to review vocabulary. This has created an atmosphere and students were lively. Students showed great interest and were very active. I believe I could use "spelling game" and "guess the word meaning game" in my teaching. This is just one aspect of attending demos, I mean picking up some tips and ideas. Another important aspect of attending demos for me is networking. Usually you get to know other teachers better, especially in large programs like ours. You also get to know the teacher who is giving the demo more. As a teacher, I get to interact with other teachers and we share our ideas after the lesson. All in all, I feel I got out of this demo with some ideas, especially using games that created a sense of competition between students and added an element of fun and humor to the learning process, which is effective. I also feel that I got a chance to network and interact with colleagues who I do not see often. Emotional impact of A2

Handwritten annotations:

- Left margin: "importance of impact and training context transferability", "importance of the engagement", "importance of the learning environment", "transferability", "importance of the engagement", "importance of the learning environment", "Detail of A2", "importance of peers", "A2", "A1 emphasis", "A1-b competition", "A1-a outcome".
- Right margin: "A1 positive attitude", "A1-a appreciation", "A1-a games", "Sample of A1-a", "emphasis of A1", "follow-up after training", "value return to A1-a impact on learning".
- Internal: "A1", "A2", "B1", "B2", "B3", "B4", "B5", "B6", "B7", "B8", "B9", "B10", "B11", "B12", "B13", "B14", "B15", "B16", "B17", "B18", "B19", "B20", "B21", "B22", "B23", "B24", "B25", "B26", "B27", "B28", "B29", "B30", "B31", "B32", "B33", "B34", "B35", "B36", "B37", "B38", "B39", "B40", "B41", "B42", "B43", "B44", "B45", "B46", "B47", "B48", "B49", "B50", "B51", "B52", "B53", "B54", "B55", "B56", "B57", "B58", "B59", "B60", "B61", "B62", "B63", "B64", "B65", "B66", "B67", "B68", "B69", "B70", "B71", "B72", "B73", "B74", "B75", "B76", "B77", "B78", "B79", "B80", "B81", "B82", "B83", "B84", "B85", "B86", "B87", "B88", "B89", "B90", "B91", "B92", "B93", "B94", "B95", "B96", "B97", "B98", "B99", "B100".

Appendix 10: Sample Assignment from the First Cycle

English, اللغة الإنجليزية		✓	Science, العلوم الطبيعية	اللغة العربية	Arabic, اللغة العربية	المادة الإسلامية	Religion, العلوم الشرعية
<p>Terminology & Vocabulary</p> <p>Vocabulary: Weather, Holiday, Trouble, Beach, Spectacular, Parades, Spend, Relax, indoors, outdoors</p>		<p>Lesson Activities</p>		<p>5. Construct learning experiences that connect with the world beyond school. 6. Apply ICT in managing student learning. 7. Assess & report on student learning. 8. Apply knowledge of students & students & how they learn to support student learning & development. 9. Apply teaching/subject area knowledge to support student learning. 10. Work as a member of professional teams. 11. Build partnerships with families & the community. 12. Reflect on, evaluate & improve professional practice.</p>		<p>Key المادة الإسلامية</p>	
<p>Starter 5 min.</p>	<p>Teacher's Role</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Student's Role</p>	<p>☞ T. gives his Ss. a warm up activity. ☞ T. asks his Ss. to write the first letter of the word of each picture. ☞ T. moves between his Ss. and checks their answers. ☞ T. asks his Ss. where do you usually go on holiday? ☞ Ss. write the first letter of each word of each picture ☞ Ss. write the word "Holiday" ☞ Ss. answer their T. question and mention the names of the places they go on their holidays</p>			



Reflection

I was very pleased with how well this lesson went. I felt I was more prepared to do this, however it helped me to feel that I was organized with my supplies and directions in this lesson. My students really got into the discussion, the book, and the whole concept of having a (holiday). I was pleased to accomplish my goal for the lesson.

The warm up activity went even better than I had expected. I had the students write the first letter of each picture I showed them to identify the title of the topic. It was an easy and interesting activity. The majority of students managed to complete the word "HOLIDAY" after they got the title. I asked about the place they usually go to on holiday. Most of them said that they like to go to Saudi Arabia because it is near.

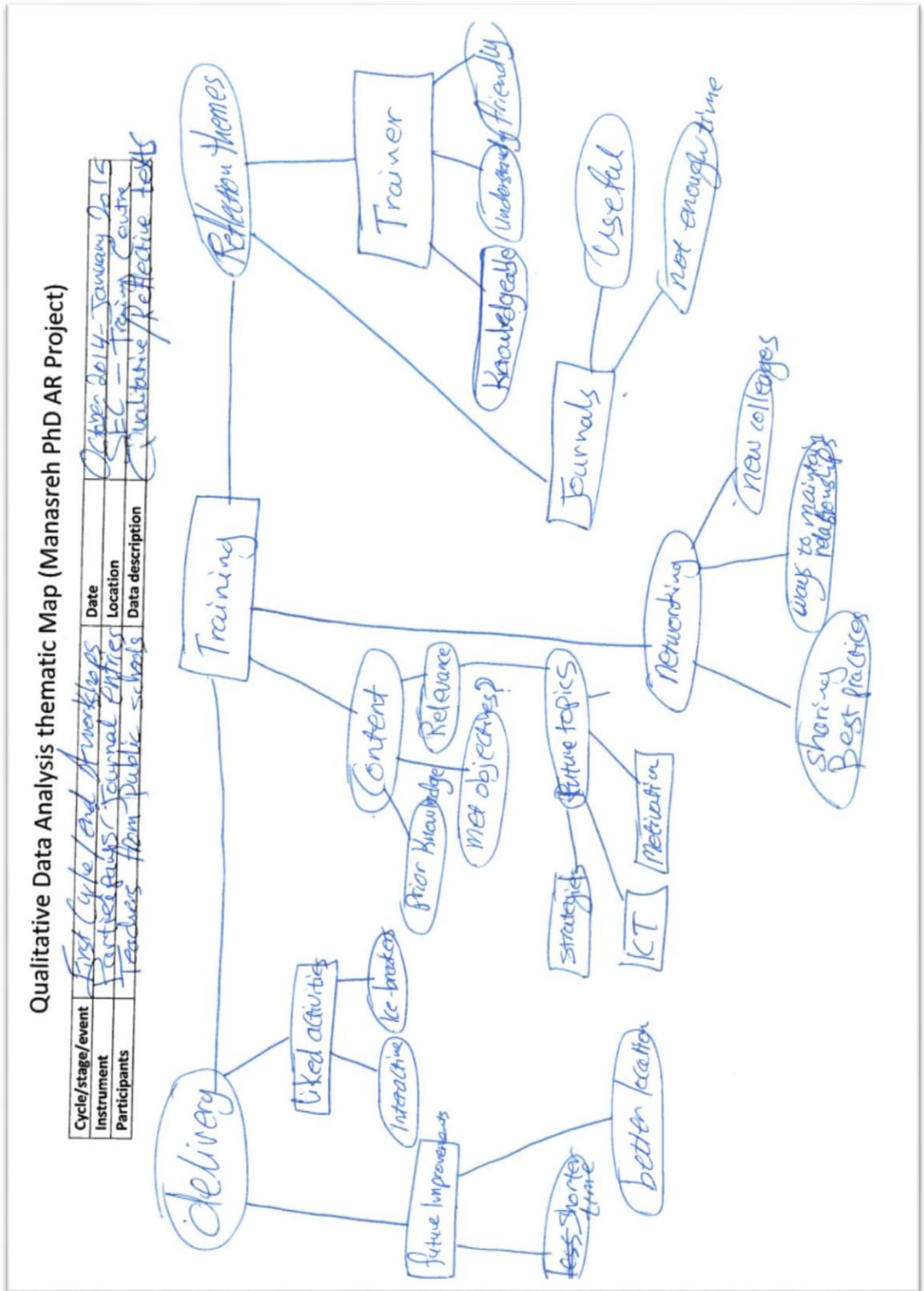
Then I introduced the new vocabularies so that students could recognize the words of the lesson. Then I gave them a listening activity in their student book on page 26. They were to answer 6 multiple choice questions after listening to someone called Dave describing his trip to Brazil to his sister. It was useful to give them some time to read the questions first to help them to answer. After that, we moved to the second activity.

Here, I asked them to work in pairs to read a narrative text about some one talking about his holiday. I asked students to look at five pictures to decide which one is suitable for young people.

The third activity was to write five sentences on a trip they made or imagined. Actually, some students found it easy and wrote some sentences. Others faced a little bit difficulty in expressing their ideas. Therefore I decided to use videos next times to help students express their idea. Videos captures their attention and make them more focused.

Finally I moved around to check their writing. I made some notes about punctuation but there was no enough time. Thus, I asked them to write a story about their weekend activities as homework.

Appendix 11: Sample Thematic Map from the First Cycle (See Braun & Clarke, 2006)



Appendix 12: Sample Text Analysis from the First Cycle

Qualitative Data Analysis Form (Manasreh PhD AR Project)

Cycle/stage/event	First Cycle	Date	24/12/2014
Instrument	End of Course Assignment	Location	SEC - Gulf Centre
Participants	School teachers Sample from WJ	Data description	Qualitative Reflection on LP

Ref	Code	Text	Comments	
1.	F	Actually the lesson started well the video, I played, related to the lesson but I felt that students didn't enjoy it so I stopped it before it was finished. I started explaining the task on board by giving examples.	importance of prior planning ↓ Success factors	
2.		C	Clarity of instructions	
3.				I should have given clearer instructions and handed the students a task to do during watching the video.
4.				
5.	F	During the pair work I discovered some mistakes so I stopped and explained again. In fact the task took more time than the fixed one and I shouldn't have done that because this affected the rest of the lesson.	Probably a future session on providing feedback	
6.				
7.				
8.	B	The task of retelling the story was interesting and high achievers found it nice to retell a story from the 1st point of view. This left a good impression which compensated the previous feeling of being failure.	Satisfaction with positive results Storytelling	
9.				
10.				
11.	A	The task of correcting verbs needed revising past tenses before answering. The idea of diving work among students was a brilliant idea to save time as the task is a recycled one. I consider this the most successful one during that period.	Impact	
12.				
13.				
14.	F	I had a problem in closing the lesson as time has passed quickly and I wasted a lot of time in the first task which I consider wasn't as important as the end of the lesson or as making sure that low achievers got something through revising the outcomes of the class.	Reflection on shortening Prioritising Teaching Strategies	
15.				
16.				
17.	A1	All in all am not completely satisfied with the start of the lesson.	Satisfaction with lesson	
18.				
19.				
20.	B2	The idea of dividing one task among students in several parts was a successful one I will try it again in long tasks as it is a good way to save time.	Group work Jigsaw Lesson shows differentiation Problem Solving Planning	
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				
26.				
27.				
28.				
29.				
30.				
31.				
32.				
33.				
34.				
35.				
36.				
37.				
38.				

Appendix 13: Sample Transcriptions of from the Needs Analysis Focus Groups

Key: The Highlighted parts are a note to self to make links to other parts of the thesis and to include in supporting the quantitative data from the survey.

Red: Points made to represent attitudes.

Blue: Perceived benefits of teacher training

Yellow: Features of good training programmes and perceived success factors

Green: Views on training assessment

‘Yes, to reform the way we teach in class.’ (F2P6)

‘Yes, I came from Egypt and I learned about the new strategies through teacher training.’ (F2P6)

‘Yes, as far it caters for the teacher needs in the class rooms. We have different teachers with different abilities and training should meet the needs of the teachers. Especially we have beginners and proficient and we need to take this into consideration, so it can be fruitful for the teachers.’ (F3P1).

‘Yes, I think teacher training is very important especially for those who are newly appointed and for experienced ones. To be honest I learn new things in training.’ (F1P4)

‘Continuous training for teachers because standards may change from country to another. All of us when we came looked at the standards because they are different and training clarified things.’ (F2 P3)

‘It is very important as it is part of teachers’ professional development. It should be continuous and not to have some training and stop.’ (F3P5)

‘I think training is an opportunity in which you can share strategies with other teachers and you can learn from them in order to apply in our classes.’ (F2P4)

‘Training is important as everything changes here and we have to improve ourselves and our strategies and I would suggest to use modelling. To watch a lesson by a skilful trainer as some people are visual not auditory and we need to store the strategies in our mind to apply them in our lessons.’ (F3P2)

‘Three years ago we were trained by a British trainer who came for two days and the workshop was in a hotel. It was very long for eight hours a day and he trained us on what is called Cagan Strategies...I remember everything that went there because everything was practical. He gave us the instructions and we did everything. The strategy was applied in the workshop not only reading and writing. All the teachers in our school participated and students were dismissed. So, teachers had the time to go to the hotel for the workshop. Because it was practical, we participated in each step. Until now I can remember everything that happened and the trainer was skilful and the school paid a great amount of money to him and he deserved that.’ (F3P3)

‘Sometimes training alters your perspective to teaching itself. Once I graduated I was concerned with what to teach, the bulk of vocabulary and grammar and I imagined the students as a vessel to fill. But After 25 years of teaching and a lot of training, now how to teach is the most important thing not to what to teach. This is I think this is the impact and effect of training on me.’ (F1P3)

‘According to my past experience, I have been teaching for about 20 years, and I have attended so many training sessions, workshops, and conferences. Unfortunately, most those focused on the theoretical part of the learning process rather than the practical one.’ (F3 P4)

‘Most of the trainers who presented the workshops and conferences are qualified and have a good experience in teaching, but the problem that I feel when attending their workshops they forget the actual situations of the real classrooms, and the real situation of the unmotivated students.’ (F1P5)

‘The training courses that I found fruitful were the ones that concentrated on the real practices of inside the classroom. An example of this is the Curriculum Standard training course, Entry level which I attended last year in Qatar.’ (F3P4)

‘I went last month to a workshop on teaching through drama at the British council and the trainer was a writer. The workshop was effective because it makes student want something new that makes them learn and enjoy’ (F1P4)

‘In my opinion the useful training is the one that touches the real situation of our classrooms. And this may include, the environment of the classroom, the students’ needs, abilities and interests, as well as the teachers’ needs and qualifications.’ (F1P4)

‘Training must include real practices that evoke real classroom situations, such as the microteaching sessions’ (F1P6)

‘Any training that meets the teachers need would be useful’ (F2P5).

‘The time is important. When you pick me from school after two of three periods and I have piles of work’ (F3P2)

‘I think any training should be important because I believe the more we teach the more we need to learn. Any workshop should be beneficial especially teaching strategies workshops because the world is developing and we have to change according to the changes in the world’ (F1P3)

‘The useful training is the one that adds to the teachers experience and can be transferred into the classrooms and does not indulge into lots of theories and provides teachers with practical examples and activities’ (F2P3)

‘I remember when I was in Bahrain I attended a lot of workshops on teaching for learning which put the students in the centre of the learning and the teaching process and the workshops were assimilations of the classroom environments which means the trainers start and end their training programmes like teachers. It means they give a starter activity, they share the objective and have a closure and that was useful because we could transfer it and it had a lot of ideas.’ (F3P2)

‘I would recommend field training where the trainer goes to the field and observe and train people and give them feedback in the field itself not to ask teachers to come to a training centre and go back without follow-up.’ (F3P2)

‘I would describe the ideal training is like an ideal lesson. The trainees should be the centre of the training and not only attend and listen. They should be active trainees.’ (F2P3)

‘I like the training that has microteaching because it allows us to share experiences, even when I see my colleagues present simple ideas, this will add to my knowledge.’ (F2P2)

‘A good teacher training programme, as I think, should be a simulation and a mirror to what the teacher exactly experience inside the classroom.’ (F3P5)

A good in-service training programme should stick to the teachers’ needs and the needs of the students as well.... A training programme should make you acquire the

skills to teach your students and to meet the needs of the programme you are teaching.’ (F1P5)

‘A training programme should be full of activities and give you a miscellaneous group of strategies to help you. It should polish and enrich your backgrounds. It should add to you more than it takes from your time.’ (F3P3)

‘A good training programme is the one that succeeds in changing the teachers’ attitudes ... teachers when they come to training they come with certain attitudes whether negative or positive and a good training overcomes the change resistance.’ (F1P2)

‘It is important to have a tool or technique to measure the change like a follow up after the training to see how the strategies and behaviour of the teachers have changed and this is done in the training we attend at the British council.’ (F1P4)

‘I attend a course at the British council which is not effective, but its practical part that you have homework to do it in class and bring back is an effective one.’ (F1P4)

‘Good training programmes must solve my problems. They should give me answers to the problems I face inside the classroom.’ (F3P2)

‘A good training programme is balanced not only theoretical and not only practical.’ (F3P1)

‘They should give an opportunity to teachers or at least some teachers to take part in the planning especially for the central programmes.’ (F3P6)

‘People should think seriously about sending teachers for training in other parts of the world where they have a similar system like England through scholarships or exchange programmes.’ (F2P3)

‘We need to have swap teachers from other countries. They come to teach in our schools and we teach in their schools and as long as there’s a lot of money this is not a waste of money.’ (F2P3)

‘I think policy makers need to be trained as well because they make ‘unwise’ decisions. The one who can innovate and improve learning is the teacher I want them to let us teach but we don’t have time because we are always busy with the piles of documents and paper work. They have to think and plan.’ (F3P2)

‘I think they need to bring people from outside but not only native speakers; people with good CV’s who teach at famous universities abroad and they can add to both trainers and trainees.’ (F1P3)

‘We need experts from abroad with good background in education and experience in training.’ (F2P2)

‘We need a committee to choose the best 20 national trainers and they train all over the country.’ (F1P5)

‘All training is focusing on teachers...but the students need training also...all teachers here in Qatar complain about motivation. Students need to be trained also on the correct learning behaviour. Teams can go to school and train students.’ (F1P1)

‘They should do something for students motivation because they all the time listen to their mobiles.’ (F1P1)

‘The problem is not a matter of teacher training but student motivation.’ (F1P4)

‘We need to have teams to go into classes to help teachers motivate students.’ (F3P2)

‘90% of the teachers are residents not nationals and only nationals are chosen. Teachers should participate in decision making and taking to help training succeed.’ (F3P6)

‘The practical side should be more than the theoretical side.’ (F3P5)

‘Avoid long periods.’ (F2P3)

‘Avoid repeating the same thing. Teachers will look negatively at training if they find themselves repeating the same thing again without change.’ (F3P3)

‘We need better venues.’ (F1P6)

‘More microteaching’ (F2P4)

‘Avoid long time.’ (F2P4)

‘Avoid mixing teachers as some ladies don’t like to go to training with male teacher’s’ (F3P3)

‘Making training optional .’ (F2P5)

‘Providing foods and meals.’ (F1P1)

‘Free food is a perfect way to the mind.’ (F1P1)

‘Field trips.’ (F2P3)

‘Travel to another native country.’ (F2P2)

‘Having different trainers for the same course. I went to a 32 week course with one trainer. How come!’ (F1P6)

‘Not too many trainings around the same time’ (F3P1)

‘Teacher training programmes should avoid instructing and informing teachers about the theories of teaching and learning that have been concluded so far. They should provide the teachers with the techniques and strategies on how to apply them. And through this, in my opinion, a more effective impact on teaching and learning can be achieved.’ (F3P3)

The key word is attitude, if the workshop succeeds in changing attitudes, I will transfer what I have learned into my classroom. If I don’t change my attitude, I will not change my behaviour.’ (F1P2)

‘Most of our students are kinaesthetic and why don’t we take advantage of this.’ (F1P3)

‘Training needs following and the trainer must follow up the trainee. Why trainers don’t visit us in our schools, for example, to see if we are following what is being done in the workshops or not...these visits should take place during the training.’ (F3P5)

‘Sometimes I want to change, but I don’t know how to change and that’s the importance of training.’ (F1P1)

‘Microteaching is very important because we are seeing something that’s happening in the classroom and how teachers are implementing things.’ (F2P5)

‘I think microteaching should be in class with students not in front of trainees.’ (F2P6)

‘I owe my experience to the training programmes which I have attended inside and outside Qatar.’ (F1P2)

‘Training should be related to situations in class... this is the time to do rather than talk.’ (F1P6)

Appendix 14: Sample Interview Transcription

Reading Workshops Conducted by Mohammed Manasreh

31 March, 27 April, 23 May 2016

ES: During the brainstorming tasks, what challenges came up regarding reading issues in Qatar?

CM: Though there are many wonderful aspects of the Qatari culture with its rich history, the habit of reading for pleasure is not one of them. The first government schools only opened in the 1950s. Girls' schools were even later. Prior to that, learning primarily took place in mosque schools and much of it was rote learning. However, the Arab and Gulf culture has an abundant oral tradition of passing on information. This partially explains why the culture of reading for pleasure has not taken root. The other problem is language issues. Qatari students don't read in their own language so reading in a second language is seen as a burden. We also shared how very important reading for pleasure can be an integral part of developing one's own culture of reading and the mastery of it. Reading can help increase both fluency and accuracy in first and second languages.

ES: Why is reading not an important part of local culture?

CM: As I just mentioned, Qataris do not read very much, instead they mostly gather together in a majlis and talk about a variety of subjects. The Qatari majlis is a designated place where men get together, usually next to the family home in separate building. They usually do this at least once a week or more often on a nightly basis. There, they drink tea and coffee, talk about every topic under the sun, do business, have dinner together, and generally enjoy one another's company. This gender-segregated community/family activity strengthens family bonds and friendships. Many women also have a women's majlis in the family home, but this tradition is becoming increasingly rare as more and more women prefer to meet each other in one of the many very popular shopping malls. These traditional practices based on conversation and discussion leave little time for reading. Among the younger generation, social media and apps are also eroding this majlis tradition. Young people prefer to communicate via social media websites like Snapchat and What's App. They don't have much time for reading.

ES: How useful do you think the articles on education in Qatar articles were?

CM: Very useful, as they set the context showing different points of view describing the educational system in Qatar. After a quick read-through of the articles, we discussed the issues presented and tried to come up with possible solutions. Most of us felt that because of the constantly changing educational policies, Qatari students have not benefitted from these educational transitions. They've resulted in a lot of problems, particularly language issues. The PISA survey results underscore some of these issues.

ES: PISA findings reveal that Qatari students consistently underperform and have very low rankings. Why does this happen?

CM: Qatar has been undergoing great educational changes, going from an Arabic-medium educational system to incorporate an English-based CLIL curriculum in some subjects. This started around 2001. Also the Supreme Education Council (SEC), which introduced an independent school type of education, replaced the Ministry of Education. Then, after the Arab Spring of 2011, many nationals clamoured for the reintroduction of Arabic as the primary language of instruction so the educational system reverted back to Arabic. This has caused confusion in schools and among

educators. Recently, the SEC itself has been replaced by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. It's sort of come full circle. As a result of all these changes, Qatari students have had a lot of inconsistencies in their schooling.

ES: Do you think looking at the PISA results was useful for language instructors at the workshop?

CM: Absolutely! Many of the participants at the workshop, who are new to Qatar, did not know about these changes and developments. They felt learning this was useful background information to explain the wide diversity of language competencies they see amongst their students. In groups, we discussed the need for reading to become a bigger part of the local culture and how reading needs to be encouraged, especially by parents reading to their children from the time they are very young. This is something new to the local culture.

ES: The workshop provided a variety of interactive activities. Do you think these went well?

CM: They were extremely engaging. The teachers became very competitive so it was clear they were really enjoying themselves. People love games!

ES: Were there any problems with any of the activities?

CM: Not that I can remember. Just like our own students, teachers got into the spirit of competition and claimed that some groups were cheating! This added to the fun.

ES: Do you think the online forum was useful?

CM: Yes. We were shown how to post threads and share our views on teaching reading. It was interesting to learn what other people thought. Some views were quite surprising. The discussion that followed was also stimulating.

ES: Did you personally learn anything new?

CM: Certainly. From the best practices sharing and Q&A part of the workshop as well as some of the activities. Participants shared some innovative teaching practices and ideas. I particularly liked using the Socratic exit ticket which I plan to use in the future.

ES: What was the focus of the second workshop?

CM: It dealt with interactive techniques and the use of ICT tools to teach reading. What was particularly interesting was the participants' feedback about the first workshop. In groups, we were asked to talk about our views on the previous workshop and how we had employed some of the practices and activities in our classes. Those who had actually done the activities reported having good experiences and positive feedback from students.

ES: Did everyone try these activities?

CM: Unfortunately, no. As some people were bogged down with work, they did not yet have the opportunity to try these out, but said they would in the future. I am one of these.

ES: I understand there was a jigsaw reading task. How did that go?

CM: It went very well. An article was cut up and each group read a different bit of the article and reported on it. Teachers who had never used this technique in class said they were certainly going to try it. I felt it activity was a very effective way to cut up large amounts of text into digestible sections. It makes it less stressful for students, especially local students who are often very reluctant to read lengthy texts. A jigsaw reading task is far more interactive and enables student to decipher meaning and report on what they've read. This type of information-sharing works very well with students in this culture.

ES: Were any other activities presented?

CM: We played charades as well. Another extremely popular and very engaging activity. Like the previous workshop, teachers got very involved and competitive. One instructor noted our enthusiasm and said that this is how our students learn best—by engaging them and enabling them to share and compete. Competition has been strongly promoted in this culture in the past 15 years as Qatar wants world-wide recognition for its sports events. This culture of competition has filtered down into the educational system. This activity clearly showed us that games and interactive activities work well. I really enjoyed tasks that made us compete against each other—highly interactive and fun!

ES: Anything else?

CM: Sure, we discussed the use of various graphic organisers to break down large chunks of text. I personally believe that graphic organisers are a very important and fun way to help students think critically as they are often daunted by the various texts they are required to read throughout any given semester. This makes reading tasks less challenging and more manageable.

ES: On to Workshop Three. Tell me about that.

CM: The topic was twofold: assessing reading in the language classroom and using ICT techniques that can be used to teach reading. What was really interesting about this workshop was the fact that it focused on some recommendations made by participants from the two previous workshops. One of the best group activities was the ‘paper tower’ activity. Each team was given sheets of paper and instructed to build a tower. The groups had to decide the best way to construct their tower. This involved a lot of teamwork and discussion, trial and error. The main objectives of this task were to promote problem-solving and teambuilding: getting participants to work together and construct the tallest tower. Once again, it was very competitive and clearly demonstrated how important teamwork is in problem-solving tasks.

ES: What other activities did you do?

CM: We did a survivor activity. The scenario was a plane crash in the desert; participants were given a list of 10 items and asked to prioritise them in order of importance as to what would be most useful. This was a challenging problem-solving and critical thinking activity. The competitive spirit was alive and well!

ES: What about the ICT part of the workshop?

CM: Well, one activity was using an online Jeopardy game template on a PowerPoint based on the theme of assessing reading. The teams chose a topic and had to answer a question for a certain number of points. Each group was engaged and everyone rooted for their team. Again this activity demonstrated how collaboration and critical thinking tasks can be fun!

ES: Did you use any on-line applications?

CM: We sure did. We talked about interactive web-based learning tools such as Kahoot.it and Socrative which can be accessed by students from their mobile phones. Most teachers were familiar with these applications and commented positively on their usefulness.

ES: In general, were these workshops beneficial?

CM: Yes. They reinforced the practices I’ve been implementing in class and also introduced me to some new ones. One of the things I particularly liked was the opportunities to share information and experiences. I was also very impressed by all the many different activities we did as a group in all three sessions. We did a variety of different reading strategies that I have also used with my students, such as

skimming and scanning, reading for main ideas, inferencing, using competition in reading assignments, etc. All these things made me reflect on my own teaching practice and hopefully I'll be able to continue to apply the many different strategies we discussed in my own classroom teaching.

ES: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

CM: The presenter was very engaging himself: positive and dynamic and always encouraging. He made everyone feel at home and welcome. This sort of warm friendly atmosphere is something we all need to strive for and we had a great role model for that. Basically I found all of these workshops really worthwhile. Some of the workshops here in our department are pretty boring, but this series on reading was both valuable and stimulating. I think all the participants came away with some useful ideas and best practices. I certainly did.

Appendix 15: Recognition Letter from the Current Chair of TEFL Qatar (IATEFL Associate)



Foundation Program
Department of English
PO Box 2713
Doha
Qatar

Dear Mohammad

I would like to thank you for initiating TEFL Qatar, a registered associate of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL).

TEFL Qatar was registered in October 2016.

As we draw to the end of the academic year 2016/17, I thought I would share with you the activities and accomplishments of TEFL Qatar since its official launch in January 2017.

Creation of TEFL Qatar and registration with IATEFL as associate	September 2016
Launch of TEFL Qatar Website www.teflqatar.org	October 2016
Launch of TEFL Qatar Facebook https://www.facebook.com/teflqatar	November 2016
Launch of TEFL Qatar LinkedIn account	December 2016
Membership Open	December 2016
Collaboration on FP Conference	January 2017
Official launch TEFL Qatar at FP Conference	January 2017
E-Newsletter Issue #1	February 2017
Stakeholders Meeting #1	March 2017
Stakeholders to host and promote TEFL Qatar activities	March 2017
TEFL Qatar Workshop #1 hosted by Qatar University	April 2017
E-Newsletter Issue #2	April 2017
TEFL Qatar Workshop #2 hosted by the British Council	May 2017
E-Newsletter Issue #3	May 2017

TEFL Qatar now has over:

300 members with membership cards
2200 Linked In connections with a target to exceed 3000
Over 8000 contacts

The associate has the following local stakeholders:

- College of the North Atlantic Qatar
- Qatar Aeronautical College
- British Council
- Ministry of Education Special Projects

TEFL Qatar has delivered:

Two workshops attended by over 30 people at each event from around the country hosted by Qatar University and the British Council respectively – details, resources, photographs and videos available on www.teflqatar.org

TEFL Qatar has issued three e-newsletters sent to all its members with a teacher profile, articles on teaching topics, resource links and top tips as well as reference to upcoming events and training and development opportunities.

TEFL Qatar communicates to all its members through Facebook, the website and monthly e-newsletters.

The remainder of the year

Plans for the remainder of the calendar year 2017 include:

- Delivery of three more workshops October, November and December 2017 hosted by CNAQ, QAC and Qatar University.
- Issue of monthly e-newsletter October, November and December 2017.
- Stakeholders Meeting #2 October 2017 (host to be confirmed)

The response and comments on TEFL Qatar's activities so far has been overwhelmingly positive and encouraging.

I am thankful to have had the opportunity to develop your concept and make it a reality. We will continue to develop TEFL Qatar further, reaching out to additional stakeholders and growing the membership, continuing to raise the profile of Qatar University as a key stakeholder in TEFL Qatar and the associate's engagement with the ELT community in Qatar and in the region.

Being an associate of IATEFL gives TEFL Qatar credibility, as well as providing access to a source of developmental opportunities and resources, keeping up-to-date with developments in the world of ELT.

Many thanks for your continued support and encouragement of this associate's activities.

Best regards



Justin Kernot
Chair TEFL Qatar