

Peer Coaching in the Kingdom of Bahrain:
Exploring the Implementation of a Professional Development Programme for Primary
Teachers

By

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Abstract

Education plays a crucial role in the Kingdom of Bahrain's "Economic Vision 2030", and the country is now working to reform its education system to meet the economic and social challenges of the 21st century.

Currently the country is focusing on improving schools' performance and enhancing their quality to keep pace with the educational reform plan. International research has demonstrated that teachers' continuous professional development (PD) is one of the fundamental strategies that improves educational quality.

Although the Bahraini Ministry of Education has encouraged teachers to adopt peer observation as a tool for PD, a number of obstacles have emerged over time. Following a mixed methods approach, this thesis describes the design and implementation and piloting of a tailor made peer coaching programme which involved 24 teachers in seven state primary schools. Questionnaires were administered to 14 senior teachers and 50 Grade Two teachers of the First Cycle of Basic Education, along with observation sheets and reflective journals. In-depth interviews were also conducted with 11 of the participating teachers.

This study reveals that such a peer coaching programme is an effective form of PD because the teachers took ownership of the approach in meeting their professional needs. This enabled them to apply strategies imposed by the Ministry of Education, thereby aiding the implementation of educational changes as required.

More broadly, this research demonstrates that if teachers are involved in their professional development provision their motivation is enhanced. A refined version of Wagner and French's model (Motivation, work satisfaction, and change in practice, 2010) is presented to illustrate this effect.

Dedication

Dearest Brother Sameer,

Even though you're gone I know you're watching upon me from the skies above, I want you to know that I am dedicating this degree to you and your beloved wife Awtif. God bless your souls.

It has been my dream since you left to follow in your footsteps of making a change in Bahrain.

Considering UCA's excellent School of Education, I am certain that I will not disappoint you in making that change back home.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This study investigates the introduction of peer coaching as an aspect of teachers' professional development in the Kingdom of Bahrain, specifically with regard to teachers in state primary schools. It originated in response to the difficulties being encountered by teachers in terms of practising the continuous professional development (CPD) strategies which are an aspect of the educational reforms currently imposed by the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

More broadly, the study explores the possibilities of using the approach of peer coaching as a way of facilitating CPD and enhancing teacher motivation to participate in it. In order to interpret my findings, I refine the Wagner and French model of motivation, work satisfaction and change in practice (2010) in response to the data collected in the Bahraini context.

This chapter outlines the catalyst for and the objectives of the study, and provides a brief profile of the Kingdom of Bahrain with an overview of the education system in the country. As background to the context, it gives a short description of cooperating schools and the recent national education reforms in Bahrain.

1.1. Catalyst for the study

The significance of the study arises from the desire of the Bahraini Ministry of Education to enhance teachers' professional development. Although the Ministry has encouraged teachers to put peer observation into practice as a tool for their professional development, a number of obstacles and difficulties to this have emerged over time and need to be considered. In order to overcome these difficulties, this study explores whether the implementation and evaluation of a peer coaching programme for primary school teachers might be an effective way forward.

More personally, a catalyst for this study was the strong association between the topic chosen and my earliest experience as a subject teacher, teaching English Language, in the first cycle of Basic Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain state primary schools. I found that, when asked to put peer teaching observation into practice, the teachers working with me in the state primary school expressed considerable dissatisfaction.. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to return to the state primary schools in Bahrain to carry out the present study.

As will be discussed in more detail below, the aims of the study are:

- a. to investigate the use of peer coaching as an element of educational change in the Bahraini context.
- b. to investigate the use of peer coaching as a means of enhancing teacher motivation to engage in CPD in a broader context.
- c. to consider how the findings relate to the use of peer coaching as a CPD strategy in a broader context.

In order to achieve these aims, I set the following goals:

1. To explore the thoughts, intent, skills and obstacles of teachers teaching Grade Two in state primary schools in the First Cycle of Basic Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, regarding peer observation;
2. To investigate the thoughts, intent, skills and obstacles of senior teachers from the same state primary schools mentioned above, regarding peer observation;
3. To design a CPD programme involving peer coaching based on a review of relevant literature, and my professional experience in state primary schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain;
4. To implement the programme with class teachers teaching in state primary schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain;
5. To evaluate the programme; and
6. To report the findings to the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain with a view to considering the implementation of the programme in all state primary schools.

1.2. A brief profile of the Kingdom of Bahrain

In this section, I present a brief profile of the Kingdom of Bahrain in order to understand the study context.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is an independent, fully sovereign, Arab Islamic country. The ruling regime in the Kingdom of Bahrain is a hereditary constitutional monarchy, as outlined in the constitution and the Royal decrees in terms of inheritance. The Kingdom of Bahrain is an archipelago in the Arabian Gulf, consisting of thirty-three islands, with a total population of 1,039,297. In 2002, the Kingdom of Bahrain was divided into five governorates (Capital Governorate NO.17, 2002: 1) as shown in Figure 1.1 below. The governorates are:

- The Capital Governorate.
- The Muharraq Governorate.
- The Northern Governorate.
- The Central Governorate.
- The Southern Governorate.

Each governorate is split into ten zones.

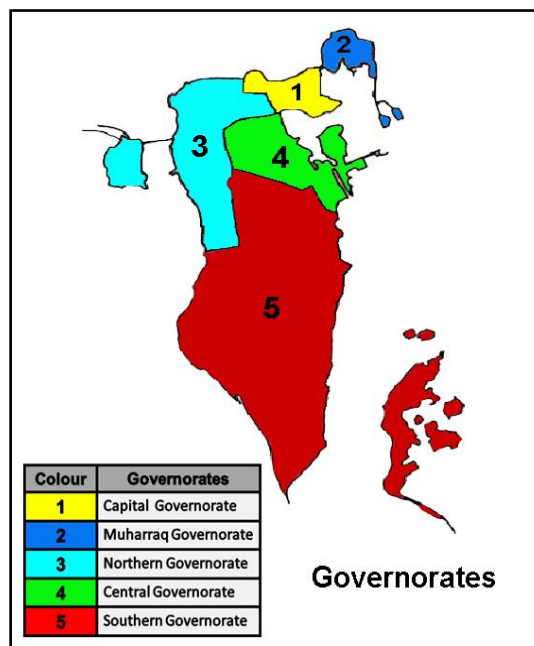


Figure 1.1: Governorates in the Kingdom of Bahrain

1.2.1. Schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain

The schools in each governorate are clustered into groups according to the size of the governorate. These groups are called Educational Areas, and the clustered schools in each educational area are called “Cooperative Schools”. These are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education in Bahrain (Al-Sulaiti & Abdul-Ghani, 2001). The schools in Educational Area Number Two were chosen as the context of my study, for two reasons: there is a high population density in this region and, as a result, there are a large number of primary schools.

1.3. The Class Teacher System

Prior to 1982 children of all ages in the Kingdom of Bahrain were taught by subject teachers and the education system at the time was based on the traditional transmission model. However, in 1982, the Ministry of Education in Bahrain introduced the Class Teacher System project for Grades one, two, and three of the first Cycle of Basic Education (see below), which follows a more constructivist approach. The Class Teacher System project put the child and his/her integrated growth at the centre of the educational process, and knowledge was perceived as an integrated unit. (Sulaiman and Hassan, 1987: 9)

The Ministry adopted four pillars to determine the nature of the development, aims, structure, and content of the educational system:

1. The education system is an integrated system. Therefore, its development should include the objectives, curriculum, and professional competencies for the teachers, the principals and the school environment.
2. The primary levels as the basic education leads to increased efficiency of education at subsequent levels.
3. The children are the centre of the educational process. Therefore, the development of primary education should start from studying their reality, taking into consideration their developmental stages and responding to their needs.
4. The teacher is the cornerstone in the development of the educational system. Therefore, by providing opportunities for teachers’ professional development and broadening their experiences to facilitate the educational process, educational outcomes will be improved. (Sulaiman, 1991) [translated from Arabic by Suhaila]

The philosophy and the aims of the Class Teacher System are summarised by Sulaiman and Hassan (cited in Bachelor of Education programme for Class Teacher System 'between theory and practice': Field analytical study for the programme 1987: 9) are as follows:

- a. Consider the environment and all its components as a scope of learning for pupils.
- b. Emphasise the role of the senses and sensory expertise in education.
- c. Consider the child as a whole, focusing on comprehensive and integrated growth, and making them the centre of the educational process
- d. Respect the child's individuality in education.
- e. Integrate knowledge and present it to the child in an integrated form.
- f. Consider the teacher as a corner stone in the educational process. (Sulaiman and Hassan, 1987)

The theoretical framework of the Class Teacher System is consistent with constructivism. Patankar states that "Constructivism has its roots in Jean Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development" (2011: 6). Piaget's theory of cognitive development advocates that information cannot be given to the learner to "...immediately understand and use. Instead, humans must 'construct' their own knowledge. They build their knowledge through experience" (College of Education, University of Huston: website). A deeper elucidation has been given regarding Piaget's theory in classrooms;

...students must be given opportunities to construct knowledge through their own experiences. They cannot be 'told' by the teacher. There is less emphasis on directly teaching specific skills and more emphasis on learning in a meaningful context. (College of Education, University of Huston: website)

My research will be applied by Class Teachers teaching Grade Two in state primary schools in the First Cycle of Basic Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

1.4. An overview of the current education system in the Kingdom of Bahrain

Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain is compulsory from the age of six to fifteen, and is free in all state schools. The constitution of the kingdom, as mentioned in its article number seven, guarantees the citizens the right to free education for Basic Education as well as Secondary Education in all state schools (Ministry of Education, 2008: 13).

The aims of education in the Kingdom of Bahrain (Report Card, 2008: 22) are

... to develop the learner at the cultural, vocational, scientific, national, emotional, ethical, mental, social, health, behavioral and sport levels within the tenets of Islam, Arab heritage, modern culture and the customs and traditions of the Bahraini society. Education also aims to inculcate in the learner the spirit of citizenship, patriotism and allegiance to the King. (AlSaleh, 2008: 22)

The Ministry of Education in Bahrain is accountable for observing the educational scheme in the Kingdom, as well as being responsible for drawing up educational policies and defining their quality criteria (AlSaleh, 2008: 14).

State schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain are segregated into boys' schools and girls' schools, while private schools and universities tend to be coeducational. In state intermediate and secondary schools, the students, teachers, and administrative staff are of the same gender. However, state primary schools are divided into three types: (i) those with female pupils, teachers, and administrative staff; (ii) those with male pupils, teachers, and administrative staff; (iii) and those with male pupils, female teachers and female administrative staff.

Below is a brief overview of the educational ladder in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

1.4.1. Pre-school stage

This stage is divided into two levels:

1.4.1.1. Nursery level: For children from birth to three years old. Although nurseries are run by the private sector, they are supervised by the Ministry of Social Development.

1.4.1.2. *Kindergarten level*: For children from three to six years old and supervised by the Ministry of Education.

1.4.2. Government/Public schools

Table 1.1, below, shows the formal educational ladder of compulsory education in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Table1.1: The formal educational ladder of state schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain

Age	Grade	Public schools		Religious Education Primary, Intermediate, Secondary	Private schools	
6	1	Basic Education	First cycle Primary			
7	2					
8	3					
9	4		Second cycle Primary			
10	5					
11	6					
12	7		Third cycle Intermediate			
13	8					
14	9					
15	10	Secondary Education				General
						Sciences
			Commercial			
16	11		Technical			
			Applied	Advertising		
17	12			Textiles		

1.4.2.1. *Basic Education (compulsory)*: divided into three cycles

- First Cycle: for pupils from six to eight years old. In this cycle there are three grades (1 – 3) called first, second, and third primary. The system of teaching in this cycle is a class teacher system. These teachers teach almost all the compulsory core subjects, which comprise Islamic Education, Arabic Language, Mathematics, Science, Family-life Education, and Social Science. Other subjects, such as English Language, Design and Technology, Music, Fine Arts and Physical Education, are taught by subject specialist teachers.

The First Cycle applies a formative evaluation system, which endeavours to allow pupils to reach “specific competencies of subjects through a continuous process of teaching, diagnosis and correction” (Ministry of Education, Bahrain. 2010). Pupils in this cycle usually progress automatically from one grade to the next.

Ideally, I wanted to implement the proposed study with class system teachers teaching Grade One, the first level of the First Cycle of Basic Education, in a state primary school for girls, because my initial research (Rajab: 2009), as well as my teaching experience, were related to this grade. However, since having visitors in Grade One classes might cause distractions for the pupils who have just started formal schooling, I decided to introduce the programme to system teachers who teach Grade Two.

- *Second Cycle:* for pupils from nine to eleven years old. In this cycle there are also three grades (4 – 6) called fourth, fifth, and sixth primary. Teachers teaching the second cycle of Basic Education are subject specialist teachers.
- *Third Cycle:* for pupils from twelve to fourteen years old. It includes three grades (7 – 9), but they are called first, second, and third intermediate. All the teachers in the intermediate level are subject specialist teachers.

1.4.2.2. Secondary Education (compulsory)

This stage of education is of three years’ duration. It comes after Basic Education, and is aimed at preparing students for higher education or the labour market. It comprises six courses but these are divided into four levels:

- General level: split into literary and sciences.
- Commercial level.
- Technical level.
- Applied level: split into advertising and textiles.

All students have the right to pursue one of the above curricula, following a science, literary, commercial, technical programme, or a textile and clothing track. The latter is for girls only. The study plan of the secondary level is the credit hours system, where a certain number of credit hours are required for the completion of secondary education. The scientific, literary, commercial and textile tracks require 156 credit

hours, while the technical track requires 210 credit hours (Ministry of Education, 2010).

The Bahraini Ministry of Education, as the official agency responsible for implementing Bahrain's educational policy, is in the process of creating a state school network in every secondary level classroom with IT-based learning. Thus, there are new types of schools emerging in the country. These schools are called King Hamad Schools of the Future, and they were introduced by the King of Bahrain as part of a project which began in 2004. The project aims to link all schools inside the Kingdom with the internet. In other words, the project centralizes the network system through an e-learning portal, where traditional print-based school books are exchanged for interactive e-books, and the traditional classrooms have been transformed into interactive classrooms using technology. Moreover, all academic and administrative staff are being trained for this new method of working (Microsoft, 2005:1).

1.4.3. Religious Education

Religious Education schools are specialized institutes for boys from six to seventeen years old. This type of school only focuses on Islamic studies to provide its students with a suitable background in religious affairs. Such schools, however, are under the responsibility of the Bahraini Ministry of Education and the education system is similar to the general Basic and Secondary Education schools regarding admission age and the period of study (Ministry of Education, 2010).

1.4.4. Private Schools

Private schools are a significant aspect of the Bahraini education system, and they exist for students from six to seventeen years old. The schools, which teach different curricula, and in several languages, are supervised by the Directorate of Private Education in the Ministry of Education. However, the Ministry has the right to block any curriculum or textbook that does not comply with the religious and national values of the Kingdom (World Data on Education, 2006: 2).

Private schools are divided into three types:

1.4.4.1. National Private Schools, which are based on the national curricula, or on curricula approved by the Ministry.

1.4.4.2. Foreign Private Schools, which are based on foreign curricula and educational supervision.

1.4.4.3. Foreign Community Schools, which are funded by foreign communities in Bahrain, with the sole purpose of educating children from those communities (Ministry of Education, 2010).

1.4.5. The cooperative schools

As mentioned above, certain schools work together in what is called Cooperative Schools Project. This is described in UNESCO's database World Data on Education as one of the strategies which Bahrain's Ministry of Education has adopted in order to achieve its educational objectives. The project was "designed for schools to improve on various aspects of their functioning and administration through cooperation" (World Data on Education, 2006: 3). Every zone in each governorate in the Kingdom is divided into educational areas, where the public primary schools work together as cooperative schools. The same applies to the Intermediate and the Secondary schools.

The aims of cooperative schools, as outlined by the Educational Documentation Section in the Bahraini Ministry of Education are to:

- Upgrade staff efficiency.
 - Enhance students' scholastic achievements.
 - Increase inter-school exchange services.
 - Exchange field expertise and concepts, and support the practice between participating schools.
 - Increase the impact of pioneering and development projects in educational fields.
 - Extend channels of communication and boost the relationship between school and home. Organize joint events, especially related to participation by the parents as support for the learning process.
 - Implement joint projects to serve the local community and consolidate relations with it.
- (Bahraini Ministry of Education, Information and Documentation Centre, 2002: 94)

In other words, the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain encourages schools within the same educational area to work together. This project is further explained by the Information and Documentation Centre in the Bahraini Ministry of Education (2002: 95):

To avoid individual deficiency, the Ministry seeks to arrive at an integrated structural formula through attempts to combine a number of educational institutions to highlight joint work, laying the foundations for the required futuristic dimensions of consolidated action conducive to increased productivity of the school as an educational institution.

The schools collaborate together in several ways, such as combined activities, school visits (i.e. one-way visits to a classroom), and reciprocal visits (i.e. two-way visits to schools).

As discussed more fully in chapter 3, the study focussed on eight state primary cooperative schools from the same educational area and, specifically, on the Grade two Class System Teachers; that is, those who teach the second primary level. At this level, the teachers carry out both one-way school visits and reciprocal visits between their schools.

1.5. National Education Reform in the Kingdom of Bahrain

1.5.1. Investment in Education

Many studies stress the need to invest in people through education. Joshua Hall, a policy analyst in the Joint Economic Committee of the United States Congress, indicates that “Human capital, (...) is the notion that individuals acquire skills and knowledge to increase their value in the labour market” (2000: 1). What is more, he emphasises the role of education:

Education facilitates the acquisition of new skills and knowledge that increase productivity, frees up resources to create new technologies, new businesses, and new wealth, eventually resulting in increased economic growth. Education is a ‘public good’ in that society benefits from increased education as well as the individual. (2000: 1)

Moreover, Bardak (2005: 2) stresses the importance of human capital for economic growth. He states that:

Human capital is considered a major component in the generation of economic growth; two major factors influence the impact of human capital on growth: (i) the quality of the education and training systems and the resulting quality of human capital, and (ii) the allocation of human resources into the labour market.

Education plays a crucial role in Bahrain's "Economic Vision 2030", which was officially launched by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on 23 October 2008 with the aim of building a better life for every Bahraini (Bahrain Economic Development Board, 2010: 3). Therefore, Bahrain is now working to reform its education system to meet the economic and social challenges of the 21st century by supporting growth and development, and eventually providing greater opportunity for all Bahrainis. Four strategic objectives were set out to realise this economic vision (AlSaleh, 2008:27):

1. Raising the quality of performance in government schools.
2. Improving the performance of the Ministry of Education.
3. Providing the opportunity of education for all, and encouraging investment in education.
4. Raising the quality of higher education and scientific research.

Bahrain's Ministry of Education and Economic Development Board (EDB) work together collaboratively to determine educational reforms, since the EDB's mission is:

... to grow and diversify Bahrain's economy by developing a strategy that supports the advancement of a modern business environment, encourages inward investment and enables us to compete in the global marketplace. (Economic Development Board, 2009)

Therefore, EDB and the Ministry of Education have jointly focused on the development of a globally competitive education system which is in line with the Kingdom's requirements for the job market. This forms part of the 'overhaul' which the education system in Bahrain has undergone since 2005, under the National Education Reform project, which places an emphasis on investing in people.

The National Education Reform focuses on four main initiatives located in Bahrain Teachers' College, Bahrain Polytechnic, Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training, and the Ministry of Education's School Improvement Programme. These are described below.

1.5.1.1. Bahrain Teachers' College

Bahrain Teachers' College (BTC) is an essential element in the national education reform. It was officially opened in November 2008 as an independent college within the University of Bahrain; however, it works collaboratively with the Bahrain Ministry of Education. Receiving 200 students as its first intake, its role is to develop the quality of teaching in Bahrain to the level of the leading nations globally (Bahrain Economic Development Board operating review, 2008: 26). BTC was established and developed with the support of the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore, which is widely recognized as one of the world's leading teacher education institutions (ibid). NIE offers:

... all levels of teacher education, ranging from initial teacher preparation and undergraduate programs to postgraduate programmes in Singapore. (Report Card, 2008:9)

Moreover, NIE is responsible for:

... teacher recruitment, performance assessment, establishing a teachers' training college (including curriculum development) and a professional development framework. (Cherie, 2009: 1)

1.5.1.2. Bahrain Polytechnic

Bahrain Polytechnic was created to cater to the needs of the labour market and, consequently, to meet the needs of the economy in Bahrain. It is financed by the Bahrain Government, and it is considered that this development:

... will benefit the economy by graduating Bahrainis with applied technical and professional qualifications to meet increasing demand created by growth in current and emerging industries. (Bahrain Economic Development Board, 2010: 2)

Bahrain Polytechnic was established with the support of Polytechnics International New Zealand (PINZ), which is a leading consultancy company in the field of education in New Zealand with existing global projects. After the formal opening of Bahrain Polytechnic, PINZ continues to provide its board with advice "on its strategy, operations and performance" (Report Card, 2008:10).

1.5.1.3. Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training

The Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) was established in 2008, with the support of three international associates (Report Card 2008: 9). Cambridge International Examinations assisted in the development of the National Examinations Unit and supervised the first rounds of examinations taken under the new system. Nord Anglia developed the Schools and Vocational Review Units as well as undertaking an early pilot review. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) developed the University Quality Review Unit and supervised the first two pilot reviews.

Four different units work within the QAAET. These review units, as mentioned in the Progress Report Card (2008), are:

-School Review Unit (SRU)

The SRU works independently from the Ministry of Education while aiming to provide schools with external experts and unbiased supervision to assist them in:

- Standards and achievement.
- Personal development of students.
- Quality of provision in:
 - Teaching and learning
 - Curriculum enhancement
 - Support and guidance
- Leadership and management. (Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training: 2011)

As detailed in the Report Card (2008: 17), its responsibilities are:

... monitoring and reporting on the quality of provision of education in schools; identifying strengths and areas for improvement; establishing success measures; and spreading best practice.

The SRU awards the schools on a four point scale: outstanding, good, satisfactory, and inadequate. These are described as follows:

Schools, which have been judged to be 'outstanding', are encouraged to strive for more improvement by sharing their best practice within the school and amongst other schools.

Those which receive an overall grade of 'inadequate' are subject to a monitoring procedure by the SRU. Their progress towards meeting the recommendations in the review report is assessed by a monitoring team which visits the school between six months to a year after the re review. (QAAET annual report, 2011: 24)

During the academic year 2010/2011, as mentioned in the QAAET annual report 2011, SUR's

...main focus for improvement for the schools that have been judged as 'inadequate' is on the quality of teaching, gauging students' progress more accurately and on the quality of their self-evaluation and e-development planning. (ibid)

-Vocational Review Unit (VRU)

The VRU aims to evaluate the quality of suppliers of professional education and training (Report Card 2008:17).

-Higher Education Review Unit (HERU)

HERU's responsibility is to:

... assure the quality of higher education in Bahrain by reviewing education institutions and their programmes. (Bahrain Economic Development Board Operating Review, 2008:28)

HERU is designed to recognise "the strengths and weaknesses of universities as well as to assess the quality of their educational provision" (Report Card, 2008:18).

-National Examinations Unit (NEU)

NEU introduces new examinations for the schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain for Grades three, six and nine, as well as offering independent "feedback on strengths in teaching and learning" (Report Card, 2008: 19).

The aims detailed above demonstrate the vibrant and committed approach to developing a quality education across the full academic range. The fourth prong of the initiatives, described below, forms the context of the present study.

1.5.1.4. The Ministry's School Improvement Programme

At the time of writing, the Kingdom of Bahrain is directing its concerns to improving school performance and enhancing its quality to keep pace with the educational reform plan. The School Improvement Programme (SIP) deals with three specific areas: the schools, the Ministry of Education, and the school-Ministry interaction. The programme comprises five projects – the model of an excellent school, school leadership, teaching to boost education, school performance, and improving the Ministry of Education's performance (AlSaleh, 2008: 17).

The focus of the programme is to put the QAAET's recommendations into practice and to address "issues raised in the Authority's public reports to ensure international best practice is instituted across the school system" (Economic Development Board: 2008). This reflects the focus of the School Review Unit, which forms part of the above-mentioned QAAET. The present study aims to explore how best to support, improve, and enrich teaching and learning practices, besides developing and enhancing teachers' careers.

1.6. Framework of the study

The study is divided into eight main chapters. This, the first chapter, has presented the background and context of the study. Chapter Two is a review of the relevant literature. The third chapter describes the research design and methodology. It focuses on the research questions, methodology of the research, data collection methods, the primary fieldwork, and the designed programme. Chapter Four discusses the findings related to the teachers' general attitudes before the implementation of the designed peer coaching programme to identify their experiences and their perceptions of these in order to inform how best to design and implement the intervention programme and future programmes. Chapter Five focuses on how the teachers implemented the designed peer coaching programme, which forms the basis of the study, and discusses the findings relating to teachers' perspectives and general attitudes towards the programme after its implementation. Chapter Six focuses on the educational changes that have occurred and highlights teachers' perceptions of these changes. It also introduces a refined version of the Wagner and French model (2010) as a way of identifying individual categories and

sub-categories which affect teachers' motivations to engage in CPD. Chapter Seven reflects on the programme and discusses if it might be implemented on a wider scale. The last chapter, Chapter Eight, presents the conclusions of the study and puts forward a contribution as well as making recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

Literature review

2.1. Introduction

Professional development experiences can be divided into two types; formal and informal. Formal professional development activities are those such as “attending classes or workshops, attending conferences, and visiting another school”, while the informal professional activities are, for example, “regular collaboration with other teachers (e.g. study groups, inter disciplinary teams), joint lesson planning, peer coaching, and collaboratively reviewing student work” (The National Middle School Association ‘NMSA’, 2004: 2).

The notion of continuous professional development encompasses when and how all types of PD might be offered and has become a fundamental and vital strategy in enhancing teachers’ knowledge and their professional skills and, thus, in improving students’ learning (Blandford, 2000). According to Craft (2002), its importance has increased in a context in which

Faced with rapid change, demands for high standards and calls for improving quality, teachers have a need, as never before, to update and improve their schools through professional development. (Craft, 2002: 6)

The ongoing national education reform in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the context of the study, highlights the need for teachers to constantly renew their teaching skills and knowledge with the intention of adapting to the continuous changes of educational practice (Bahrain Teachers College, 2011). Thus this chapter begins by reviewing the literature on continuous professional development and its role in educational change. Having established some of the elements which contribute to effective CPD,

the review focuses on two specific professional development activities, the lesson study and peer coaching. The latter is given the most attention as it came to play a key role in the programme described in this thesis.

In discussing professional development from these four angles, I link them to the context of the research undertaken here through nine questions to demonstrate how the literature informed my thinking when designing, implementing and evaluating a peer coaching programme for the Bahraini teachers.

2.2. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The term 'Continuous Professional Development' was introduced by Richard Gardner who was responsible for professional development at York University in the mid-1970s. Livingston and Robertson (2010:187) define teachers' professional development as "a process whereby teachers may be helped to become more professional", and state that:

CPD is about teachers learning to improve their expertise in what they already do or about developing new knowledge and skills and/or new learning and teaching strategies. (2010: 187)

Continuing professional development is about strengthening all aspects of teaching throughout a teacher's career (Ontario Ministry of Education 2004). The national framework for CPD developed in Scotland with local authorities, teacher organizations, the General Teaching Council for Scotland and other stakeholders, was planned in order to assist teachers to recognize and access significant, premium growth prospects "that enable them [teachers] to meet their full potential" (The Scottish Government, 2003: 2). Learning and Teaching Scotland, an online service funded by the Scottish Government, defines CPD as:

...a process which ensures that all educational staff can, at all stages of their careers, develop their knowledge, improve their skills and enhance their confidence and motivation to affect pupil learning positively. (The National CPD Team, 2007)

While initial teacher education is considered to be a sound foundation to begin a teaching career, Livingston and Robertson (2010) emphasise that,

...the dynamic nature of society, together with new ideas and thinking about the learning and teaching process, means that teacher education must be a continuous process throughout a teacher's career. (2010: 186)

I concur with other researchers (see below), that initial teacher preparation is insufficient for a whole career of educational development. Teachers need constant enhancement and development in their professional skills and knowledge, particularly in the light of changing policy. This may be carried out as part of their "in-service" training and also through courses (Gray, 2005: 5). Bubb and Earley (2007) argue that since initial teacher education is not seen to be enough for lifelong professional progress, teachers need to keep up with new ideas and programmes:

It is clear that long gone are the days when initial training and induction were seen as a total or final preparation for a career in teaching, nowadays they have to be seen as merely providing a platform on which further or continuing professional development will be built. Nevertheless, the initial period in teaching is crucial as the experience of the first year is most formative. (Bubb & Early, 2007: 4)

Moreover, Richards and Farrell (2005) cite the importance of professional development for teachers during their working life and for the success of the programmes conducted, arguing that:

The need for ongoing renewal of professional skills and knowledge is not a reflection of inadequate training but simply a response to the fact that not everything the teachers need to know can be provided at pre-service level, as well as the fact that the knowledge base of teaching constantly changes. (Richards, & Farrell, 2005: 1)

During the past three decades, the importance of teachers' professional development throughout their period of service has become evident. For example, the New South Wales (NSW) Institute of Teachers in Australia, which was established to support quality teaching in all NSW schools, describes continuous professional development as a measure which reinforces the teachers "knowledge base and supports your [the teacher's] commitment to effective teaching and learning" (2007: 1). Moreover, continuous professional development helps teachers to construct and revive their skills and contribute actively to their vocational development throughout their professional life (ibid).

In terms of the development of teachers, several studies (e.g, Diaz-Maggioli, 2004, Richards and Farrell 2005, Livingston and Robertson, 2010) describe professional development as a long-term procedure. Diaz-Maggioli (2004: 5) defines professional development “as a career-long process in which educators fine-tune their teaching to meet student needs”, while Richards and Farrell refer to the wider dimension of the professional development of teachers:

It serves a longer-term goal and seeks to facilitate growth of teachers’ understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers. (Richards & Farrell, 2005: 4)

Livingston and Robertson consider CPD as a nonstop procedure during teachers’ careers which must consider diverse factors such as individual teachers having different needs and priorities depending on the stage of their career and their adaptability to change. In addition, they state that

Decisions regarding the nature and composition of any framework for CPD are dependent on what one understands professional development to be and on its underlying purpose. (2010: 187)

Implementing CPD, however, is not straightforward, not least since as Gottesman (2000: 16) points out, professional development begins “...with the assumption that professional teachers want to continually improve their skills and knowledge base”. How to engage teachers in the process of CPD is one of the key issues addressed throughout this thesis. For example, while the literature refers to the importance of meeting individual needs according to individual circumstances and yet, as will be discussed further below, most CPD programmes seem not to take this into account. Research also suggests that in order to be effective, CPD needs to take place over an extended period of time as will be discussed later. It is interesting to note that in the case of changes introduced in Bahrain, teachers complained that the provision of training is insufficient (Rajab, 2009: 68).

It is important to recognise the expense involved in its implementation. Every year, educational organizations in the United States for example spend millions of dollars on all forms of teachers’ professional development during their working period, but nonetheless they “... do not take into account what we know about how teachers learn” (Borko, 2004: 3). This links to one of the initial research questions

How might our understanding of how teachers learn be incorporated into a CPD programme in the Kingdom of Bahrain?

2.3. CPD as a tool for educational change.

Raising schools' standards has become a significant issue in the educational debate of many countries. All those involved in raising the level of education, such as theorists, policy-makers and practitioners, agree that CPD is key to this matter (Blandford, 2000: 1). This issue draws attention to the importance of putting professional development into practice as a technique not only to advance teachers' careers at all stages of their working lives (ibid) but to promote the development of schools and more broadly, to foster educational change. Blandford (2000: 3) describes the major role of professional development in schools as being to enhance teachers' performance, to perfect the inefficient aspects in their practice and to facilitate the progression to change. Professional development thus has the potential to promote individual growth and group growth, as well as the growth of schools themselves (ibid).

Adey (2004: 3) concurs, suggesting the importance of teachers' professional development as the teachers are "...the most important force in the quest for educational improvement". He states that "Professional development of teachers lies nested within school improvement, which in turn is part of the larger picture of educational change" (Adey, 2004: 5).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1992: 6) argue that the link between professional development and educational change

... is not just a matter of better implementation of selected innovations (although it includes this) but more basically a change in the profession of teaching, and in the institutions in which teachers are trained and in which they work. (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992: 6)

The same authors discuss to what extent sustained professional development can influence the teachers throughout their professional life. They emphasise that it affects teachers in three aspects during their career "in the classroom, in the staff room, and in the unfolding of a career". The first aspect can be seen in the expansion of teachers' knowledge and skills, besides the results they bring to their

vocation in the classroom. The second can be seen in the contribution teachers make to their professional society. Finally, the third aspect is demonstrated by the progress and development of the teachers' individual career (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992: 186-187).

Although the above literature shows the importance of the continuing professional development of teachers, as previously mentioned, realising change strategies is a complex procedure because the aims, attitudes and beliefs of stakeholders may differ from those of teachers. Guskey (2002: 381) mentions that professional development is active in three areas "... change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students", and this is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

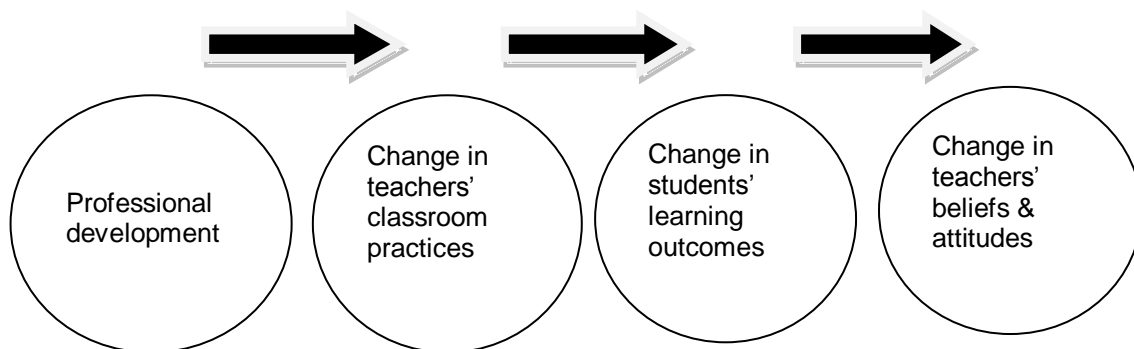


Figure 2.1- A model of teacher change (Guskey, 2002: 382)

The difficulty of implementing change in practice is recognised by Fullan who says that "The crux of change is how individuals come to grips with this reality" (2007: 20). He argues that difficulty in defining and achieving real educational change arises whenever we apply an innovation. He attributes the cause of the difficulty to the fact that:

...educational change is not a single entity, even if we keep the analysis at the simplest level of an innovation in a classroom. Innovation is *multidimensional*. There are at least three components or dimensions at stake in implementing any new program or policy: (1) the possible use of new or revised *materials* (instructional resources such as curriculum

materials or technologies), (2) the possible use of new teaching approaches (i.e., new teaching strategies or activities), (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g., pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programs).

All three aspects of change are necessary because together they represent the means of achieving a particular educational goal or set of goals. (2007: 30)

Taking this point from Fullan and in the context of the current study, I will be seeking ways to develop such processes for the Bahraini teachers. Thus, my second research question is:

How can CPD most effectively be used in order to support teachers to successfully implement educational change strategies?

2.3.1. Educational Change through professional development.

It has been widely recognised that individual development and organisational change are both complex processes involving a number of elements. For example, Clarke and Collins (2007: 162) describe teacher learning as a complex system, which Opfer and Pedder elaborate, stating that,

Complex systems ... assume that there are various dynamics at work in social behavior and these interact and combine in different ways such that even the simplest decisions can have multiple causal pathways. (2011: 378)

Avalos (2010) also describes teachers' professional development as "...a complex process" explaining that it "brings together a host of different elements and is marked by an equally important set of factors" (p-10). She adds that "at the centre of the process, teachers continue to be both the subjects and objects of learning and development." (Avalos, 2010: 17). She concludes that teachers' professional development,

...requires cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively, the capacity and willingness to examine where each one stands in terms of convictions and beliefs and the perusal and enactment of appropriate alternatives for improvement or change." (Avalos, 2010: 10)

Canada offers an example of what happens when teachers are not given the opportunity to develop a sense of ownership in the context of educational reforms

and change. A paper prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2004) presenting the principles and ideas that the Ministry was taking into consideration for developing the excellence of new teachers in Ontario, highlighted the problems encountered by the previous government when introducing a completely new curriculum in 1998. Teacher Professional Activity Days were decreased from nine to four days; at the same time, the time given for "...professional development activities were taken over by report card writing, parent teacher meetings and semester turnaround time". Thus, there were few chances for principals and their staff for shared problem solving, team learning and learning communities. They also suffered from lack of time to keep up-to-date with and to support each other by discussing the progress or problems of implementing new strategies, in order to sustain engagement with the change process. As a result of these difficulties for the teachers, the report indicated that the children's educational scores had also suffered. Therefore, the current Ontario Ministry of Education documented that teacher professional development "... is not just acquiring knowledge or teaching skills, but sustaining motivation and innovation as well" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004: 6). The above leads to the third research question, which is:

What makes professional development more sustainable generally; and what specifically, might make it more sustainable in the Kingdom of Bahrain?

Indeed, Bennett et al. (1992) place individual change above organisational change, suggesting that change is not about forming policies and implementing instructions, but rather "...about the development of personal strategies by individuals to respond to, and seek to influence the impact of, structural and cultural change: personal change as much as organizational change".

Hargreaves is cautious about the mechanisms of application when implementing change. He states that:

Even the most well intentioned change devices which try to respect teachers' discretionary judgments, promote their professional growth and support their efforts to build professional community are often self-defeating because they are squeezed into mechanistic models or suffocated through stifling supervision. (Hargreaves, 1994: 3)

This point that Hargreaves makes is an important element of consideration if the Bahraini educational reforms are to be successfully implemented and transformed into effective practice by teachers. Rajab (2009: 81) has already identified a training need for school administrative staff in the Bahraini context in terms of their understanding of the role of CPD programmes. This is important because school administrators need to work flexibly with teachers during the implementation of educational change.

Fullan argues that successful educational change "...is not just about being right; it is about engaging diverse individuals and groups who likely have many different versions about what is right and wrong" (Fullan, 2007: 40). He goes on to propose ten basic tenets relevant to all change situations:

1. Define closing the gap as the overarching goal.
2. Attend initially to the three basics [vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and teachers' own affective states].
3. Be driven by tapping into people's dignity and sense of respect.
4. Ensure that the best people are working on the problem.
5. Recognize that all successful strategies are socially based, and action oriented – change by doing rather than change by elaborate planning.
6. Assume that lack of capacity is the initial problem and then work on it continuously.
7. Stay the course through continuity of good direction by leveraging leadership.
8. Build internal accountability linked to external accountability.
9. Establish conditions for the evolution of positive pressure.
10. Use the previous nine strategies to build public confidence. (Fullan, 2007: 44)

In pursuance of educational goals, and based on his extensive work over the past thirty years, Fullan concludes that

...change will always fail until we find some way of developing infrastructures and processes that engage teachers in developing new knowledge. (2007: 29)

Therefore, the fourth research question is:

In the context of the Kingdom of Bahrain, to what extent are the teachers able to feel ownership of ongoing educational reforms?

Fullan's recommendations are important in the context of the current study, since they provide a theoretical basis for understanding the mechanisms of institutional

change. In addition, since teachers themselves are the key to the implementation of such educational change through engaging with the processes of CPD, further understanding is needed as to how participation in professional development might be fostered.

2.3.2. Fostering participation in professional development: the role of motivation.

Leithwood reports on research which reviewed how teachers' working conditions combine to influence their [teachers'] performance and motivation (2006: 6). The report aimed to reform "an imbalance in attention, at least in policy circles, to teachers' working conditions" and to understand how teachers' conditions influence their performance and thereby students' learning. He considered that

Although most contemporary efforts to improve student learning have targeted teachers' motivations and capacities, inadequate working conditions seriously undermine any potential" (2006: 5).

The centre of Leithwood's review was "Teachers' internal states – thoughts and feelings" (2006: 8). He states "What teachers actually do in their schools and classrooms depend on how teachers perceive and respond to their working conditions" (ibid). Thus, he suggests that

...A clearer understanding of the working conditions that enable teachers to do their best will also provide insights about how to support teachers' efforts to further develop their abilities and motivations. (Leithwood, 2006: 6)

More specifically, he concludes that there are eight significant internal conditions related to teachers. These he defines as:

- Sense of individual professional efficacy
- Sense of collective professional efficacy
- Job satisfaction
- Organisational commitment
- Levels of stress and burnout
- Morale
- Engagement in the school or profession
- Pedagogical content knowledge (2006: 8)

Furthermore, evidence from Leithwood's (2006: 72) report clearly demonstrates that "the working conditions matter, and that they influence the performance of teachers and therefore the learning of students". I will return to the matter of working conditions in a later section of this chapter and in the discussion of findings.

Fullan (2007: 62) sees the eight conditions identified by Leithwood as "...entirely compatible" with his ten "elements of successful change", stating that Leithwood's list "...is reporting on research findings, while I am proposing strategies to produce the positive end of each of his factors" (ibid).

Guskey (2002: 382) states that what pulls teachers towards professional development is "their belief that it will expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth, and enhance their effectiveness with students". Research carried out by the National Middle School Association (NMSA) of Ohio, describes a variety of teachers' professional development activities, as being:

...a range of formal and informal processes and activities that teachers engage in both inside and outside of the school, in order to improve their teaching knowledge and skills. (Jackson & Davis, 2000; cited in NMSA, 2004: 1)

In their review, Opfer and Pedder (2011: 378) aim to transfer the theoretical framing of teacher professional development "from a cause-and-effect approach to a focus on causal explanation" to recognize why, how, and under what conditions teachers gain knowledge. They observed that,

Relationships between elements in the system vary in scale and intensity come together in different combinations depending on the situation, are often reciprocal, and are always nested" (2011: 379)

A study by Karabenick and Conley (2011) highlights the impact of teachers' motivation to practise professional development, and thus, for change to occur. Based on a research sample of 736 teachers representing 75% of the total sample, the purpose of the research was

...to provide a snapshot of PDM [motivation to participate in professional development] for teachers in general, and math and science teachers in particular". (2011: 8)

The model of teacher PDM (Figure 2.2 – PDM Process model – Karabenick and Conley, 2011: 13), which was situated in a school/societal context, was;

...designed to capture the motivation-related dynamics of teacher PD, which is meant to depict an episode in a process that is iterative and dynamic given the ongoing nature of interventions. (p-13)

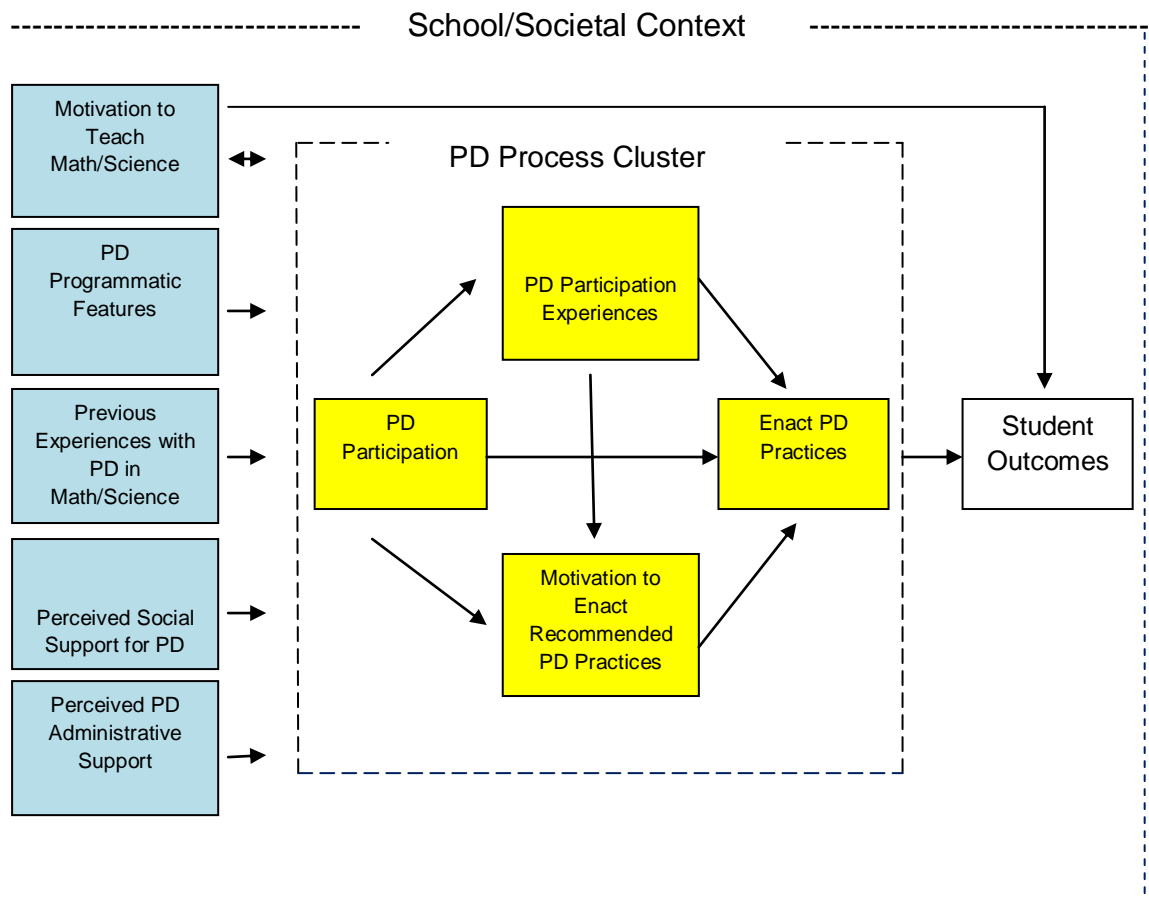


Figure 2.2 – PDM Process model (Karabenick and Conley, 2011: 13)

The PDM Process Model shows that there are five components that have a positive impact on student achievement. Teachers’ motivation to teach as one of these components, has a direct impact on student achievement but also an indirect impact through practices of professional development and indeed, as can be seen, the other four components all involve dimensions of professional development: the professional development programmatic features, teachers’ previous professional

development experiences, and their perception of the social and administrative support to participate in professional development practices – have a positive impact on the professional development process, and thus, on student achievement (Karabenick and Conley, 2011: 14).

Thus the PDM Process Model consists of four elements which were selected as a group of professional development processes. The teachers have the right to choose whether to participate in the professional development process or not. They can also decide on the level of their participation. The model demonstrates that the extent of teachers' participation in professional development has a direct influence on teachers' motivation in engaging in the required professional development practices. In addition, this motivation is affected directly by teachers' experiences of these professional development practices. The model illustrates that teachers' implementation of these practices is a result of their participation, experience and motivation to incorporate them into their teaching. Thus the model shows that teachers' participation in professional development practices has a direct and indirect impact, through their professional development experience and their motivation to perform the imposed practices, on their performance. Their participation in professional development processes is then shown to impact directly on student achievement (Karabenick and Conley, 2011: 13).

Karabenick and Conley correlated the relations,

...between teachers' PDM and their previous experiences with PD, their preferred content characteristics of PD, and what they expect to gain from participation. (2011: 15)

They also studied “teacher characteristics and features of the school context” (Karabenick and Conley, 2011: 15). Thus, they “identified a set of factors that potentially affect the likelihood of teacher participation in PD, engagement in PD and benefits from their participation in PD”. (p. 15)

The data indicates a high rate of participation in professional development by the teachers. In addition, teachers' participation;

...(a) was a positive rather than a negative experience, (b) was judged to be useful for increasing their teaching effectiveness, and (c) made teachers more motivated to participate in PD in the future. (Karabenick and Conley, 2011: 18)

Karabenick and Conley (2011: 7) point to the impact of teachers' positive motivation when engaging in professional development, arguing that the more teachers were motivated positively to engage in professional development "...the more likely they will be to profit from the experience". Furthermore, they demonstrated that;

Teacher motivation in PD is directly linked with classroom enactment of PD approaches, content and skills and it is indirectly related to increasing the likelihood of desirable student outcomes. (2011: 7)

Karabenick and Conley (2011: 7) also demonstrated that teachers preferred to engage in professional development practices when:

- It is practiced to improve teachers' subject-matter knowledge, and in a pleasant and fun way that does not require too much time and effort.
- Teachers are encouraged by the principal to participate in professional development practice.
- Teachers participate in a single or a series of workshops.
- Professional development is delivered completely or partly online.
- Professional development helps the students to learn and improve their achievement as they engage in their lessons. (p-7)

The PDM Process model focuses on teachers' motivation to practise professional development. It illustrates how teachers' continuous participation is a nested form of professional development, and the degree to which their participation has a positive impact which then motivates teachers to further participate in professional development practices which then impact positively on student outcomes.

Thus Karabenick and Conley's model emphasises the dynamic role of teacher motivation to participate in an effective implementation of a professional development practice. I will investigate the relevance of this model in the Bahraini context. However, as it does not address the question of what makes teachers motivated, in the next section I review Wagner and French's work regarding teacher motivation.

2.3.3. Implementing a professional development programme

Research by Wagner and French (2010) identifies three significant elements for teacher motivation. These are summarised as: supervisor support, the nature of the work itself, and co-worker relations. They suggest;

...a dynamic state influenced by interactions between teachers' personal background, their work context, the context of the professional development program, and their perception of changes in the children in their care. (2010: 162)

Because their research is central to this research and to the discussion in Chapter Six, the participants and methods used are described in detail here.

These findings were drawn from a two and a half year study with 37 teachers and 40 teaching assistants working in early childhood classes in the USA. Participants were involved in a PD programme for either one or two academic years. The programme comprised monthly workshops and support visits. Professional development was facilitated by teacher observation, modelling new techniques, discussion of issues and teacher concerns, and generating suggestions for continued improvement. A mixed method approach to data collection included written evaluation forms and interviews with a subset of ten teachers at the end of the academic year. A survey was conducted at the end of each PD programme and was completed by 34 out of 39 teachers, and 20 out of the 40 teaching assistants. The data was analysed using a grounded theory approach (2010: 157).

Wagner and French designed a model (Figure 2.3), based on the results of the research findings which integrates the research findings related to motivation, work satisfaction, and change in practice. It illustrates the interactions of the significant aspects that motivate teachers to change their practice leading, they argue, to changes in children's performance. The design shows that the three aspects overlap in motivation.

The elements identified above, interact and "work to facilitate or undermine the change process". Figure 2.3 illustrates the dynamic interaction between teachers' personal background, the work context, the context of the PD programme, and the teachers' perception of change in the children in their care (2010: 162).

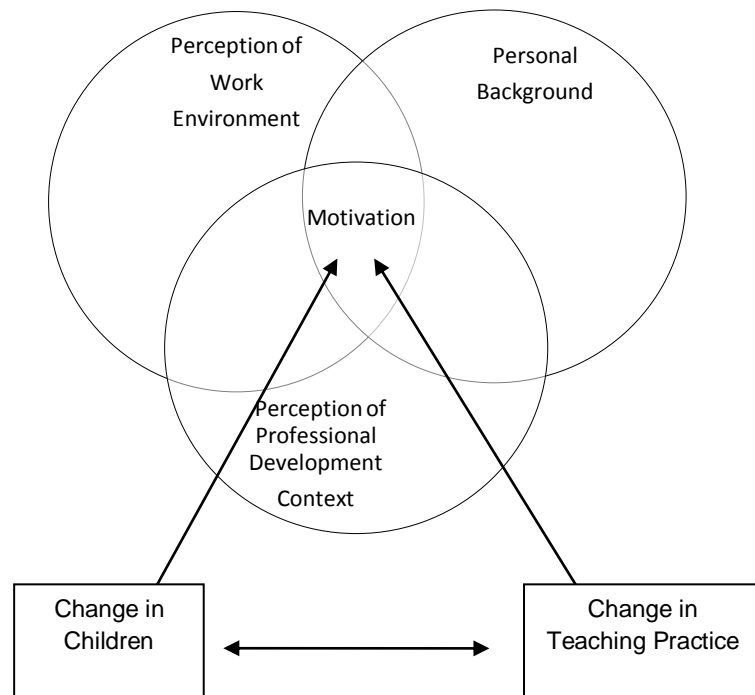


Figure 2.3 Motivation, work satisfaction, and change in practice

(Wagner and French, 2010: 163)

Wagner and French (2010: 162) connect teachers' motivation to engage in professional development with fulfilling job requirements, benefitting students and; "as a means of challenging or improving oneself". Moreover, they state that "teachers' motivational states influenced the way they experienced the professional development program" and that

...teachers' perceptions of their work environments interacted with the professional development experience in ways that either sustained or undermined their attempts to change their practice. (2010: 164)

Four factors emerged from the research as significant elements in terms of how teachers experienced the professional development activities, their motivation as

participants in these activities and the extent to which teachers were willing to change their practices as a result:

- a. Administrative support in terms of “feedback, materials/funding, time, and support for professional development”. (2010: 164)
- b. The extent of control or choice the teachers experience everyday.
- c. Teachers’ choice in decision making regarding their participation in the professional development activities or not.
- d. Collegiality:

Of these four factors, Wagner and French give particular attention to the importance of collegiality within the context of professional development. They state that collegiality during the implementation of “peer sharing, problem solving, collaboration, and encouragement” by teachers to improve their practice, “helped sustain teachers’ motivation to continue attempting to change their practice” (2010: 166), and thus, bring about change in children. Tangible changes in child outcomes further motivate the teachers towards continued change:

When teachers perceived changes in the children as a result of their participation in the professional development program, they were strongly motivated to continue their efforts toward change in practice. (2010: 169)

Therefore, Wagner and French (2010: 170) suggest that;

Work environments must be structured to facilitate interest in professional growth... First, administrator support should be provided in the form of positive informational feedback concerning teachers’ classroom practice and professional development goals. Second, positive co-worker relations should be facilitated by structuring physical layout, planning time, and program policies and processes in ways that promote trust, respect, and collaboration. And, third, autonomy should be facilitated by assessing the ways in which decisions are made regarding center programs and policies-particularly, decisions concerning what professional development opportunities. (2010: 170)

The above suggests that teachers’ satisfaction with all the aspects in the school, as well as the relationship between the aspects themselves, increases their motivation to develop professionally, leading to the potential for change in teachers’ practices

and better outcomes for children. This model would seem to integrate important dimensions for maximising the effectiveness of CPD. Therefore, the fifth research question is:

How might Wagner and French's model 2010 (Motivation, work satisfaction, and change in practice) be used as a framework for interpreting the results of the current study?

2.4. Effective implementation of continuing professional development

The following sections look at the elements that might contribute to successfully implementing CPD.

Livingston and Robertson (2001: 183) point out that teachers may view the process of CPD from a different perspective to school managers and policy makers. Whilst they may share the goal of improving educational quality, there may be differences in the way teachers view the best method for achieving these goals. In the Bahraini context the policy of educational reform has highlighted this issue for teachers who are tasked with implementing it. Consequently, the sixth research question arises:

Do policy makers and teachers in the Kingdom of Bahrain share the same view on initiating change?

Livingston and Robertson suggest that care is needed from all the agents involved in the process of CPD, which must include identifying the overall goals and the needs and priorities of teachers along with other stakeholders. (2010: 187). Joyce (1980) proposed three essential elements for effective CPD programmes, which include consideration of the needs of the education system, the teachers' own personal and professional satisfaction, and the development of the personal and academic potential of students. These elements may be given differing emphasis in CPD; however, Joyce argues that the overall goal will remain the enhancement of the educational achievement of students.

This potential gap between teachers and policy makers, despite shared aims, is illustrated by research on PD in the Malaysian context, where the Ministry of Education sees improvement of teachers' classroom practice as central to enhancing

pupils' performance. Zakaria and Daud (2009: 226) found the teachers frustrated by their lack of involvement in the planning procedure:

...each time a new curriculum is implemented, teachers are expected to interpret and use the new curriculum as espoused in the original document. The Malaysian solution to such major changes has been a very top-down approach. (Dhamotharan cited in Zakaria & Daud, 2009: 226)

It would appear therefore that the purposes of CPD and the strategies for implementing it need to be clear and well defined, and be inclusive of the needs and input of teachers, in order for them to be able to engage effectively with it. As Livingston and Robertson point out "CPD must not be something that is 'done' to teachers: they must feel ownership of it" (2010: 193).

Indeed, Hargreaves goes further by placing the teacher at the heart of educational change:

The restructuring of schools, the composition of national and provincial curricula, the development of benchmark assessments – all these things are of little value if they do not take teacher into account. Teachers don't merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define it and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get. (1994: ix)

In this regard, a case study conducted by Minas Mahmood (2003) in the Kingdom of Bahrain mentions the significance of giving teachers a chance to organize their own professional development. She says that professional development

(...) is not something done to the teachers. Rather, learning is far more valuable when teachers are given the opportunity to set the agenda and lead the direction of their professional life. (Mahmood, 2003: 121)

Both Coultas (2008: 145), and Fullan and Hargreaves (1992: 188) agree that it is important for teachers to practise professional development in a way that benefits their own needs, as well as the schools':

Together, teachers' professional interests and schools' institutional requirements form the basis for criteria, and which professional development resources might be allocated and their effectiveness assessed. (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 188)

The above can be illustrated by the case of a state primary school for girls in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which is the education level in which I had teaching experience. At the beginning of the academic year, the teachers are provided with a list of training programmes in the aspects that the school wants to develop, and they are asked to choose the programme they want to attend, according to their needs and which will help them to progress in their careers. However, as discussed in the next section, although the teachers were able to exercise some freedom of choice, there was a further issue which required attention: timing.

2.4.1. Time and timing in continuous professional development

Choosing the right time to conduct professional development programmes appears to be an issue often overlooked. Gottesman (2000) for example describes PD sessions which take place after the end of the working day as “(...) the worst possible dark hole of learning ... This time period makes it virtually impossible for even the best staff development training to get back to the classroom to help students” (Gottesman, 2000: 17).

Timing and giving teachers enough time become even more crucial in periods of educational change, as reported by the Ontario Ministry of Education (discussed previously in section 2.2.) where teachers’ professional activity days had been reduced while introducing an entirely new curriculum. This meant that “... the opportunities for shared problem solving, team learning and learning communities suffered” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004: 6).

However, Holland (2005) suggests that extending the time available for PD may not be as important as ensuring that the activities offered focus on high-quality subject-matter content:

While adequate time for professional development is essential, studies also show that by itself, more time does not guarantee success. If the sessions do not focus on the subject-matter content that research has shown teachers’ practices and improve student learning.
(p. 4)

Furthermore, many researchers report that traditional professional development activities, such as conferences and workshops, are not effective. For example, Diaz-Maggioli states that

(...) many weary professionals (...) flinch at the mere mention of the word 'workshop'. In the collective imagination, the term 'professional development day' conjures only images of coffee breaks, consultants in elegant outfits, and schools barren of kids. (2004: 1)

This leads to consideration of more informal professional development activities, and drawing on the insight regarding the value of collegiality, of activities in which teachers engage collaboratively in their own development.

2.4.2. Lesson study as a tool for teachers' professional development

In light of what has been discussed, here I consider whether the implementation of lesson study (LS) could be a successful way to address some of the issues which have been raised and incorporate factors identified as facilitating effective implementation. For example, the literature suggests that teachers become better motivated when they have opportunities to work collaboratively; in this regard, the implementation of LS may make a positive contribution to CPD in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

A number of researchers define LS as a tool for professional development. For example, Lewis (2000: 3) explains that LS consists of "...the lessons that teachers jointly plan, observe and discuss" while Hurd and Licciardo-Musso (2005: 388) define LS as a "...cycle of professional development focused on teachers planning, observing, and revising 'research lessons'". They consider that it is "...a tool that helps teachers to be effective learners themselves" (2005: 394).

The Lesson Study Research Group (LSRG) from Columbia University refers to the background to the concept of lesson study, and describes it as being:

...a professional development process that Japanese teachers engage in to systematically examine their practice, with the goal of becoming more effective. This examination centers on teachers working collaboratively on a small number of "study lessons". (LSRG, n.d.)

LSRG describes the lesson study procedure as being one where the teachers collaborate and:

...draw up a detailed plan for the lesson, which one of the teachers uses to teach the lesson in a real classroom (as other group members observe the lesson). The group then comes together to discuss their observations of the lesson. Often, the group revises the

lesson, and another teacher implements it in a second classroom, while group members again look on. The group will come together again to discuss the observed instruction. Finally, the teachers produce a report of what their study lessons have taught them, particularly with respect to their research question. (LSRG, n.d.)

Yuk refers to LS as a procedure developed by in-service Japanese teachers working collaboratively

(...) to foster their pedagogical knowledge and competence, through working together in iterative cycles of planning, teaching, and assessing research lessons in their school. (2012: 49)

Armstrong (2011: 1) further describes LS as:

... a structured process ... that enables small groups of teachers to plan, observe, analyze, and refine actual classroom lessons. Because the focus is on the effectiveness of a lesson itself and what students learn, rather than on an individual teacher's performance.

Armstrong goes on to describe it as a method which can alleviate any anxiety and resistance that teachers might feel towards being observed (ibid). He lists the three phases which this approach consists of: planning, observing, and analyzing and discussing (Armstrong, 2011: 2), and refers to a study conducted by teachers from Denver in the USA, implementing the lesson study process in their schools. The popularity of the procedure was clear when the entire cohort who participated in the process "listed lesson study as one of the professional learning endeavours they wanted to see return the next year" (ibid: 3), with all the coaches taking part highlighting the shift in terms of collaboration and willingness to adopt change on the part of the teachers as a result. Moreover, Armstrong states that the participants linked achievement of the procedure "...to two aspects of lesson study -- teacher ownership and a student-centered focus" (ibid).

In recent articles published by Dudley (2012) and Yuk (2012), lesson study is claimed to enhance and improve learning and teaching process in the UK and Hong Kong. For example, Dudley (2012) aims "...to describe the development of Lesson Study (LS) in England through a Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) project" He found that:

... LS has a place in the repertoire of teacher learning approaches and there is evidence that its use can improve teaching, learning and pupil learning outcomes in a range of school contexts. LS has works successfully in a system that expects teachers and school leaders to improve professional knowledge and practice through systematic use of collaborative, enquiry based teacher learning approaches. (2012: 85)

Yuk (2012: 50) focuses on LS as a learning study module that was developed as an educational programme for novice teachers by the Hong Kong team. The programme was put into practice to meet the critical conditions exposed by teachers in Hong Kong's schools. Yuk concludes that "Learning study has yielded positive results in the Hong Kong in-service context, in terms of supporting professional teacher development and improving student learning", and that it "...has a significant potential to be developed into a sound pedagogy for initial teacher education" (Yuk, 2012: 62).

The above studies show the successful implementation of LS as a tool of professional development in different contexts. These studies illustrate that the programme is based on groups of teachers teaching the same subject and collaborating in visiting each other, with one group of teachers visiting one of the group members.

However, Rajab (2009) found that having groups of observers in the classroom caused problems for the observed teacher as well as the pupils because the pupils would be distracted "especially [by those] who they are not used to seeing everyday inside the classroom" (ibid: 61). In addition, she found that teachers were not happy with the observation practice because it was not based on their needs. Thus, Rajab's suggestion, as a solution to overcome the difficulties and the obstacles the teachers face during their observation practice, was to put the observation into practice according to teachers' needs. She stated that the teachers:

...emphasise the fact that peer observation needs to be based on teachers' needs and not on what the school administration decides. According to these teachers' perspective, it is the responsibility of the individuals to determine their own requirements for their personal progress and developing their careers. (Rajab, 2009: 74)

One of the themes emerging from the literature is the importance of teachers having control and ownership of their professional development. Thus, although the LS

approach has potential, it needs to be framed in a way which teachers experience as supportive and which gives them flexibility to apply it according to their needs. Therefore, I now turn to discussing peer coaching, the approach I adopted in designing the professional development programme, as this practice, based on two or more teachers working together, is geared towards each teacher's individual needs and decisions.

2.4.3. Peer coaching as a tool for teachers' professional development

Peer coaching is a programme that provides the teachers with opportunities to work collaboratively, and to determine the time and the aims of the practice, according to their needs. It is a collaborative teacher learning strategy, involving interaction between two or more teachers. As all teachers need to keep up with new ideas and programmes, PC can be as beneficial for a new teacher as for an experienced one. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) refers to PC as a process that teachers agree to engage in order to contribute to the development of their vocation, as it is a powerful way to accelerate an individual's growth (NUT, 2004: 3). They state that the underlying principle of implementing PC strategy is to offer teachers the opportunity to help each other to increase their vocational abilities and cognition, as well as for additional professional development.

PC is also described as a process which empowers teachers as they learn from each other and thus it has the potential to foster "...ongoing and sustained examination of practices", helping to transfer those skills teachers have learnt through in-service professional development (Zepeda, 2008: 185). PC creates opportunities for applying a variety of activities such as "experimentation, observation, reflection, the exchange of professional ideas, and shared problem-solving" (Zwart et al., 2007: 165). The reciprocal aspect of PC means teachers participate in these activities "in an integrated form" (ibid).

The PC process is also considered to help teachers boost their knowledge and expertise during their entire working life. Wong and Nicotera (2003) drawing on Killion (1990), conclude that "Peer coaching programs encourage professional growth, recognition, experience-enhancing roles, and collegiality for teacher mentors" (Wong & Nicotera, 2003: 3). Gottesman (2000: 2) goes so far as to say that

teachers practise PC as a tool for professional development, and coaching each other in the new methods, “can improve the success rate of new staff development models”.

Kise describes coaching as

... the art of identifying and developing a person’s strengths. Even when a teacher needs to build skills in areas that are natural weaknesses for them, coaches help them do that through techniques that utilize strengths. (2006: 139)

PC derives its effectiveness from being based on teachers’ needs. It is the responsibility of the individuals to determine their own requirements for their personal progress and professional development. Through PC, teachers can understand their effectiveness as teachers, at the same time as they improve their performance. In addition, they can understand their pupils’ ways of learning and seek ways of bettering their achievements. Becker (1996) considers PC as a collaborative development because teachers can teach one another, share new ideas, and solve any problem they face in their place of work. Wong and Nicotera (2003: 5) add that “the strength of peer coaching lies in its potential to promote a culture of collaboration and professionalism among teachers”.

Zepeda (2008: 187) defines PC as:

... a multifaceted tool that can be implemented as an instructional strategy, a professional development strategy, and a complement to instructional supervision. Originally conceived as a form of professional development, peer coaching consisted of a cycle that included the presentation of theory as well as a demonstration.

In addition, PC is instrumental in raising teachers’ confidence and comfort level, as Eisenbach and Curry (1999: 425) suggest: “Involvement in peer coaching can provide an invaluable source of support and self-confidence”.

Robbins refers to diversity in names for PC. She explains that “Although peer coaching seems to be the most prominent label for this type of activity, a variety of other names are used in schools: peer support, consulting colleagues, peer sharing, and caring” (Robbins, 1991: 1).

As suggested earlier, PC is as beneficial for a new teacher as for an experienced one since it has the potential to improve new, as well as, existing teaching practices (Becker, 1996).

Little (2005: 87) discusses what teachers experience when practicing PC, concluding that they start "... to feel less isolated from other educators and thus more empowered" since they work in a "... low-stress collegial environment ... exercise the freedom to try new things and can profit from peer input and advice" (ibid). Thus, as Danielson (2007: 176) mentions, the relationship between teachers "... is one of professional synergy, with each participant offering insights that result in the improvement of teaching". Gottesman (2002) specifies the existence of a rapport among teachers when they give, and receive, serious feedback while practising PC, especially if the teachers in question face similar challenges. She defines PC as:

(...) a simple, nonthreatening structure designed for peers to help each other improve instruction or learning situations. The most common use is teacher-to-teacher peers working together on an almost daily basis to solve their own classroom problems. (Gottesman, 2002: 5)

The same author goes on to refer to the rationale of peer coaching as being a way to make new elements brought in through training as manageable as possible, with the key purpose of helping to "implement new training or help sustain existing training so that the training will impact on student learning in the classroom" (Gottesman, 2002: 23).

Gottesman (2000) argues that PC is not only a model to be implemented between teachers who are close to each other or co-workers to observe one another. Since its motto is 'No Praise, No Blame':

A teacher could theoretically use the structure with his worst enemy, his best friend, or a complete stranger – if they were both seeking the improvement of instruction and could set their egos and pride aside for that purpose. (Gottesman, 2000: 9)

The literature reviewed above shows how flexible peer coaching is as a model that involves teachers whose main aim is to improve instruction. This flexibility makes it an interesting possibility in the context of the present study to enhance the effectiveness of CPD under the new education system in Bahrain.

2.4.3.1. Peer coaching to improve students' learning process

A number of studies have shown that PC in education is a model of professional development that can be used to improve teaching practices and students' learning process. In other words, PC can be used to improve student learning by improving teaching (see for example, Meyer and Gray, 2004). An account by Diaz-Maggioli (2004: 75) describing a PC activity between Paul and Meghan, teachers teaching Grade 3, illustrates its potential. Diaz-Maggioli explains that Paul "attended a two-day workshop ... conducted extensive bibliographical and Internet research on the model, and designed mini-units for use in his class" in order to make him capable in his classes to put a new curriculum model into practice. Despite his efforts, he was not confident of their efficacy. He therefore asked his colleague Meghan, "to sit in one of his classes...to observe the level of student involvement in different activities". Prior to the observation, Paul explained the new curriculum model to Meghan. During the observation, Meghan observed the students and reported plentiful observations on their participation, and provided them to Paul afterwards for analysis. After Paul had had analysed the data, he;

... concluded that he had to drastically alter his teaching approach if he really wanted his students to learn; the data showed that the new curriculum model was certainly no guarantee of increased achievement. So he made changes to his original plan and asked Meghan to repeat her classroom observation and assess the effectiveness of his restructured model. After class, the two teachers discussed the experience and planned further alterations to the framework to better serve Paul's students.

By now, Meghan had grown curious about Paul's curriculum model and asked him to help her apply it to her own classroom. During the second semester, Meghan and Paul switched places: she started using the framework in her class and he sat in on her lessons, guiding her application of the model. Together they reflected on how this theoretical framework could best be adapted to the reality of their school and their students. (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004: 76)

Through a staff meeting, Paul and Meghan promoted the findings of the new curriculum model with all the staff in their school. They discovered that a Grade Two teacher was also trying to put the same model into practice while teaching. Therefore, the three teachers decided to "...visit each other's class to vary their

perspectives” and “Since then, student achievement has increased in both the 2nd and 3rd grade teacher” (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004: 76).

Zepeda (2003: 185) emphasizes that PC “(...) provides opportunities for teachers to support and learn from each other and to engage in realistic discussion about teaching and learning, their own and that of their students”. Moreover, it is important to recognise that “Peer coaching is not content, but rather a process that can be used for any skill” (Gottesman, 2000: 23). It can be used “(...) with any content material, for mastery of new methods, or for specific behavioral problems” (ibid: 2). However, although PC strategy is used in different environments the aim is always the same: to have better instruction for better student achievement” (Moon et al. 2000: 109).

Stoltz et al. (2010: 1) conducted a project to find out: “How can staff maximize what they’ve learned in a workshop without spending an inordinate amount of time on the transfer of training?”. A group of Maryland librarians and a consulting company were employed “...to pilot an Emergent Literacy Peer Coaching project ... The team developed a Peer Coaching Toolkit and training program”. The findings of the project for the support of PC were:

Five percent of learners will transfer a new skill into their practice as a result of theory.

Ten percent will transfer a new skill into their practice with theory and demonstration.

Twenty percent will transfer a new skill into their practice with theory and demonstration, and practice within the training, and feedback.

Ninety percent will transfer a new skill into their practice with theory and demonstration, and practice with the training, feedback, and coaching. (Public Library Association, 2010: 3)

A study conducted by Prince et al. with thirty-eight Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) Science students training to become teachers in the UK (2010) was intended “To determine the effectiveness of peer coaching in supporting the development of professional attributes” (ibid: 4). It indicated that:

...the peer coaching procedures had a positive impact on student teachers’ professional development partially because it helped develop their confidence as a classroom

practitioner and also because it equipped them with strategies to support them during their school practise. (Prince et al., 2010: 2)

The above study concluded that:

The participants felt strongly that peer coaching was a success. One of the key themes is how important it is for students to be able to talk to each other about their progress, establish effective working relationships and learn how to improve their practise through these discussions ... it illustrates that the student teachers really did value the support of a peer coach and they also recognized the capacity of a peer coach to identify areas of development, build confidence and ultimately move their classroom practise forward. (Prince et al., 2010: 7).

A study conducted by Goker (2006) illustrates how PC can improve instructional skills and self-efficacy. The study compared the instructional skills and self-efficacy of two groups of student EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers; one group received traditional supervision whilst the other group participated in a peer coaching training programme

The student teachers practising PC felt more:

...freedom to ask questions and expressed their own opinions and increased demonstrations and effectiveness of instructional skills and self-confidence due to consistent feedback. (Goker, 2006: 251)

The study concludes that practising a PC strategy is important for the curriculum, in that it helps teachers practising PC strategy to “diagnose problems, clarify concepts, and develop self-efficacy” (ibid: 252) leading to a quality EFL curriculum.

Robbins (1991: 3) points out that generically, the term coaching can refer to interactions that take place “between an expert and a novice or between experienced and less-experienced teachers”. In contrast, PC, as Browne (2006) emphasizes, “...does not involve an expert and a novice relationship. It is based on the belief that in the coaching relationship both players have something to offer” and that “Thus a peer coaching relationship enables and indeed encourages a co-learning approach, where each draws on the skills of the other”.

Anderson and Sumra (2002: 63) describe PC as a teacher learning procedure where teachers participate in reciprocal observation as well as giving and receiving

feedback about each other's teaching. The common model of PC is described by several authors (for example, Kohler et al, 1997: 204; Showers and Joyce, 1998: 15; National Union of Teachers in the UK, 2004: 3; Meyer & Gray, 2004) as a mutual and reciprocal approach between two equal teachers: the observer or 'coached', and the observed or 'coach'. The observation is based on the teachers' needs, and it enables them to collaborate and exchange feedback.

Gottesman (2000: 113) stresses that:

Peer Coaching works best when teachers build trust with each other, set their own schedules, and use Peer Coaching on an almost daily basis. Teachers as real peers have control of time, place, and subject. It is used by request to improve teaching, with no 'elite' team, no administrative schedules, and no reporting to administrators. Peers coaching each other works best.

The literature reviewed above illustrates that peer coaching is a strategy which provides teachers with the opportunity to develop a positive rapport with each other, and effectively transfer knowledge to each other. Putting peer coaching into practice seems to be an effective professional development programme, as Little (2007: 87) emphasises "utilizing peer coaching effectively enables teachers to identify the areas of teaching in which they want to improve and the skills they wish to develop". PC has become a widespread strategy in developing learning and teaching practices. Furthermore, Glasgow and Hicks (2003: 32) emphasize its value in times of educational change: "Peer coaching is designed to foster a teacher's development and acclimatisation during periods of the development and introduction of new instructional practices in the classroom".

Many sources also support peer coaching statistically. For example, statistics show that 90% of learners "will transfer a new skill into their practice with theory and demonstration, and practice within the training, feedback, and coaching" (Becker, 2009: 2).

Studies corroborate the contribution PC can make to educational change. For example, Danielson confirms that

Peer coaching is more likely to contribute to change in teaching practice when it focuses on specific behaviors, and when teachers have access to in-service training for the desired changes. (2007: 64)

In addition, Galbraith and Anstrom mention the effect of PC on teachers' performance. They state that

(...) coached teachers experience significant positive changes in their behaviours, when provided with an appropriate program that ensures accountability, support, companionship, and specific feedback over an extended period of time. (1995: 2)

Thus, in many aspects, PC is an important skill which helps teachers work together efficiently. It allows them to be in charge of their own proficiency and progress, as well as being a helpful method for them as individuals (NUT, 2004: 2). It is a way in which teachers can assist each other and give feedback after observation, with the emphasis on what Ferguson and Bunge (1999: 65) call "... a collaborative effort to refine, expand and enhance knowledge about the teaching profession".

However, teachers often face difficulties and obstacles when putting such a seemingly positive effort into practice. For example, Wong and Nicotera (2003: 5) state that schools practise PC programmes face problems such as "insufficient training, limited resources, and lack of evaluation". Moreover, these difficulties and obstacles were illustrated in research conducted by Rajab (2009) with teachers in one state primary school for girls in the Kingdom of Bahrain:

There is a lack of training programmes specifically in peer observation and feedback skills for the academic staff as well as the administrative staff. While the teachers are in need of training in observation skills and how to give and receive feedback, the administration staff requires training in terms of altering their attitudes and mentality towards peer observation. Moreover, they need to distinguish between evaluative observation, whose objective is to check the teachers' performance, and developmental observation, which is essentially meant to enhance and develop the teachers' careers. (Rajab, 2009: 81)

The significance of the present study arises from the strong association between the topic chosen and the case that was the focus of the study carried out as part of my Masters research (Rajab, 2009) as mentioned above. After discussion with colleagues and friends working in the same field in Bahrain, I identified problems which arise when peer observation becomes evaluative rather than developmental.

2.4.3.2. Peer coaching teaching as a formative programme

As indicated above, PC has become controversial because of its incorporation into forms of teacher evaluation. Wong and Nicotera (2003) drew on research carried out by Wanzare and da Costa (2000), which recommended that PC could be an evaluation procedure for teachers in a peer review process, as “peer coaching programs could create an environment conducive to peer review” (Wong & Nicotera, 2003: 4). Many researchers define PC as a formative process as it is a procedure in which two or more teachers work together confidentially and in a friendly and pleasant way. PC is not judgmental, nor is it intended to be a remedial or corrective activity. However, it is a way of obtaining feedback about teaching after observation and enables discussion of the outcomes with a trusted colleague, with the purpose of validating and enhancing teaching performance (Robbins, 1991: 1; Becker, 1996).

Nevertheless, PC is not an evaluative programme but a confidential and supportive process where teachers can help each other, share their ideas, and solve their problems. Moreover, it is a kind of formative peer observation, where teachers' performance or teaching approach is not judged, because teachers meet as professional friends wanting to share experiences and help each other. For Regina and Renee (1999:111), PC is “(...) a structured, formative process by which trained faculty voluntarily assists each other in enhancing their teaching repertoires within an atmosphere of collegial trust and candor”.

Johnson (2009) argues the benefits of practise peer coaching without any imposition from higher authorities:

...the non-hierarchical social relationships and structured arrangements of Peer Coaching create opportunities for teachers to guide their own learning and development while engaging in goal-directed dialogic mediation with a non-evaluative and trusted peer. (Johnson, 2009: 102)

Besides, it offers teachers the opportunity to practise "a natural support system at their school" (Little, 2005:1). As Gottesman claims:

Since the teacher 'requests the visit' or observation, he or she can pinpoint the problem on which he or she wishes feedback and coaching. This method is easier than a supervisor's evaluation or clinical supervision process because it allows the teacher to

work on a specific skill, the mastery of which is a work in progress, with no fear of evaluation. (Gottesman, 2000: 2)

2.4.3.3. The peer coaching process and different types of peer coaching

Richards and Farrell (2005: 143) explain the PC process in more detail:

... a teacher and a colleague plan a series of opportunities to explore the teacher's teaching collaboratively. One adopts the role of coach or "critical friend" (someone in who one has trust and confidence and who can offer constructive feedback in a positive and supportive manner) as some aspect of teaching or of classroom life is explored. During and after the process, the coach provides feedback and suggestions to the other teacher. The type of feedback the coach provides will depend on the goals that have been established.

PC can take different forms which Richards and Farrell list as follows:

- It can be a series of informal conversations between a teacher and a colleague about teaching, focusing on what is happening in the teacher's classrooms, what problems occur, and how these can be addressed.
- It can be collaboration between two teachers on the preparation of teaching materials ...
- A teacher and a coach can observe each other's lessons.
- Two teachers can co-teach lessons and observe each other's approach and teaching style.
- A teacher can videotape some of his or her lessons and later watch them together with the coach. (2005: 143)

They also classify PC into three types: technical, collegial and challenge coaching.

Technical coaching indicates a case in which a teacher aims to become more skilled in a strategy or a method of teaching, so he/she searches for the help of a colleague who has more experience and knowledge in this field (Richards and Farrell, 2005: 145). For example:

... a teacher might want to try teaching composition classes in an e-learning, distance mode with students in different part of the campus. To learn more about it, the teacher seeks the advice of a colleague on how to implement this approach and the colleague advises him or her on the process, giving feedback as it is tried out. (ibid)

Collegial coaching refers to a situation which engages two teachers together to focus on refining and improving their existing instructional practices and would like to corroborate “their view on teaching”. The teacher with more skill in particular methods of teaching may take the role of coaching. Gottesman (2002: 30) emphasizes the point that “Peer Coaching will not occur by itself. It must have an advocate in a position to make it happen”. This is precisely how it happens in collegial coaching. Richards and Farrell (2005: 146) explain the process of collegial coaching as a teacher inviting another teacher “... into his or her classroom to observe the class and offer constructive feedback as a critical friend”.

Challenge coaching points to a situation where two teachers come together to focus on a problem which has occurred in the teaching process, leading the two teachers to work together to solve the problem. An example of such a situation is provided by Richards and Farrell (2005: 147):

... a teacher you know may realize that he or she has a problem “getting through” to some of the students in a class and so invites a trusted peer to come observe the class in order to help identify the cause of the problem, and hopefully a solution.

Wong and Nicotera (2003) draw on Ackland’s (1991) and Becker’s (1996) comments on challenge coaching, saying that it “... can be used in a larger context than the classroom, such as a school or grade level” (Wong & Nicotera, 2003: 2).

Diaz-Maggioli (2004) offers a different classification of PC which focuses on relationship rather than purpose, which consists of reflecting that helps teachers to form new beliefs; mirror coaching, collaborative coaching, and expert coaching. In mirror coaching, as the term indicates, the coach acts like a mirror, taking notes on a specific aspect of a colleague’s practice and then gives them to the coached without any judgement. Collaborative coaching is similar to challenge coaching in that colleagues decide to focus on a teaching dilemma, with one observing the other followed by a discussion of the session. Expert coaching pairs a less-experienced teacher with an experienced teacher who offering alternative suggestions based on analysis of the lesson observed. Diaz-Maggioli (2004) stresses that the teacher being coached is responsible for choosing the type of coaching he/she needs.

Robbins (1991) deals with the types of peer coaching by dividing the process into activities, such as co-teaching lessons, coach as collaborator, coach as an expert adviser, coach as a mentor, co-planning lessons, coach as a mirror in the classroom, planning interdisciplinary units, videotape analysis, storytelling about teaching practices, materials development, curriculum development, study groups, and problem solving. She also says that:

Some peer coaching involves two or more colleagues working together around the shared observation of teaching. In this instance, there is generally a pre-conference, and observation, and a post-conference ... Other types of peer coaching might involve a pair or a team of teachers co-planning a lesson or curriculum unit. Still other types might involve problem solving, videotape analysis, or study groups. (Robbins, 1991:1)

Little (2007: 87) emphasizes that “utilizing peer coaching effectively enables teachers to identify the areas of teaching in which they want to improve and the skills they wish to develop”. Richards and Farrell (2005) concentrate on the importance of making it clear to collaborators what their roles are. They emphasize that:

It is important to clearly define the roles of both the coach and teacher from the very beginning of the process so that a culture of trust can be established as early as possible in the collaboration. When institutions want to implement peer coaching, the teachers should be consulted about their concerns and informed about their roles in the process and the type of structure the institution will provide. (Richards & Farrell, 2005: 15)

The role of collaborators will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

In the discussion thus far, PC appears to have great potential. However, before proceeding further, it is important to remember what Borko writes about how teachers learn, referred to above. For this reason, I will now explore further theoretical perspectives.

2.5. The theoretical rationale for introducing peer coaching as a CPD strategy

Worthy of mention are some of the many learning theories that underpin the process of peer coaching and its impact on teachers' learning and on pupils' improvement. For example, Ladyshevesky (2003) discusses two theoretical perspectives, cognitive development theory and behavioural learning theory and the association between them to demonstrate the effectiveness of peer coaching.

The theoretical basis for the practice of peer coaching among teachers may be supported by the suggestions made by Damon:

Cognitive-developmental psychologists in the tradition of Piaget look to peer interaction as a means of providing children with uniquely constructive feedback. Soviet psychologists in the tradition of Vygotsky valued the special thought processes engendered by peer communication ... Educators experimenting with peer tutoring in schools have discovered the instructional benefits of peer interaction for the tutors as well as the tutee. (1984: 332)

Atencio, Jess, and Dewar (2009: 5) state that “Cognitive development theory sees cooperation between peers as an essential pre-requisite for cognitive growth”. In addition, Ladyshevesky (2003: 5) argues that work carried out by Piaget, Sullivan and Vygotsky demonstrates that for cognitive development theory, peer collaboration has been perceived as a mandatory requirement prior to cognitive growth. She cites what Damon (1984) summarized regarding the work of the mentioned theorists;

...that peer interaction is seen to promote cognitive development by creating critical cognitive conflict. If learners are aware of a contradiction in their shared knowledge base, the experience creates disequilibrium. This disequilibrium motivates the learners to question their beliefs and to try out new ones. This disequilibrium is only possible in the context of a social learning environment where interaction between peers is encouraged (2003: 5)

Further, Ladyshevesky (1984) states:

In this overview Damon (1984) reports that peers benefit from one another by internalizing the cognitive processes implicit in their interactions and communications with others. The peer dialogue that results emulates several critical features of rational thinking, in particular: the verification of ideas; the planning of strategies; the symbolic representation of intellectual acts; and the generation of new solutions. Further, the social and cognitive interaction with a more capable peer allows the less capable learner to enter new areas of potential. Vygotsky calls this new area of potential the ‘zone of proximal development’ (Vygotsky 1978, 1986). (Ladyshevesky, 2003: 5)

-Behavioural Learning theory

Here, Ladyshevesky (2003) focuses on peer coaching as a breeding ground for reinforcement and behaviour. She looks at Bandura’s (1971, 1997) perspective of behaviour and group learning (2003: 5) and reports Bandura’s description of three

types of reinforcement that influenced the learning outcome: direct external reinforcement, vicarious reinforcement, and modification of the learner's own behaviour "based upon the consequences" the learner has just observed. And that; "self-administered reinforcement involves regulating one's own behaviours according to standards". Bandura explains that;

Peer coaching provides rich opportunities for these three types of reinforcement to occur. For example, feedback from a peer, or observing a peer, may help you recognize that certain consequences arise when one implements a specific behavior. These reinforcements, of course, contribute to the learner's personal learning framework by providing opportunities for identifying knowledge gaps and deficiencies. The development of professional competence is facilitated by the rich opportunities for the three types of reinforcement in a peer coaching experience.

Furthermore, Ladyshevesky (2003: 6) explains how Bandura expanded his views of behaviour. She says that Bandura elucidated three dimensions of personal knowledge: knowns, known unknowns, and unknown unknowns. Bandura emphasises the role of peer coaching as it enables learners to access the third dimension of 'unknown unknowns';

Things that are 'known' can be declared by individuals ... Things that are 'known unknowns' are things which you can declare you don't know anything about ... being able to make these declarations about 'known-unknowns' you can choose to pursue further knowledge such that they become 'knowns' ... Being able to operate in the domains of 'knowns' and 'known unknowns' is the heart of the self evaluation. By exploring these domains of knowledge you can steer your individual professional development and your lifelong learning requirements. Peer coaching, however, enables learners to enter the domain of 'unknown unknowns'. Peer coaches come to the learning experience with different knowledge and experience. Hence, the 'known', 'known unknown' and 'unknown unknown' domains of knowledge will be different across the two learners. By working together, coaching, and discussing concepts and performance, opportunities for entering different domains becomes possible. (2003: 6)

Bandura (1989: 23) developed his theory of learning as 'observational learning or modelling'. He considers that people learn through observing each other and by attending to the consequences of their own actions. He details the four components which direct observational learning;

1- Attention: Paying attention to what the learner is going to learn.

2- Retention: The learner retains and remembers what s/he has paid attention to.

3- Reproduction: The ability to reproduce the behaviour.

4- Motivation: Learner should be motivated to imitate. (Bandura, 1989: 23)

The method of peer coaching would seem to be endorsed by the above mentioned theories of learning.

2.6. CPD and educational change in the Kingdom of Bahrain

Continuous professional development has become a significant strategy for all sectors, not only for the educational sector, in the Kingdom of Bahrain. With regard to professional development in education, it is considered to be a key element for teacher promotion in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In order to address the issue of effective CPD, the Bahraini Teachers' college (BTC) was launched at the University of Bahrain in 2008. The Bahraini Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Education & Training Reform Committee, speaking for the government, asserted the main factor underpinning the development of plans and strategies is investment in human resources (Bahrain News Agency, 2008). The current study forms part of this initiative. Thus the establishment of BTC, together with the related reform projects, including the current study, reflect the steps that are being taken in education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in response to the challenges arising due to rapid socio-economic transformation and the consequent demands on the education system.

The academic head of professional development at Bahrain Teachers' College (BTC) announced that BTC, working together with the Bahraini Ministry of Education and other stakeholders, would embark on a programme for "high quality professional development for serving Bahraini teachers" (BTC, 2009). Consequently, the BTC launched a professional development programme in the second semester of the academic year 2009-2010. The programme is especially customized to meet the needs of teachers of all levels of experience (ibid). BTC believes that:

Upgrading teachers' professional skills throughout the course of their careers is an essential aspect of a successful education system. Professional Development complements our existing B.Ed and PGDE [Post-secondary Diploma in Education]

programmes, by ensuring that the skills, knowledge, and professional attitudes of both new and experienced teachers are informed by world class best practice. (BTC, 2009)

The Bahraini Minister of Education, Majed Al Noaimi, seemed to agree with this when he proclaimed in interviews with the local Bahraini press that the highest budgets and the largest potential approaches alone would be unable to achieve the desired development in education if an efficient, qualified, educationally adequate, and professionally developed teacher is not available (Education, 2010: 21).

A recent article from Bahrain News Agency (BNA) (2007) highlights the importance of teachers' CPD, and relates it to teachers' promotion, since teachers are the most significant component in the execution of educational development programmes and initiatives. BNA elucidates that this new CPD system has become more of an incentive for teachers as it allows them to rise up through the grades in a short period of time, by connecting teachers' promotion to apprenticeship and not to the availability of jobs (BNA, 2007). This new system provides a framework for CPD as a part of educational reform.

Given that CPD is recognised as important by both the government and the press in Bahrain, a key question in conducting the research has been:

What is the current understanding in the Kingdom of Bahrain regarding the benefits of teachers practicing CPD?

Even with additional incentives provided for engaging in CPD, teachers face a range of difficulties and obstacles when implementing well-regarded practices such as peer observation as part of their professional development. This is illustrated in a study conducted by Rajab (2009) with the Class System teachers of the first cycle in one primary state school for girls in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The research showed that, although peer observation is seen as an important part of teachers' professional development, there is a need for training programmes in peer observing and feedback skills for the teachers, as well as a change in administrative staff's attitudes and approach towards peer observation:

There is a lack in training programmes specifically in peer observation and feedback skills for the academic staff as well as the administrative staff. While the teachers are in need of training in observation skills and how to give and receive feedback, the administration

staff requires training in terms of altering their attitudes and mentality towards peer observation. Moreover, they need to distinguish between evaluative observation, whose objective is to check the teachers' performance, and developmental observation, which is essentially meant to enhance and develop the teachers' careers. (Rajab, 2009: 81)

Rajab's (2009) research seemingly agrees with what Cockburn (1999: 48) concluded was one of the common reasons which resulted in compulsory changes being unsuccessful: "the lack of understanding of the individuals who are supposedly required to implement the changes in the contexts in which they work".

Moreover, Cockburn (1999: 51) cites that one of the change aspects is that "When a teacher wishes to initiate a change it is usually because a need has arisen or she/he has been inspired by someone else's idea and would like to try it".

From my experience in a state primary school for girls in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and from my previous research (Rajab, 2009), I found that teachers were not happy when asked to practise peer teaching observation as part of their professional development by their head teacher. At the beginning of a new academic year, it is customary for head teachers in Bahrain to suggest that teachers exchange expertise through observing each other's teaching and giving feedback. This suggestion was mostly met with unwillingness on the part of the majority of the teachers, who were not ready to work collaboratively with their colleagues. More specifically, I became aware that teachers who visited each other's classes with the purpose of peer teaching observation were not satisfied because the observation exercise had been changed from exchanging expertise to summative evaluation. This coincides with Joyce and Showers' (2002: 90) observation that "Peer coaching appears to have turned sharply to peer supervision in many applications, which does pull those forms of coaching toward an evaluative stance". The results of my study (Rajab, 2009) reflect this reality.

Returning to the aim which lies at the core of professional development of teachers, that of enhancing student learning, and given the importance of CPD in achieving this aim, along with drawbacks of the existing CPD programme in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the aim of my research is to explore the potential for teachers to put PC into practice in order to enhance their and their students' learning experience. Thus central to the research are two final questions:

What problems face Bahraini teachers while implementing CPD as part of the educational reform?

Can PC become an essential strategy within CPD for educational change in the context of the Kingdom of Bahrain?

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature regarding CPD generally, as a part of the implementation of educational change and considered what factors contribute to its effectiveness. It also reviewed models of the processes involved in CPD and the factors inherent to it. The method of Lesson Studies was considered before bringing a particular focus to the advantages of using peer coaching as a method of CPD during the educational reforms being rolled out and planned in the Kingdom of Bahrain. A background was provided for the context of the present study, whose research design and methodology is detailed in the following chapter.

The process of researching for and writing this review of literature on CPD and PC enabled me to formulate various questions, which I have included in the course of my writing. These questions relate to the situation and potential situation in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In summary, they address the following areas:

- *How might our understanding of how teachers learn be incorporated into a CPD programme in the Kingdom of Bahrain?*
- *How can CPD most effectively be used in order to support teachers to successfully implement educational change strategies?*
- *What makes professional development more sustainable generally; and what specifically, might make it more sustainable in the Kingdom of Bahrain?*
- *In the context of the Kingdom of Bahrain, to what extent are the teachers able to feel ownership of the ongoing educational reform?*

- *How might Wagner and French's model 2010 (Motivation, work satisfaction, and change in practice) be used as a framework for interpreting the results of the current study?*
- *Do policy makers and teachers in Bahrain share the same view on initiating change?*
- *What is the current understanding in the Kingdom of Bahrain regarding the benefits of teachers practicing CPD?*
- *What problems face Bahraini teachers within CPD as part of the educational reform?*

These areas lead into the main focus of the research, this being to explore whether PC can become an essential strategy within CPD for educational change in the context of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

This chapter describes the research design and methodology selected for this study. It presents the research questions, and discusses the development and piloting of the data collection instruments.

3.1. Research design

A researcher designs his/her study, which is considered to be a written study plan, by connecting his/her aim as well as the purpose and the importance of the study, step-by-step, with the study plan (Kumar, 2008). Therefore, the first step I took was to establish a provisional plan (see Appendix A) as a framework and guide for my study. This is in line with what Kumar (2008) states about the grounding of a piece of research: “The preparation of a research design for study helps in establishing directions in which to proceed and in knowing exactly what has to be done and how it has to be done at every stage” (ibid: 30).

As there are a number of research methods that can be utilised in a study, it is important to decide which method, or methods, should be selected. Lyons and Doueck (2010) describe mixed methods research as a strategy which utilizes many types of methods. For example, a researcher can choose a number of qualitative methods, or a number of quantitative methods, or the researcher may decide to mix both qualitative and quantitative methods, depending on the purposes of the study in question.

Mason (2006) states that mixed methods research:

...offers enormous potential for exploring new dimensions of experience in social life, and intersections between these. It can encourage researchers to see differently, or to think 'outside the box', if they are willing to approach research problems with an innovative and creative palette of methods of data generation. (Mason, 2006: 13)

For Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003: 44):

Mixed methods research is not a simple collection of two strands of data collection and analysis. The strength of the mixed methods designs is in using systematic approach questions that are answered by multiple types of data and an analysis procedure that ultimately leads to an integrated set of inferences.

Moreover, Creswell, (2003: 18) identifies a mixed methods approach as being:

(...) one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds (e.g., consequence-oriented, problem-centred, and pluralistic). It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems.

As mentioned above, mixed methods research design includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data communicates meaning and interpretive information by means of numerical analysis. This is accomplished by statistical methods that help to generalize findings. Quantitative researchers take an objective stance regarding participants and their settings, and use research samples to apply their findings to a larger population (Neuman, 2000; Dillman, 2000). In contrast, qualitative data is non-numerical. Thomas (2003: 1) describes qualitative methods as providing "kinds of characteristics of people and events without comparing events in terms of measurements and amounts". Conversely, quantitative methods spotlight "measurements and amounts (more and less, larger and smaller, often and seldom, similar and different)" (ibid).

This is a mixed methods study and the different aspects of these methods, including the data collection instruments, are described in detail in the following sections.

3.2. Triangulation

Triangulation is based on the principle that using one single method to answer a research question is not sufficient (Cottrell and Mckenzie, 2010: 242). Mackey and

Gass (2005: 181) note that triangulation includes the use of “multiple research techniques and multiple sources of data in order to explore the issues from all feasible perspectives”. Furthermore, they put forward the argument that the use of varying methods of data collection and analysis may help “in credibility, transferability, conformability, and dependability” (ibid). In addition, for Jamison (2006: 2) “triangulation shows the richness and complexity of behavior by studying theories from more than one standpoint”. Moreover, Lyons and Doueck (2010: 102) state that a researcher uses triangulation to confirm data, “as well as to enhance understanding of the data”.

In my view, deploying both qualitative and quantitative method data collection and analysis enhances the credibility of findings and interpretation of the findings, since issues are examined in different ways. For the purposes of triangulation I therefore chose to use mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative.

3.3. Research assistant

Before detailing the data collection instruments used in this research, it is important to clarify the reasons why I found it necessary to have a research assistant. Being away from the research site for much of the time gave rise to the need for someone onsite who could help with some of the administrative aspects of data collection. I therefore asked a colleague, who is a retired teacher and aware of my study and its purposes, to help me, by arranging appointments with the participants, obtaining documents from the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain and delivering them to me. He also assisted in distributing and collecting the consent forms and questionnaires (see below). However, in order to maintain confidentiality, he did not have individual contact with the participants who responded to the questionnaire and, therefore, was not privy to their names.

3.4. Research questions

Stake (1995: 15) states that designing good research questions is the main and the most complex part of a study because “that will direct the looking and the thinking enough and not too much”.

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006: 475) indicate that the research questions in mixed methods studies are:

... vitally important because they, in large part, dictate the type of research design used, the sample size and sampling scheme employed, and the type of instruments administered as well as the data analysis techniques (i.e. statistical or qualitative) used.

As mentioned above (section 3.1), Tashakkori and Teddie (2003) refer to the use of a set of 'systematic approach questions' to direct a piece of research. Therefore, to facilitate the study and give it a clear focus I designed the following questions:

- 1- Does the teaching of peer coaching support, improve, and enrich learning and teaching practices in Bahraini primary schools?
- 2- Does the teaching of peer coaching develop and enhance teachers' professional development in Bahraini primary schools?

Kumar (2008: 2) states that the major reason for conducting a study is to find answers to its questions "through the application of scientific procedures", and to discover the truth which is concealed and has not been discovered up to now.

3.5. Objectives of the study

Burnie (2002: 60) recommends that the first step researchers consider in their planning is to make a decision about the research objectives, as they are "the basis for every decision that follows in the process of planning, conducting, analyzing and presenting research".

Therefore, the present study has two objectives, which correspond to the research questions detailed above:

- 1- To endeavour to support, improve, and enrich learning and teaching practices.
- 2- To endeavour to develop and enhance teachers' professional development.

3.6. Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods are all the techniques a researcher uses while conducting their studies (Kumar, 2008: 4) and, in a mixed methods approach, data can be gathered from a number of resources, as Creswell (2003: 18) describes:

The researcher bases the inquiry on the assumption that collecting diverse types of data best provides an understanding of a research problem. The study begins with a broad survey in order to generalize results to a population and then focuses, in a second phase, on detailed qualitative, open-ended interviews to collect detailed views from participants.

Mason (2006: 14) indicates the basis on which the researcher chooses the methods from the 'palette' that is available:

... the logic for choosing which methods to select from the palette should as always continue to be governed by the questions that drive the research. However, what is different is that the relationship between the questions and the palette of methods is fully acknowledged to be an iterative one, and there is a will to think creatively and multi-dimensionally.

Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007: 171) recommend that an effective technique be:

... drawn from concurrent forms of data collection, in which both the quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently, or from the sequential forms of data collection, in which one type of data is collected and analyzed prior to a second data collection. Issues develop during both of these approaches that the investigator must address.

As discussed below, the data for this study was collected from seven sources: Questionnaire 1, Questionnaire 2, a specifically-designed peer coaching programme, observation sheets, reflective journals, interviews, and my field diary.

The procedure by which these instruments were developed is presented in the sequence they were chosen as the study progressed. The data collection methods are discussed in detail and in separate sections below.

3.7. Questionnaire 1 – Class System Teachers

As a quantitative research method, questionnaires are often used to gain a general sense of the related phenomena and to form theories that can be further tested by

using qualitative research methods, which are frequently used to gain greater insights and better understanding (Creswell, 2003: 21). Thus, in the early fieldwork for the present study, the first method used to collect information for the research was a questionnaire. Questionnaire 1 was designed specifically for the class system teachers who were teaching Grade Two of the First Cycle of Basic Education (Primary level) and built on previous research conducted by Rajab (2009).

The main advantage of using a questionnaire is the ease in collecting data from a large sample in a short time. However, an article by the University Library in Loughborough (2009) notes that “It may not be possible to survey every person who could provide a useful response to your questionnaire. In such cases, you will need to choose a sample from your population to survey”. In this case, and as will be discussed more fully below, and following a pilot study, fifty out of 402 class system teachers teaching Grade Two were chosen as a sample for Questionnaire 1, from fourteen out of 134 state primary schools. The size of the sample was determined by my aim to obtain as representative a range of responses as possible to enable me to fulfil the objectives of my study, and to provide answers to key questions. Moreover, the selected sample was manageable, but it would still enable me to generalize from the findings.

At the end of the second semester of the academic year 2009-2010, I distributed Questionnaire 1 with the chosen sample. The questionnaire required fifteen minutes to complete and was collected by the research assistant after completion.

3.7.1. Aim of Questionnaire 1

Milne (1999: 5) states that, in order to obtain helpful answers, “it is important to be clear about the aim of the questionnaire and how the responses will help you”. Therefore, as teachers in the Kingdom of Bahrain appear to have little useful experience in peer observation, Questionnaire 1 (see Appendix D) was designed to consider the following issues from the perspective of the class system teachers:

1 – From a teacher’s perspective, what is peer observation?

2 – How do teachers practise peer observation?

3 – Are teachers trained in observation skills?

4 – Are teachers trained in the skills of giving and receiving feedback?

5 – How do teachers develop their careers?

3.7.2. Characteristics of the sample respondents of Questionnaire 1

As mentioned above, and due to the size and the time-scale of this study, the first data gathering method, Questionnaire 1, was limited to fourteen state primary schools in the First Cycle of Basic Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as this is the educational sector where the Class Teacher System is applied. The schools were also cooperative schools (Further details on the selection of schools are provided in Chapter One).

Each of the 50 educators in the sample taught almost all the compulsory core subjects, which include Arabic Language, Islamic Education, Science, Mathematics, and Social Science. Other subjects, such as English Language, Design and Technology, Music, Fine Arts and Physical Education, were taught by subject-specialist teachers. Table 3.1 below describes the type of schools, context of the study, and teacher/pupil gender.

Ideally I wanted to implement this study with class system teachers teaching Grade One, the first level of the First Cycle of Basic Education, because my initial research, as well as my teaching experience, was related to this grade. However, because of a concern that visitors in Grade One Classes might cause distractions for the pupils, due to their young age, it was decided to focus the study on the Grade Two teachers.

Table 3.1: Types of school in the study context.

Types and number of schools	Gender	
	Teacher	Pupils
2 Boys' schools	Male	Male
3 Boys' schools	Female	Male
9 Girls' schools	Female	Female

As discussed in Chapter One, the schools were chosen especially because they were cooperating schools from one educational zone. This meant that visits with the aim of reciprocal expertise would already have been established.

The sample comprised all the teachers teaching Grade Two in the schools where the study was implemented. Pupils in Grade Two are aged between seven and eight years old. Pupils from this grade were chosen because of the level of children's socialization in this age group. Grade One pupils are beginning school, and their teachers need time to build a relationship with them. As stated earlier, having visitors in their classrooms could have been disruptive for both the young learners and their teachers.

3.7.3. Questionnaire design

Questionnaire 1 was designed for the class system teachers described above. It was paper-based and was translated into Arabic language. Paper and pencil forms allow the respondents to consider both the scope and content of the survey, as well as giving them the freedom to answer questions in any order (Norman et al., 2001).

The questionnaire was sent by email to the research assistant in the Kingdom of Bahrain who distributed the questionnaires to the fourteen state primary schools, where the administrative staff in turn distributed them to the fifty class system teachers who comprised the sample. As Adomi et al. (2007: 1) claim, personal contact has been found to have a positive effect on the rate of questionnaires returned. Therefore, I felt that it was important that the research assistant did this on my behalf, although he did not have direct contact with the respondents themselves, due to the issue of confidentiality.

In addition, the questionnaire was designed to be self-completed, as it consisted of close-ended questions and the respondents were simply asked to tick a box or circle a number (see Appendix D). Hannan (2007: 1) argues that these kinds of uncomplicated written questions "are very sufficient ways of collecting facts". Furthermore, closed questions are very acceptable because they offer the respondents a range of possible answers to select from, as well as giving consistency of responses making them easy to code and analyse (Cano 2010).

3.7.3.1. Details of the questionnaire

Questionnaire – 1 for class system teachers (Appendix D) consisted of six pages, including the consent form and the participants' information sheet (Further details on the ethical considerations are provided in section 3.7.5). The questionnaire comprised twenty-four questions and was divided into two parts.

Part one: Background and information

Part one requested general personal background details from the sample to give an indication of their qualifications and level of experience.

Part two: Questionnaire items

Part two was divided into three sections:

Section A: Teachers' practice of peer observation teaching.

This consisted of thirteen items (items 1-13) and it investigated what constitutes effective peer observation, from the perspective of class system teachers.

Section B: Peer observation strategy as a tool for continuous professional development.

This section consisted of nine items (items 14 - 22) and focused on peer observation as a strategy, and how it assists teachers as a tool for continuous professional development

Section C: Teachers' training.

The section comprised two items (items 23-24) to ascertain whether the teachers had accessed training courses related to peer observation skills, and giving and receiving feedback.

In this section, respondents were required to answer 'Yes' or 'No'. If the answer was 'Yes', the respondent was asked to complete the data related to the special training

course(s) they had already accessed about skills pertaining to peer observation and giving and receiving feedback.

3.7.3.2. The Likert Scale

Hannan describes questionnaires as “devices to gather information about people’s opinions, often asking respondents to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree” (2007: 1). The same author states that one of the clear benefits of questionnaires is that “they provide data amenable to quantification either through the simple counting of boxes or through the content analysis of written responses” (ibid.).

Much of the quantitative data from Questionnaire 1 was collected using a five-point Likert scale. The respondent had to apply a five-point response scale statement, from one to five, to each item which required this, to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the item. The five-point response scale statements were:

5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = no opinion, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

The questions were phrased and ordered to reduce chance of (always strongly) agreeing.

Items one to twenty-two in sections A and B contained the five-point Likert rating scale statements, whereas items twenty-three and twenty-four, in section C, were measured by using the basic Guttman scale, which is explained below.

3.7.3.3. The Guttman scale

The Guttman scale is a measuring technique based on a binary result. It presents a number of items to which the respondent is requested to agree or disagree. The Guttman scale is employed both in psychology and education, with the aim of obtaining “... a single dimension that can be used to position both the questions and the subjects. The position of the questions and subjects on the dimension can then be used to give them a numerical value” (Abdi, 2010:1).

In Section C of Questionnaire – 1, items twenty-three and twenty-four were questions which applied the Guttman scale, as ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answers to the questions were sufficient.

3.7.3.4. Questionnaire language

The language which was used in the questionnaire was Arabic, because the respondents’ mother tongue was Arabic. Therefore, the questionnaire was translated from English into Arabic, and since the study is written in English, the results were then translated back into English,.

3.7.4. Pilot study

Piloting was the preliminary step to the main study, in order to check the validity and reliability of all the data collection instruments. In the case of questionnaires, they need to be piloted to verify that all questions and instructions were clear, as well as to enable the researcher to remove any items which do not yield usable data. An article by Coventry University (2000) mentions that, in order to recognise mistakes in a created questionnaire the researcher may try conducting it on a pilot basis. This is because:

Validity of what you are testing, asking or measuring is important. You should always get advice, or try things out before doing it for real. So for example, if you are using a questionnaire, how do you know that correspondents will interpret your questions in the same way that you meant them? (Coventry University, 2000)

Moreover, testing the formed questionnaire on a small sample from the same level as the intended target group before distributing it more broadly

...will not only help you pick up any typos, but highlight any ambiguity in the wording of your questions. You may also discover that in order to analyse the data in the way you want, you need some extra questions. Or you may find out that some questions are superfluous. Give your pilot group the same information that you tend to give your target population and a deadline! (Loughborough University, 2009)

Lyons and Doueck (2010: 102) state that, although there are different terms and expressions for reliability and validity, such as “credibility, trustworthiness, defensibility, and generalizability”, they are vital in quantitative research.

A pilot study is defined by Cargan (2007: 116) as a pre-test, describing it as a tool which helps the researcher to ensure that the designed questionnaire is both manageable and can provide precise data. Cargan further states that answers to the following questions should be considered when designing questions for a pilot study:

Are there enough directions for those conducting the survey to administer it, collect it, code it, and report it? Are the procedures standardized? Is the necessary information being provided? Is the information being obtained consistent? – are items included that can be assessed for internal consistency? (Cargan, 2007:116)

Moreover, piloting a questionnaire should have the same sampling procedure and techniques as in the larger study; thus, it prepares the researcher for what is to come.

Drawing on these considerations, in May 2010, a pilot questionnaire was administered to refine the research instrument for the designed Questionnaire 1, as well as to enable alterations to be made and ensure that there would be no difficulties in completing the questionnaire in the main study experience.

3.7.4.1. Validity

As mentioned above, one of the key issues when designing and applying a questionnaire is validity. Cargan (2007:116) emphasizes the fact that a test for validity could begin “by making sure that all the main topics have been included”. Therefore, prior to the pilot study, I sent the questionnaire by email to three subject experts as judges: a curriculum expert in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) who was an associate professor of curriculum and instruction in the University of Bahrain; an assistant professor of educational technology in Bahrain Teachers College at the University of Bahrain; and a lecturer in educational technology, also at the University of Bahrain.

The questionnaire was sent to the experts for reading and correction, as they were experienced in designing and applying educational questionnaires. They reviewed the content and the format of the questionnaire, and commented on whether the items covered a representative sample of the contents that needed to be included. They were also asked to make any necessary amendments. Therefore, they looked

at the aim of the questionnaire and read over the items and the questions. They checked whether the knowledge measured in each item was essential and useful to the issue under investigation, and whether each item measured one or more of the objectives. They also marked with a cross any objective that was not assessed by any of the items. In addition, they evaluated the appropriateness of the format of the instrument.

The experts agreed that the items presented in Questionnaire 1 were essential and useful. However, they suggested dividing the questionnaire into two: one questionnaire for the class system teachers and another for the senior teachers of the class system. They made some changes to the questions and the final format, which they felt were necessary because of language differences resulting from the questionnaire being translated from English to Arabic. In addition, as the teachers involved in the study might not be familiar with the idea of peer observation, they thought it would be better to add a brief definition at the beginning of the Arabic questionnaire to make the issue clearer to the respondents. Following the experts' suggestions, amendments were made to Questionnaire 1. For reliability, the second step of the pilot study was to send it to the research assistant to distribute to ten class system teachers of Grade Two from state primary schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain. I chose the teachers because I had worked with them and established a good relationship with them, so I asked them if they would be willing to take part in the pilot study, as I knew they would be honest in their feedback.

3.7.4.2. Reliability

Another important aspect of a data collection instrument is reliability. Cargan (2007: 116) argues that testing for reliability can be done "by checking the format of questionnaire and the clarity of the questions being asked". Thus, as described above, the pilot questionnaire was sent to a group of ten Grade Two system teachers by mail. Cargan explains that when a questionnaire is applied to a random sample, it can provide "a comprehensive view of the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the larger population with a smaller sampling – range error" (ibid).

Thus, in May 2010, the pilot questionnaire was administered to refine the final research instrument of Questionnaire 1, as well as to enable any further alterations to

be made, and to ensure that there would be no difficulties for the respondents to complete it in the main study. In order to replicate the application of the questionnaire, the pilot questionnaire used the same sampling procedure and techniques as in the larger study (see below).

The changes the teachers proposed were minor and related to the structure rather than the content of the questionnaire for the most part. These changes were taken into account and incorporated in the final version.

3.7.4.3. Pilot test outcome

The internal consistency between the items in Questionnaire 1, and how closely they are related to each other, was measured by Cronbach's Alpha giving a mean reliability score of 7.0 out of 8 on the Likert scale. This indicates a high level of reliability as the results are all above 0.70, which is the acceptable value (Field, 2005). Based on this outcome, Questionnaire 1 was prepared to be administered to the fifty class system teachers of Grade Two, as described above.

3.7.5. Ethical Considerations for Questionnaire 1

Driscoll & Brizee (2008) point out that most studies carried out by researchers affiliated to a university require prior approval by an ethics review committee in order to verify that no ethical considerations are violated. Therefore, first and foremost, in order to apply my questionnaire (Questionnaire 1), I provided the format of the questionnaire to the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Faculty of Social Sciences, of the University of East Anglia, asking for approval (see Appendix J). This was done before piloting the questionnaire, which was only sent after obtaining ethical approval. I also drew up information sheets (see Appendix C) and consent forms (see Appendix B) for the participants to sign if they agreed to take part in the study. These included the possibility of participants withdrawing from the study, or making any complaints they felt were necessary.

In the context of Bahrain, if the Ministry of Education gives permission for schools and teachers to take part in research, there would be an expectation for them to participate without question. However, I explained to the teachers informally in school

that their participation was voluntary. As a result, one of the schools took my word and declined to participate, as discussed below in section 3.9.2.

3.7.6. Access to schools

At the beginning of my research, I had asked the School of Education and Lifelong Learning for a letter addressed to the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, requesting them to facilitate my mission for this study. A copy of this was sent by email, along with Questionnaire 1, to the Scientific Research Directorate in the Secretariat General of the Higher Education Council in the Ministry of Education, for approval to access the state primary schools in Bahrain where the study was to be undertaken.

Once I obtained this approval, I forwarded it to the research assistant so that he would be able to access the schools. As mentioned previously, these schools were chosen because of their location, and the fact that they belong to the same group of cooperating schools. This means that the selected state primary schools work together in several activities, including reciprocal visits, which take place once every academic semester for the sake of continuous professional development, the core of my study.

The research assistant used the above-mentioned letter of approval from the Scientific Research Directorate to access the schools and obtain permission from the head teachers for Questionnaire 1 to be distributed to the class system teachers of Grade Two who would comprise the research sample. Questionnaire 1 was distributed together with the participants' information sheet, which explained what the study was about and what the rationale of the study was (see Appendix C). Besides, the respondents were asked to sign the consent form (see Appendix B) if they agreed to take part in this study. In the selection of participants, I took into account the point made by Driscoll (2008: 1): "When you are doing research, be sure you are not taking advantage of easy-to-access groups of people ... simply because they are easy to access. You should choose your subjects based on what would most benefit your research".

Moreover, according to ethical considerations for research at the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT):

Informed consent should be gained from participants before they become involved in the project. Informed consent is deemed to be when participants have been provided with a comprehensible explanation of the nature and purpose of the research, possible hazard and their right to decline or withdraw from the research at any time. (NMIT, 2008: 4)

3.7.6.1. Anonymity

As mentioned previously, the participants were informed that the questionnaire would be used to compile information about their training needs, and that their anonymity would be guaranteed. Therefore, each questionnaire was referred to by a unique number (Questionnaire 1, Questionnaire 2, Questionnaire 3 and so on) during the collection of the questionnaires and analysis of the survey results.

3.8. Questionnaire 2 – Senior Class System Teachers

Questionnaire 2 (see Appendix E) was designed to follow the same steps that were used in Questionnaire 1 in terms of design, language, piloting, validity, reliability, and access to schools and ethical considerations. However, the characteristics of the sample participants in Questionnaire 2 were different, as the stakeholders were the fourteen senior class system teachers from the fourteen state primary schools which formed the context of the study.

At the end of the second semester of the academic year 2009-2010, I applied Questionnaire 2 to the chosen sample. I sent the questionnaires to the senior teachers by email, and received their responses by the same means.

3.8.1. Aims of Questionnaire 2

Questionnaire 2 (see Appendix E) was applied in order to obtain answers from senior class system teachers to the following questions, from their own perspective, for the purpose of gathering information for the research:

1 – What is peer observation?

2 – How do teachers develop their vocation?

3 – What are the obstacles to practising peer observation?

4 – Are the senior class system teachers and the class system teachers teaching in the same schools trained in the skills of observing, as well as giving and receiving feedback?

3.8.2. Details of the questionnaire

Questionnaire 2 (see Appendix E) consisted of six pages, including the consent form and the respondents' information sheet. The questionnaire comprised twenty-one questions and was divided into two parts.

Part one: Background and information

Part one comprised seven categories, requesting general personal background information of the sample to give indications of their qualifications and level of experience.

Part two: Questionnaire items

Part two was divided into three sections.

Section A: Teachers' practice of peer observation teaching.

This consisted of eight items (items one to eight) and it investigated the effectiveness of peer observation from the senior class system teachers' perspectives.

Section B: Peer observation strategy as a tool for continuous professional development.

This section comprised nine items (items nine to seventeen) and discussed peer observation as a strategy and how it assists teachers as a tool for continuous professional development.

Section C: Teachers' training.

This included four items (items eighteen to twenty-one). It explored whether the senior class system teachers, as well as the class system teachers, had had access to training courses related to the skills of peer observation and giving and receiving feedback.

3.8.3. Scales

As discussed in sections 3.7.3.2 and 3.7.3.3, the Likert scale was used in collecting the quantitative data from Questionnaire 2, and the Guttman scale was used for the qualitative data.

Items one to seventeen in sections A and B contained the five-point Likert rating scale statements, whereas items eighteen to twenty-one, in section C, were measured by using the basic Guttman scale, explained previously.

3.8.4. Summary

The findings of the two questionnaires (1 and 2) described above guided me to the next stage of my research which was to design a peer coaching programme to assist Grade Two teachers of the first cycle of Basic Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain in this aspect of their professional development.

3.9. Designing a Peer Coaching Programme

Based on the findings of the above mentioned questionnaires, 1 and 2, and as will be discussed in detail below, I designed a peer coaching programme for Grade Two of the First Cycle of Basic Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This peer coaching programme was then implemented by twenty-four class system teachers in seven state primary schools, part of the original fourteen schools. (See details of selection below). The peer coaching programme was designed to follow the same steps that were used in Questionnaires 1 and 2 in terms of language, piloting, access to schools and ethical considerations (see Appendices G and H). Anonymity of the participants in the implementation of the programme will be discussed in more detail in section 3.10.4, the interview protocol.

The programme was implemented in the seven state primary schools in the second semester of the academic year 2010-2011. At the beginning of the semester I, as a fieldworker, visited these schools, and met the head teachers individually to explain the programme and ask for their permission to meet the senior class system teachers and then the class system teachers, who made up the sample of teachers involved in the coaching programme.

After obtaining the head teachers' permission, I met each senior class system teacher individually. I explained to each one of them the designed peer coaching programme, and they arranged for me to meet the Grade Two class system teachers in their schools. I conducted a workshop for each school and explained the programme to them in detail.

3.9.1. Aims of the programme

As explained to the participants, this programme was carried out for the purpose of gathering information with the aim of answering the following research questions:

- 1- Does peer coaching teaching support, improve, and enrich learning and teaching practices in the Kingdom of Bahrain?
- 2- Does peer coaching teaching develop and enhance teachers' professional development in the Kingdom of Bahrain?

3.9.2. Characteristics of the sample who implemented the designed peer coaching programme

As discussed previously in sections 3.7 and 3.8 in this chapter, the programme was designed for seven state primary schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain, specifically for the first cycle of Basic Education, where the class system teaching is applied. These particular schools were chosen because they were from the same subsection of the original zone used in Questionnaire 1. In addition, they were cooperative schools from one Educational Area as this would mean that visits between teachers with the aim of reciprocal expertise would be easier. Moreover, teachers would be able to practise peer coaching skills with their colleagues from the same school and from other cooperative schools.

The key stakeholders in the mentioned peer coaching programme were twenty-four class system teachers teaching Grade 2 in the above-mentioned seven primary schools. The seven senior class system teachers taught in those same schools.

The designed programme was carried out with twenty-four class system teachers teaching classes of pupils aged between seven and eight years old. I selected these teachers because they were teaching Grade 2 level in the schools where the programme was to be implemented, and they constituted all the Grade 2 classes in these schools. As explained previously, each of these educators taught almost all the compulsory core subjects, which include Arabic Language, Islamic Education, Science, Mathematics and Social Science, with other subjects being taught by subject-specialist teachers.

The schools that were the context of the study were varied, and Table 3.2 provides an overview of the schools who participated in implementing the programme. It is worth mentioning that in fact eight schools were chosen for the implementation phase. However, one of the schools, a girls' school with female teachers and students, later declined to participate because of the conditions which the Kingdom of Bahrain experienced during the months of February and March 2011. The senior class system teacher in that school said that the class system teachers were not willing to contribute to the programme and they expressed their desire to withdraw. Therefore, the programme was implemented in seven schools, each given a fictitious name.

Table 3.2: Schools participating in implementation of the peer coaching programme

Schools (designated names)	Class System Teachers	Students
Red primary school	4 - F	M
Blue primary school	5 - F	M
Pink primary school	4 - F	F
Yellow primary school	4 - F	F
White primary and Intermediate school	3 - F	F
Orange Intermediate school	2 - M	M
Green Town primary school	2 - M	M

M = male; F = female

3.9.3. Peer coaching programme design

The findings of Questionnaire 1 are discussed in detail in Chapter 4. However, this chapter outlines the key findings which informed the peer coaching programme design.

The findings from Questionnaire 1, which was administered to fifty class system teachers, revealed that almost the entire questionnaire sample concurred on the advantages of practising peer observation strategy and how it affected their professional development. In addition, the questionnaire sample preferred practising peer observation because they learnt more from their colleagues than in workshops. However, the sample was dissatisfied with the current peer observation practising procedure as they felt that it caused some difficulties.

Moreover, the findings from Questionnaire 2 (discussed in detail in Chapter Four), which was administered to fourteen senior class system teachers from fourteen state primary schools, showed that the entire questionnaire sample agreed that peer observation is a strategy which enhances, develops, and enriches the learning and teaching process, as well as developing the class system teachers' professional vocation. However, the senior teachers believed teachers faced difficulties when putting this procedure into practice.

Therefore, I designed the peer coaching programme, as a particular form of peer observation, based on the findings of Questionnaires 1 and 2, and taking into account all the obstacles mentioned by the participants in this part of the research.

3.9.3.1. Details of the peer coaching programme

The programme is described in Appendix H and is divided into three parts. The first part, pages 1 to 10, describes the programme and its procedure. The second part, page 11, is the observation sheet. The third part, pages 12 and 13, is the reflective journal sheet and some selected sentences to be used by class system teachers to indicate the most beneficial aspects, or barriers, encountered while implementing the programme.

Part one:

Page 1: The title (I chose a simple descriptive title)

Page 2: Who: (The participants)

Teacher + teacher / Teacher + group of teachers / Group of teachers.

This page was designed to show that peer coaching is intended to be a non-hierarchical structure, in which only teachers from a similar status peer coach each other. Barkley and Bianco (2005: 4) mention this important point:

Coaching is a relationship between two equals, one of whom is committed to making personal and professional improvements. These improvements may come in the form of wanting to learn new strategies, to get unblocked or unstuck, to re-evaluate beliefs or values affecting professional outlook.

In addition, the programme can be used in a larger context, such as an entire school or grade level.

Page 3: Why:

Here, the programme's purpose is stated as improving teaching quality, then teachers' professional development, and the ultimate purpose of peer coaching which is to increase pupils' achievement. This corresponds to what Barkley and Bianco (2005: 4) state: "Students receive the benefit of an improved teacher in their classroom".

Page 4: How:

In this stage, the designed programme is divided into three parts:

-Awareness:

Teachers are aware of the significance to the programme. Bean (2004: 120) states that building trust between teachers is one of the "principles that should be taken into consideration when one is involved in coaching activities". She explains that trust is built

...by maintaining confidentiality. Coaches who talk about what they have seen in classrooms will not be seen as individuals whose responsibility is one of providing support. Teachers will be less likely to respond in a positive manner to them. (Bean, 2004: 120)

-Teachers:

Teachers as key members in the programme will guide their own learning and development. They promote, assist and support each other. Furthermore, teachers share their teaching practices by observing each others' classrooms and discuss what they have observed and ways of improvement.

-The programme:

The programme can be utilized in a classroom or a grade level, or in a larger context such as a school. Moreover, it focuses on developing instruction rather than on revealing weaknesses.

Page 5: Peer coaching procedure

Five procedures to be followed by teachers are explained on this page.

Page 6: This explains that the participants in the peer coaching programme are the class system teachers and the senior class system teachers.

Pages 7 and 8: The role of teachers

The programme specifies the teachers' responsibilities as a stakeholder in six steps.

Pages 9 and 10: The role of the senior class system teachers is very significant in the implementation of the programme. They provide two types of support, explained in two sections:

-Administrative and organizational support, and

-Emotional support.

Part two:

Page 11: Observation sheet:

The Observation Sheet is a confidential form to be shared and utilized by members of the peer coaching programme. Price (2002) notes that teachers use observation sheets "...to assist with the focus and recording information about the lesson". This record sheet is considered as one of the key features of observations by Imperial College London, because it "usually prompts thoughts about teaching" (website).

This form is divided into three parts:

- Pre-observation: The catalyst for the observation.
- Observation: Practising the foci the teachers agreed upon in the pre-observation sessions.
- Post-observation: Meeting for a feedback session.

Part three:

Page 12: Reflective journals

This page requires the observed teacher to complete a reflective journal, with the intention of having the observed teacher discuss whether the purpose of observation was achieved or not. Moreover, the observed teacher is invited to describe any benefits or barriers they faced while putting this programme into practice. Thus, these reflective journals were intended to provide me, as a researcher, with a better understanding of how the teachers implemented the peer coaching programme in their classrooms. This is supported by Holly's statement that

...the most general and important reason for keeping a personal-professional journal is that it helps the author to better understand him- or herself, teaching, and the nature of the profession itself. (1989: 9)

For Janesick (1999: 513), journal writing "...allows one to reflect, to dig deeper if you will, into the heart of the words, beliefs, and behaviors we describe in our journals". In addition, Hiemstra (2001: 25) refers to Reflective and Critical Thinking as one of the benefits of the journal writing. He explains:

Journaling helps adult learners increase their ability to reflect critically on what they are studying or learning. The resulting outcomes from values clarification, that is, finding meaning in what is being examined, and developing wholeness as a professional through critical judgments, enhance not only the professional but also the profession.

Rainer (1980: 71) believes that reflection "...is characterized by the perspective, or psychological distance, it provides (...) tend[ing] to deal with the general and the overall perspective".

Boud (2001: 10) describes reflection "as a process of turning experience into learning, that is, a way of exploring experience in order to learn new things from it". He argues that "Reflection involves taking the unprocessed, raw material of experience and engaging with it as a way to make sense of what has occurred". Moreover, Boud refers to three occasions of reflection: before, during, and after the event. As the purpose of the designed peer coaching programme was that observers should reflect on their colleagues' classroom practices, this would seem to be what Boud calls 'Reflection in the Midst of Action', describing it thus:

Our engagement with an event constitutes a learning experience. The model points to key features of learning in the midst of action. Through noticing, intervening, and reflection-in-intentions and with what we take with us to help us through the process. (Boud, 2001: 13)

Boud (2001: 17) concludes that:

Journal writing is a multifaceted activity that can take many forms for many purposes. It can be used in many different ways to promote reflection. Different strategies and devices can be used at different stages of learning to focus on events anticipated, as well as those that have passed.

Page 13: Benefits / Barriers encountered:

A number of phrases are given on this page as examples of benefits or barriers to help the teachers while writing their reflective journals.

3.9.4. Difficulties encountered during my implementation of the programme

At the beginning of implementation the programme was delayed due to the fact that the Kingdom of Bahrain was exposed to a coup attempt against the regime, involving

the Bahraini Teachers' Association. This Association instigated some of the teachers and students to strike and then to commit civil disobedience, which led to the absence of some teachers and, thus, to disruption of the official working hours. As a solution to that crisis, the Bahraini Ministry of Education opened the door to volunteers to work in schools as teachers and administrators. Hundreds of volunteers flocked to the Ministry, which distributed them to the schools that were affected by the crisis.

The approval I requested from the Ministry of Education to implement the peer coaching programme in eight state primary schools and with twenty-eight teachers came through at the beginning of the second semester of the 2010-2011 school year. As soon as the schools opened, I visited the head teachers and met the senior teachers in order to explain the programme to them and obtain their consent to meet with the teachers. Unfortunately, that period was the beginning of the crisis in the kingdom. Therefore, the head teachers and the senior teachers postponed the meeting with the teachers for a week.

The senior class system teachers arranged a meeting between the class system teachers and myself for the following week, when I met the class teachers of each school and explained the details of the peer coaching programme. The teachers read the participant information sheet (see Appendix G) and signed the consent forms (see Appendix F). However, three weeks after the start of the second semester, teaching was suspended for two days, after which the teachers went back to school, with the pupils returning two days later.

I contacted all the schools again to ensure their readiness for the implementation of the programme. All the schools, except the one discussed in section 3.9.2 above, indicated their willingness to cooperate, and their eagerness to begin the programme. The designed peer coaching programme was, therefore, implemented for one academic semester.

3.9.5. Volunteer teachers

As explained above, the Bahraini Ministry of Education had requested volunteers to work in the schools affected by the above-mentioned crisis. As a result, two of the seven schools which formed the context of the implementation had volunteers

teaching Grade 2. I met the volunteer teachers and explained the peer coaching programme to them. The volunteer teachers showed an interest in implementing the programme because of its potential to facilitate the teaching process and, thus, accelerate the delivery of the school curriculum, which had been disrupted due to teacher absence.

3.10. In-depth interviews

Once the data was collected from the reflective journals and observation sheets that accompanied the peer coaching programme, I found that they did not provide sufficient in-depth data (this will be discussed further in Chapter Five) to evaluate the implementation of the programme. Therefore, the need arose to conduct interviews, following what Kajornboon states:

Interviews are ways for participants to get involved and talk about their views. In addition, the interviewees are able to discuss their perception and interpretation in regards to a given situation. It is their expression from their point of view. (2005: 2)

Boyce and Neale define in-depth interview as,

...a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. (2006: 3)

They also describe the appropriate time for conducting these interviews as being "...when you want detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors or want to explore new issues in depth" (Boyce and Neale, 2006: 3). This type of interview is also useful when other data collection methods do not yield enough data for a piece of research, as was the case here.

3.10.1. Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Kvale suggests that interviews as a qualitative research method are used to:

...understand something from the subjects' point of view and to uncover the meaning of their experiences. Interviews allow people to convey to others a situation from their own perspective and in their own words. Research views are based on the conversations of everyday life. (Kvale, 1996: 1)

One type of interview is the semi-structured interview, described by Cousin (2009: 71) as one that “allow[s] researchers to develop in-depth accounts of experiences and perceptions with individuals”. Furthermore, Hancock (1998) argues that the advantage of conducting semi-structured interviews is that when an interviewee finds it difficult to provide a full answer to a question, or any answer at all, the semi-structured interview can:

...use cues or prompts to encourage the interviewee to consider the question further. In a semi structured interview, the interviewer also has the freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on the original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewee. (Hancock, 1998: 13)

Therefore, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews in which it was not necessary to ask all the questions as the teachers had often answered them beforehand. The teachers’ answers guided me to ask additional questions, such as “What do you mean by an improvement team in your school?” (Salma 2, Blue School, 2:41). I also asked the teachers different questions regarding pedagogy, as these varied according to their experiences and the way they had implemented the designed peer coaching programme.

However, Kajornboon (2005: 5) refers to some disadvantages of the semi-structured interviews, one being that “...inexperienced interviewers may not be able to ask prompt questions. If this is the case, some relevant data may not be gathered”. In this study, I, the researcher, was the interviewer. Therefore, I was aware of all the issues and was able to ask additional questions in the time available. Moreover, the order of the questions in the interviews conducted was changed. Kajornboon (2005) states that in semi-structured interviews “...the order of the questions can be changed depending on the direction of the interview” (Kajornboon, 2005: 4), and that “Additional questions can be asked and some may be questions that have not been anticipated in the beginning of the interview” (ibid).

On this basis, the fourth data collection instrument employed in the present research was in-depth interviews with all the participants. I chose in-depth interviews, particularly because this research needed a deeper understanding of the perspectives of the teachers who implemented the peer coaching programme. Therefore, I contacted the same twenty-four teachers teaching Grade 2 level in the

Kingdom of Bahrain state primary schools who had participated in the implementation of the peer coaching programme. Eleven teachers responded to my call regarding the in-depth interviews. The other teachers did not respond as they were spending their holidays abroad at the time. However, the eleven teachers who were available for interview represented five schools out of the seven where the programme had been implemented, and thus constituted an acceptable sample.

3.10.2. Aim of the interview

Seidman (cited in Nolan Jr & Meister, 2000: 33) argues that the aim behind conducting in-depth interviews "...is to understand the experience of other people and the meaning that they make of that experience". Given that insufficient data had been collected from the observation sheets and the reflective journals, I designed a series of questions that would allow the eleven participants in this stage to evaluate the implementation of the peer coaching programme. The interviews were carried out to answer the following questions for the purpose of collecting in-depth information for analysis.

1 – Have you done any observations before? If so, how and why did you do it, and how do you find it now?

2 – How did you go about observing your peer?

3 – What was helpful in this experience?

4 – Has it impacted on your practice?

5 – How did you choose your colleague?

6 – How did you decide what was to be observed?

7 – Have you been observed? If so, on that occasion did you see any notes made by any of the observers?

8– What was the procedure you used?

At the end of the interview, I asked the interviewees if they would like to suggest any amendments, changes, or additions to the peer coaching programme.

3.10.3. Interview design

I arranged the in-depth interviews personally by phone and agreed a suitable time to hold them. Nine interviews were conducted face to face, while the other two were conducted by phone. One of the face-to-face interviews was conducted in a coffee shop as preferred by the interviewee. Another three interviewees suggested meeting in the house of one of the interviewees, which was agreed. The rest agreed to come to my house, where I met them individually.

Opdenakker (2006) argues that conducting face-to-face interviews helps the interviewer to gain more data:

... FtF [face to face] interviews are characterized by synchronous communication in time and place. Due to this synchronous communication, as no other interview method FtF interviews can take its advantage of social cues. Social cues, such as voice, intonation, body language etc. of the interviewee can give the interviewer a lot of extra information that can be added to the verbal answer of the interviewee on a question. (2006: 3)

The interviews were conducted between July and August 2011 during the school summer holidays in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The majority of the interviews lasted between forty-five and sixty minutes. At the beginning of the interview, a copy of the participant's information sheet (see sample in Appendix G) was provided to the interviewee, while a copy of this sheet was sent by email to the interviewees with whom I conducted interviews by phone. In addition, each interviewee who agreed to take part in this part of the study was also given, or sent, a copy of the consent form (see Appendix I) to sign upon their approval. I also requested their permission to tape-record the interviews for subsequent transcription and analysis (these procedures are discussed in detail in section 6).

After the completion of the participant sheet and the consent form, the interviews were guided by the interview protocols.

3.10.4. Interview protocol and ethical considerations

King and Horrocks (2010: 123) state that "The ethical practice of qualitative interviewing is a wide-ranging and often demanding enterprise".

In order to conduct the in-depth interviews, I first had to ask for approval, as with the research instruments mentioned previously. Once obtained, I travelled to the Kingdom of Bahrain to arrange to meet the twenty-four teachers who had implemented the peer coaching programme in order to conduct these interviews. I made a polite request to the participants to help me in my study, at the same time informing them that they were free to refuse to take part in the study, whenever they wished. For this purpose, the interviewees were given a participant's information sheet (see sample in Appendix G) which outlined the rationale of the study. Moreover, a consent form (see Appendix I) was prepared for the interviewees to sign if they gave their approval to take part. The consent form explained that the anonymity of the interviewees would be ensured and that their identities would not be disclosed, as their names would be substituted by different Arabic first names only. In order for readers to distinguish between the participants, a coding system is used. For the interviews, each teacher is referred to by a first name (fictitious) followed by the number 1 or 2, then a school name (a colour). When an extract is used as an example or illustration, this information is followed by the page and line number corresponding to the respective transcript. Observations and reflective journals are identified with the school name, as above, and a number, which corresponds to a teacher from that school.

The importance of anonymity is made clear by King and Harrocks (2010: 117) when they explain what this means:

Anonymity refers to concealing the identity of the participants in all documents resulting from the research, therefore actively protecting the identity of research participants.

Their anonymity was further guaranteed as the names of the schools were also changed to colours: white school, blue school, red, orange, green, yellow, and pink school.

I requested their permission to tape-record the interviews, aware that they might be anxious because of cultural reservations. I reassured them that whatever they said in the interviews would only be used for research purposes and I stressed the need for them to be as honest as possible because I really wanted to learn how to improve the programme.

As the participants are Arabic language speakers, the consent form and the participants' information sheets were translated into Arabic and the interviews conducted in Arabic to facilitate communication. After transcription, all the outcomes were translated into English.

The entire interview process was conversational and not a question and answer session, but an interview with some open-ended questions (see section 3.9 for the outline questions). Prior to the interviews, I allocated time for an informal talk between myself as the interviewer, and the interviewees about our everyday lives. This approach helped me to build up trust and rapport as it was important to put the interviewees at ease before conducting the interviews. Then I informed them about the questions I had prepared and asked them to respond with details from the peer coaching programme that had been implemented.

At the end of each interview, I thanked the interviewees for taking part as they had given up a great deal of their time for my research, and they were much overburdened.

3.10.5. Tape-recording and transcription

One of the disadvantages of conducting interviews is referred to by Boyce and Neale (2006: 3) as the fact that they are 'time-intensive'. Not only do the interviews have to be conducted, but they also have to be transcribed and analysed. Tape-recording the interviews, however, enabled me to listen carefully to the interviewee and, at the same time, it reduced the amount of writing I had to do while conducting interviews. All the interviews were recorded, after the participants had given their authorization.

The transcripts (see Appendix K) are entirely verbatim as this provided me with the best quality of data possible, which then helped me in the analysis. This reflects what Hannan (2007) from the University of Plymouth states: "...the more you succeed in recording every possible detail of what took place, the more data you will have to analyze". Moreover, he indicates that trying to remember what was said during an interview is not likely to be a reliable way of collecting data for subsequent analysis (ibid). Opdenakker (2006; 3) adds that another advantage of tape-recording interviews is that "...the interview report is more accurate than writing out notes". However, I wrote some notes during the interview while the recorder was on, in

anticipation of possible problems with the recording device. That is one of the three reasons why it is a good idea to take notes and not depend entirely on a tape-recorder, as emphasized by Opdenakker: “(1) to check if all the questions have been answered, (2) in case of malfunctioning of the tape recorder, and (3) in case of “malfunctioning of the interviewer” (ibid). Hannan (2007) concludes from his own experience when conducting research that writing notes, even when tape-recording interviews, is a safeguard, and that these assist when transcribing as “If I have both my notes and the tape I can save myself some time when transcribing by listening for the bits I already know to be important”.

The taking of notes during the interviews came naturally to me and proved useful in two ways. The first was when, in one interview, I noticed after ten minutes that the machine was not working, and I was able to use the notes to recap on what had been said. The second was to remind me of key points of the interviews to focus on later. With regard to transcription, Hannan (2007) refers to the benefits of the researcher him/herself doing this time-consuming task:

The biggest advantage of doing the transcription yourself is that you know what’s being discussed. It is possible for you to replay tapes making notes as you go, summarising the points made and then pausing the tape, rewinding and writing out verbatim those bits that are of particular interest. You also get to know the data better the more you listen, constructing categories as you go and analyzing what has been said as part of the process of testing and generating hypothesis. (Hannan, 2007)

I found it beneficial to do the transcription (see Appendix K) of the interviews myself and, because the tape-recordings were easy to hear, the procedure was straight forward. Afterwards, I destroyed all the tapes so that they would not create any future potential problems for the interviewees, such as being used against them in appraisals.

3.10.6. Interview language

The interviews were carried out in Arabic as this is the mother tongue of the interviewer, myself, and of the interviewees. However, for the purpose of analysis and as the study was written in English, the interviews were translated into English.

3.11. My research diary

A diary is an important data collection method which assists the researcher in the analysis process, particularly in the latter stages of the research. Newbury notes the significance of keeping a research diary:

The reason for keeping a research diary is to facilitate the research process through recording observations, thoughts and questions as they happen, for later use by the researcher, and to stimulate reflective thinking about the research. (2001: 2)

Scott and Morrison (2006: 63) explain that such a diary might contain “more personal and detailed information ... [which] can be used to serve a range of critical purposes for the researcher”.

My research diary was an important data collection tool in this study as I was in the habit of writing during every step of my study. I recorded all my notes in my research diary, especially throughout my field trips to the Kingdom of Bahrain, the context of my study. I wrote all the details relating to my fieldwork; from the primary stages of preparing the research method and its ethical considerations, to collecting the data. As soon as I finished with each research instrument, I transferred what I wrote in the research diary to a report, which then helped me and facilitated the writing of the methodology chapter, and subsequent data analysis. This process seems to be what Scott and Morrison (2006: 63) refer to as the diarist being a “...witness to the educational phenomena of interest to the researcher”.

3.12. Conclusion

To sum up, Chapter Three has reviewed the research design, and its aims and objectives. It has also described the mixed methods which were used in collecting the data by means of questionnaires, designed peer coaching programme, observation sheets, reflective journals, in-depth interviews, and the research diary, to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. The above-mentioned methods have been presented in sequence as they were chosen, according to the development of the study. They, together with the sample, have been discussed in detail in separate sections. Furthermore, the validity, reliability, the ethical considerations and their relevance to the study have been discussed. The analysis of the data gathered from all the data collection instruments is detailed in the following chapter.

Findings and discussion

Chapter 4:

Participants' general attitudes before the implementation of the designed peer coaching programme.

Chapter 5:

Teachers' responses to the implemented peer coaching programme.

Chapter 6:

Change in teachers' perceptions after the implementation of the peer coaching

Chapter 7:

Reflection on the implemented programme

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

Participants' general attitudes before the implementation of the designed peer coaching programme

4.1. Introduction.

In this chapter I will report on the findings and discuss the data collected from the four research techniques employed in this study: questionnaire 1 for teachers; questionnaire 2 for senior teachers; observation sheets and reflective journals; and structured interviews. These techniques are summarised in Table 4.1. The interview data incorporated into this chapter was gathered after the peer coaching programme, but only the teachers' experiences of peer observation prior to the implementation of the programme is included in the discussion of this chapter. Some readers might consider this unusual given that the remarks were made after the programme was implemented, but a) they enrich data already collected in pre-programme questionnaires, and b) although the interviews were not part of the original plan, the limited data from the research journals (see Appendix H) meant that they were necessary in order to elaborate the material collected during the course of the programme. One of the advantages of these after-the-event discussions was that some of the teachers were more open about their thoughts on peer coaching prior to this study. For example, Dana from Yellow School revealed her feelings when she was invited to the first meeting for a workshop regarding the implementation of peer coaching programmes. She stated that:

When you came to our school with your new 'peer coaching programme', and when the senior teacher called us for a meeting with you and for a workshop, my colleagues and I didn't want to take part. We were annoyed because we thought that the programme you brought was another kind of programme from the Ministry, and that we would be forced

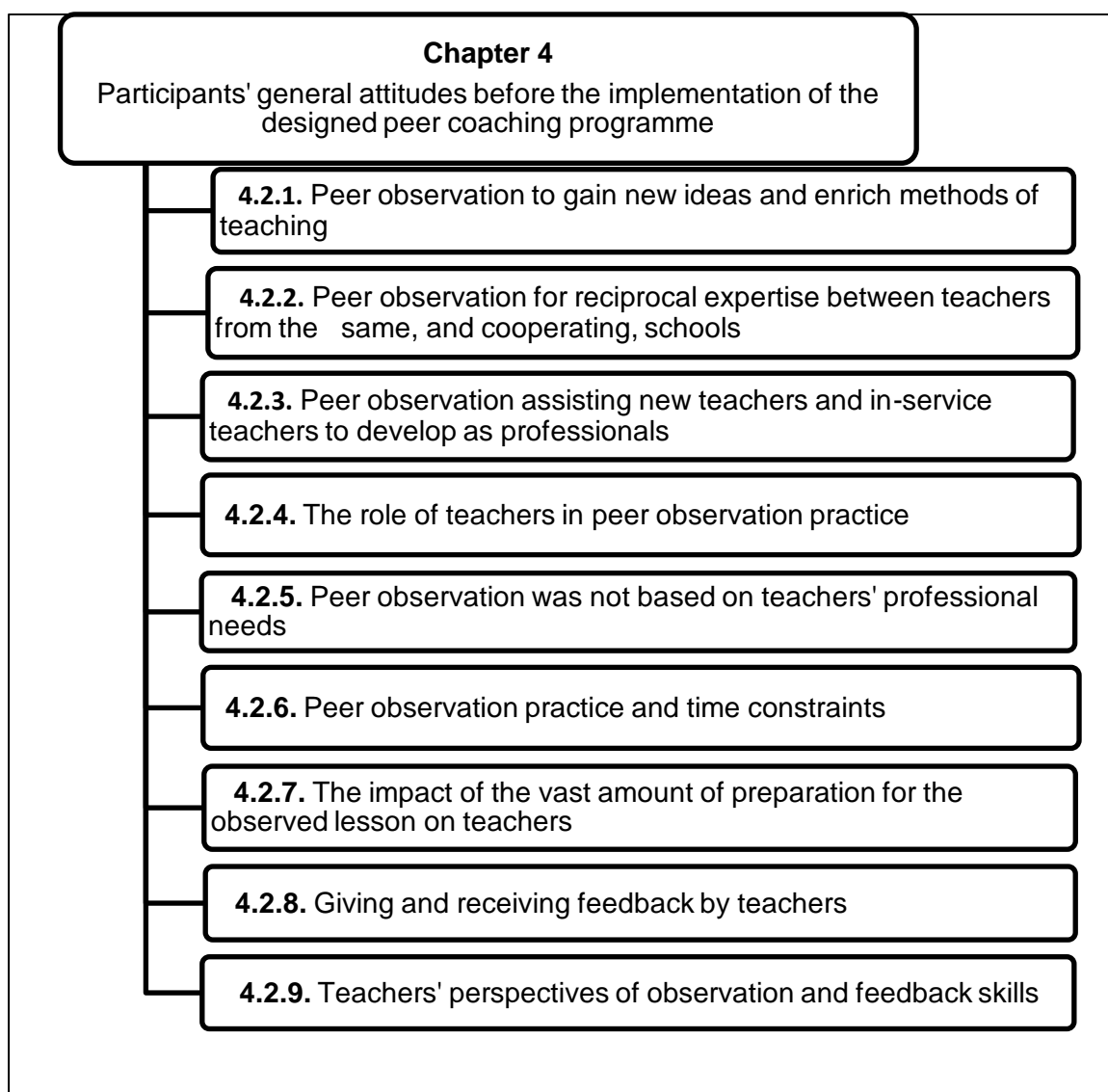
to apply it. We thought that it would have a negative impact on our pupils' achievement. That is why we were upset and not happy when we came to the workshop. But when you started explaining what the programme was, we found that it sounded different from the other kinds of observations we were used to applying. That is why when I came out of the workshop, I was wondering if we could implement the programme like you told us. Then I said to myself 'why not?'. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 2: 35)

Table 4.1: Summary of data collected

Research Technique	No	Participants	Context	Timing	Aim
Questionnaire 1	50	Class system teachers	14 schools	End of 2 nd semester of the academic year 2009/2010	Teachers' perspectives of peer observation practice
Questionnaire 2	14	Senior class system teachers	14 schools	End of 2 nd semester of the academic year 2009/2010	Senior teachers' perspectives of peer observation practice.
Observation sheet + reflective journals	24	Class system teachers	7 schools	During implementation Second term of the academic year 2010-2011	Teachers' experiences of the designed peer coaching programme to explore if it supports, improves, and enriches learning and teaching practices, as well as teachers' professional development.
Semi-structured interviews	11	Class system teachers	Home + coffee shop + phone	During the school summer holidays, July to Sept. 2011.	Teachers' perceptions towards the designed peer coaching programme before, during and after, and the peer coaching concept.

In this chapter I will present the findings and discussion related to the teachers' general attitudes before the implementation of the designed peer coaching programme to identify their experiences and their perceptions of these. The findings informed the design of the programme and can inform future design and implementation of similar programmes in the future.

4.2. Findings and Discussion.



The data showed how peer observation was put into practice by the teachers before the implementation of the programme, as well as their attitudes towards the mentioned practice. It was important to consider these aspects to help me to be able to design the intervention programme, and to encourage the teachers to participate.

The chapter is divided into sections for clarity reasons. The sections refer to different aspects of peer observation from participants' perspectives. The data presented below demonstrates that many of the teachers had had experience of peer observation and found it to be beneficial in a number of different ways. More specifically, it seemed that peer observation helped the new and the in-service teachers from the same school and from cooperating schools to gain new ideas and to enrich their methods of teaching, as well as to develop as professionals. However, the data also illustrates teachers' passive role in the practice of peer observation, and their perspectives of it. Data related to obstacles to the practice of peer observation, in the experience of participants, are also included; in particular, they show that observations were not based on teachers' professional needs, that there were time constraints, and that the vast amount of preparation required for the observed lesson was burdensome for the teachers. Finally, findings regarding the perceived reality of peer observation practice and training are revealed; specifically, how a lack of training can have an unconstructive impact on teachers' positivity in its application, and hinder them from putting it into practice.

4.2.1. Peer observation to gain new ideas and enrich methods of teaching

The findings demonstrate that teachers viewed peer observation as assisting teachers in developing as professionals, as well as in broadening their skills and improving their practice.

The teachers perceived that the key point of practising peer observation was to improve the teaching process. This is supported by Imperial College London, who state that "The main purpose of engaging in observation of teaching is to enhance practice" (Imperial College London, 2011:1). It is evident in the results shown in Figure 4.1 below that participants believed that practising peer observation strategy contributed to developing the teaching and learning process as it was a way of enhancing and enriching methods of instruction. These results reflect what Vidal (2008: 1) has stated about peer observation, in that it was a method "designed to assist in the development and continual improvement of learning and teaching practices".

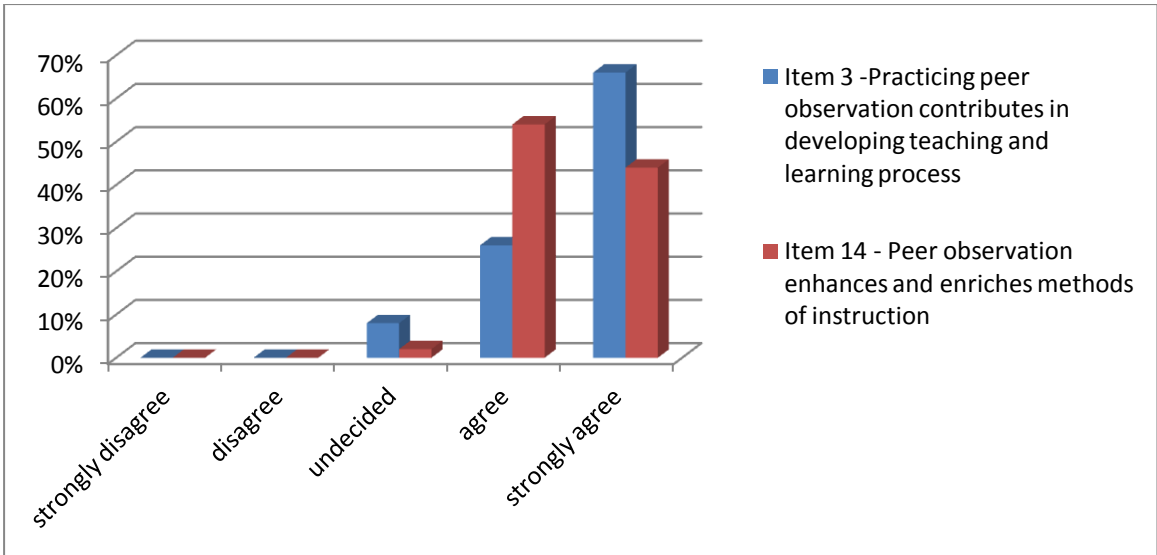


Figure 4.1 Findings of Items 3 and 14 – Q1

Furthermore, the results demonstrated in Figure 4.2 regarding how peer observations helped teachers to gain new ideas from watching their colleagues teaching, is also stressed by Vidal (2008: 1), in that peer observation “...enables the observer and observee to explore each other’s learning and teaching practices in order to gain ideas for their own teaching”.

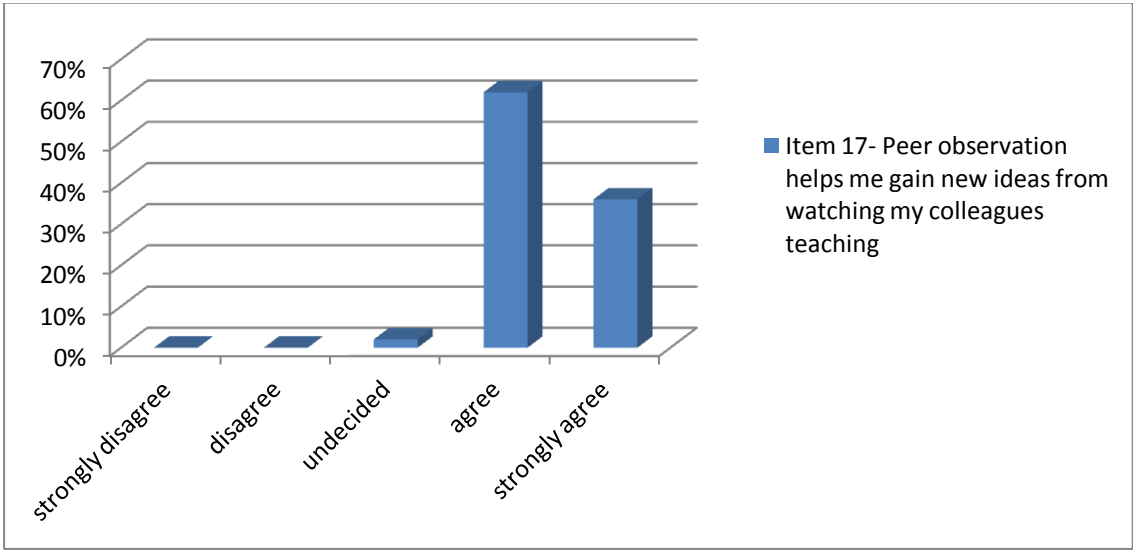


Figure 4.2 Findings of Item 17 – Q1

The findings from the questionnaires illustrate that peer observation was a strategy which helped teachers to gain new ideas, as well as enhancing methods of instruction. Thus, they believed that it contributed to developing the teaching-learning process, and this is clearly shown in Figure 4.3, below.

Moreover, this was also evident from the comment made by Salma from Blue School in support of class visits between teachers as she found them helpful, although the senior teacher was the one who made a decision regarding what and who the teachers observed. Recalling a visit to observe an experienced teacher, planned for Salma by the senior teacher, Saima said:

...once I visited a qualified and efficient teacher. I liked her lesson. I was dazzled by her performance. I liked the way she applies the e-lesson. Though I am not a new teacher, I felt that I really benefited from that visit and I needed it. I have six years' experience as a class system teacher; I am not new to teaching. However, this school I am teaching in is now implementing the project of His Majesty the King, which is e-learning. I have one year of experience in it. The school is applying the smart board project, so it is necessary for us to visit each other to be more skilled in how to use it. (Salma 2, Blue School, 1:11)

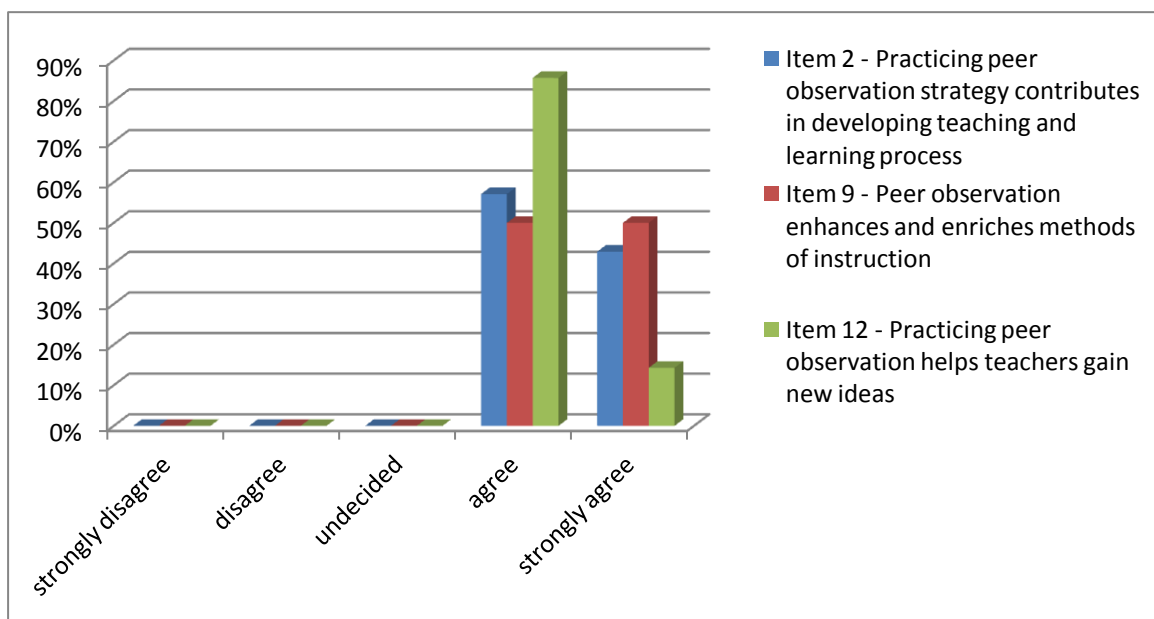


Figure 4.3 Findings of Items 2, 9 and 12 – Q2

This was also reported in an article published by the Teacher Learning Academy of the General Teaching Council for England (2005: website) concerning a case study

about 'On-site specialist support for teachers integrating technology into their classroom practice'. The article addressed the importance of renovating teachers' understanding to be able to use new technology; therefore, professional development was planned to help teachers use the technology "more effectively for learning" (2005: 1).

On the other hand, Jawaher from White School took advantage of being observed to highlight her own work. She stated that:

... I had a project about healthy food, about 'Integrated diet'. I presented the project in the school hall. I invited the teachers in my school, but I also invited the senior teacher, and the supervisor from the Ministry of Education to observe my presentation and to assess my project as I wanted to highlight my work. (Jawaher 2, White School, 1:22)

The above-mentioned results implied that the participants concurred on the benefits derived from practicing peer observation.

4.2.2. Peer observation for reciprocal expertise between teachers from the same school and cooperating schools

It is clear from Figure 4.4 below that the participants believed the reciprocal visits implemented by teachers from the same school, as well as by teachers from cooperating schools, were beneficial.

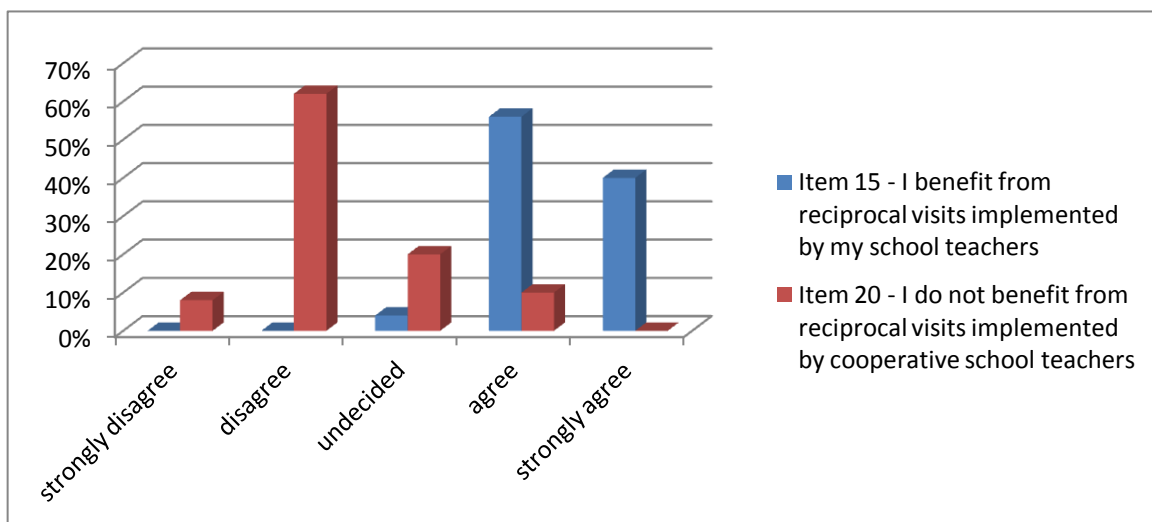


Figure 4.4 Findings of Items 15 and 20 – Q1

Furthermore, Figure 4.5 highlights what Vidal (2008: 1) said, that peer observation “provided a mutual learning experience”. In that regard, the entire questionnaire sample shared the opinion that peer observation was for exchanging expertise.

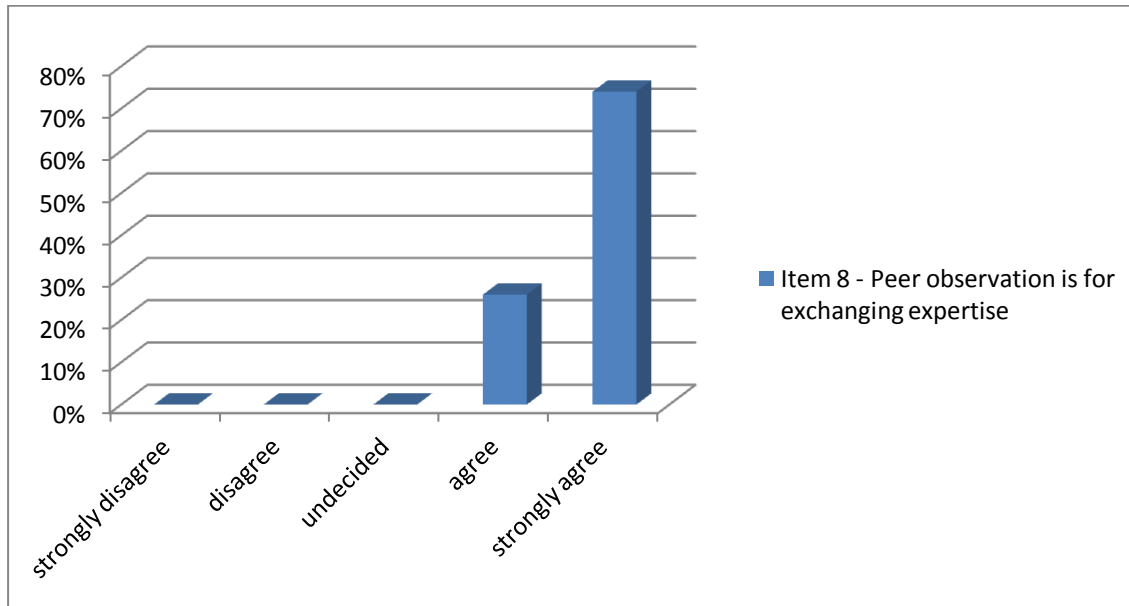


Figure 4.5 – Findings of Item 8 – Q1

Figure 4.6 matches what Figures 4.4 and 4.5 show about peer observation. The participants believed that peer observation was a strategy for exchanging expertise between teachers from the same school as well as from cooperating schools, and that teachers learned from their colleagues more than from workshops.

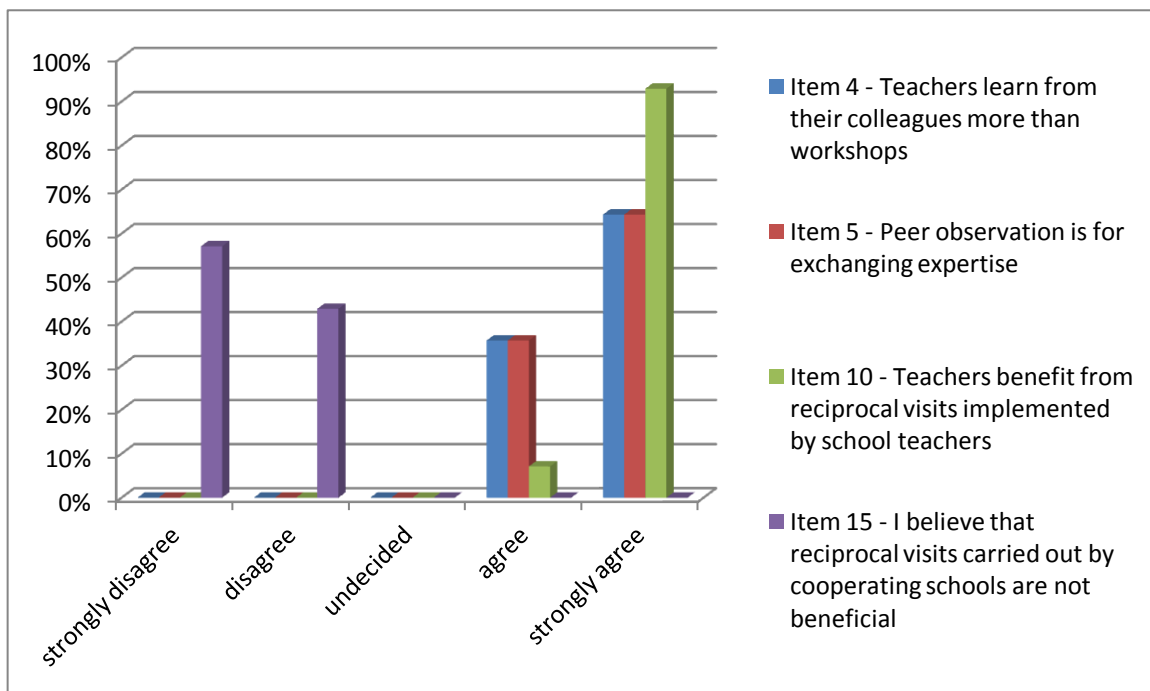


Figure 4.6 Findings of Items 4, 5, 10 and 15 – Q2

All the interviewees mentioned that the senior teacher, the head teacher, or the supervisor from the Ministry of Education observed the teachers for the purpose of assessment, while teachers accompanied them to increase their expertise and, at the same time, to apply the Ministry’s plan which aimed at the exchange of expertise between teachers. However, Sami from Orange School stressed that he was concerned about those visits as they were imposed by the supervisor, and there was the possibility that teachers could misunderstand the purpose of the observation:

...the supervisor visits us. She asks if there are any reciprocal visits between the teachers. We answer ‘No’. So she says ‘No. You must visit each other. There should be reciprocal visits between you and your colleagues’ Here, this compulsory visit makes me upset, makes me unhappy, because when you force me to visit this teacher or that, it shows that I am weak in some points; that is why you are forcing me to visit the other teachers, or the opposite, maybe the other teacher is weak and she wants me to evaluate his performance. (Sami 1, Orange School, 5:130)

Dana from Yellow School went further and argued that teachers were not happy with these visits:

Although these reciprocal visits were required by the administration and the Ministry of Education for teachers' professional development, they were not welcomed by the teachers. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 2:32)

In contrast, Jawaher from White School made this seemingly positive comment about the role of the observed teacher:

Another kind of observation was held between the cooperating schools. For example, in the first academic term, and as part of the Ministry of Education's plan for mutual visits between cooperating schools based on reciprocal expertise, the senior teacher asked me to present a model Arabic language lesson for the boys' school, our neighbouring school, one of the cooperating schools. I agreed, and I presented the model lesson. (Jawaher 2, White School, 1:13)

Some teachers highlighted that class visits were not the only way to achieve expertise and to exchange experience between teachers, arguing that teachers benefited from their discussions in the teachers' room. For example, Noora and her colleagues from Pink School obtained expertise in different ways. They benefited from their discussions in break time, and Noora explained this about herself and her colleagues:

...we teach the same educational level, besides we have the same lesson plan, the same joint quarterly plan, and we teach the same lesson in a week but maybe the differences are in the days. So whenever we have problems, we discuss them together. The teacher who faced difficulties will say 'I did this lesson today. I faced difficulties in such and such... what about you? How did you put it into practice?' So I explain to her what I did, and how I explained the lesson. So, all we do is explain to each other but without any visiting or observing our colleagues. (Noora 1, Pink School, 1:17)

However, Jawaher from White School stressed that although she found answers to her questions whenever she asked her colleagues, she found class visits of more benefit. She preferred to observe a practical application because, as she said:

The visit and the observation will help me to clarify the level of the pupils. Because from my observation I can identify if the way my colleague explained something to her classroom could be beneficial for the level of my pupils or not. (Jawaher 2, White School, 15:363)

In her interview, Amal from Pink School also commented that the process of reciprocal expertise was held outside the classroom. She explained that she and her

colleagues talked about and solved their problems in the teachers' room, and she mentioned the cause:

We don't visit each other because we always think that the idea of visiting is quite unbearable and intolerable. We got this idea from the visits that were held by the senior teacher, or the head teacher, or the supervisors and the amount of preparation we have to do for these visits. (Amal 2, Pink School, 1:20)

However, Sami (Sami 1, Orange School, 1:10) mentioned that although teachers exchanged expertise in the teachers' room, they also needed to visit each other "if the issue is about teaching procedures".

Noora from Pink School brought up her experience of practicing peer observation in her previous school where she had spent eight years teaching. She mentioned that the senior teacher's choice was not limited only to existing teachers within the school, but also to teachers from cooperating schools. Therefore, most of observations were held between these teachers. She said that:

...There weren't many reciprocal visits between the teachers from the same school but with other cooperating schools. For example, the administration agrees the visit with the observed teacher, that a delegation of teachers from a certain school will come and visit her in her classroom, in the Arabic language lesson using the collaborative learning strategy... She [the senior teacher] would note the observed teacher's weaknesses and what aspects need improvement. So the senior teacher arranges for a visit to a teacher who is efficient in that specific point. Then, for example, the senior teacher indirectly tells the teacher who is in need of improvement 'Teacher, on such a day you have a visit to a listening lesson in such and such a school' So she will send the teacher to observe a lesson in another school. You will think why the senior teacher sent me to that school and why to that specific lesson, listening lesson. So the senior teacher is the one who decides what we need as she observes and finds our weak points, and sends the teachers to take advantage of the experience of another teacher in that lesson. For me, this way didn't bother me. Although it was tiring, because you have to go out of the school and the weather is hot, I liked it as we gained expertise from other teachers. (Noora 1, Pink School, 2:33)

The above-mentioned findings imply that peer observation helped teachers to exchange expertise between teachers from the same school, as well as from cooperating schools.

4.2.3. Peer observation assisting new teachers and in-service teachers to develop as professionals

Richards and Farrell (2005:86) emphasize the importance of observation for novice and in-service teachers:

In teaching, observation provides an opportunity for novice teachers to see what more experienced teachers do when they teach a lesson and how they do it. But experienced teachers can also benefit from peer observation. It provides an opportunity for the teacher to see how someone else deals with many of the same problems teachers face on a daily basis. A teacher might discover that a colleague has effective teaching strategies that the observer has never tried. (Richards and Farrell, 2005:86)

Results shown in Figure 4.7 below affirm what Richards and Farrell (2005:86) state above, and with the reflection made by Salma from Blue School, mentioned above (page 6), on her previous experience that peer observation enhanced and improved teachers' professional development, for both new and in-service teachers.

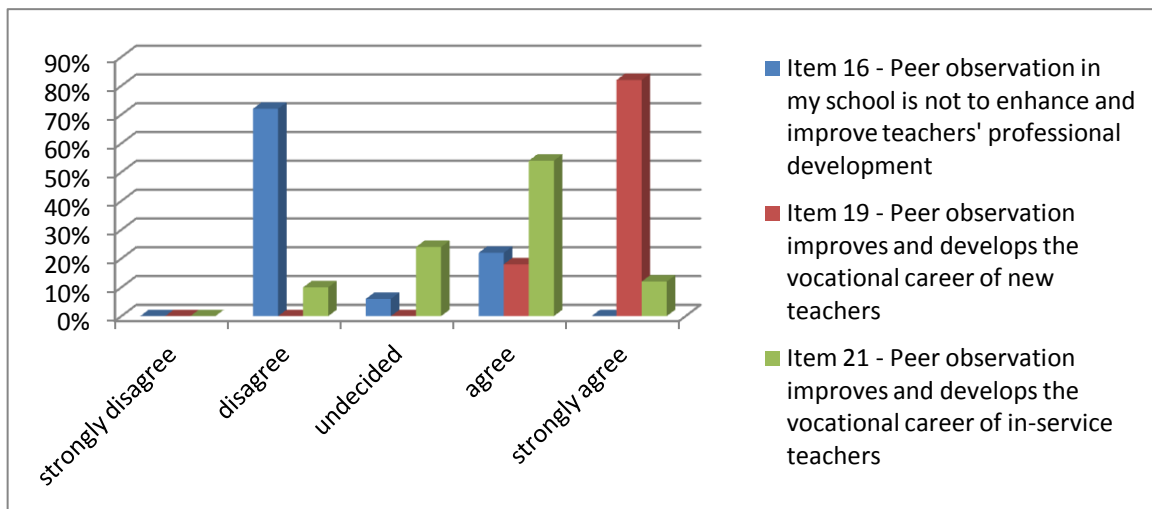


Figure 4.7 Findings of Items 16, 19 and 21 – Q1

Similarly, Figure 4.8 demonstrates that senior teachers believed that all teachers, including new and in-service, benefited from peer observation to enhance and improve their professional development.

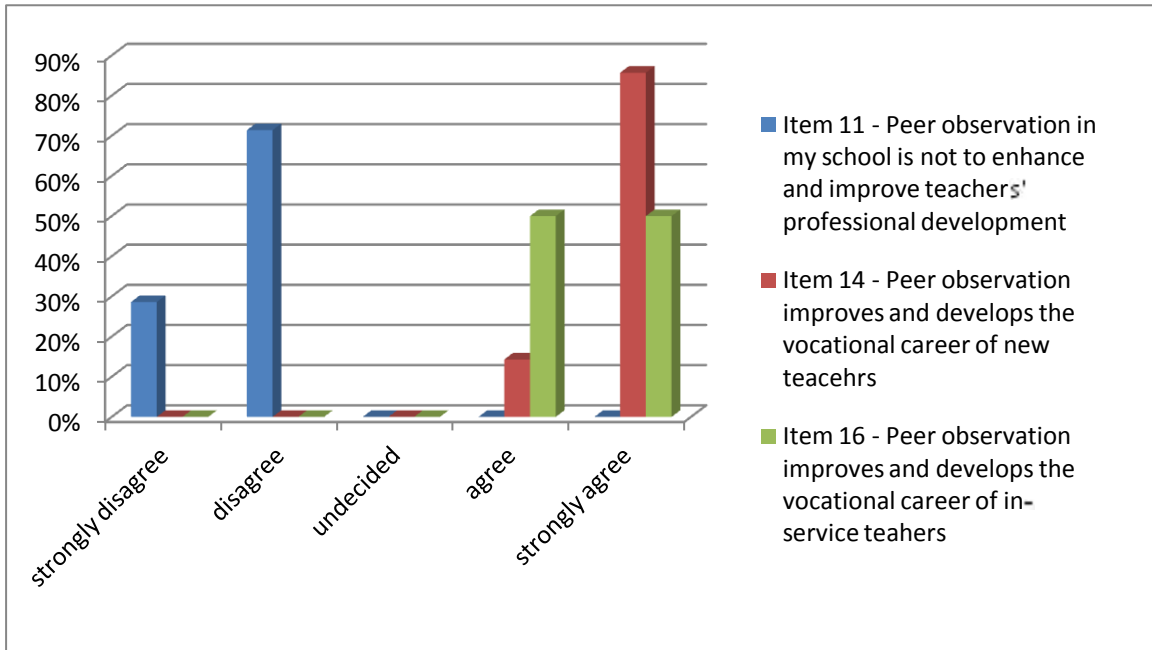


Figure 4.8 Findings of Items 11, 14 and 16 – Q2

The above-mentioned findings show that peer observation practice assisted all teachers, new and in-service, to improve and develop their vocation.

4.2.4. The role of teachers in peer observation practice

The data presented below demonstrate how the role of the teacher in peer observation practice has a great impact on its achievement. In other words, the success or the failure of the practice is affected by the teacher's role as they are the key participants in the practice. Thus, the findings illustrate teachers' passive roles in the practice and their perspectives on it.

The interviewees disclosed that they had negative responses to some practices in the peer observation strategy, as they encountered problems when putting peer observation into practice. In their experience, the teachers' role in determining the purpose and the need for the observation was neglected. Instead, findings show that teachers practiced peer observation as a response to the invitations they received from the senior teachers. For example, Noora from Pink School indicated that most of the observations were held once each academic term by the senior teacher, the head teacher, or the deputy head teacher, for the purpose of evaluation. On their part, they visited the teachers for assessment, as well as inviting the other teachers

to accompany them to observe their colleagues for exchange of expertise. Noora described the process as being similar to a popular proverb:

Whenever they visit us, it is for evaluation, but as we say, they kill two birds with one stone, because when they visit for assessment, they invite five or six teachers to accompany them so that they exchange experiences while they visit each other. (Noora 1, Pink School, 1: 13)

Furthermore, Jaber from Orange School indicated what his experience was in that school. He explained the observation procedure in this way:

At the beginning of the academic year, the visiting schedule for the internal visits is put on the wall in our room, the teachers' room. It mentions the name of the teachers to be observed and the observer, the time, the date, and which lesson to visit. So everyone was aware of their visits and knew when, what and where to visit. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 1:11)

Moreover, Rajab (2009) mentioned that observers were chosen by the senior teacher and that was considered an issue that made peer observation practice difficult:

Another factor that contributes to the teachers' unease regarding peer observation is the way in which the observing teachers are chosen by the senior teacher for peer observation, which is not always the same. For example, Teacher C says that "The senior teacher chooses the teachers who will observe an educational situation randomly. She chooses teachers according to their free time and if they wish to join the visiting group. (Rajab, 2009: 65)

Richards and Farrell (2005:88) state that "If observation is to be a positive experience however, it needs to be carefully planned for and implemented". Jaber from Orange School also highlighted the passive role of the teacher as an observer in the preparation of the plan; the senior teacher was responsible for arranging and planning for those visits, as well as deciding what/who/when to observe:

...I knew that the observation was going to be in that specific period and that specific subject but which lesson the teacher is going to teach and why specifically I am observing, I don't know. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 3:57)

Another kind of passive role of the teacher was mentioned by Jawaher from White School when she noted the role of the observed teacher as receiver of orders. After

presenting a model lesson in a neighbouring school, at the request of the senior teacher, she was not involved in any subsequent discussions or meetings about that observed lesson:

At the end of the lesson, teachers gave their notes to the senior teacher. So the senior teacher was the one who decided and arranged for the visit, she invited the teachers and not me. My role was not more than receiving orders and implementing them. (Jawaher 2, White School, 1:13)

In addition, the findings presented in Figure 4.9 demonstrate that teachers found practicing peer observation difficult as they did not participate in the preparation of the observation process, everything being prepared by the senior teacher, including choosing the observers. Therefore, teachers found problems in the way peer observation was practised as they did not have the right to choose observers.

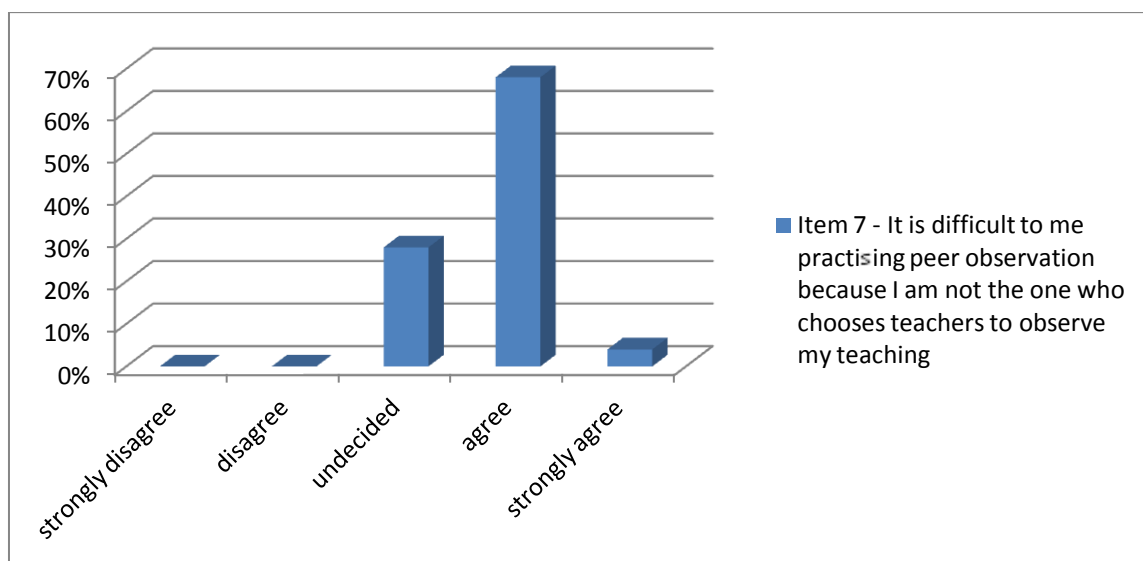


Figure 4.9 Findings of Item 7 – Q1

Deena from White School described how a peer observation would be discussed in her school:

...the senior teacher used to inform us like this: 'I am going to visit teacher 'A', in such a lesson, on such a day, so if you would like to attend the lesson with me'. (Deena 1, White School, 2:44)

In the above-mentioned findings, all the participants stressed the fact that teachers did not practise peer observation according to their needs. They also mentioned that it did not fall to them to determine the purpose of the observation.

4.2.5. Peer observation was not based on teachers' professional needs

Findings proved that failure to identify teachers' needs forms a barrier in peer observation practice. This was clear in the interview with Dana from Yellow School, when she stated that the observations were arranged for them without asking them what they needed to observe:

...We used to go and observe without identifying the purpose of the visit. We knew that it was for reciprocal expertise, but what specifically? We were not the ones who decided what kind of expertise we need, what we need to learn from our colleagues. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 3:56)

Figure 4.10 shows that peer observation was not based on the teachers' professional needs.

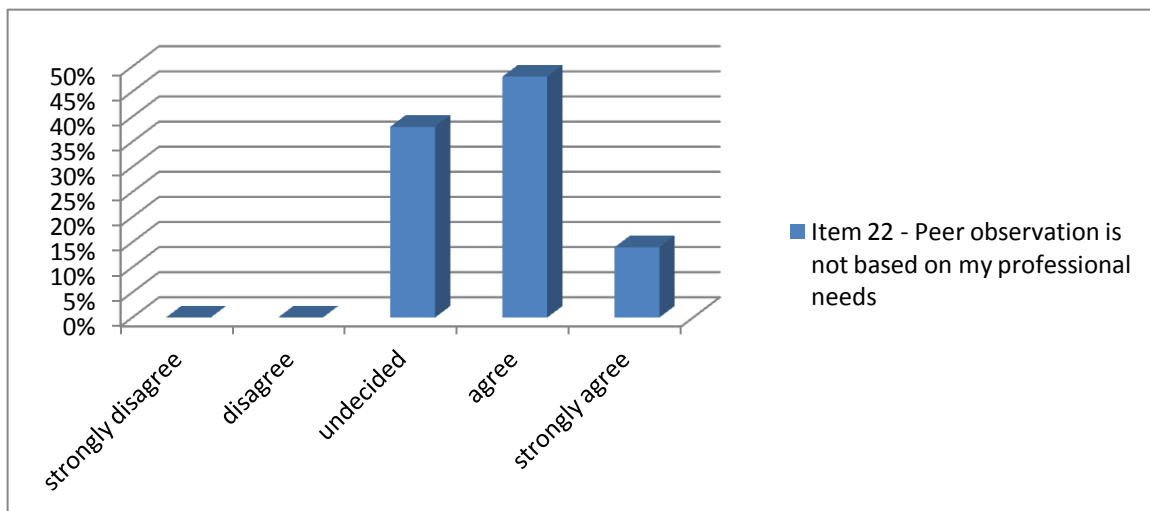


Figure 4.10 Findings of Item 22 – Q1

All participants emphasised the role of the senior teachers in determining who was observed, who the observers were, and on what basis they had been chosen. For example, Noora from Pink School (see page 13) focussed on the fact that the senior

teacher determined the observers within the same school and cooperative schools. Salma from Blue School and Jaber from Orange School stated that the senior teacher, through his/her evaluation visits, could identify the observer and what aspects h/she needed to improve, and who the teacher observed should be, according to his/her area of expertise. Salma mentioned that it was the senior teacher's job to:

...follow up her teachers' work. Therefore, through her visits to us, she sees the aspects that we need to develop and then she plans a schedule for us; who to visit, what lesson, what time to visit, and so on. (Salma 2, Blue School, 2:27)

Moreover, the interviewees stated that as practising peer observation was a mandatory requirement by the Ministry of Education, it often had a negative impact on teachers. For example, Amal from Pink School revealed that she was not happy with practising peer observation:

...the administration doesn't give us the option of visiting and observing according to our needs. This is why when they invite me for any observation, I feel uncomfortable. (Amal 2, Pink School, 1:14)

Jawaher (Jawaher 2, White School, 1:19+3:53) explained the role of the teachers and the senior teachers, with the senior teacher being responsible for all the prearrangements for the observation, including requesting the participation of the observers. In contrast, the teachers' role was to obey the orders of the senior teacher and Jawaher further stressed that the observations were held without the teachers involved determining their purpose.

Teachers were required to put peer observation into practice as a strategy to exchange expertise. Dana from Yellow School was impressed by the role of the Ministry of Education in encouraging teachers to apply reciprocal visits and exchange expertise, but she was not happy with the practice itself. This was because:

The visits were not based on the teachers' needs... The visits were based on who was free ... Sometimes we felt as if we were forced to accompany the group for observation. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 1:11)

However, Salma from Blue School indicated that teachers were not authorized to determine the times when peer observation would take place:

The previous visits were imposed on us. They were held in our free hours. Actually we needed these free hours for correcting, for revising our lesson preparation, or make any changes in the preparation. So we have a lot of work to do in these free hours, but the administration told us to do the visits in these hours. (Salma 2, Blue School, 4:95)

Item 17 in Figure 4.14 (page 23) emphasized the above-mentioned findings as the senior teachers believed that peer observation was not based on teachers' professional needs. This led to difficulties in implementing the strategy.

These findings reveal the importance of teachers' participation in preparing for the observation practice, as well as in planning the observations according to their needs.

4.2.6. Peer observation practice and time constraints

The factors which led to teachers experiencing time constraints with regard to practising peer observation are reflected in Figures 4.11 and 4.12, below. Although teachers were encouraged by the Ministry of Education to put peer observation into practice, they were frustrated because they were overwhelmed by the amount of administrative work they had to do which was not related to teaching, and the fact that they were involved in many school committees, activities and projects.

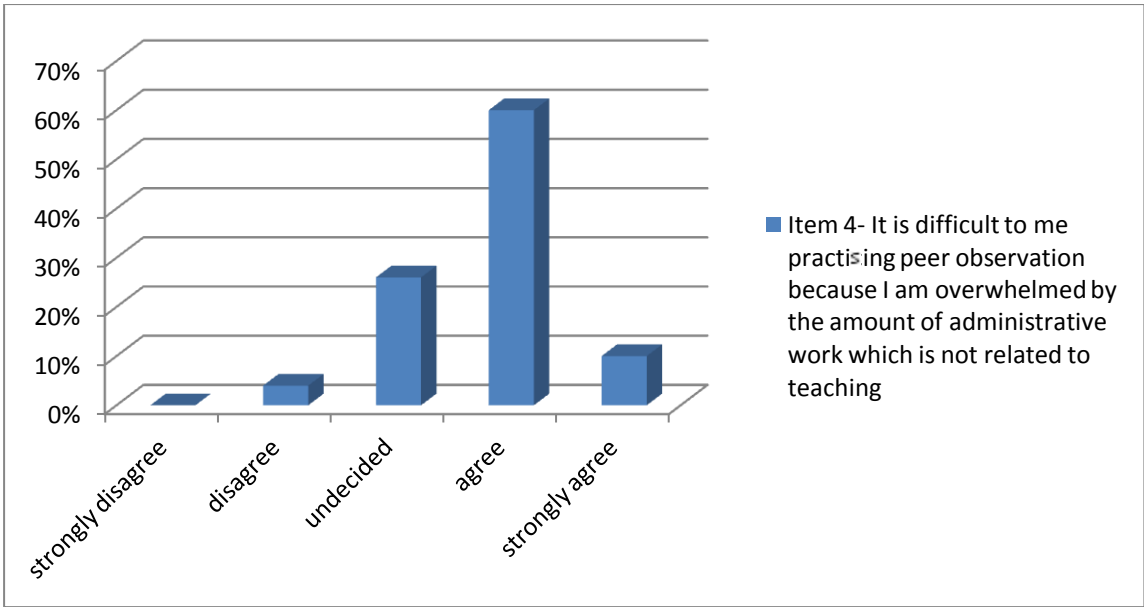


Figure 4.11 Findings of Item 4 – Q1

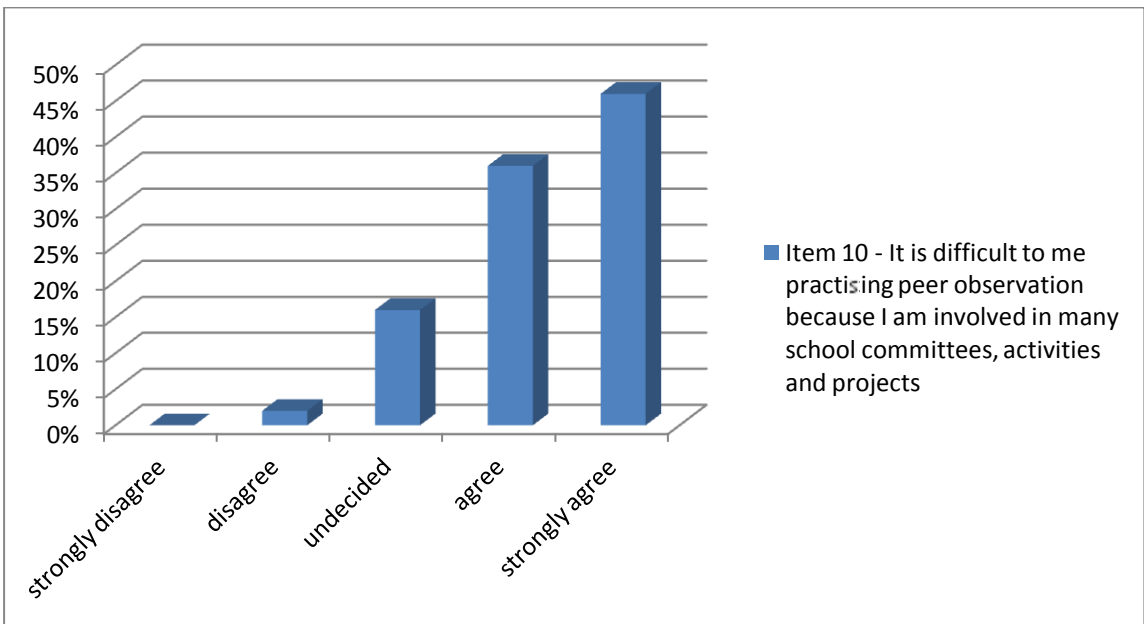


Figure 4.12 Findings of Item 10 – Q1

Another factor that led teachers to feeling a lack of time was the effort and time teachers expended in preparing for peer observation. Figure 4.13 shows that peer

observation was considered time-consuming, as it required a great deal of preparation.

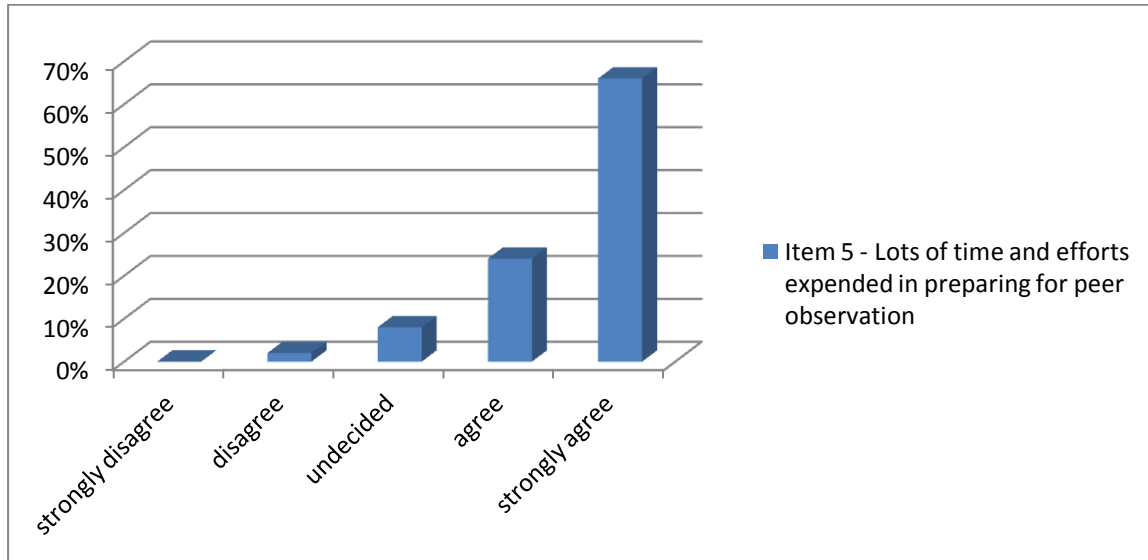


Figure 4.13 Findings of Item 5 – Q1

Items 3 and 4 in Figure 4.14 below, which addressed the senior teachers' perspectives on practising peer observation, confirms what the teachers expressed in Figures 4.12 and 4.13 above, regarding time constraints. The findings reveal that the senior teachers believed that teachers find difficulties in practising peer observation because of their involvement in many school committees, activities, and projects as well as the administrative work unrelated to teaching which they have to carry out, and peer observation is seen as one more of those tasks.

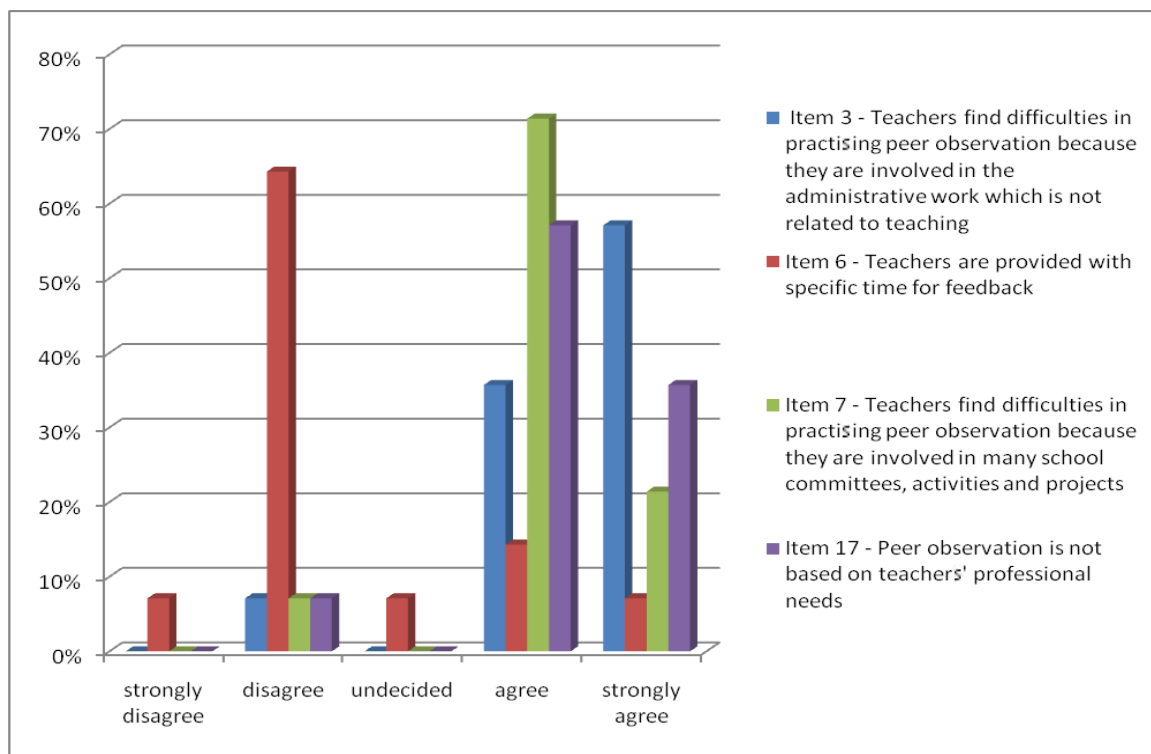


Figure 4.14 Findings of Items 3, 6, 7 and 17 – Q2

4.2.7. The impact on teachers of the amount of preparation necessary for the observed lesson

Figure 4.13 above (page 22) shows that practising peer observation required a great deal of preparation and, therefore, it was time-consuming. Moreover, Rajab’s research (2009: 58) reported on teachers’ criticism of the great deal of preparation necessary for the class visits, as they related peer observations “...to the fact that they have become more evaluative than observational”.

In addition, Dana from Yellow School, Noora and Amal from Pink School, Jawaher from White School, and Jaber from Orange School stressed that they were overwhelmed with the huge amount of preparation for the observed lesson. For example, Dana mentioned:

We had a lot of preparation which led us to be fatigued. Visits were more tiring because of the amount of materials we had to prepare for the lesson, as it had to be a model lesson. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 4:102)

Noora from Pink School stated that there had been no radical changes in the lesson plan when an observation had been determined, except for adding a few lines. However, she highlighted the effort she took in preparing for that lesson and the lack of time to do so, explaining that:

I will make an effort in other preparations for the lesson. I used to prepare many charts, of course now the smart board helps us a lot as it gave us a lot of pictures we need for the lesson, but of course there must be diversification between the tangible and non-tangible things. With the smart board you will present electronic pictures but you also need to show things in reality for the pupils. We also display models. Preparation to make these models takes time. This causes a problem. For example, for a person like me, I can't do anything on weekdays. I can't go out on weekdays, so whatever preparation I need for these models has to be at weekends. At weekends I need to think and decide what I need for the educational situation, what charts I need for that day. So if the senior teacher informs me on Monday that the panel will visit me on Wednesday or Thursday...what can I do? How can I go and buy the materials for the models I want to present or the charts or anything? It will be a disaster because I can't do any shopping during the week. So I tell them "please could you make it next week so I will be able to prepare myself". The problem here is the time, lack of time. Nowadays the smart board and the internet have facilitated these things. It has saved us time and it has also saved us money, but not the things you have to buy. What about the materials you need for the model you want to present? The charts? The coloured charts? And so on..." (Noora 1, Pink School, 3:52)

On the other hand, Jawaher from White School was aware of the amount of time she needed to prepare for an observed lesson, and she was used to it. However, she did need time for planning, as she stated:

Although these visits need time to prepare for the lesson, I am used to it. Whenever the teachers come to visit my classroom, I would prepare more for the lesson because it needs more accuracy, and besides it needs more activities. I must present the best in front of them. Therefore, I need at least one day for planning. (Jawaher 2, White School, 2:31)

Amal from Pink School stated how the amount of preparation adversely affected the teachers, and led them to avoid requesting a visit, as discussed above (see p. 13). In addition, Amal revealed another two types of preparation which burden the

teachers: that of the pupils as they were prepared for the observed lesson; and the psychological aspects for teachers:

...We used to get ready preparing the lesson and preparing the pupils, in order to ensure their excellent performance in front of the visitors. Most of the preparation, and the most difficult, was the psychological aspect, because we would always be thinking 'Will the visit succeed? Will the head teacher like the way I explain the lesson? Will my way of explaining satisfy the supervisor?' And so on. That is why the visits were a heavy burden on the teachers, and teachers felt irritated from just hearing the word 'visit'. (Amal 2, Pink School, 2:40)

Therefore, Jaber from Orange School preferred not to be informed beforehand about the class visits, as he explained:

Sometimes you don't feel you are yourself. Sometimes you get upset because it affects the curriculum plan and will cause a delay. I would prefer if they come to observe me without informing me in advance that they are coming. Because if they inform me that they are coming, I will do intensive preparation for that lesson, while the lesson will be a normal lesson if they visit me without telling me in advance. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 3:64)

On the other hand, Salma from Blue School mentioned that teachers in her school were always completely equipped for visitors as they have an improvement team in their school, and teachers expect to be visited by the team at any time. However, in spite of the teachers being aware of and ready for these visits, they were not completely satisfied with them:

The visits upset the teachers. We have an improvement team in our school, so we are trained to receive any visitors and at any time. But the teachers are still not happy with it because they always have to be fully prepared for visitors. (Salma 2, Blue School, 2:31)

4.2.8. Giving and receiving feedback

A study by Imperial College London has cited the importance of observation, followed by critical conversation between teachers. They state that "Observation provides a means of focusing on teaching, and engaging in reflective, constructive and analytical discussion with a peer about teaching practices" (Imperial College London, 2011:1) Moreover, Richards and Farrell (2005:93) indicate that feedback sessions are helpful procedures when putting peer observation into practice,

instructing teachers to “Arrange a post-observation session. Meet as soon as possible after the lesson. The observer reports on the information collected and discusses it with the teacher” (Richards and Farrell, 2005:93).

The findings show that in the research context there was a lack of teachers’ participation in feedback practices. All the interviewees emphasised the fact that the teachers who observed did not sit with the observed teachers for feedback, as the feedback process was limited to the administration: the head teacher, the senior teacher, or the supervisor. For example, Deena (Deena 1, White School, 2:38) mentioned that the teachers, both the observed and the observer, did not meet after observing for feedback, just as they did not meet before the observation to identify the purpose of the observation. The observed teacher received feedback from the senior teacher or the supervisor. Badreya from Pink School explained what happened in this meeting:

...after the reciprocal visits the senior teacher tells us her perceptions and writes down on the sheet the points which need adjusting or improving. (Badreya 1, Pink School, 3:72)

Rajab (2009) reports that teachers of the first, second, and third primary level of Basic Education in Bahrain state primary schools indicated the following regarding feedback:

...the senior teacher provides them with feedback forms before beginning the observation session, so that they are able to write their notes while observing. The details which the observers need to write on the form are the name of the observed teacher, the name of the observer, the date and time of the lesson, the subject, the positive points, the points which need development and, finally, how they benefited from the visit. However, these forms are not submitted to the observed teacher after the observation session, but to the senior teacher, who keeps the forms in her observations file. (Rajab, 2009: 67)

Dana from Yellow School commented on the observed teacher’s perspective concerning receiving feedback:

I didn’t like to be observed before because I always thought that the head teacher or the senior teacher was visiting me to observe the weakness in my teaching. And I always thought that the teachers who participated in the observation only came to criticize. That is why the old visits hampered relations between the teachers a little. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 3:81)

On the other hand, Jawaher from White School defended the observed teachers, saying:

...the observed here is receiving advice from the observers who she didn't invite to her lesson. She didn't need them to observe her. Thus, she did not accept anything from them as she considers that a kind of destructive criticism. (Jawaher 2, White School, 4:81)

As is clear in Figure 4.15 below, teachers indicated that they did not apply the feedback procedure due to the issue of time, in that a specific time for feedback was hardly ever set aside when practising peer observation. Nevertheless, Figure 4.15 demonstrates that teachers believed that they would learn more from observing their colleagues than they would do from workshops on peer observation.

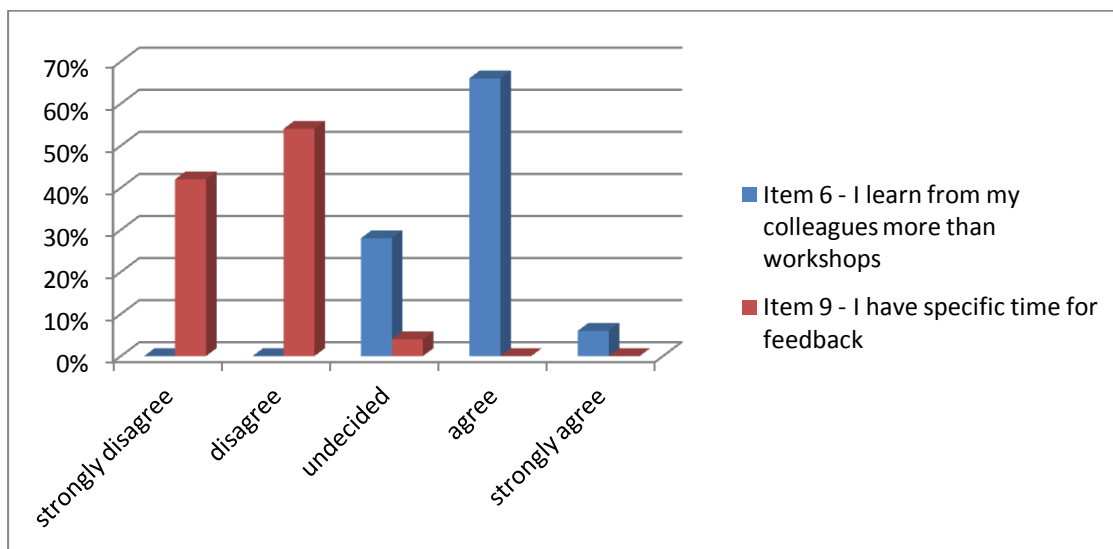


Figure 4.15 Findings of Items 6 and 9 – Q1

Salma from Blue School explained that there was no feedback meeting between the observed and the observing teachers, linking the reason to lack of time. She also noted that “The administration or senior teacher didn't determine a specific time for such a meeting” (Salma 2, Blue School, 12:326). Besides, after observing they gave the observation sheets to the senior teacher.

In fact, all the interviewees stressed that they put peer observation into practice, but that they did not apply the feedback procedure. They stated that teachers were

given observation sheets by the senior teachers, where they recorded what they had observed. These observation sheets were given back to the senior teachers, would meet the observed teacher for feedback, and not the observing teachers. The observed teacher did not see what was written on those sheets. For example, Jaber (Jaber 2, Orange School, 1:2) mentioned that the coordinator in this school used to set a plan for mutual visits between teachers for a year in advance. The teachers had special forms for such visits to record what they had observed, but after the forms were filled by the observers with their notes, they were given to the coordinator instead of to the observed teacher. The same teacher also commented that “It was the role of the coordinator to sit with the observed teacher for feedback; we do not sit with them. I don’t know. Maybe lack of time” (Jaber 2, Orange School, 3:60).

Findings in the present study echoed the participants’ criticisms in Rajab’s (2009) research, regarding allocating time for feedback:

...although the administration arranges a detailed schedule for peer observations containing the name of the observed teacher, the names of the observers, and the date and time of the observation(s), unfortunately a special time for the observed and the observers to meet and discuss the outcomes of the session as an essential part of the feedback procedure is not mentioned in the schedule. In addition, the time constraints of the teachers mentioned previously would make it difficult for them to allocate time in their tight schedules for peer observation feedback. They mentioned that they meet in their break times for feedback. (Rajab, 2009: 66)

However, Dana stressed that there was no necessity to arrange a specific time for teachers to give or receive feedback as this would be given by the senior teacher or the head teacher. She explained the following:

Whenever we had free time, we would sit and talk to each other for nearly ten minutes, but if we were not free, it was not important to arrange a meeting for feedback. The reason was that the teacher would get the main feedback from the head teacher or the senior teacher but not from us, the teachers. Moreover, the observation notes we wrote while observing would be given to the senior teacher and nothing remained with us. So nothing was documented and kept by the teachers; everything was documented by the teachers but kept by the senior teacher. (Dana 1. Yellow School, 3:60)

In her interview, Jawaher from White School described her experience. She said that although there was no formal feedback exchanged between her and her colleagues, they did hold an informal discussion about what happened in the classroom:

When a visit takes place by the supervisor from the Ministry of Education, accompanied by the teachers, the supervisor requests to sit with me before and after the observation, while the teachers who were invited at the same time, who accompanied her for observation, don't sit with me before or after the observation. I didn't even receive the observation sheets as they were all given to the senior teacher. Sometimes we ask each other in a friendly way. For example, I ask my colleague how the lesson was and she answers 'If you did this or that it would be better', but of course it was just talking but nothing was documented. (Jawaher 2, White School, 3:55)

Moreover, Jawaher noted the importance of observation sheets to enable the Ministry of Education to analyse issues for the schools' performance improvement programme. Jawaher explained the procedure:

The Ministry's programme for improving the performance of schools requests supervisors to visit the schools and observe the teachers' performance. The Ministry asks for the observation sheets to analyse teachers' performance as one aspect in improving the school's performance. Therefore, the supervisor conducts pre-observation and post-observation and post-observation meetings with the teacher observed. (Jawaher 2, White School, 3:64)

On the other hand, Salma from Blue School highlighted the benefit of the participation of the observers, together with the senior teachers, in the feedback sessions. She described what happened:

We observed and recorded what we had observed on the observation sheet given to us by the senior teacher. After the observation, we gave it back to her, without any feedback meeting with the observed teacher because of lack of time. It was just the visit. I would go to observation with the senior teacher. But then the senior teacher would meet the teacher who had been observed for feedback, without me. I would have liked to have been with her for the feedback, to hear their discussion and take advantage of the comments of the senior teacher and try to avoid the same errors in my lesson. But we didn't have time to meet together for feedback. The administration or senior teacher didn't determine a specific time for such a meeting. Maybe if the observed teacher asked me to show her my observation sheet, I might show her, but formally I am not allowed. These sheets remain with the senior teacher, in her files. She doesn't show the observer's notes

to the observed teacher. Though it is the right of the observed teacher to see the comments, the senior teacher doesn't show her. (Salma 2, Blue School, 12:318)

In addition, Noora from Pink School highlighted the advantages of the observed teacher receiving the notes from the observer as they would contain helpful constructive criticism:

If the senior teacher showed us those sheets, nothing would happen. I think it is a normal situation because when a teacher observes her colleague I don't think she will criticize her colleague harshly, but her criticism will be constructive. It will be just observations; it will be more like giving ideas. (Noora 1, Pink School, 4:78)

Jawaher, on the other hand, did not support the idea of receiving feedback from the observer, her view being that:

The teachers didn't like any advice or feedback from their colleagues especially when the observer came and asked them 'Why did you use this method?' or 'Why you didn't use that method?'. And of course the observed here is receiving advice from the observers who she didn't invite to her lesson. (Jawaher 2, White School, 3:77)

4.2.9. Teachers' perspectives about observation and feedback skills

The results of items 23 and 24, presented in Figure 4.16 below reveal that the teachers were not trained in how to observe each other and how to give and receive feedback from each other. Indeed, the majority of the teachers had not accessed training courses related to peer observation skills, or to giving and receiving feedback skills. This is a significant issue particularly since the data collected from the structured interviews showed the importance of teachers having those skills.

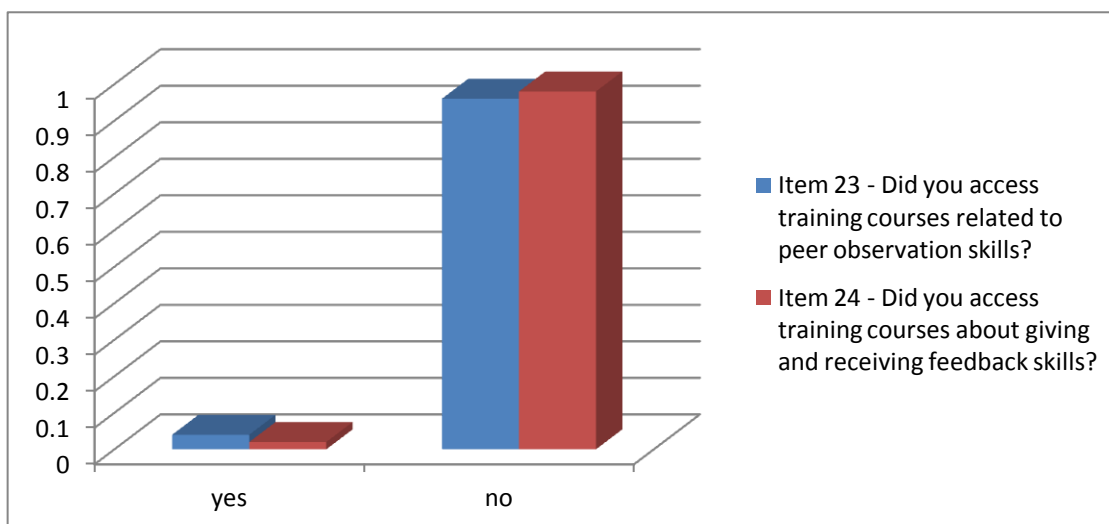


Figure 4.16 Findings of Items 23 and 24 –Q1

Furthermore, Poumellec et al. (1992:129) cite the importance of teachers being trained in observation and feedback skills as a lack of such would lead their experience to be “less productive and less constructive than hoped”. For example, Sami from Orange School explained his inspiration to be trained in those skills, highlighting the importance he saw of becoming skilled in observing:

I would like to learn these skills. These skills are very important to us because the observer may write anything in his records, but if he was competent and had these skills, he would be better in recording what he observed because he will know what to observe, what to focus on, and how the dialogue should be between the observer and the observed. Although it is important, we have a lack of these kinds of courses or workshops (Sami 1, Orange School, 2:44).

Noora from Pink School said that although she taught herself how to receive and give feedback, she was not able to put it into practice. She considered the reason for this to be that “the senior teacher observes and after that she sits with us and shows us her observation form, the feedback notes, so we will only see her notes” (Noora 1, Pink School, 4:85).

Amal from Pink School revealed that she had attended many courses, such as those on methods of teaching. However, Amal’s perspective towards the importance of peer observation had changed; therefore, she thought that:

Maybe if I develop my observation skills it will help me a lot when I visit my colleagues. I didn't think of it before. As I said earlier, I didn't like to visit anyone; at the same time I didn't like anyone to visit me, but now I think I have changed my mind. I don't find any difficulties in us visiting each other. On the contrary, I have found it helpful, observing each other, learning from each other, teaching each other, and helping each other. (Amal 2, Pink School, 3:78)

The findings on this point showed there was a lack of workshops on observation and feedback skills for teachers. As can be seen in Figure 4.17, neither the teachers nor the senior teachers had accessed training courses related to peer observation skills. However, with regard to courses about giving and receiving feedback, the senior teachers had accessed such courses while the teachers had not.

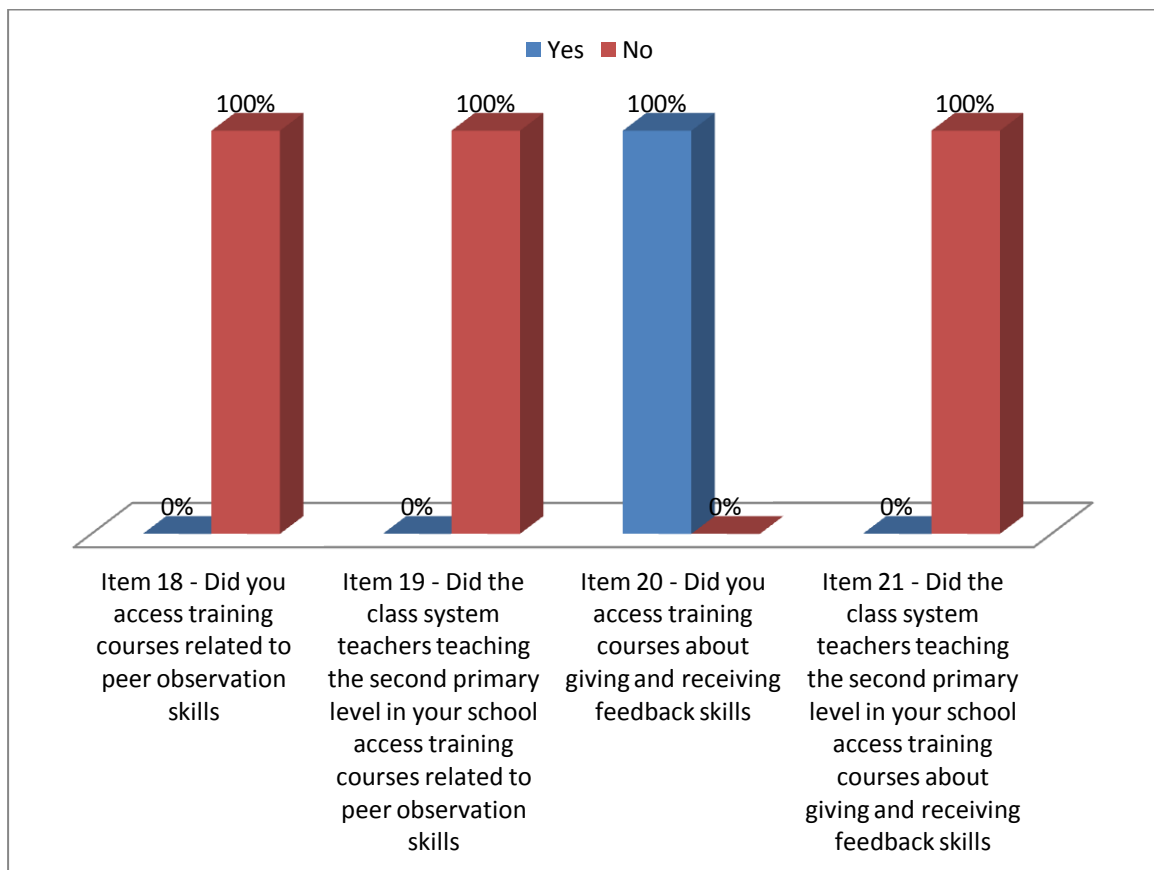


Figure 4.17 Findings to Items, 18, 19, 20 and 21 – Q2

4.3. Summary

The data presented in this chapter demonstrate the benefits derived from practising peer observation strategy, such as enhancing, developing, and enriching the learning and teaching process, widening teachers' skills and improving their practice, as well as developing the teachers as professionals. However, the teachers faced difficulties in putting peer observation into practice, confirmed by the senior teachers who also emphasized the difficulties teachers had in implementing the strategy.

Moreover, the data helped in designing the peer coaching programme to assist teachers teaching Grade Two of the First Cycle of Basic Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain in this aspect of their professional development. The obstacles to the practice of peer observation and the difficulties the teachers faced were taken into consideration when designing and implementing the peer coaching programme. These included teachers' contributions to the practice, as well as determining the purpose of the practice according to their needs as, in the programme, the observer would not evaluate the performance of the observed teachers. However, in order for such a programme to be implemented effectively, teachers need to develop their observation skills as well as skills in giving and receiving feedback.

The next chapter in the study will discuss the implementation of the designed programme to identify if the practical elements of the programme worked as a form of professional development and if so, why.

Chapter Five

Teachers' responses to the implemented peer coaching programme

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will report on the findings and discussion of the same four research techniques mentioned in Chapter Four. However, the chapter will focus on how the teachers implemented the designed peer coaching programme which forms the core of the study, in seven state primary schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain, to find out whether the practical elements of the programme worked. It also looks at the participants' perspectives and general attitudes towards the programme after its implementation; in particular, it examines whether peer coaching worked as a form of professional development and, if so, why.

5.2. Findings and discussion

The data in this chapter were collected from the teachers who implemented the programme. The chapter comprises two themes; theme one is divided into four sub-themes and theme two is divided into two sub-themes:

Theme one: the impact of the implementation mechanism on teachers' perceptions of its effectiveness.

Theme two: the impact of the implemented programme on pedagogy and teachers' thoughts on collaboration.

Theme one

The impact of the implementation mechanism on teachers' perceptions of its effectiveness

Theme one gives details of how the teachers operationalised the designed peer coaching programme so as to move forward in its implementation. In this chapter I aim to describe how teachers implemented the programme, more specifically the practical matters which show good practice and the potential difficulties of implementing the programme. I also discuss the professional issues of reflecting on teachers' practice, seeking advice from each other, and sharing good practice.

Theme one is divided into sub-themes to identify how the programme functioned in a way that encouraged implementation by the teachers. Figure 5.1 – below shows this division in order to show how this part of the chapter is organised.

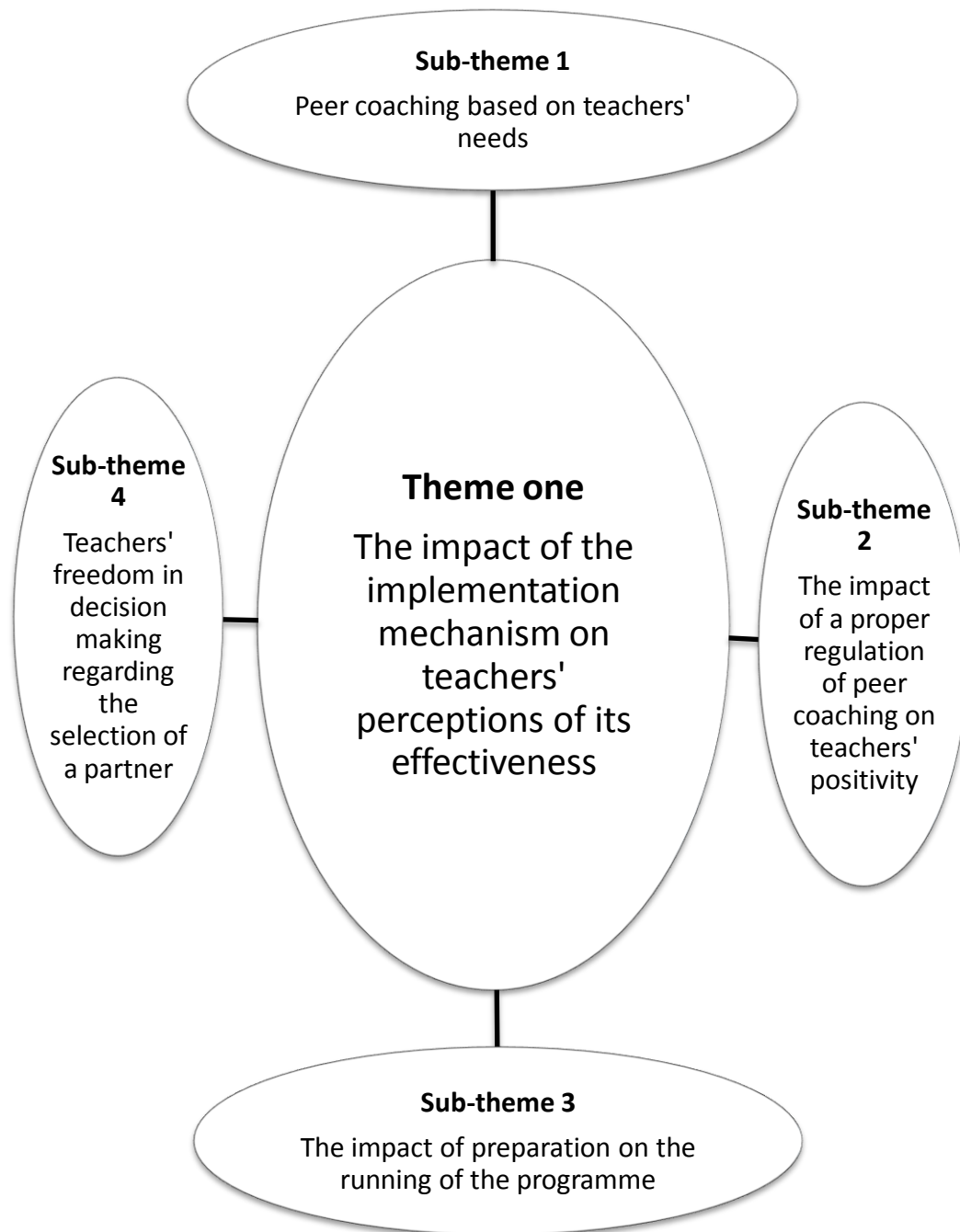


Figure 5.1: Division of theme one

Sub-theme 1: Peer coaching based on teachers' needs.

The data presented in Chapter Four (section 4.2.4) shows that one of the major drawbacks facing teachers prior to the programme was lack of planning by observation peers. Instead, the visits were made without specifying the reason for the visit beforehand. Therefore, planning ahead and specifying the purpose of the visit was taken into consideration when designing the programme and when briefing the teachers about the programme, I stressed the importance of this issue. This approach is supported by Bean (2004) who emphasizes the importance of planning before applying the coaching strategy:

Planning is an important first step. Walking into the classroom without a focus is similar to traveling in an unfamiliar city without a map and trying to get from one location to another ... The planning conference enables the coach and the teacher to discuss important issues:

What are the goals of the lesson?

What does the teacher hope to gain from the observation? (Bean, 2004: 101)

Moreover, Richards and Farrell (2005) give the following advice to teachers:

...plan how and when to carry out the activity. Peer coaching works best when teachers build trust with each other, set their own schedules, and engage in peer coaching on a regular basis. For real peer coaching to take place, it has to be performed on a system of request: One teacher requests a peer to coach him or her on some aspect of teaching in order to improve his or her teaching. There is no reporting to administrators, no "expert", no "elite", and no fixed administrative schedule. (Richards and Farrell, 2005: 153)

The data suggests that the teachers were interested in the programme and eager to implement it, as they saw it as based on their professional needs to develop and improve instruction. This was made evident by Amal from Pink School, when she stated the following: "I started to visit my colleague because I decided to visit her, I needed to visit her, I wanted to learn from this visit and not because it was a demand or a requirement" (Amal 2, Pink School, 3:36).

She went on to explain the importance of determining the purpose of the visits. She compared the strategy used in the past with the visits they during the peer coaching programme. Before she felt it was an obligation, but "(...) now it is a need, I ask my

colleague for her help and my colleague asks me to help her” (Amal 2, Pink School, 3:58).

Salma revealed how the programme helped her when she was searching for more effective methods of teaching. She explained:

The peer coaching programme helped me to determine the visit according to my needs. For example, in the field of collaborative learning between pupils; although I have experience in this field, I liked seeing how my colleagues were applying it. I wanted to compare their way of application to mine to find the most appropriate and most effective way for the application. I visited my colleague and I benefited from that visit (Salma 2, Blue School, 4:101).

Deena revealed an added benefit from the implemented programme, stating that, “My visits were very useful; I was being myself and I didn’t try to please the others” (Deena 1, White School, 11:261). The idea of teachers setting their own agenda is a crucial dimension to the implemented programme.

The following sections summarise the types of visits, which were based on the teachers’ needs and which helped them in the implementation procedure. Figure 5.2 shows the division of sub-theme 1 and the different parts.

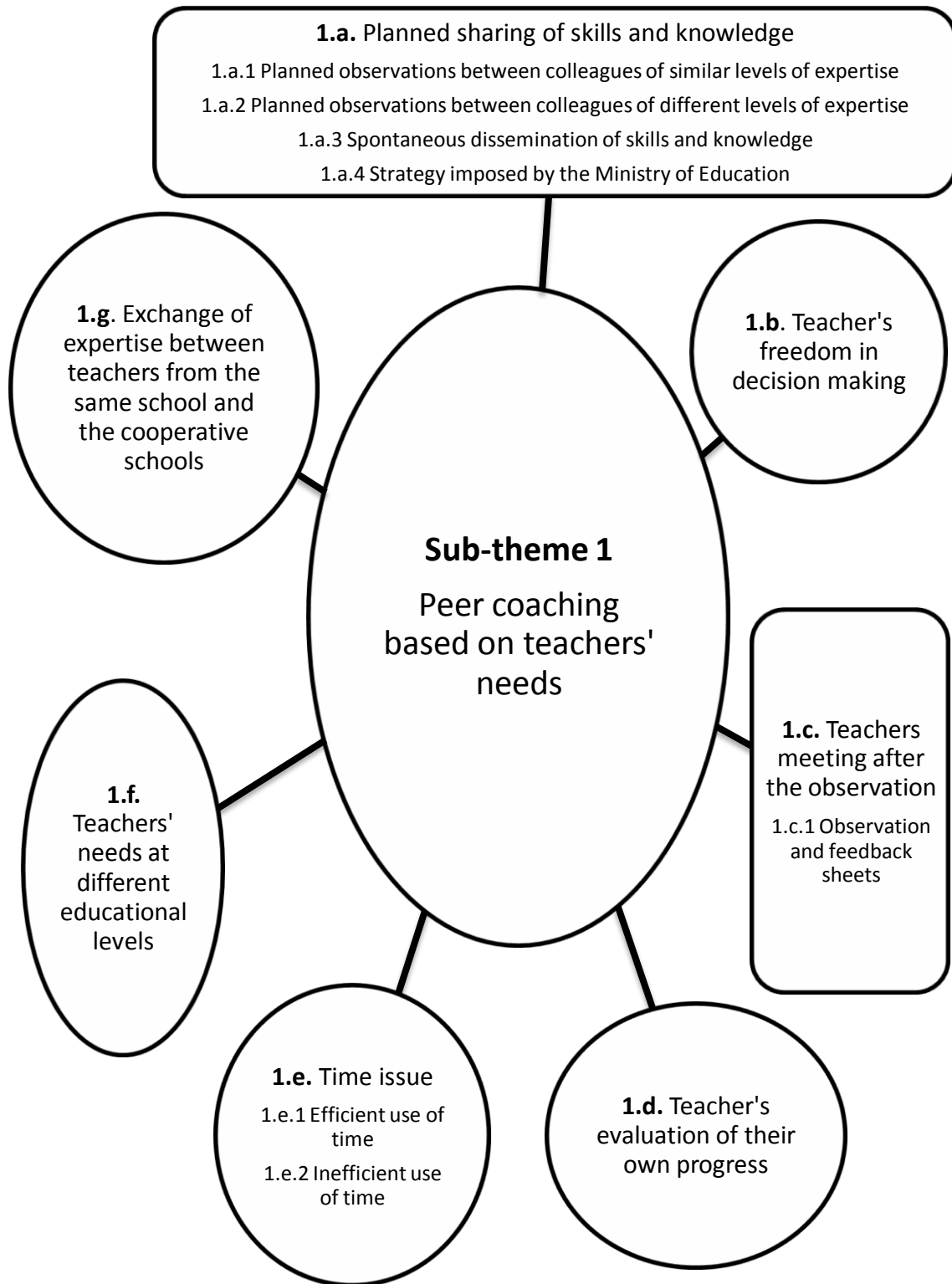


Figure 5.2: Division of sub-theme 1

1.a. Planned sharing of skills and knowledge

The data reveals that the teachers not only opted to work with their immediate peers but also with those with different levels of experience and expertise.

By way of illustration, here the planned visits have been classified according to the teachers' levels of experience.

1.a.1. Planned observations between colleagues of similar levels of expertise

The data shows that the teachers took advantage of their informal daily meeting in the staff room to discuss the difficulties they faced while teaching and how to solve them. For some it proved to be an important opportunity to determine the purpose of a peer observation visit. In her interview, Mariam from Pink School explained that:

In the break time, my colleagues and I identify what are the difficult subjects the pupils face. We also agree and concentrate on what expertise we need to observe; expertise like how to teach the words which contain pronounced but not written letters, or the 'tashkeel' the movement used with the words like 'tanween', or solving some verbal exercises, and so on. So each teacher will observe her colleague's expertise. (Mariam 1, Pink School, 16:382)

Noora from Pink School illustrated how she and her colleagues took advantage of the break times to discuss their needs. She stated that:

We take advantage of break time for talking about our needs. I was searching for new strategies for the currency unit as I was facing many difficulties in this lesson. I wanted to see the others, how they presented this lesson. Maybe they were better than me in the way they presented it. (Noora 1, Pink School, 12: 291)

Amal, from the same school, explained the following:

...when I face a problem in a specific lesson, I ask my colleagues 'how did you explain this lesson? And did the pupils understand?' So every teacher explains their way of teaching that specific lesson. Then I ask one of my colleagues if I can visit their class to observe a practical application. (Amal 2, Pink School, 3:70)

Furthermore, Dana from Yellow School stated that specifying the purpose of the visit by the observation team meant that "the visits became meaningful" (Dana 1, Yellow School, 3:67).

A reciprocal arrangement was illustrated by Badreya from Pink School. On one occasion she assisted another teacher, while in another instance, she needed the help of her colleague in finding the best way of teaching a particular lesson which her pupils had difficulties in learning. Badreya stated that:

This unit was one of the difficult lessons for the pupils, but I didn't experience problems when teaching this lesson, like my colleagues did. Therefore, when Amal asked me about the currency unit, I invited her to my class to observe the way I presented the lesson, how I was teaching the currency unit and how pupils dealt with the money. (Badreya 1, Pink School, 8:185)

She went on to explain how she asked for her colleague's help. She described her experience:

I asked my colleague Ibtisam about the possibility of observing her teaching the letters (ت) and (ة). The similarity between the two letters (ت) and (ة) is in pronunciation; both are pronounced [t], while the difference is in the form and in the meaning. The pupils were suffering with this problem. They found it difficult. Therefore, I wanted to observe my colleague, how she delivered it to her pupils. (Badreya 1, Pink School, 16:399)

This indicates that Badreya had a reciprocal arrangement with her colleagues who had a similar level of experience.

1.a.2. Planned observations between colleagues of different levels of expertise

Not all of the examples of planned observations were from teachers of similar levels of expertise. For example, Dana from Yellow School, who had five years experience in teaching, described her peer coaching practice with her colleague Batool, who had ten years of experience in the same school. Initially, Dana expressed how the implemented programme helped her as she had difficulties in delivering her lessons:

...peer coaching helped me a lot when I had ideas but I found some difficulties in delivering them to the pupils ... The lesson was about time ... I heard from Batool that she was happy about the lesson she taught her pupils and the materials she used in her teaching ... Batool was very clever in using the smart board in the classroom. So I asked her if I could visit her and observe her while teaching the same lesson. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 4:111)

This then led on to a reciprocal arrangement when Dana suggested to her colleague Batool that she might like to observe a practical lesson using a brain storming strategy. Dana explained what happened:

Batool and I met before the observation and identified the purpose of observation which was 'to employ the brainstorming strategy'. She wanted to see a practical application in teaching by using this strategy. Therefore, I invited her to observe my way of teaching ... Here I presented some problems and the pupils put forward some good ideas to solve these problems and clarify them. You can notice from Batool's reflective journal how she mentioned the benefits she got from this observation. She said that the observation taught her a new strategy and how to apply it. At the same time, it enhances and improves the teaching methods, and develops teachers' performance. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 7:174)

A different experience was had by Deena, an in-service teacher with her colleague Nasreen, a volunteer teacher, who had little experience of teaching. Deena described the situation in the following way:

Nasreen wanted to be sure how the pupils interacted in a specific lesson. The lesson was about the Prophet's tradition about 'good neighbours' in a 'Hadith' ('Hadith' is the words of the Prophet Mohammed), as she didn't get any interaction from her pupils in the classroom while she was explaining that lesson. Therefore, she was asking herself why, and how she could get her pupils to be more interactive in the Hadith about 'good neighbours'. She asked if she could observe my class when I taught the same lesson. Of course, I welcomed her as her visit did not bother me. Actually, she came to observe what she needed. (Deena 1, White School, 9:212)

Jaber, who had four years' teaching experience, requested help from his considerably more experienced colleague, Sami, who had been a teacher for twenty-three years. Jaber explained that:

In the pre-observation meeting, he showed me his lesson plan. He explained to me how he designed the collaborative learning objectives; I mean on what basis he distributed the pupils in groups, also in which subject. Does the strategy suit all the subjects, or only specific subjects? The lesson I observed was science, with an experiment. So it was very appropriate to use this strategy for this lesson.

... I observed how he divided the pupils in groups in the classroom ... However, he arranged them in a comfortable way and distributed the tools of the scientific experiment to each group... (Jaber 2, Orange School, 11:288)

Sharifa, a volunteer teacher from another school, the Blue School, took this approach a step further, explaining how useful it was for her to observe her colleague at work and then to be observed by the same colleague. She believed that the implemented programme came at the appropriate time as it met her pressing professional needs. She described the situation in the following way:

...practising the peer coaching programme was the first time for me to practise an observation strategy. This programme came at the appropriate time, when I really needed the help of my colleagues ... I visited my colleague and observed her way of teaching and how she dealt with the pupils. Then I practised what I learnt in my classroom. Moreover, I invited my colleague to observe my work and also to provide me with her feedback. I felt it was the perfect programme for teachers in my situation ... I didn't have any experience in teaching inside a classroom and I didn't know any methods of teaching. The programme helped me a lot in terms of asking for the help of my colleagues to observe me while teaching, as well as me being able to visit them and observe their way of teaching and benefit from their experience. (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 1:20)

She went on to explain how other colleagues became involved in the process:

All the teachers helped me, and also the administration and the deputy head teacher. I would ask the teachers, I would refer to a particular thing and tell them that I didn't know what it was, and ask them 'Please can you explain it to me?' For example, I am going to teach geography and I didn't know how to use the map while explaining the lesson. So I asked for the help of Jenan ... Jenan explained that particular lesson to me in the teachers' room in her free time. She said 'I am free now... I can help you' ... She explained the way of teaching the lesson with all its details. Then I practised everything I learnt from her in the class with my pupils. (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 2:32)

Sharifa recalled one of her observations of Sameera, an experienced teacher from the same school:

I told her 'Please I want you to show me how to teach reading aloud and oral conversation; How do we explain the lesson? What must the pupils do? And what about the teacher?' She told me 'Come and visit my class'. I visited her and saw her way of reading the text ... I asked her if I could practise the same way with her pupils, with the same group. She agreed. So the next day I tried that in her classroom and then I practised it in my classroom. She observed me in both classes. (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 4:132)

Jawaher made an important point when she observed that the implemented programme was easy to put into practice as the observations “...were held without fatigue and without harassment for the teacher” (Jawaher 2, White School, 15:366). Furthermore, she explained that the programme made her sufficiently comfortable:

I didn't feel shy about my request even though I was asking a new teacher. Maybe she had less experience but she had new teaching methods. So I may benefit from what new things she brings to the classroom. Moreover, I found this procedure easy and not complicated because we may benefit from each other according to our desire, our needs, and also our choice (Jawaher 2, White School, 14:349).

Positive observation 1: Pre-planning of observation. The preceding data suggests that identifying the purpose before observation by the teachers helped to facilitate the observation procedures between teachers with similar or different levels of experience, as well as between in-service and new teachers.

1.a.3. Spontaneous dissemination of skills and knowledge

The data reveals that visits were planned beforehand, although there were exceptions; not all visits were done in such an organised and pre-planned manner. The data shows that during the implementation period, whenever the teachers felt that they had the knowledge required by their colleagues, they took the initiative to disseminate the requisite skills and knowledge by suggesting that their colleagues come and observe them. For example, Mariam from the Pink School had invited her colleague Amal for observation. She stated that:

I told the teacher, Amal, about my lesson and invited her to come and observe me while teaching the lesson. I applied the lesson and found that the pupils had benefited from the lesson, so I was happy to let my colleagues take advantage of my way of teaching and of the strategy I used in this lesson. (Mariam 1, Pink School, 6:151)

Moreover, Jaber from the Orange School mentioned the following point:

Sometimes I invite my colleagues to observe my lesson. For example, when I practised a new strategy, the strategy of using smart board in teaching, and found the positive reaction of the students and their interaction in the lesson, I informed my colleagues about it and invited them to my class to observe the lesson. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 3:80)

Another form of dissemination was when colleagues heard of another's expertise and requested if they might come and observe them in their classroom. For example, Noora from the Pink School talked about her experience with her colleague, Amal. She explained that:

Amal heard me talking with my colleagues about the words which contain letters that can be pronounced but not written. So she asked me about the possibility of observing my class while I was teaching this. I welcomed her, and she visited me because she wanted to learn. In fact, Amal was a very flexible teacher who likes to help and, at the same time, doesn't feel shy to ask for help. (Noora 1, Pink School, 9:228)

Jaber recalled the spontaneous dissemination of skills and knowledge to the cooperative schools. He explained how Salman's strategy of 'individual enhancement' was transferred to the neighbouring schools, such as the White School, which were participating in the implementation of the programme. Jaber mentioned that:

The most beautiful thing was that the idea of putting this kind of news in the school bulletin had expanded, and reached the other schools, such as the cooperating schools, as these bulletins were reaching all the houses in the area. I knew about this when I met with the teachers from one of the cooperating schools, they were our neighbours. One of the teachers said that they applied the same method as an individual enhancement (Jaber 2, Orange School, 10:257).

Positive observation 2: Peer coaching is a positive way of disseminating knowledge. The preceding examples show that teachers wanted to share successful ideas and strategies with their colleagues.

Positive observation 3: Non-threatening relationship. The above-mentioned examples demonstrate that non-threatening relationships between colleagues appear to enhance the quality of the peer coaching experience.

1.a.4. Strategy imposed by the Ministry of Education.

The literature on professional change suggests that imposed change is very hard to implement. Data from the current programme suggests that when teachers are given freedom to interpret a directive, it seems to help the implementation. For example, Sami stressed that the reason he liked putting peer coaching into practice was

because "...it is optional and not compulsory" (Sami 1, Orange School, 5:126). Jaber explained how he benefited from implementing the designed programme and that it strengthened the collaborative learning strategy which supervisors encouraged teachers to engage in:

Our supervisor always encourages us to use collaborative learning. I took the application of the peer coaching programme to strengthen the collaborative learning strategy. Though I applied it in my classroom, I still needed to be more familiar with it. I knew that Sami was brilliant in this strategy. Therefore, I asked for his help. I met him in the teachers' room. We had a conversation about practising collaborative learning strategy. I told him that I wanted to know more about this strategy and I would like to observe a practical lesson using this strategy. So he invited me to his classroom ... Then I visited him. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 10:280)

Jaber (Jaber 2, Orange School, 9:236) also asked his colleague Salman to help him as he wanted to be acquainted with the new procedures of individual enhancement recommended by the Ministry of Education. In addition, Jaber, with four years' teaching experience, recalled when Salman, who had fifteen years of experience in teaching, asked to visit him to observe the way he practised the introductory activity. Jaber explained what happened:

Salman visited me once to see the introductory activity which I practised in my classroom. It was a new approach from the Ministry of Education to improve schools' performance. The Ministry encourages the teachers to practise an introductory activity at the beginning of the day to 'break the ice'. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 12:317)

Deena indicated what her experience was like with Nasreen from the same school, White School, when they were required by the Ministry of Education to apply the strategy of differentiation in asking questions. One of the experiences she recalled was that:

Nasreen wanted to gain more ideas about teaching methods. Moreover, she wanted to know more about differentiation in asking questions.

... she needed some help to identify some teaching strategies and the differentiation in asking questions which suit the pupils' levels. So I invited her to my classroom for observation.

Nasreen observed ... as I employed the lesson in different subjects. Moreover, I prepared different questions that were suitable to all the levels in the classroom. (Deena 1, White School, 8:198)

Jaber suggested putting peer coaching into practice as required by the implementation programme, but with some alterations, as he demonstrated:

I can mix the peer coaching programme with what is required by the Ministry, which is peer observation and reciprocal expertise. For example, the administration asks us to provide them with our plan for class visitations, and I will do it, but in my way. I will do a beautiful mixture of the old style and the new style. So the new mixture will be more self-determination ... in specifying the purpose of the observation. In this way I meet the administration's aspirations and, at the same time, I fulfil my needs. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 6:167)

Positive observation 4: The implementation programme helped teachers to engage with imposed changes more positively. The data presented above shows that the way the programme was implemented helped the in-service and new teachers to engage in activities required by the Ministry of Education that coincided with their interest. Thus, it helped the teachers to increase their expertise.

1.b. Teachers' freedom in decision-making.

The data shows that teachers considered that they were given opportunities to make decisions, as well as prepare for the visits. For example, Deena stressed the fact that the implemented programme gave teachers the opportunity to decide what they needed:

The implemented programme gave us the chance to specify the purpose of the visit. It gave us the chance to make up our minds and come to a decision on our needs for a visit. (Deena 1, White School, 1:7)

Jawaher from White School stated that "These visits didn't cause any harassment or annoyance to us because they were arranged between us and without a mandate or command from the administration" (Jawaher 2, White School, 9:221). Sharifa, a volunteer teacher from Blue School, explained that she had not needed administrative assistance:

I didn't need the administration's help with a replacement teacher. If I have to observe my colleague in a certain lesson and I am not free at that time, I ask to change that period with the sports teacher, or the design and technology teacher, or the English teacher. So we arranged it between ourselves. We didn't need the administration. (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 6:200)

Amal from Pink School explained how teachers arranged a visit themselves when they decided to increase their expertise. She described how this happened:

...a teacher explained punctuation marks to her class. Then she told her friends "I taught this lesson. At the beginning, it was very difficult for the pupils to understand, so I used this strategy and also that strategy, and I did this and I did that and so on, and the pupils benefited". So we said to her 'We would like to visit you as you have become proficient in this lesson'. So, the proficient teacher who has mastered her lesson explained to her colleagues what she did in her class, and how this impacted on the pupils' outcomes. Therefore, the teachers ask to visit her to increase their expertise. (Amal 1, Pink School, 3:62)

Salma from the Blue School described the programme in general as being flexible in practice. She stated her reasons:

We specify the purpose of observing, we determine the time of the visit, and we sit with each other for the feedback. That is why I found it a flexible programme. The programme was between us, the teachers. We were free in the visits, and we can say that we felt the benefit of the observing visits when we applied the peer coaching programme. (Salma 2, Blue School, 12:334)

Positive observation 5: Visits decided and arranged by teachers. The data shows that giving the teachers a role in preparation for visits to each other helped them to apply the programme positively and develop their professional skills.

1.c. Teachers' meetings after observation

Gottesman (2000) argues that the crucial aspect in the peer coaching procedure is the feedback stage. She links the success of peer coaching to that of applying peer coaching as a strategy to enhance methods of teaching:

The critical attribute of Peer Coaching is the Talk after the Visit. If this step is successful, then Peer Coaching will continue to be used in the school for the improvement of instruction. This is where the work of the coach and the teacher pay off and where the seed is planted for any future sessions of Peer Coaching. The careful preparation which

the coach did in reviewing her notes and listing possibilities pays off in this step.
(Gottesman, 2000: 63)

Research conducted by Thurlings et al. (2012) to investigate the feedback procedure, as well as to determine what effective feedback was, revealed that:

...the effectiveness of feedback does not primarily depend on how feedback messages are characterised, as is postulated in many feedback studies. The effectiveness of feedback depends on patterns or chains of interactions between providers and receivers, thereby organising feedback into a multidimensional process. (Thurlings et al., 2012: 15)

The results of the above-mentioned research are confirmed by the data collected in the present study, as the data shows that the programme gave the teachers the opportunity to determine the feedback procedure by themselves. Thus, it was the teachers' responsibility to determine the feedback visits, to meet together after the observation to discuss the observed lesson and exchange suggestions for the benefit of the educational process. For example, when Deena's colleague Jawaher wanted to know more about using the interactive board, she invited Jawaher to observe her e-lesson, called 'I dream'. When they met together after the observation, they benefited from the feedback session as they reviewed the observed lesson. Jawaher considered it would be better for the pupils to have the lesson in their classroom and use the classroom's corners rather than in the e-classroom, where it took place. However, Deena explained her decision:

I have made it clear to Jawaher that I use the classroom corners in teaching the same lesson but not on the same day, as I use different strategies for teaching the lesson. The plan for this lesson was to take the pupils to the e-class and use the electronic board.
(Deena 1, White School, 8:187)

Another kind of feedback was described by Dana, who described a visit with her colleague, Batool. Dana asked for the visit and Batool agreed. Dana mentioned that although she benefited from the lesson presented by Batool, she also gave some suggestions when they met for feedback:

...after the observation we met for feedback. Although I was the one who asked Batool if I could observe her while she was teaching, I also provided some suggestions. For example, I suggested enriching the self-learning corner by providing the corner with tangible activities like clocks and watches for pupils to perfect reading the time. I also

suggested using the electronic lesson prepared by Batool in the other classes when teaching the same lesson. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 5:142)

Similarly, Jawaher from White School described her experience with her colleague Deena. She observed a practical lesson given by Deena as she wanted her help to identify the characteristics of the interactive board. However, when they met for the feedback, although Jawaher had requested the observation out of a need she felt, she also gave a suggestion:

I mentioned that it would be better if the observed teacher concentrates more on the pupils' answers; encouraging them to answer in a particular way. Usually pupils like to answer randomly without putting their hands up. This is normal but the teacher should guide the pupils and teach them the proper way. For example, she should tell them 'I will not let you answer if you don't put your hand up'. (Jawaher 2, White School, 10:253)

Salma from Blue school stated that the volunteer teachers "needed the feedback after our visits to them" (9:227). At the same time, Sharifa, a volunteer teacher from the same school, noted that she benefited from her colleague's feedback: "...Then we sat together for feedback. I liked the way she encouraged me. I felt I became capable in my teaching (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 5:156).

1.c.1. Observation and feedback sheets

It was noted by Rajab (2009) in her research that, prior to the implementation of her peer coaching programme, giving the observation forms to the senior teacher rather than to the observed teacher, was typical practice in Bahrain: "...these forms are not submitted to the observed teacher after the observation session, but to the senior teacher, who keeps the forms in her observation file" (2009: 68). This procedure seems to have more to do with assessing a teacher's performance than enhancing it, and this was evident when Sami, from Orange School, disclosed the reason for his response to the implemented peer coaching programme. Sami stated;

I like this programme because the administration is not going to interfere in the programme, I mean in the visits, and [there will be] no evaluation for our annual report. (Sami 1, Orange School, 5:144)

He also indicated how useful it was for him to have access to the observations, explaining that:

...documenting our work helps a lot. Because in future, if you have the same problem, you don't have to go and ask your colleagues and you don't have to see how they do it. But instead you will go back to your file, to the observation sheets, to the reflective journals and solve your problems. For example, when my colleague visits my classroom to observe how I utilize the interactive board and how I use the activities, of course he can't depend on his memory to remember everything, maybe he forgets a step, the 'operating step' for example, in this case, he doesn't have to ask me or observe me or... What he needs is to go back to the documents, the written observation sheet and the reflective journal, and find the solution; it's as easy as that. (Sami 1, Orange School, 2:52)

Gottesman demonstrates the importance of keeping the observation sheets and feedback between the observation team and giving nothing to the administration. She notes that:

As the Talk after the Visit draws to a conclusion, the coach makes a point of giving the teacher all the notes and suggestions from the coaching session. She does not keep copies or send copies to the principals nor allow other teachers to look at the notes. By giving the notes to the teacher, the coach reinforces the fact that the teacher is in control of this process. It also builds trust and confidentiality. If, for any reason, the teacher and coach did not reach the true coaching stage of suggestions for improvement, the suggestions page should be destroyed. (Gottesman, 2000: 72)

Maintaining the observation sheet between teachers was one of the elements that made teachers feel positively towards the programme during the implementation period. All the interviewees stated that the feedback sheets were not given to the senior teachers, but kept with the teachers involved in the observation, the observation team. For example, Sami expressed how he was encouraged to practise the programme:

...between me and my colleague there is this paper 'the observation sheet', so there is no need for the administration to ask 'how was your visit to Salman?'. I like the peer coaching programme because the visits and the observation sheets and the feedback are between us the teachers only. The senior teacher's role and the administration's role is that they know there are reciprocal visits and that we the teachers are visiting each other, but they don't ask to see the observation sheets. (Sami 1, Orange School, 5:144)

Moreover, Amal from the Pink School also appeared to appreciate this change:

...now we don't give the observation sheet to the senior teacher but we only inform her that we, the teachers, are visiting each other for organisational purposes. (Amal 1, Pink School, 3:55)

Dana stressed the confidentiality of the feedback sheets:

...the feedback was between us the teachers, and the observation sheets also remained with us, the teachers. No one else can look at the observation sheets. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 3:69)

Jaber added that he liked the way the observation sheets were designed and he went so far as to suggest that the Ministry of Education should implement the programme. He explained his reasons, saying that:

I liked the observation forms which you gave us. I liked the way how you divided the form into stages; for example, pre-observation, observation, and the post-observation. The form was simple. I hope the Ministry will put peer coaching into practice. I hope the Ministry circulates this programme to all the schools and applies it formally. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 4:108)

Positive observation 6: Feedback. The preceding data shows that the programme provided teachers with the opportunity for debriefing and reflection with one another after they implemented the programme in their classrooms.

Positive observation 7: Observation and feedback sheets. The observation and feedback sheets were kept between the teachers, the observation team, and did not form part of teachers' assessment.

1.d. Teachers' evaluation of their own progress

The data shows that in endeavouring to apply the Ministry of Education's requirements such as introductory activities, the teachers took advantage of implementing the designed programme in their schools. Despite being mandated by the Ministry, teachers applied the introductory activity and coached each other as they were doing it, without resentment and without the intervention of the administration in terms of determining the visiting time or choosing partners. For example, an observation (Orange 9) conducted by Salman and Jaber had the following aim: 'Introductory activity and correlate it to other subjects'. Salman stated in the observation sheet (Orange 9) that he observed how Jaber prepared the pupils

during the introductory activity and made them excited to study. Although Salman stated in the feedback that the mentioned activity was longer than required, he reflected (Reflective Journal Orange 9) that he benefited from that observation, from how Jaber applied that strategy and encouraged the pupils to participate. In his interview, Jaber described the above-mentioned lesson:

I remember once I had to teach a lesson about animals, it was in science. As I mentioned before, the Ministry of Education encourages teachers to practise an introductory activity at the beginning of the day as one of the ways to improve schools' performance. Therefore, to meet the requirements of the Ministry, I invited Salman to observe how I do this in my classroom ... I started asking the pupils indirect questions about animals and farms as an introductory activity ... In the feedback meeting, Salman commented that the activity took longer than expected, but I expressed my belief that this activity facilitated the lesson. It took longer because it was an introductory activity, as I and the pupils were having a chat about general information in our daily life, and at the same time it was an introduction to my lesson. Therefore, in the reflective journal he wrote that he benefited from the way I presented the introductory activity and, at the same time, how I was encouraging the pupils. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 12:339)

The above data supports Gottesman's belief that "This is the optimum use of Peer Coaching - when it becomes internalized by teachers for everyday use" (Gottesman, 2000: 45).

Another kind of peer coaching practice was evident in the observation (Orange 6) in which Sami observed Salman. The purpose was 'How to use the interactive whiteboard in a reading lesson'. Salman reflected (Reflective Journal Orange 6) that, although he felt confident in using the whiteboard, he benefited from this observation in terms of pupils' interaction with the lesson, pupils' ease of dealing with the interactive board, and how they participated and enjoyed operating it. In his interview, Sami explained how the above-mentioned observation was conducted. He noted that his colleague Salman had asked him in the staff room about one of the ways of using the smart board, as teachers had been told by the Ministry of Education to use the technology in their daily work. Sami stated that he explained this to Salman and then visited him to observe how his colleague applied his knowledge. Sami described this observation in detail:

...I have more experience in using the smart board than my colleagues. So whenever they face any problem, they come and ask me ... [Salman] had already prepared the

lesson ... Then I visited him in his classroom to observe how he was teaching and using the interactive board, and to see how he used the secret ink on this board in the 'clock' lesson and how he correlated that lesson to the subjects, and I helped him in employing the brainstorm strategy (yellow 9) in the classroom. (Sami 1, Orange School, 9:230)

Moreover, Salma stated that the implemented programme made things easier for her as it was uncomplicated and not like the preceding practice because, as she claimed, "...I can take advantage of other teachers' expertise. I can also help my colleagues in the field that I have experience in" (Salma 2, Blue School, 13:347). This statement by Salma echoed Sami's account of his observation of Salman. Another example is an observation (Orange 2) conducted by Sami observing Jaber, with the aim of finding out more about methods of teaching science for second primary level. Sami reflected that he benefited from the introductory activity presented by Jaber and how the pupils were effectively involved in the lesson. In his interview, Sami stated that he shared his experience with his colleagues, Salman and Jaber. He mentioned that although he had twenty three years of experience in teaching, he needed the help of his colleague Jaber who had only four years of experience, and he described why:

In our school, each class system teacher is responsible for his class and teaches all subjects, except Jaber. Jaber taught only science for the first and the second primary level. In the beginning of this term, the Ministry of Education transferred one of the class system teachers to another school; therefore, the head teacher decided to replace him with Jaber and that I and Salman would teach our classes all the subjects including science. So in this case we needed the help of Jaber. He has four years' experience in teaching, while I have twenty-three. Despite this, I needed his help, I needed his expertise. The reason was that the science curriculum was changed, and Jaber had started with the new curriculum, while I and teacher Salman hadn't taught since then. So we both needed the help of Jaber in teaching a lesson about objects. For example, the definition of objects, what is an object? How do we distinguish between objects? And so on. I asked Jaber how he taught this lesson. So he invited me to observe him teaching the lesson. (Sami 1, Orange School, 13:336)

More examples were given by Jaber from the same school, such as an observation (Orange 7) with his colleague Salman, with the purpose of knowing more about 'silent reading strategies'. Jaber reflected (Reflective Journal Orange 7) that he benefited from the way Salman designed the objectives of the lesson, the

importance of teaching silent reading and its impact on reading in the library. In his interview, Jaber stated that:

I wanted to know more about silent reading strategies, so I asked Salman, the coordinator, as he has experience in this area. I knew that he was very good in that aspect. I met him in the teachers' room. We discussed together the advantage of silent reading. I told him I wanted to see a practical application of silent reading strategies, because the supervisors always recommend applying it. They direct us a lot to use it but I do not know the exact mechanism in using it. I asked him about the possibility of visiting him while he was teaching and using that strategy. He told me 'This week I will apply this strategy so you can come and visit me'. He determined the day and the period to be observed. He also showed me his lesson plan, and of course he wrote down the procedures of the lesson and the behavioural objectives he designed. Then I visited him ... After the observation we met again in the teachers' room, and I asked him to explain to me how he designed the behavioural objectives for that lesson. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 7:195 + 8:217)

Jaber continued, commenting on how he applied what he had learned from the observation:

...I found that the strategies used by teacher Salman were very useful for use in the library. Therefore, I practised that strategy with my pupils in a library. Teacher Salman applied that strategy in the classroom and I applied it in the library. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 8:219)

Deena, from White School, noted how they had benefited from each others' expertise in educational technology. She argued that although they were trained in its use, they still required help:

We only started using the interactive board this year. This is the first time we have used it. We were trained to use it but still we needed each other's help. My colleague Jawaher wanted to know more about it, so I invited her to my class, I told her that I have an e-lesson called "I dream", and would employ the interactive board in the lesson. (Deena 1, White School, 7:165)

Furthermore, the data revealed that the volunteer teachers benefited from the implemented programme as a way of increasing their knowledge and improving their teaching skills. For instance, the programme assisted Nasreen, a volunteer teacher, to develop herself by benefiting from her colleagues' expertise. This was evident

from Deena's and Jawaher's – teachers from White School – comments. Deena explained how the observation was carried out:

Nasreen, the volunteer teacher, asked me to observe her pupils' strengths and weaknesses while she was teaching a Maths lesson. Nasreen taught my pupils, in my classroom; I wanted to see if my pupils interacted with her, and her way of teaching, like they interacted with me and my way of teaching. (Deena 1, White School, 11:251)

Jawaher also stated that Nasreen had asked her to observe her teaching and her performance as she was a volunteer teacher (Jawaher 2, White School, 8:190).

Sharifa, a volunteer teacher from another school, highlighted that the programme came at a suitable time as she found it helped her to become more able to control her pupils when teaching in the classroom:

I started practising the programme from the beginning as I started teaching then. To be honest, the programme came at the right time as I was truly in need of such a programme and such training. I benefited greatly from the programme because it helped me to manage teaching in the classroom. The programme helped me in controlling the pupils in the classroom. All of this was because of my visits and my continuous observations of the teachers and their continuous visits to my class, observing my performance and my way of teaching. They helped me in everything. I became capable of setting goals for my lesson, I felt a significant difference between the first day I entered the classroom and the last day. Even the parents were happy with my way of teaching their children. (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 3:101 + 7:217)

However, even a more experienced teacher, Dana from Yellow School, revealed that she did not feel shy asking her colleagues about methods of teaching writing and reading because, as she explained:

I didn't feel shy because we needed each other. She helped me in using the smart board in the 'clock' lesson and how she correlated that lesson to other subjects, and I helped her in employing the brainstorm strategy (Yellow 9) in the classroom. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 6:169)

Positive observation 8: Teachers' mutual visits and meetings to evaluate their progress. The data presented above shows that the implemented programme encouraged the teachers to carry out continuous reciprocal visits and meetings to

evaluate their progress. The visits were based on equality between them, as each teacher had expertise that the other benefited from.

1.e. Time issues.

Of the problems that might be faced when implementing a peer coaching programme, Richards and Farrell refer to that of time:

Teachers entering a peer-coaching relationship should be aware of problems that might occur for both the teacher and the peer coach. Time is an often-cited problem. The demands of time need to be considered. The coach needs time to discuss and observe the teacher and the teacher needs time to learn from the coach. (Richards, & Farrell, 2005: 154)

Data from Questionnaire 1, Figures 4.11 and 4.12 (as discussed in Chapter 4, section 6) shows that teachers suffered from time constraints as they were involved in many activities and administrative work which were not directly associated with teaching. The above-mentioned data is supported by Rajab' findings, when she stressed that:

All the Class System teachers suffer from time pressure, and teachers note that they are overwhelmed by the amount of administrative work they have to do which is not related to teaching. (2009: 62)

Therefore, time was a significant obstacle in the implementation of the programme in that the way of using time impacted on teachers' acceptance of its application. The data presented in the following sections will show efficient and inefficient uses of time.

1.e.1. Efficient use of time.

Time issues have been discussed in this study, with regard to two aspects: identification of the time of the visit, and the impact of the implementation programme on reducing time and accelerating delivery of the curriculum.

The data from the interviews reveals that having the teachers, the observation team, determining the observation time had a positive impact on the process of peer coaching, and this was very important during the implementation of the designed programme. For instance, Salma said what encouraged her to implement the

programme was its flexibility in terms of identifying the time of the visit without the restriction of having to find a substitute teacher:

I choose my partner and I determine the time that I want to go for a visit, and according to my needs. Even if I have a class at that time, the administration prepares a replacement teacher for my pupils in my absence. I felt a lot of flexibility in the programme. (Salma 2, Blue School, 4:92)

Sami explained that identifying the purpose of the visit beforehand helped to determine the time of the visit (Sami 1, Orange School, 5:140). This was evident when Sami was asked about the duration of the observation, and he explained that he did not observe the complete lesson:

... but only half an hour because I went there for a specific aim. I wanted to observe how he presented the lesson, how he explained the lesson, and how he asked questions. As soon as he finished that, I left the class. I went at the beginning of the lesson but, as he moved to another step, I left the class. Actually he told me that he was going to start evaluating the pupils, so I left the class. (Sami 1, Orange School, 8:213)

Similarly, Jaber liked the implemented programme because:

...the partners determine the reason for the visit and thus decide the time of the visit according to its purpose. So the visit was much more focused and didn't take away from the teachers' time, both teachers who are the observers and the observed teachers. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 4:112)

Moreover, Jaber considered that "...deciding the exact observation date, period, and time made the observation easier, so that it will not hinder the teacher's work" (Jaber 2, Orange School, 13:371).

Deena from White School stated that "...I and my colleagues arranged for the visits to take place when we had spare time" (Deena 1, White School, 2:25). Moreover, she explained that she and her colleagues "...implemented peer coaching once a week and sometimes once a month. It was according to our needs" (Deena 1, White School, 2:34).

Noora discussed the time issue and the curriculum. She reflected on the following point:

Although you asked us to apply the peer coaching programme at a very sensitive time in Bahrain and there was pressure because of a lack of time to finish the curricula, our group was happy with the programme. One of the advantages in this programme is that it takes less time and helped us to speed up and finish the curricula. (Noora 1, Pink School, 5: 107)

Deena explained that “It is good when you do something you feel will help you especially when there is a lack of time, rather than it causing a lack of time (Deena 1, White School, 1:21). In addition, Salma stressed that she benefited from her colleagues’ expertise, which facilitated her practice. Therefore, she found that the “...Implementation of the programme helped me to accelerate the curriculum. It helped me in the speed of completion of the curriculum” (Salma 2, Blue School, 5:134).

In his interview, Sami recalled that through the programme he had been able to benefit from Jaber’s four years of experience in teaching science and adopt the new curriculum more effectively:

Jaber taught the lesson and I observed him. The observation helped me a lot in adapting the new curriculum. Instead of searching for new methods of teaching the lesson, it was easier to visit my colleague and observe a practical application in the classroom. Moreover, the observation saved my time and my effort, and made me more confident when I taught my class the same lesson. (Sami 1, Orange School, 13:359)

Positive observation 9: Identification of the observation time. The data presented above shows that the issue of time was one of the reasons that led to the teachers’ willingness to implement the programme; being able to determine the time of the visits made the programme easier to implement and in turn, implementation of the programme helped in accelerating completion of the curriculum.

1.e.2. Inefficient use of time

The preceding data gives examples of efficient uses of time during the observation period. However, Salma noted that misuse of time could lead to a delay in the curriculum. She explained her point:

...when I and my colleagues agree on a visit, we agree on the time and the place of the visit, and we specify the purpose of the visit as well. We arrange for everything to be in place to achieve that visit. So if the observer comes late to the class, this will cause delay.

For example, I arranged for a visit with my colleague, and we arranged for that visit from all the aspects. My colleague was supposed to be in the classroom before starting the lesson, and in particular before starting with the introductory activity. But she came late and I had to wait because I didn't want to start teaching and restart again when she came. The repetition of such issues and frequent repetition causes a delay in the curriculum. Therefore, the issue of commitment in terms of time must be stressed. You know very well how precious class time is, and we plan for each minute in the lesson particularly. So my colleague being five minutes late made a lot of difference, because this particular time was arranged for the introductory activity or the introduction of the lesson. I don't like anyone entering my classroom while I am teaching, so I postponed the educational situation till the observer entered my classroom. This was what I meant by the delay in the curriculum. (Salma 2, Blue School, 6:141)

The data shows how teachers' behaviour had a significant impact on time. For example, as mentioned in section 1.4, when Jawaher visited Deena's classroom, Jawaher had suggested the pupils might have that lesson in their classroom, using its corners. She explained the reasons why Jawaher made that suggestion, as it was also related to misuse of time:

Jawaher noticed some chaos when she arrived at the classroom at the beginning of the lesson. The reason was that I was busy with the supervisor's visit in the previous lesson. As soon as she finished, I took my girls quickly to the e-class. So there was some chaos till I controlled the pupils. (Deena 1, White School, 8:191)

Limitations – 1: Improper use of time. Misusing the time of the visit may lead to a delay in completing the school curriculum.

1.f. Teachers' needs at different educational levels

As discussed above, the data suggests that the programme was successful when it was based on teachers' needs. For example, Deena chose to observe her colleague Shereen, teaching the same primary level at the same school, to benefit from her methods of teaching. Deena explained why she did this:

I wanted to know more about strategies and methods of teaching inside the classroom. I wanted to know more how the teacher deals with the pupils inside the classroom. How the teacher deals with the subject and how she presents the lesson – pupils' interaction – how the teacher deals with all the specifics – and how to expand the subject. (Deena 1, White School, 5:115)

Jawaher from White School also described how she was able to benefit from her colleagues' experience:

I visited my colleague Deena to identify the characteristics of the interactive board. Deena attended many workshops about the interactive board in other schools. Therefore, she was more experienced than me in this field. I tried to learn by myself, but I asked her to teach me how to use the interactive board in applying this lesson. She allowed me to visit her and observe her way of teaching. So I observed a practical application. (Jawaher 2, White School, 10:236)

Teachers suggested that the programme could be implemented not only between teachers of the same level but teachers of different educational levels. For example, Deena recommended "the programme to be applied to all the educational levels and not only to the second primary level" (Deena 1, White School, 11:265). Meanwhile, Jaber suggested implementing the programme across all levels:

I think it will be a good idea if we apply this programme between all the teachers from different levels and not just in a particular level. For example, in our school, the teacher who teaches first primary level will move with his pupils to the next level. I mean the teacher who taught first primary moves to second primary, then third primary, after that he will come back again to the first primary level, and so on. In this case if I have any problem in delivering maths for second primary, I can ask my colleague who is teaching the third primary level as he has experience of the second primary curriculum, Or maybe I can ask for the assistance of teachers from first or third primary levels on how to use a specific technology in teaching. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 6:150)

As illustrated above, the data suggests that the programme was responsive to teachers' needs. This was also evident in Deena's interview when she described how she utilized the programme according to her needs. However, Deena found her needs met by her colleague's, a teacher teaching third primary level and not the same level she was teaching. She explained why this was:

I would prefer to visit my colleagues from all the educational levels rather than to visit my colleagues from the same level, second primary level. When implementing the peer coaching programme in my school, I requested the help of a teacher teaching third primary level. She was using a useful strategy, so I asked for her permission to visit her while she was teaching to learn how she used this strategy. I observed a practical application and then I applied it in my classroom. (Deena 1, White School, 2:27)

The above data is supported by Cockburn and Littler (2008: 36), who refer to the issue of whether curricula in Mathematics at primary level should be limited to one age range. They explain their point of view as follows:

...Many of us are tempted to use a particular tried and tested model or phrase which we know from our own experience works very effectively for children of a particular age. Indeed, using analogies and endeavouring to simplify situations is a natural, and entirely reasonable, part of teaching process. However, teachers need to have a greater understanding of the broader mathematical context in which they do this. Overemphasis of a particular model can make it more difficult for children to solve problems when they are presented in unfamiliar contexts. (Cockburn and Littler, 2008: 36)

Positive observation 10: Working across levels. The data shows that the programme allowed teachers to work across levels and according to their professional needs.

1.g. Exchange of expertise between teachers from the same school and the cooperative schools

Data presented in the following section supports what was mentioned in Chapter Four (Section 2) about the benefit of reciprocal expertise between teachers within the same school and the cooperative schools. However, teachers were against the method of implementing the imposed visits that had been habitually carried out previously. Therefore, they took advantage of the peer coaching programme to exchange expertise. For instance, Dana from Yellow School stated that:

The Ministry of Education was encouraging us to do reciprocal visits to exchange expertise between teachers, and in fact we needed these visits, but not in the way that the school was preparing it for us. So why not apply peer coaching programme and get some benefit from these visits? We, as a group of teachers, have a strong relationship with each other. We have a strong rapport with each other. Therefore, as long as the visits were based on our agreement, we didn't find any difficulties or any trouble in observing each other. Furthermore, the psychological comfort helped us in visiting each other. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 2:46)

Noora from Pink School decided to exchange expertise with her colleague Mariam from the same school. She described how they applied the story telling strategy:

[This] was about words that contain letters which can be pronounced but not written. I and Mariam thought of exchanging expertise, and this strategy helped the pupils to understand the lesson easily. (Noora 1, Pink School, 15:371)

Sami opposed the mandatory visits imposed by the administration, stating that:

However, if the programme is optional, I mean if the observation is optional, the reciprocal visits will be very easy, because I am not forced to visit my colleagues, but I visit them or they visit me because there is a need for this visit (Sami 1, Orange School, 5:143).

Amal from Pink School was happy with the implemented programme as it was easy and she disliked the procedures they had been following. She pointed out that she “found it different, firstly because, in peer coaching, we ask for the visit, according to our need, and it was not compulsory to do it” (Amal 2, Pink School, 2:50). Jaber from Orange School shared Amal’s opinion that the peer coaching they implemented was easy and flexible because it was based on the teachers’ needs:

I found it different than what we were doing, especially in specifying the purpose of the visit. I was happy with it. I was happy in myself while practising it. What I most liked was the flexibility of the programme; I ask my colleagues when I need their help or they ask me when they need my help. For example, I wanted to know more about self-learning and how to practise it with my pupils. My colleague invited me to his classroom to observe how he practises that strategy... I also asked my colleagues in the teacher’s room, whenever I feel that I needed help, or I needed to clarify some points, or to know more about a specific strategy. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 3:75)

Jaber also recalled how expertise had been exchanged spontaneously between teachers in the cooperative schools, as mentioned in section 1.4. Jaber stated that the teacher from the cooperative school said that “...they started to put the photos of the pupils winning the largest number of stars in the weekly bulletin” (Jaber 1, Orange School, 10:262).

Positive observation 11: Reciprocal expertise based on needs. Teachers from different schools exchanged expertise smoothly and without any difficulties, as they applied a peer coaching procedure based on their needs, and not imposed by the administration.

Sub-theme 2: The impact of proper regulation of peer coaching on teachers' positivity.

Studies show that identifying the time of the visit by the teachers, the observation peers, is as important as defining the purpose of the visit. Therefore, the fact that, in this case, teachers met after the visit for feedback had a constructive impact on the implementation of the programme. This shows that implementing peer coaching properly in terms of pre-observation, observation, and post-observation has a great effect on teachers' positivity towards the programme. This is made evident by Gottesman (2000):

...the first step is in the teacher's hands: the teacher requests a Visit. The Visit may be to observe one specific point of instruction or classroom management in which the teacher needs help. Or it may simply be for her peer to observe a new technique the teacher wants to try. The teacher requests that her peer come into the classroom for a limited period. This saves release time, prescheduling, and the delayed formality of evaluation observations. Because requested Visits are for one specific point instead of a whole lesson and because they can take place in as few as ten minutes, this model of Peer Coaching can occur almost daily and can be totally nonthreatening, like the informality of doctors sitting in on each other's operations. With these informal exchanges characteristic of other true professions, from musicians to medical doctors, teacher professionalism can improve. (Gottesman, 2000:33)

Jaber from Orange School referred to the importance of the time for the visit being determined at the same time as the purpose of the visit being identified. He explained:

The visit should be specified on the size of demand. Thus, because we specified the purpose of the observation in advance, the visiting time was specified too. For example, I don't need to visit my colleague for the whole lesson. Maybe I don't need the introductory activity or the end of the lesson. Maybe I need the teacher's explanation or the teacher's practice for a specific subject or specific activity for ten minutes only. Thus, I enter the classroom only for that specific reason. Of course here. when I and my colleague identify the purpose and the time of the visit before observing, I tell him 'please send one of the pupils to let me know when you reach this point'. This is what happened to me. My colleague sent one of his pupils to inform me, and I entered the classroom only for that specific purpose and went out. I didn't stay the whole lesson because I needed only those ten minutes to observe.

So, I found the peer coaching programme better because the teacher enters the classroom only to observe what he needs. Moreover, the observer and the teachers observed meet before observing and specify the purpose of the observation. At least the observer has got an idea about what is happening ... The new programme gave meaning to the class visitation and to observation. It showed us and explained to us things that we needed ... When I put peer coaching into practice, I went exactly to the point I needed to, and not trying to waste my time or my colleague's time. There wasn't any inconvenience in the practice. Rather, relations between teachers were naturally free of any harassment. I know that the teacher will visit me for this specific reason, and I will provide him with what he needed exactly. I don't have worries about other things. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 3:86)

Therefore, through the implementation of the programme, Jaber's perception of it was positive, as he favoured the flexibility of the programme. He reflected this in his statement that:

...the programme was flexible in terms of who to choose for observing my work, and determining the exact time for observation. Moreover, it was well organised in terms of time allocation to decide the purpose of observation and the feedback. I meet the teacher, decide why I need him to observe me, we agree with each other on the exact time to observe, then he observes and, at the end, we meet with each other for feedback. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 6:159)

Noora also expressed her preference for flexibility: "You feel comfortable when you apply it as it is a flexible strategy" (Noora 1, Pink School, 5:119). Deena revealed that she liked the implemented programme because, as she stated:

...we were not obliged to apply it, but we agreed among ourselves how to apply it. At the same time, we wrote down the purpose of the visit and, at the end of the observation, we sat together for feedback. (Deena 1, White School, 2:49)

Sharifa from Blue School emphasised the fact that the visiting arrangements were made by the teachers, stating that "...usually most of our observations were arranged between us, the teachers, between me and the teacher I asked for help" (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 2:57).

The programme emphasised the need to schedule a meeting for feedback to verify the achievement of the purpose of the visit. As Gottesman (2000) states, clarification of the purpose of this meeting is crucial:

The Visit is also different from the formal observation in that both parties know that it is a professional peer exchange: no evaluation, no supervising – just a friendly “help me” visit. Since the visit is non-evaluative and the teacher has requested feedback on one specific area, there are neither surprises nor wholesale and sometimes unwanted feedback of everything that went on. In other words, the teacher knows what to expect: feedback on the Request, no extras. It also makes the Visit easier on the coach: one request to fulfil and ten minutes out of his teaching day to help a fellow professional who can later do the same thing for him. (Gottesman, 2000: 33)

Salma from Blue School was very positive towards the implementation of the programme in terms of transferring expertise between teachers:

We were required to practise peer coaching for second primary level, so it was a good opportunity to transfer our expertise to the volunteer teachers through the class visits, their visits to us and our visits to them, as well as during private meetings or sessions with each other outside the classroom, such as on how to prepare a lesson. We put peer coaching into practise, but we were in need of this programme. The volunteers were in need of that kind of coaching and watching a practical application in front of them. (Salma 2, Blue School, 8:221)

Dana also reflected a positive view of the impact of the programme:

The peer coaching experience that we have put into practice now made us think that we are all teachers, we are all alike, and we work as one group. Being critical of my colleague or not, in the end we are all working together for the benefit of the pupils and to increase their achievement. Furthermore, if teachers talk to each other in any manner, eventually it becomes a friendly way as there is no assessment and no judgment. I mean, what happened inside the classroom was between me and my colleague; I will not get worried that maybe she will talk with the others about what happened inside the classroom. I will not get worried that what happened inside the classroom will affect my annual report or will affect my grades. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 4:89)

Positive observation 12: Good organisation. The preceding data shows that good organization of the programme in terms of identifying the purpose and the time of the visit, as well as of the feedback meeting, had a positive impact on teachers.

Sub-theme 3: The impact of preparation on the running of the programme.

One of the points identified by Rajab (2009) regarding the mandatory peer observations required by the Ministry of Education was related to teachers’

unwillingness to put peer teaching observation into practice due to the huge amount of preparation they had to do for the observed lesson. She said that:

All the teachers criticize the amount of preparation done for the reciprocal visits and peer observations due to the fact that they have become more evaluative than observational. (2009: 58)

The data presented here with respect to the peer coaching programme shows that one of the factors that encouraged the teachers to implement the programme was the lack of extra preparation for the observations, as Deena explained:

...Although we were used to class visitation before, there was extra preparation for that lesson because we had to present a model lesson. Now, there is no extra preparation. Moreover, we don't prepare all kinds of activities for that lesson except the ones that were already planned for that lesson. (Deena 1, White School, 5: 106)

Jawaher considered the programme was easy to practice since, as she stated, it "...was intended for a specific purpose, a specific reason; therefore, there was no extra preparation for the lesson" (Jawaher 2, White School, 2:35). Amal noted that "The peer coaching programme was helpful because there was no stress and no intensive preparation that exhausts the teachers." She also mentioned that the teachers did not reject her as an observer "...because I would not cause her any stress, as she would not need to do any extra preparation for that lesson and for that visit" (Amal 2, Pink School, 2:33).

Jawaher also referred to the lack of stress and preparation:

I didn't need to allocate a full day to think about how I should present the lesson to satisfy the observer ... The visits didn't bother me because I didn't need to prepare for that lesson ... whenever my colleague wants to observe me I welcome her because I didn't need to prepare for that lesson. (Jawaher 2, White School, 2:38)

Positive observation 13: Preparation. The data presented above indicate that lack of preparation for the observed lesson facilitated the implementation of the programme.

Sub-theme 4: Teachers' freedom in decision-making regarding the selection of a partner

One of the basic components of the programme was the teachers' freedom to choose their partner, as it had been considered an obstacle with previous class visits (section 4, Figure 4.9) where partners were chosen by the senior teachers. Rajab (2009) also found that teachers suggested this change:

...it would be preferable for the observed teacher to be the person who has the authority to choose the observers and also the suitable time for observing. This is because she is the one who is presenting this educational situation and, at the same time, she has some aims that she wants the observers to observe, which will be previously scheduled in her lesson plans. (Rajab, 2009: 74)

Therefore, during the implementation of the designed programme, partners were chosen by teachers and on different bases, such as teachers' experience, proficiency, competency, trust and skill. As Gottesman (2000) states in this regard:

The whole psychological mind-set of this user-friendly model is different from evaluative models. Instead of the supervisor scheduling a visit, pairs of teachers working together know that they are in this for the purpose of helping each other improve instruction and the teaching/learning situation for children on an almost daily, neighbourly, professional basis. (Gottesman, 2000: 33)

Noora from Pink School referred to teachers' experience in the geographical area and the school she was teaching in, and the pupils of that area. Although Noora had fourteen years of experience teaching, she had only been teaching in that particular school for three years. Thus, she chose her partners according to their experience in that school in that area. She explained her reasons for this:

It is true that I have fourteen years' experience teaching as a class system teacher, but I have only three years' experience in this school, and specifically in this area, while my colleagues had more experience in teaching in this school. They had experience in dealing with the pupils, their levels, the level of their thinking, and their way of thinking. In all these aspects, they were more experienced than me. As I told you before, three years ago I was transferred to this school. I was in a school with a different environment to the current school environment. The nature of the people was different. Most of the pupils in the previous school didn't go to kindergarten but directly to primary school... I benefited from the experience of my colleagues with the pupils in this school, as they have been in

this area for longer and they have more experience of the girls in this area. (Noora 1, Pink School, 5:123)

Amal from Pink School chose her partner according to her proficiency:

... so we said to her "We would like to visit you as you have become proficient in this lesson". So, the proficient teacher who has mastered her lesson explains to her colleagues what she did in her class, and how this impacted on the pupils' outcomes. (Amal 2, Pink School, 3:65)

Sami from Orange School also chose his partner according to his proficiency. He mentioned that he and his colleague Salman needed their colleague Jaber's experience as he had been teaching science for four years, since he started teaching. Although Sami had twenty-three years experience in teaching, he did not have experience in teaching science. Therefore, he asked his colleague Jaber, as he was proficient in that field (Sami 1, Orange School, 13:336).

Sami also chose his partner according to his skills, competency, efficiency, as well as confidentiality:

I chose the teacher according to his skills, his competency, and his efficiency in what I need. Moreover, I should feel comfortable with the chosen teacher and have confidence in him. I trust that whatever happened between us 'me and him' will remain confidential. He will not go and tell the others about me and about what happened inside the class ... Moreover, if I want to visit the teacher, Salman, because I need to learn some new teaching strategies, but what I discovered is that he went and told other teachers that Sami visited me because he is weak and hasn't mastered these skills and ... No, I will never visit this teacher. If I don't trust this teacher, I will not visit him and will not let him visit me, unless he is visiting me in a formal way where I am forced to receive him and forced to welcome him – 'No trust, no visit'. (Sami 1, Orange School, 2:63)

As seen in the comment above, confidentiality was an important element in selecting a partner in the programme. It enabled the teachers to observe each other without any fear. For Jaber, for example:

And most importantly of all, my partner will not speak about me with anyone outside the classroom. Teachers fear nothing more than this point as some teachers maintain the confidentiality of the work, while others do not. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 5:130)

What Jawaher also liked most in the implemented programme “was the confidentiality in the work” and she stressed the importance of this: “What happened inside and outside the classrooms was completely between the observer and the observed teachers and no one else” (Jawaher 2, White School, 3:73). Sami from Orange School emphasised the need to choose a trusted partner. He mentioned this when asked if he was comfortable asking for help from a teacher who was younger than him and with less experience. Sami replied:

Yes, I asked him for help without any embarrassment, because as I told you earlier, I chose my partner, and I trusted him. If there was no trust between each other I wouldn't ask him for any help... whatever happened between me and my colleague will remain confidential. My colleague will take into consideration that one day he will need my expertise. (Sami 1, Orange School, 14: 366)

Jaber indicated that while teachers chose their partners according to their needs, they asked for the coordinator's help in choosing the most skilful teacher in the subject they needed to observe:

...the coordinator, and on the basis of his experience, knows the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers. Therefore, he can identify the most efficient teacher, who can meet my needs. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 5:145)

Jaber gave an example of how he chose a partner when he wanted to know more about silent reading strategies. He said that he asked the coordinator, Salman, “as he has experience in this area. I knew that he was very good in that aspect” (Jaber 2, Orange School, 7:195).

In her interview, Deena from White School stated that she was responsible for choosing an observer. Furthermore, she pointed out that she chose the teacher she trusted “and the teacher I feel comfortable with” (Deena 1, White School, 2:23). At the same time, as mentioned earlier, she gave another reason for her choice: “I requested the help of a teacher teaching the third primary level. She was using a useful strategy” (Deena 1, White School, 2:27). Deena asked for that teacher's permission to visit her while teaching. Thus, the implemented programme gave Deena the right to choose her colleagues.

As mentioned in section 1.7, Jawaher also chose her partner according to her expertise. She stated that although she had tried to teach herself how to use the interactive board, she needed the help of her colleague Deena, as she was more proficient (Jawaher 2, White School, 10: 236).

Salma from Blue school stated that the thought of choosing her partner by herself encouraged her to implement the programme:

The thing I like most in the programme is that it is based on the two partners. That is why I was encouraged to apply it. I choose my partner and I determine the time that I want to go for a visit, and according to my needs. (Salma 2, Blue School, 4:90)

Dana from Yellow School preferred an efficient teacher who met her professional needs, but concentrated on obtaining the teacher's permission before proceeding in the programme. She stated her position:

From our daily discussion in the teachers' room, I can notice strengths and weaknesses in my colleagues. And of course I know what I need to improve and the points that I need to strengthen. So firstly I choose the teacher who is strong in the point I need. Secondly, although we have a strong rapport with each other, I ask for my colleague's permission to visit her, or she asks for my permission to visit me. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 3:75)

On the other hand, Sharifa, a volunteer teacher from Blue School, revealed that she chose her partner for health reasons. She described the situation:

...all the teachers helped me. They provided me with all kinds of help regarding training, inside and outside the classroom. But I chose teacher Sameera for most of my observations, because her class was beside mine. It was the nearest classroom to mine. So it was easier for us to visit each other as I have a kind of disability. I can't walk easily; I walk slowly. Therefore, I found it better for me to visit her classroom instead of wasting time with my slow walking. So I told Sameera about that and she helped me and welcomed me in her classroom. I am on good terms with all the teachers. I didn't choose Sameera because I felt more comfortable with her than the others, but because her classroom was the nearest. (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 5:176)

Positive observation 14: Selecting partners. The above-mentioned examples confirm that teachers exchanged expertise smoothly and without any difficulties as they selected their observation partners by themselves, rather than selection being imposed by the administration. The selection was based on the partners' proficiency,

competency skills, experiences, trust and confidentiality. Therefore, the programme was implemented based on teachers' needs and their freedom in choosing their partners.

Thus the data pertaining to theme one in this chapter, has shown that the system followed in the implemented programme helped to increase the enthusiasm of the teachers in its application. Moreover, the data has shown that the methods of the programme, such as identifying the visit according to teachers' professional needs, as well as the authority which was given to the teachers to arrange their visits and choose the partners by themselves, helped the teachers in a way that facilitated the implementation of the programme, in order to improve classroom instruction, as well as to develop their professional skills.

The data has confirmed that teachers did not need intensive preparation for the observed lessons, except for the daily preparation required that would lead to the purpose of the observation. This facilitated the implementation of the programme by the teachers and flexibility in dealing with each other. Therefore, teachers benefited from each others' experiences to develop their teaching skills in order to increase the pupils' academic achievement.

Theme two

The impact of the implemented programme on pedagogy and teachers' thoughts on collaboration

In Theme two I explain the details of how the teachers implemented the programme in a way that helped them to develop their pedagogical reasoning, as well as teachers' collaboration on the basis of developing their professional skills.

This theme is divided into two sub-themes (Figure 5.3) to identify how the implemented programme encouraged teachers to collaborate for pedagogical development;

Sub-theme five: The impact of the implemented peer coaching programme on pedagogy.

Sub-theme six: The impact of the implemented peer coaching programme on teachers' collaboration.

Theme two

The impact of the implemented programme on pedagogy and teachers' thoughts on collaboration

Sub-theme 5

The impact of the implemented peer coaching programme on pedagogy.

5.a. Differentiated instruction and pupils' individual differences.

5.b. Pupils' collaborative learning.

5.c. Diversity in methods of teaching.

5.d. Correlation between teaching subjects.

5.e. Educational games.

5.f. The impact of the implemented peer coaching programme on pedagogy.

5.g. Enhancement.

Sub-theme 6

The impact of the implemented peer coaching programme on teachers' collaboration

Figure 5.3: Division of theme two

Sub-theme 5: The impact of the implemented peer coaching programme on pedagogy

Sub-theme 5 explains how the implemented programme helped teachers to develop their way of thinking pedagogically, and how peer coaching practice enhanced and developed teachers' pedagogical abilities. The focus here is to examine whether the implemented programme impacted on the methods of teaching in terms of developing the teaching strategies designed to ensure that all pupils learn effectively.

Sub-theme five is divided into sections as follows:

5.a. Differentiated instruction and pupils' individuality differences

Researchers define differentiated instruction by correlating it to each student's needs. For example, Heacox's (2002:1) definition is that differentiated instruction "means changing the pace, level, or kind of instruction you provide in response to individual learners' need, styles or interests". Hall et al. (2000) define differentiated instruction as follows:

To differentiate instruction is to recognize students' varying background knowledge readiness, language, preferences in learning and interests; and react responsively. Differentiated instruction is a process of teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same class. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student's growth and individuality by meeting each student where he or she is and assisting in the learning process. (Hall et al., 2000)

An article on Canada's Ministry of Education website explains that:

In any class, students will have a range of abilities, needs, and interests. Differentiated instruction is any instructional strategy that recognizes and supports individual differences in learning. Differentiated instruction maximizes learning by considering students' individuality and cultural learning styles, recognizing that some students will require adjusted expectations, and offering different ways for students to explore curriculum and demonstrate learning (as well as accepting that these different methods are of equal value). With differentiated instruction, the teachers aim to create learning situations that match students' current abilities and preferred learning styles while stretching their abilities and encouraging them to try new ways of learning. (Alberta Education, 2005:1)

It was clear in the way that the participants implemented the programme in their classrooms that they wanted to practise differentiation in the questions they asked in class, and by applying individualised strategies. These strategies were required by the improvement team, formed by the Ministry of Education in Bahrain in order to improve the performance of the Kingdom's schools. As Salma stated, they were required by the improvement team to "...prepare activities for the pupils. Activities should be of three levels; high level, average, and low achieving level" (Salma 2, Blue School, 2:36). Thus, Salma took advantage of the implemented programme to apply the strategies which were required by the Ministry. She explained:

...As we are under obligation to apply this strategy, we prepare differentiated activities for our pupils ... divided the white board into three parts ...different questions on each part ... questions were for all the pupils, but not one question for all the levels, because there were different levels of abilities in the classroom. (Salma 2, Blue School, 9:235)

Salma mentioned that, at the beginning of the programme, she was observed by Suad, the volunteer teacher, as she wanted to know about differentiation in instruction. Then Salma visited Suad to observe how she applied the same lesson (Salma 2, Blue School,10: 279).

The participants also implemented the peer coaching programme to enhance what they knew as well as to help each other in using effective strategies to raise pupils' achievement. For example, Mariam explained how she found the implemented programme changed teachers' mathematical practices in the currency lesson. Starting with her own daughter's difficulties, Mariam connected this to her practise in the classroom:

I noticed this with my daughter ... I started teaching her and I tried as much as possible to show her and clarify the money unit for her as well as the value of each unit of currency, but I found she still had some weaknesses in this lesson. I decided to give her the chance to deal with the money in real life by herself ... I used to give her a packed lunch to take with her, so she would not waste her time standing in the queue buying food. But I discovered that my daughter lost a lot of experience which she can get easily from her daily life. She didn't know how to deal with the money. (Mariam 1, Pink School, 9:213)

Thus, Mariam explained how she benefited from her personal experience with her daughter in practising differentiation strategy in the classroom with her pupils

according to their backgrounds and to each specific situation. She explained that although she knew the levels of the pupils in her classroom, she discovered that during the currency lesson, the weak pupils' performance was better than that of the clever pupils:

...we have a problem in the currency lesson because the pupils can't master this lesson easily so we try out many methods. We benefited a lot from some methods, such as the shop corner. Sometime in this lesson, the weak pupil shows that she is better than the cleverest one because the weak girl has more experience with money as she is used to playing outside the house and taking money from her parents and then buying from the cold stores. While the clever girl, her family don't give her money in her hand to buy by herself. Her parents get whatever she needs for her. That is why she will never gain experience like the weak girl... therefore; the weak pupil is cleverer in this unit than the cleverest pupils. (Mariam 1, Pink 8:203)

The above data supports an article by the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University, which illustrated that:

Teachers who differentiate instruction recognize that students differ in many ways, including prior knowledge and experiences, readiness, language, culture, learning preferences, and interests. They realize they must change the way they teach in order to reach all students. Through differentiated instruction, students will get to the same place, but take different paths. (University N Y, 2008: 2)

Jawaher's experience also resonates with this article. For example, Shereen observed Jawaher with the aim of finding out more about learning through games and role-play. It was in the subject of Arabic language, Shereen reflected (Reflective Journal White 7), that she benefited from observing her colleague who was applying a differentiating strategy in the asking of questions. In her interview, Jawaher demonstrated how she applied the role-play strategy to encourage pupils with different abilities to participate in the classroom activities. She described the lesson in detail:

I had a pupil who had limited abilities, but she liked role-playing. She was talented in role-playing ... I used to give her a chance in this activity as she would learn more by using this strategy. Her performance was remarkable in terms of diction ... She forgets quickly so I gave her a longer time to memorise her role in the play, but her performance was amazing. I give the girls a chance to memorise the words but I gave this girl a longer time,

I always encourage her to participate. Although her level is average or below, I always let her participate as this has helped her to learn a lot. (Jawaher 2, White School, 12:288)

Jawaher went on to explain that she constantly encouraged pupils of all levels of ability to participate in the classroom by giving each a specific role in the lesson:

I always let all the pupils participate. The clever girls or the weak ones, they will all have a role in the lesson. I don't let one pupil sit still or silently in the classroom. In the 'tree' lesson I distributed the roles according to the pupils' levels. I gave the role of the apple tree and the orange tree to the cleverest girls, as there is a lot of talking in these roles, and the role of the palm tree to the girls with fewer abilities as there is less talking in it. The girl carries the palm tree in her hand. The palm tree was a big serving spoon used in the kitchen. I took this serving spoon and covered it with cloth. Then I gave the pupil a simple sentence to memorise. At the beginning she hides the palm tree, and says the sentences as a puzzle "I am your friend. You take dates from me. Who am I?" The pupil who is the palm tree says the riddle which reminds the pupils with simple sentences, and the pupils answer. (Jawaher 2, White School, 12:300)

Another reported observation (Pink 3) was between Mariam and Noora. The purpose of the visit was 'reciprocal expertise – methods of solving maths problems'. Mariam was the observer. She reflected (Reflective Journal Pink 3) that one of the beneficial points that she gained from her observation to Noora was that of "differentiated activities provided to pupils with different ability levels". This feature was explained in detail by Noora, when describing the differentiated activities she used in the classroom during that observation:

When I teach maths exercises, I start my lesson with a story ... through it, I present a specific problem so we need to follow mathematical steps and methods to solve this problem ... The mathematical exercises could also be presented in the shop corner. We take an exercise and act it ... Some of the girls need individual learning. Although I follow an interesting strategy which is telling stories, the girls with limited abilities need more help. I have to choose a story which suits their level of understanding. (Noora 1, Pink School, 14:351)

Noora went on to say that, at the end of the lesson, she evaluated the pupils by giving them "a mathematical exercise as an assessment to take in the lesson more". However, she stated that she "...evaluate[s] the pupil's higher skills, higher thinking skills. But I gave drills to pupils with limited abilities" (Noora 1, Pink School, 15:363).

The above-mentioned data matches what Hall et al. state, that “differentiation means tailoring instruction to meet individual needs” (2000:1).

Positive observation 15: Teachers exchange pedagogical expertise. The data shows that the implemented programme helped the teachers, with similar and different levels of experience, to practise the pedagogical strategies required by the Ministry of Education to develop their professional skills and, thus, to increase pupils’ achievement.

Positive observation 16: Tailoring instruction to meet pupils’ needs. The data shows that the implemented programme helped the teachers to change their practices according to the level of the pupils’ abilities, as well as their background, so that the teachers would be able to provide the pupils with the most suitable assistance to meet their needs in specific situations.

Data from the reflective journal (Orange 1) shows that the most significant benefit for Sami in his observation of Salman was that he was able to “Identify types of questions ... Ways of presenting them to pupils ... Pupils take enough time in processing the answer”. In his interview, Sami explained this:

...I benefited from Salman’s way of asking questions... how he started to ask simple questions from their daily life till he reached his aim which was the calendar, how to use calendars and how to recognise the days, the holidays, the occasions ... the teacher was asking his different questions to all levels of pupils, but whenever he sees that some pupils are not participating, he starts asking them directly, asking questions gradually, from the simple ones till he reaches the question that the pupils was not answering. But this time the pupil answers it. So the teacher was very patient and, in the end, he enabled all the pupils to participate. (Sami 1, Orange School, 7:179)

Furthermore, when Sami was asked how he noticed that his colleague took into account pupils’ individual differences, he gave the following details:

When I see that nearly all the pupils are answering the questions and participating, even the weak pupils were participating and putting their hand up to answer. This shows that the questions which were asked suit the pupils’ levels, because the pupils with low abilities will not answer the high level questions. Therefore, they will not participate. On the other hand, clever pupils will not answer the low level questions, as there is no challenge. It will be a boring lesson for them. The same thing happens with the medium level. In all the cases, not all the pupils will participate and answer.

Moreover, I know the pupils' levels. I know the pupils with limited abilities. I know the different abilities in my colleague's classroom ... because when their teacher is absent, I replace him whenever I am free ... Therefore, I know his pupils and he knows mine. We the class system teachers who teach the three levels, first, second, and third primary levels, we know each other's pupils, as I said because we replace each other and teach our colleague's pupils whenever their teacher is absent. (Sami 1, Orange School, 4:99)

Positive observation 17: Facilitating the teaching and learning process. The teachers benefited from each other's expertise during the implementation of the programme as it encouraged them to adopt each other's pedagogical strategies and follow up their coaching in the aspect of differentiated instruction, to facilitate the learning and teaching process.

In her interview, Jawaher described in detail how she used differentiation in asking questions from the beginning of the academic year. She stated that she prepared the activities beforehand. She gave an example of a lesson she taught called 'The palm tree' and how she informed the pupils at the beginning of the academic year about the lessons they would have and what to prepare. She considered that the clever girls would respond to the required activity, while the weak girls would need continuous encouragement. She explained:

I have a lesson about the palm tree, the next day pupils bring to class information about the palm tree. The procedure was that at the beginning of the year ... I gave the pupils the newsletter, informing them that I am distributing worksheets for the pupils ... who would like to bring more information about that lesson. This method of 'searching for information' is considered to be a motivational initiative for the pupils ... The clever girls bring information regularly, while the weak girls rarely bring information. My role here is encouraging them continuously. (Jawaher 2, White School, 6:137)

When Deena observed Jawaher, the purpose of the observation was teaching strategies, and pupils' effectiveness. Deena mentioned in her observation sheet that she observed how Jawaher took into consideration individual differences in the classroom (Observation, White 8). She also noted that one of the beneficial aspects she gained from that observation was the differentiation in the activities the teacher used in the lesson (Reflective White 8). Deena described what Jawaher did:

[She] used differentiation in asking questions. The level of the questions was appropriate to the levels of the pupils. She asked the smart girls questions which suited their levels;

also the less intelligent were asked questions which suited their levels. And thus, all the pupils participated in the classroom activities and in answering the questions. (Deena 1, White School, 3:70)

In addition, Jawaher clarified how she presented the differentiated questions and the activities in the classroom during the above-mentioned observation. She stated that:

They were divided into three sections or three levels (level one, level two, and level three). One level was for the weak pupils, another for the average pupils, and the last one for the clever ones. Each level has its own activities. (Jawaher 2, White School, 4: 91)

Deena transferred the pedagogical strategies she learnt from Jawaher, the in-service teacher, to Nasreen, the volunteer teacher. Nasreen mentioned that the purpose of the observation was to recognize differentiation when asking questions and in preparing activities (Observation, White 12). She reported in her reflective journal that she benefited from the observation as it enhanced and enriched her methods of teaching. Moreover, in her interview, Deena described how she practiced differentiation instruction according to the level of the pupils' abilities, to achieve the aim of the lesson observed by Nasreen. She explained:

...I gave the acting roles to each pupil according to their level. I started by asking the pupils simple questions ... Gradually I changed the level of the question, from easy to more difficult. (Deena 1, White School, 10:242)

Positive observation 18: Ease of transferring pedagogical expertise. The data shows that the implemented programme helped the teachers, from similar and different levels, to transfer the pedagogical expertise they gained from their colleagues to their own teaching.

Section one has shown how the implemented peer coaching programme helped the teachers to benefit from each other's pedagogical expertise, in particular differentiation education, which is responding to individual differences. Moreover, the data demonstrates the importance of recognizing pupils' cultural background, in order to provide them help, which meets their needs in specific situations.

5.b. Pupils' collaborative learning

Many researchers describe collaborative learning as group work in which pupils with different abilities collaborate and take responsibility for each other in order to achieve their desired aim. For example, Gokhale (1995) gives the following definition:

The term "collaborative learning" refers to an instruction method in which students at various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common goal. The students are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own. Thus, the success of one student helps other students to be successful. (Gokhale, 1995)

Adams and Hamm describe collaborative learning as:

...an educational approach that encourages students at various skill levels to work together to reach common goals. The basic idea is to move students from working alone to working in learning groups where they take responsibility for themselves and other group members. Though there are provisions for individual accountability, students receive information and feedback from peers and from their teacher. As they collaborate on tasks, students move toward becoming a community of learners working together to enhance everyone's knowledge, proficiency, and enjoyment. (Adams & Hamm, 2008: 62)

The ideas presented above were reflected in the way the teachers practise collaborative learning strategy in their classrooms during the implementation of the peer coaching programme, in order to encourage all the pupils to participate. For example, when Deena observed Jawaher (White 12), one of its aims was putting a collaborative learning strategy into practice. In her interview, Jawaher described how she divided the pupils into groups and gave each member of the group a task to do in order to achieve the aim of the lesson:

I gave each group parts of a tree and each group fitted the given parts together and discovered the type of the tree ... Each pupil in the group did something. One cut the pictures, another pasted them on the tree in the correct place, and so on till they completed the picture of the tree. So each pupil in the group participated. The pupils cut, placed, and pasted the pictures till they completed a picture of a tree ... In that lesson the pupils collaborated with each other. At the end, the pupils chose one of the group members to present and describe the picture. (Jawaher 2, White School, 4:98)

The above mentioned observation (White 12) was also described by Deena, from 'the perspective of an observer'. Deena described how Jawaher "...brought in an activity and let the pupils carry out the activity: cut pictures, stick them together to make a proper tree on a poster and then write about the benefits of the tree" (Deena 1, White School, 3:76).

In her interview, Salma explained in detail about the role of the group members:

...each member had a special role to perform in that strategy, and I told the pupils that each member in the group had a particular duty ... one was responsible for getting the materials that the group needed ... another one was the leader ... the editor ... and the others are group members. (Salma 2, Blue School 7:175)

Salma also described a lesson (Observation Blue 5) in which she was observed by Suad. She explained that she divided the pupils into 'reading groups' and the competition between the groups was on the basis of speed and accuracy:

The collaboration in this situation was based on the cooperation of the members of the group in answering the questions. Each group had its own question paper to answer, with questions that were suitable for the level of the pupils. The group who responded to questions quickly and finished first, in terms of speed and accuracy, of course wins. (Salma 2, Blue School, 6:161)

Another observation was conducted by Jenan and Salma (Observation Blue 10), the purpose being 'The application of collaborative learning'. Salma observed how her colleague applied the above-mentioned strategy in the classroom. She stated that she gained new effective strategies of collaborative learning (Reflective Journal, Blue 10). In her interview, Salma explained that:

Another strategy was the way she [Jenan] started applying collaborative learning and the way she ended it ... using a small bell. She rang the bell to inform the pupils that it was the beginning of collaborating and working together. It was amazing. Each pupil knew his role, as if she had told them that the competition had started. Also, at the end she rang the bell again, informing them that the time was over; they had reached the 'finish line'. Each pupil also knew what to do. It was really wonderful. I hadn't done that before. (Salma 2, Blue School, 5:122)

With regard to how teachers organised groups to work collaboratively, Deena referred to how Jawaher did this: "[She] divided the pupils into groups. Each group

consisted of a leader, an assistant, and members. All the group members worked together. Each member had a role” (Deena 1, White School, 4:91). Salma described what happened in the observation she carried out: “Each pupil has a card identifying his job; such as leader, editor, member, or holder. Each one should be wearing his card and know his ‘role’ (Salma 2, Blue School, 7:189). However, Jaber had this point to make:

Pupils need time to know what their roles are, and that they are working in a group. The other thing was the large number of pupils in a classroom. They were twenty-nine, so there were a large number of pupils in one group or a large number of groups in the classroom. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 11:310)

Sharifa, a volunteer teacher, explained that the way her colleague Sameera utilized the collaborative strategy created a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Sameera employed the collaborative strategy in a reading lesson, where she allowed the pupils to help each other in their reading, limiting herself to the role of supervisor. Sharifa described the observation:

I observed how the pupils started reading after their teacher and how they gained experience from the teacher. I liked her technique in reading. She let one of the boys read and the others correct his mistakes. She let one of the boys be ... the reading leader to correct his friends. For example, one of the boys was reading and he made a mistake in the word (الثعلب) ‘fox’. He said the word correctly but the vowelings (pronunciation of the vowels) was wrong. So the leader stopped him. He said “One minute Ahmed, the pronunciation of this word is like this”, and he pronounced the word for him. I liked Sameera’s way; first she read, then the cleverest pupil, then the other pupils but supervised by the leader. The leader was the cleverest boy at reading. This technique created a beautiful positive response among pupils. (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 4:139)

The data presented above supports what Adams and Hamm (2008) say about this strategy: “The collaborative learning model seems to allow students more say in forming friendships and interest groups. In addition, student talk is stressed as a way for working things out among group members” (Adams & Hamm, 2008: 63).

Positive observation 19: Importance of identifying roles. The data showed that the teachers benefited from each other’s pedagogical expertise regarding collaborative learning, particularly, the importance of identifying the role of each pupil in the group to facilitate the learning process.

Salma stated that the teachers did not practise a collaborative learning strategy regularly before implementing the peer coaching programme, though they had been trained to apply it. However, as this was required by the improvement team, the teachers "...were more serious in applying this strategy" (Salma 2, Blue School, 7:169).

Sami from Orange School also mentioned the fact that collaborative learning was a strategy required by the Ministry of Education, "...but we practised it between each other when we practised peer coaching" (Sami 1, Orange School, 12:324). Sami practised it with his colleague Salman in the Arabic language subject and, in the observation (Orange 4), Salman explained that Sami had practised collaborative learning effectively. Salman also suggested to his colleague that he activate the role of the pupil as a teacher. In his interview, Sami (Sami 1, Orange School, 10:271) described in detail how he practised that strategy in the classroom. He stated that the roles of the group members were identified on the basis of the level of their abilities. In addition, the teacher encouraged the pupils to participate by rewarding the winning group. Thus, a sense of cooperation came out, as the pupils showed their enthusiasm for helping one another. Sami also explained that he applied collaborative learning in different subjects, such as Maths and Islamic Education:

...in Islamic Education, I ask the group to write one 'sorah', which consists of five or six 'aya'. I ask the group to memorize the 'sorah'; the pupils try their best to memorise 'for each other'. Then I start to ask each pupil randomly to read one 'aya'. (Sami 1, Orange School, 12:308)

Positive observation 20: Stressing the strategies required by the Ministry. The data indicates that the peer coaching programme helped the teachers to practice pedagogies such as collaborative learning which were required by the Ministry of Education, but they did not apply this strategy decisively.

The teachers revealed how collaborative learning impacted on the pupils. For example, after observing Sami, (Orange 4) Salman later reflected (Reflective Journal Orange 4) that he benefited from seeing how the collaboration got all the pupils to participate, and the way in which his colleague employed the strategy effectively. In his interview, Sami mentioned that they were required by the supervisor to apply collaborative learning. He explained that:

...whenever she [the supervisor] comes to our school she keeps on saying 'Try to practise this strategy'. So we decided to practice it. We decided to give the pupils the opportunity to work in a group. Each group collaborates on one activity. Each group has a leader. In this activity I chose the leader according to his efficiency because I needed him to explain to his colleagues whatever they didn't understand. (Sami 1, Orange School, 10:271)

Sami went on to talk about how he set up the collaborative activity:

Practising collaborative strategy helps the pupils a lot to understand the difficult aspect of the lesson, because the pupils understand from their colleagues more. At the same time, we make it clear to the pupil who is explaining that he shouldn't answer the question for his colleague, but help him to understand the lesson and let him answer by himself. I also make it clear to him that he shouldn't tell his friends that he is explaining to his colleague because he is weak and that his colleague doesn't understand, and if anyone does that, I will not let them be the leader of the group anymore. Exactly like what is happening in the peer coaching programme, we do not tell the others what is happening between me and my colleague. (Sami 1, Orange School, 12:314)

Mariam recalled a lesson in which she had introduced punctuation marks and their use in writing, applying collaborative learning. She was observed (Observation 6) by her colleague Amal, and explained how she had applied it: "I gave the pupils kinds of roles to play. The pupil will act as if she is the punctuation mark. The pupil will be a sort of model of the punctuation mark" (Mariam 1, Pink School, 7:157). Mariam commented that the pupils:

...showed efficiency in the lesson as they worked together ... I found that the pupils were happy when they mastered the skill. They seem to be happy when they finished with their cards and gave them to their colleagues in the other groups. (Mariam 1, Pink School, 7:175)

At the end of the observation, Amal reflected (Reflection Journal Pink 6) that she learnt several things from her colleague: role playing the punctuation marks; reading the sentences expressively to show the type of the sentence; using the smart board; reminding the pupils before they start writing their activity not to forget to write the punctuation marks; continuously encouraging the pupils who are using the punctuation marks; and providing the weak pupils with remedial activities.

Positive observation 21: Developing pedagogies to improve pupils' learning.

The peer coaching programme helped teachers to develop their pedagogies in order to improve pupils' learning.

The previous data showed that Jaber had more experience in teaching science at second primary level, though he had four years experience as a teacher (as discussed in 1.1.2). However, Jaber needed his colleague's pedagogical expertise in teaching: he wanted to know if he would be able to practise collaborative learning in a science subject (Jaber 2, Orange School, 11:284). Therefore, Sami applied the strategy in a scientific experiment. Jaber described his visit to his colleague Sami in detail. He described how Sami

...divided the pupils in groups in the classroom. The number of pupils in his classroom was very large, so the numbers of pupils in the groups were not equal. Moreover, the size of the classroom was small. However, he arranged them in a comfortable way and distributed the tools of the scientific experiment to each group. He also distributed the role of each member in the group. He appointed the leader and his assistant. He gave each group a model paper to write on it what they found. So there was a challenge between the groups, and the first group to finish had to raise their hands and then hang the answer sheet on the white board. Then teacher Sami took each sheet and called each pupil to read the answer of his group. Of course, the teacher helped them in their reading and, at the same time, corrected the answers and wrote them on the whiteboard.

I liked the way he related the collaborative learning to this subject as it was not suitable for all subjects. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 11:294)

Positive observation 22: Integrated pedagogy to improve practice. The data presented above shows that the programme helped the teachers to use integrated strategies in order to improve their pedagogical practices in the classroom.

The role of teachers during the practice of collaborative learning is stressed by Macaro (1997):

A definition of collaborative learning is when learners are encouraged to achieve common learning goals by working together rather than with the teacher, and when they demonstrate that they value and respect each other's language input. Then, the teacher's role becomes one of facilitating these goals. (Macaro, 1997: 1)

The data in this study shows the importance of the role of the teacher during the collaborative learning practice. For example, Salma demonstrated the role of the teacher when encouraging her pupils to participate in the lesson with their classmates. She described how she saw her role:

I walk between the groups; that was how we were trained, that the teacher walks between the groups to check the pupils' work and observe how the pupils are debating, or what the group leader is doing, or to observe if a pupil is participating or is isolated ... our role is to encourage all pupils to participate. (Salma 2, Blue School, 7:185)

Jawaher described her role during an observation (White 12) as the monitoring of pupils' work:

...I walked among the pupils and watched them work, and observed what each pupil and what each group was doing. I encouraged the weak pupils to collaborate with their colleagues, to cut and to paste the pictures. I distributed the working materials to all the members of the group so the weak pupils would be forced to work and join in with their colleagues in the group. (Jawaher 2, White School, 5:112)

Deena referred to the role of her colleague, Jawaher, in this observation (White 12) as being "...to set rules for the group about collaboration, quietness, participation and so on" (Deena 1, White School, 4:93).

These comments support what Romney (1996) states about the teacher's role during the practice of collaborative learning:

Instructors who use the method believe that learning is essentially a social process, that their role is not simply to impart their own knowledge to their students, but that the acquisition of knowledge comes mostly through discussion and negotiation. The instructor's role is that of a facilitator, organizer, and occasionally of a resource person. (Romney, 1996: 1)

Positive observation 23: The teacher's role. The data shows the importance of the teacher's role as an organizer who facilitates and encourages the pupils to collaborate together.

This section shows that the teachers benefited from the implemented programme through practising pedagogical strategies, such as pupils' collaborative learning, to

facilitate the learning process. Moreover, the data demonstrates the importance of the teacher's role during the practice.

5.c. Diversity in methods of teaching

Asia e-University (AeU) states that "To be a good teacher, you should know the ways to embrace diversity among your students" (2008:191). This was evident in the teachers' practice mentioned above in sections 1 and 2. Three strategies were implemented simultaneously: differentiated instruction, individual differences, and pupils' collaboration. Noora believed that "...diversification in strategies helped us in teaching and helped pupils to understand the lesson easily" (Noora 1, Pink School, 12:305), and her belief was supported by her practice in the classroom. For example, (Pink 4) Amal discussed her observation of Noora; the purpose of the observation was 'words containing pronounced but not written letters'. In her interview, Noora explained that she attempted to facilitate the skill of spelling those words for the pupils by practising different strategies, such as storytelling and repeatedly reading the words which were in laminated cards stuck on the wall of the classroom and, therefore, in front of them every day. She described in detail how she started the lesson by telling the pupils a story and then letting the pupils read the laminated cards:

...I started the lesson with a story and an activity. The activity was pieces of white paper with the words which were the purpose of the lesson written on them – words containing pronounced but not written letters (هذه، هذا، هؤلاء، ذلك). This was the letter 'alef'. I wrote these words on the pieces of paper but I wrote the letter 'alef' in them. I didn't remove the letter. I put them in a way that the pupil could remove them easily later. The pupil can take away the letter 'alef' and the correct word will be shown. I put them in transparent envelopes. I showed the girls these words and started the story. I said that these (I pointed to the four words) are four sisters. They went out for a walk but they were obstructed by the river. They wanted to get from this bank of the river to the other bank on the other side. So one of the sisters suggested that each sister take her letter 'alef' and, putting them together, could build a bridge with them, and then would be able to move from the bank, across the bridge to the other bank. So the pupils removed all the 'alef' letters from the written words, stuck them together, with magnets, like a bridge to let the sisters move across the bridge. The story was very interesting ... I also have laminated cards with words written on them which contain letters that can be pronounced but not written. These words were written in big computer fonts. I hang the cards on the wall. So they are in front of the pupils every day. (Noora 1, Pink School, 10:236)

Another example of using a diversity of strategies in the classroom was mentioned by the volunteer teacher Nasreen, from White school. She stated that she observed (Observation White 5) Jawaher applying a variety of strategies in her lesson. Jawaher (Jawaher 2, White School, 6:158) described those various strategies, such as power point, role play and fashion show, saying that “The pupils enjoyed that lesson. They were happy” (2, White School, 7:161). Moreover, during the fashion show activity, the pupils listened to music. Jawaher mentioned that Nasreen, the observer, reflected on:

... how a beautiful atmosphere was created in the classroom that broke the atmosphere of teaching, and that was by playing music in the fashion show, it was a kind of change from the daily routine. The oral teaching aids were conversation and dialogue. The concrete educational teaching aids were the charts and the maps. (Jawaher 2, White School, 7:181)

By contrast, Jawaher also described pupils’ reactions when teachers followed the same routine, in this case in a science lesson. She stated that:

...there was no diversity in methods of teaching or teaching strategies. The lesson had the same routine. The teacher didn’t change the places of the cars, and at the same time she followed that same procedure. Moreover, there was no diversity in the teaching aids which led to boredom among the pupils, and they started looking outside the classroom, through the window so the pupils were distracted and the teacher couldn’t control the pupils in the classroom. That was all because of there not being any diversity in the teaching methods, something which attracts the pupils’ attention to the lesson. (Jawaher 2, White School, 8:195)

Dana from Yellow School showed that she gained pedagogical expertise during the implementation of the programme. She described what happened in an observation:

...I observed a practical application, where I noted several points and benefited from those points. For example, I benefited from the diversity of the learning strategies she used in the classroom. I liked the way she employed the smart board in teaching. She followed the narrative style of ‘story telling’ on the smart board. She told them a story of a girl who was eight years old, and what time she wakes up every day, washes her face; eats breakfast, and so on, till she goes to sleep at night. As she was telling them the story, the pupils were listening and looking at the pictures on the smart board. The beautiful thing was how Batool was linking old expertise with new expertise. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 5:124)

Positive observation 24: Diversity in strategies. The data shows that the teachers benefited from the implemented programme through exchanging expertise and by integrating a variety of instructional methods into their teaching to encourage pupils to participate in the classroom and to attain success.

5.d. Linking the subjects

The education system for the first cycle of Basic Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain is based on the class-teacher system in which “one teacher teaches all subjects – except English Language, Design and Technology, Music and Physical Education” (Ministry of Education, 2012). Teachers, therefore, need to learn how to link the subjects taught during one lesson.

Data from the present study shows how the teachers benefited from each other’s expertise in linking the subjects. Three different visits between three teachers from White School illustrate how each teacher transferred the pedagogical insights she gained from her colleague to the other teacher. At the beginning of the programme, Deena observed her colleague Jawaher linking three subjects: Arabic language, Mathematics and Islamic Education. She explained what happened:

The lesson was ‘I am your friend’. The teacher linked this lesson to the other subjects. She linked Arabic language, Maths and Islamic Education together. For example, the lesson was about trees talking about themselves ... One was an apple tree, another was an orange tree. The teacher started the lesson as an Arabic language lesson. She explained about the tree and its fruits. She talked about the apples and the oranges. Then she linked the trees’ fruits with the price of the fruit in the classroom shop. Here the lesson was linked to Maths in adding the price of one kilo of apples to one kilo of oranges. Then she transferred from Maths to Islamic Education as she started explaining God’s graces and God’s creation. So Arabic language was the explanation about the tree and its fruits; Maths was the classroom shop and the prices of the fruit in the shop; Islamic Education was about God’s graces. Three subjects in one lesson. It was a wonderful link between the subjects. (Deena 1, White School, 3:57)

Subsequently, Jawaher observed Deena as she wanted to know more about using the smart board in the class. Deena presented the lesson using the smart board and, at the same time, took the opportunity to link the subjects of Geography, Arabic language and Islamic Education. Jawaher stated that Deena “...showed them [the

pupils] some countries, some places where people like to visit ... She correlated Arabic language to Islamic Education” (Jawaher 2, White School, 10:248).

After the above-mentioned peer coaching between the teachers, Deena became more capable of applying the strategy, as was evident in the feedback of one of her observations to Nasreen. Deena suggested to Nasreen that she should link between subjects. She stated:

I mentioned to teacher Nasreen that it would be good to have diversity in methods of teaching as well as to correlate between the subjects. (Deena 1, White School, 11:256)

Therefore, Nasreen asked her colleague Jawaher about the possibility of observing her and Jawaher agreed. Jawaher described in detail what she did in the lesson:

I linked the lesson to other subjects. I linked the lesson about fashion with the map of the world, so I linked Arabic language to social studies, to geography. Then I indicated the Kingdom of Bahrain and neighbouring countries, followed by the capitals and the cities. After that I entered into the subject of water and land. For example, when we were talking about fashion, I started by asking the pupils about the costume of each country. Then I asked them ‘Do we live on water or land?’ Ok we live on the land. The pupils pointed to the continent on the map. So it shows that we have continents surrounded by water, by oceans. Gradually we transferred from fashion – Arabic language – to the countries and the map – social sciences – till I reached water and land. Then we transferred to Islamic Education by talking about God’s graces and how we live on the land and how it is surrounded by water. (Jawaher 2, White School, 7:168)

Dana from Yellow School (as discussed in section 3) also showed that during the implementation of the programme, she learnt about how to make links between subjects in one lesson from her colleague. She stated that her colleague Batool:

...started by showing [the pupils] a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a circle. She showed them the circle and then coloured the area of a quarter of the circle as a quarter of an hour. She did the same thing with the $\frac{1}{2}$, as half of an hour. Here, Batool correlated the concept of fractions such as $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$, which she had taught earlier in a Maths lesson, to the science subject through the clock lesson. At the end of the story, she linked what happened in the story to the pupils’ life by asking them what time they woke up every day and what time they went to school, and so on. At the end, she related the lesson to the subject of Arabic language by asking the pupils to build sentences orally, and then write them as a paragraph. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 5:132)

Positive observation 25: Linking up the subjects. The data shows that as class system teachers, participants benefited from the programme by transferring pedagogical expertise to each other, as with, for example, making links between subjects.

5.e. Educational games

The importance of educational games in pupils' learning has been stressed by a number of researchers. For example, Cockburn (2007), when writing about 'Understanding subtraction through enhanced communication', emphasizes that "Games can be a good way to encourage children to think about subtraction and to share their methods of calculation with each other" (2007: 21). Another study conducted by Groff et al. (2010: 5) regarding the educational benefits of console game-based learning found that "Game-based approaches present an excellent opportunity to engage students in activities which can enhance learning and produce a range of educational benefits".

Deena demonstrated how she benefited from a colleague's teaching strategies in the form of games, which were new to her. She described how these were applied:

It was an Arabic language lesson. The teacher used games as a teaching strategy. The title of the lesson was 'The smart bird'. The lesson was about the using of 'Al Elshamseya' and 'Al Elqamareya'. The game the teacher used in that lesson was for rewarding the pupils. She used the 'rabbit board' to reward the pupils. The 'rabbit board' was a picture of a sun and a moon drawn on the board and a rabbit with some carrots. Also there were cards. On each card the 'al elshamseya' words or 'al elqamareya' words were written. The pupil read the word properly then stuck it with the right picture; the 'Al Elshamseya' word in the sun and the 'Al Elqamareya' word in the moon. If the pupil's answer was correct, the rabbit would be rewarded with a carrot, and if the pupil's answer was wrong, the rabbit would lose the carrot. (Deena 1, White School, 6:132)

Deena recalled another type of game presented during the introductory activity. She explained the game:

...It was the box game. The teacher and the pupils played that game to break the ice between them. The teacher covered the box and asked the pupils 'What is inside this box?' Then she made some movements in front of the pupils to help them guess what was inside that box. The teacher changes the game every day so the pupils will not get bored. Another game was that the teacher hid something under one of the pupils'

chairs or desks; then the teacher asked one of the pupils to search for it ... Also there was the balloon game ... In all other games, if the pupils' answers were right, they would get a present. (Deena 1, White School, 6:146)

Shereen stated that she benefited from observing her colleague Jawaher (Observation White 7) teaching through games. In her interview, Jawaher described her practice in the classroom:

I had a rope held at both ends by two girls and I put all the twenty-eight letters of the alphabet on the ground. Each pupil got up from her chair and picked one of these letters and categorized it as the 'al elshamseya' or the 'al elqamareya'. Then the pupils hung the letters on the rope like hanging washing on the washing line. (Jawaher 2, White School, 11:272)

Positive observation 26: The impact of game-based activities on pupils' learning. The data shows that the teachers benefited from each other's pedagogical expertise in terms of learning about game-based activities to increase and enhance pupils' learning.

5.f. Educational technology

An article by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) states that interactive whiteboards "...allow pupils to engage and interact with the technology to become active participants in learning" (NCTE, 2008: 1). Thus, NCTE stresses the importance of teacher training in developing their skills with technology:

Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is crucial to the effective use of the technology. Training is needed in how to actually use the technology and its components. But also teachers need training on the most effective approaches to take advantage of the technology. (NCTE, 2008: 2)

Data from the present study shows the use of interactive whiteboards is a new strategy in state schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain and therefore, the teachers need more training in using it. In her interview, Deena revealed that she and her colleagues had already had training, although she recognised that they needed more:

We only started using the interactive board this year. This is the first time we have used it. We were trained to use it but still we needed each other's help. (Deena 1, White School, 7: 165)

Noora mentioned that as she had been looking for new strategies to teaching currencies, she had visited her colleague Badreya as she was proficient in this lesson. Badreya used different strategies in teaching this lesson, including the smart board, a new strategy popular with the pupils. Noora stated that:

...the teacher presented the lesson on the smart board. She presented clear pictures of currencies. Besides, the pupils feel happy when we present anything on the smart board. As I said earlier, it is a new strategy. This is the first year for us using the smart board. (Noora 1, Pink School, 12:301)

Noora also recalled how she assessed the pupils at the end of the lesson by writing mathematical problems on the interactive whiteboard:

...at the end of the lesson, I gave them a mathematical exercise as an assessment to take in the lesson more. I present the exercise on the smart board. For example, I write on the smart board that this person says $700 - 200 = 500$, while the other one says $700 - 200 = 300$, which answer is correct? And how do you know that? This was at the end of the lesson. (Noora 1, Pink School, 15:363)

Jawaher observed Deena (White 3) to identify the characteristics of the interactive board. In her interview, Jawaher described the situation:

I visited my colleague Deena to identify the characteristics of the interactive board. Deena has attended many workshops about the interactive board in other schools. Therefore, she was more experienced than me in this field. I tried to learn by myself, but I asked her to teach me how to use the interactive board in applying this lesson ... So I observed a practical application. (Jawaher 2, White School, 10:236)

The data shows how using educational technology in the classroom encourages pupils to participate, as was evident in Salma's description of when her colleague:

...used the smart board in a reading lesson. She scanned the reading text on the smart board. Thus, the pupils looked at the smart board while reading aloud. Each pupil stood up and read. It encouraged them to read and, most of all, they were all concentrating on the reading. The teacher used the smart board for reading aloud in a very interesting way. She used the smart board in a smart way while I was letting each pupil look at his own

book to read. I found her way was more attractive to the pupils. (Salma 2, Blue School, 5:115)

Moreover, Sami referred to the pupils' effective participation in the classroom as a result of using the interactive whiteboard during teaching. Sami explained (as discussed in Chapter 5 – Theme 1) how his colleagues in the school benefited from his expertise in using the interactive whiteboard:

Nearly all the pupils participated in the class. They looked at the picture and described what they saw. They wrote words or sentences on the board. The pupils liked the lesson. The lesson had become a challenge for them ... Then the pupils asked the teacher to allow him to write the sentence again. Each wanted to prove his efficiency in the lesson. (Sami 1, Orange School, 9:253)

The preceding data supports the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) about the benefits of using the interactive whiteboard: "The benefits of interactive whiteboards are both practical for teachers and motivating for pupils" (BECTA, 2004:13). In fact, peer coaching may be the most effective way to convert reluctant colleagues into enthusiastic users of new technologies.

Positive observation 27: Effective use of the interactive whiteboard. The data presented above shows that the teachers took advantage of the implemented programme in terms of training each other in pedagogical practices such as the use of the interactive whiteboard. The data shows that the interactive whiteboard helped the teachers to facilitate the teaching process, as well as encouraging the pupils to engage effectively in the classroom.

5.g. Enhancement.

Data from the present study reveals how the participants benefited from each other's expertise in providing different types of enhancement to their pupils, in encouraging them to participate in the classroom. For example, Jaber stressed the significance of "...students' enhancement in terms of raising students' motivation and enthusiasm, especially for pupils in Basic Education" (Jaber 2, Orange School, 9:227). Jaber observed his colleague Salman with the aim of learning about 'The advantages of individual encouragement' (Observation Orange 8). He later reflected (Reflective

Journal Orange 8) that he gained from the observation in terms of: 1- Diversity in methods of individual enhancement; 2- Linking enhancement with the curriculum; and 3- The impact of enhancement on pupils' motivation. Moreover, in his interview, Jaber described how Salman encouraged the pupils and developed this encouragement from the classroom to society, which impacted positively on their behaviour in the classroom. First of all, he described individual enhancement in the classroom. He explained that his colleague Salman:

...was hanging a large board with pupils' photographs on the wall ... if the pupil's answer was correct, all the pupils clapped for him or the teacher put a star in the circle beside his photo ... Therefore, the pupils were very interactive. They challenge each other on the basis of who will get more stars. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 9: 239)

Jaber went on to describe how Salman moved the encouragement from the classroom to the school, and then to society. Moreover, as mentioned in the preceding data presented in Theme one, Sections 1.4 and 1.8, Jaber explained that:

...the pupil with the most stars will be rewarded and his name will be put as the star of the week in the school's weekly bulletin, which will be distributed to all the parents. Moreover, all the pupils in the second primary level will see the picture of the star of the week ... Here the individual enhancement is related to the parents and to the local community. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 9:246)

Jaber stated that he benefited from the diversification in methods of individual enhancement which his colleague presented in his classroom as "pupils get bored with repetition". Moreover, Salman related the enhancement to the curriculum:

...[Salman] discusses with the other subject teachers, like music, arts or sports, to know who is the cleverest pupil in their class or the well-behaved pupils. So whenever he goes to the classroom, he tells them that the music teacher praised such and such a pupil, and we must applaud him, so all the pupils clap for him. In this case, pupils feel that they must make an effort in all subjects and not only in a specific one. This kind of enhancement affects the pupils' motivation. It encourages them to participate as they will be rewarded. It gave pupils self-confidence. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 10:264)

Amal from Pink School stated (Reflective Journal Pink 6) that one of the benefits of observing Mariam from the same school was the 'continuous enhancement to pupils who used punctuation marks'. The purpose of the observation was 'Employing punctuation marks while writing a paragraph'. In her interview, Mariam revealed that

she provided the pupils with material encouragement “I gave the group which won a present” (Mariam 1, Pink School, 7:171). Similarly, Deena’s way of enhancing the pupils was a present: “In all other games, if the pupils’ answers were right, they would get a present” (Deena 1, White School, 7:159).

Jawaher mentioned that she regularly encouraged the pupils who could not bring their activities regularly by telling them that she “...will provide them with marks for their work. Therefore, they [pupils] try their best to bring the activity” (Jawaher 2, White School, 6:149).

Sharifa, the volunteer teacher from Blue School, revealed that she gave the pupils presents to build up a good relationship with them. She described what she did in this case:

At the beginning I didn’t start explaining the lesson but I played with them. I did competitions for them. I brought with me presents for the winners and for those who didn’t win, to build a good relationship with them and to let them like me and like the lesson.
(Sharifa 1, Blue School, 6:208)

Positive observation 28: The impact of teachers’ enhancement on pupils’ enthusiasm in the classroom. The data presented above shows that the teachers benefited from the programme in learning more from each other about some pedagogical practices, such as pupils’ enhancement, that motivated the pupils to engage positively in the classroom.

Summary for sub-theme 5:

The data in sub-theme 5 has shown that the peer coaching programme supported the teachers in transferring the pedagogical knowledge they needed to each other. Moreover, the teachers integrated strategies in order to facilitate the learning and teaching process.

Sub-theme 6: The impact of the implemented programme on teachers’ collaboration

Sub-theme 6 explains how the implemented peer coaching programme prompted the teachers to collaborate in order to learn and improve their instructional practices as well as to increase their pedagogical competency with the aim of developing their

profession. The focus here is to examine whether the implemented programme impacted on teachers' behaviour, in encouraging them to collaborate and act as a team, and to ascertain whether the teachers were satisfied with their collaborative participation in the programme.

Much research into education notes the importance of teachers' collaboration during instruction, in order to increase pupils' learning. Guerrero (2009) emphasises how collaborating affects time, teachers, and schools. He explains that:

Collaborating well involves a commitment to working together to both challenge each other and support your common goals ... Know your own strengths and area for improvement and acknowledge those of your team members. Build rapport outside your classroom with your professional learning community in the same way you seek to build it within your classroom with students. In other words, interact, make connections, negotiate and problem solve respectfully. Involve and honour everyone. Do this with grade level partners, other teachers, specialists and your administrator. The benefit of working together can save you time, build you capacity as an educator, improve your class, grad level and school. (Guerrero, 2009: 80)

In addition, Guerrero believes that teacher collaboration should not be a compulsory practice; rather it is teamwork to which each member contributes, leading to better results than if it practices are carried out individually. This author uses his own experience to illustrate his point:

I worked with a very diverse team when I taught 1st grade. One of us was abstract and creative, another precise, detail oriented and sequential and the last central, opinionated and domineering. It could have been a total disaster except that we each knew who we were as individuals and team members. No one insisted anyone be like them. Each of us accepted each other's strengths and owned our own weaknesses. As a result we all learned from each other, were less isolated and became better teachers through sharing our work in depth.

If you want to lessen your individual work load, cut down on the overwhelming demands of teaching and foster mutual appreciation collaborate with colleagues. Do it for yourself, your colleagues and most of all for students. (2009: 81).

Ruebling et al. (2007) consider that teachers' collaboration is part of the teaching culture, and thus part of the school culture. They state that:

Teacher collaboration in a collegial atmosphere is central to the effectiveness of small learning communities and interdisciplinary teaching teams. Teacher collaboration uses the process of planning, development, implementation and evaluation for the purpose of improving instruction, curriculum, assessment, and professional practice. It is through focused collaboration in teaching teams that more effective teaching practices are planned and successfully implemented. Continuous improvement of instruction, curriculum, assessment, and professional practice becomes part of the routine and culture of the teaching teams and, therefore, part of the routine and culture of the school. School improvement happens at the teaching team level. (Ruebling et al, 2007: 54)

Showers and Joyce (1996) refer to the significance of collaboration between teachers, particularly during peer coaching practice. Their opinion is that:

...collaborative work of peer coaching teams is much broader than observations and conferences. Many believe that the essence of the coaching transaction is to offer advice to teachers following observations. Not so. Rather, teachers learn from one another while planning instruction, developing support materials, watching one another work with students, and thinking together about the impact of their behaviour on their students' learning. (Showers & Joyce, 1996: 4)

The literature mentioned above supports the data presented in Chapter Five; Theme One, as well as Theme Two, sub-theme 5. The data shows that the participants collaborated during the implementation of the peer coaching programme to improve their professional skills and, consequently, to increase the pupils' learning.

The data also indicates that the participants were satisfied with the implementation of the peer coaching programme. For example, Amal found the programme was helpful as she collaborated with her colleagues during its implementation. She confirmed that she had "...found it helpful, observing each other, learning from each other, teaching each other, and helping each other" (Amal 2, Pink School, 4:82).

Observation as discussed in Chapter Five, sub-theme 1, 1.g) Mariam observed Noora (Pink 2) with the purpose of 'reciprocal expertise to meet pupils' interest' (similar to observation Pink 4]. In her interview, Noora (Noora 1, Pink School, 15:371) explained how the teachers collaborated in exchanging expertise in order to facilitate the content. Noora and Mariam collaborated to facilitate the lesson about words that contain letters which can be pronounced but not written. Noora presented the lesson as a story to make the learning process easier for pupils.

Mariam explained in more detail how the above-mentioned observation came about:

In the break time, my colleagues and I identify what are the difficult subjects the pupils face. We also agree and concentrate on what expertise we need to observe; expertise like how to teach the words which contain pronounced but not written letters, or the 'tashkeel' the movement used with the words like 'tanween', or solving some verbal exercises ...and so on. So each teacher will observe her colleague's expertise. (Mariam 1, Pink School, 16:382)

Another observation (Pink 8) reflected how the teachers collaborated in order to facilitate the content. Badreya observed Noora introducing punctuation. Badreya (Reflective Journal Pink 8) said that she benefited from the way Noora presented punctuation, employing the structure in simple sentences, and facilitating the transfer of knowledge to the pupils. She stated that the only obstacle she faced was 'lack of time'. However, in her interview, Badreya described how she and her colleague overcame the time constraint:

...we talk about our needs in the break time. So I needed to know more about the punctuation marks and the strategies my colleagues use in teaching this lesson. We use punctuation marks continuously, in every lesson, five days a week. We don't use it only in dictation but in composition also. For example, every day we give the pupils a spelling line and composition but we don't need to access and observe all the lessons during the week. We observe only one lesson because we are not free as we have classes to teach, but we talk about and discuss the other lessons and what happened inside the classroom in the break time. (Badreya 1, Pink School, 13:311)

Positive observation 29: Collaboration to facilitate the content. The data shows that during the implementation of the programme, the teachers collaborated to facilitate the content in order to make transferring the knowledge to pupils easier.

Limitations – 2: Lack of time for observation. Ideally, teachers are expected to spend more time in observations, but that lack of time prevents them from complying with the ideal practice. Teachers overcame that difficulty by dispensing with the rest of the visits and substituting them with simple discussion sessions with their colleagues in the staff room.

In addition to what is mentioned above, the data shows how teachers' collaboration helped in developing pedagogical practices. For example, Jaber stated (Orange 8)

that the purpose of observing his colleague Salman was to learn more about the advantages of individual encouragement, as well as the techniques of applying it. He reflected (Reflective Journal Orange 8) that the useful factors he took away from that particular observation were: diversification in the strategies of individual enhancement; correlating pupils' enhancement to the curriculum; and how enhancement impacted on pupils' motivation. In the interview, Jaber (as discussed in detail in chapter 5, sub-theme 1) revealed how he, in collaboration with his colleague, developed that strategy in order to increase the pupils' motivation:

...I and my colleague thought about gathering all the basic levels; first, second, and third primary, in one joint weekly bulletin. At the end of each month, we collect the stars of the past four weeks and honour them in the morning assembly (Jaber 2, Orange School, 9:254).

Jaber stated that the programme encouraged him to collaborate with his colleagues whenever he was in need, and without the feeling that it would affect him negatively. He said:

[The implemented programme] gave me the chance to discuss with my colleagues what aspect I need to be more familiar with, so they can help me, without thinking that this may affect my annual report or maybe they will say that I am a weak teacher. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 13:368)

In her interview, Deena described how the teachers collaborated effectively and without any tension or anxiety to become skilled in certain teaching methods. She stated that:

...while implementing the peer coaching programme we visited each other for reciprocal expertise without any pressure. Moreover, we did it because we felt that we needed to observe, and reflect on what we observed with each other. We did it, for example, to learn a certain teaching strategy. We did it with no stress and no pressure. (Deena 1, White School, 1:15)

An example of integration in work was revealed by Dana when she collaborated with her colleagues to resolve pedagogical problems they faced during practice. Dana explained how she and Batool cooperated together, as they needed each other, and without reference to the senior teacher. She described their situation:

...when I find myself in need of developing or changing my way of teaching a specific subject, I discuss the problem with my colleagues and find solutions to it. In this situation, I identify the problem and then the solution. I didn't wait for the senior teacher to decide what I needed and who to observe. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 6:164)

Dana reported on two observations (Yellow 6 and Yellow 9) which she conducted with her colleague Batool. For example, in one observation (Yellow 6), she wanted to know how Batool employed technology in presenting the 'clock' lesson. Although Dana was the teacher who needed to observe her colleague, she also gave suggestions in the feedback session (Yellow 6), as mentioned in the observation sheet. This was also evident from her interview: she stated that she suggested "...using the electronic lesson prepared by teacher Batool in the other classes when teaching the same lesson" (Dana 1, Yellow School, 6:146). Dana reflected (Reflective Journal Yellow 6) that she benefited from that visit with regard to a number of pedagogical practices, such as diversification in learning strategies, employing the interactive whiteboard, and correlating the preceding expertise to subsequent lessons. However, Dana did not feel embarrassed at the request of her colleague, as shown in her interview, because her colleague was also in need of her expertise, regarding brain-storming. Thus when Batool observed Dana (Observation Yellow 9), the aim of was to employ the brain-storming strategy. Batool reflected (Reflective Journal Yellow 6) that she benefited from that observation because she learned new strategies and ways of applying them. She also stated that the observation had enhanced and enriched her methods of teaching as well as developing and improving the teachers' practice. In her interview, Dana commented on the two above-mentioned observations (Yellow 6 and 9), stating that she:

...didn't feel shy asking Batool about the strategies she used in teaching her pupils how to read and write the time ... because we need each other. She helped me in using the smart board in the "clock" lesson and how she correlated that lesson to other subjects, and I helped her in employing the brain storming strategy (yellow 9) in the classroom ... She wanted to see a practical application in teaching by using this strategy. Therefore, I invited [her]... Batool recorded what she observed in the practical application; such as the increase in pupils' motivation to participate, as well as correlating the practical situation to the real experience. Here I presented some problems and the pupils put forward some good ideas to solve these problems and clarify them ... Batool's reflective journal ... mentioned the benefits she got from this observation. She said that the observation taught her a new strategy and how to apply it. At the same time it enhances and improves

the teaching methods, and develops teachers' performance. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 6:169)

On the other hand, Dana revealed that she and her colleagues faced some obstacles during the implementation, such as lack of time in the feedback sessions and delay in the curriculum. In her interview, Dana explained the reasons for these obstacles. She stated that:

...there was no specific time for feedback. What I meant was that I needed more time for feedback. I sat with Batool for only ten minutes, but I needed more than that. Sometimes ten minutes is enough but sometimes it is not, so there should be more flexibility in the time. Administration should reduce a bit from the time allocated for the activities which increases the burden on teachers, and instead, to give an adequate time for teachers in order to achieve a fruitful feedback meeting. It is indicated in all the reflective journals how time was an issue for us. It even caused delay in the curriculum ... I meant that most of the time was devoted for the activities imposed by the administration, and the time allocated for the feedback was not sufficient. It was not enough for an efficient discussion. All the teachers faced the same problem; spending a lot of time on administration activities (Dana 1, Yellow School, 6:148)

More examples were given by Dana showing how the programme encouraged the teachers to collaborate in order to increase their pedagogical expertise. Dana observed Arwa (Observation Yellow 4) in a Maths lesson, with the aim being 'Applying collaborative learning strategy for a verbal problem-solving lesson'. Dana summarised three points she observed and benefited from in that lesson: the distribution of the roles during the implementation of collaborative work; the clear instructions which were given by Arwa before starting the collaborative work; and celebration for the shared success of the pupils. Furthermore, Dana illustrated in her interview (Dana 1, Yellow School, 7:186) that:

...The senior teacher encouraged us to put collaborative learning into practice. At that time, I was facing difficulties in teaching verbal problem-solving in the subject of Maths. Therefore, Arwa invited me to observe how she applied collaborative learning in teaching verbal problem-solving in the Maths lesson. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 7:186)

Positive observation 30: Collaboration to develop pedagogy. The data shows that the implemented programme supported the teachers in transforming their

pedagogies effectively by working collaboratively with each other, and without anxiety.

Limitation 3: Lack of time for feedback. The data indicates that giving the teachers flexible time for feedback would increase the benefits of observation.

However, the programme was also seen as time efficient: in commenting on the usefulness of the programme for new teachers, Jawaher explained how the programme impacted on the new teachers in terms of speed:

...[The implemented programme] had a significant impact on teaching, especially in terms of speed. For example, if I was a new teacher, I would find the peer coaching programme a useful programme which helps me to benefit from the experience of my colleagues. Thus, the new teacher feels comfortable when she visits or invites her friends to visit her, and at the same time she learns a lot from them. (Jawaher 2, White School, 2:42)

Jawaher gave an example of this regarding an observation she did with Nasreen, the volunteer teacher. She observed Nasreen in a science lesson clarifying the concept of impetus and drag. Her feedback to Nasreen showed how a new teacher can benefit from the in-service teacher's expertise. The feedback, as Jawaher mentioned in the observation sheet (White 1), was that she would prefer Nasreen to have diversified the learning methods and strategies she applied, controlled and managed the pupils better, not concentrated on one group to obtain answers, used classical Arabic Language, applied an introductory activity before starting the lesson, and correlated the subject to others. Jawaher commented on this observation in her interview as she confirmed that Nasreen used to ask her colleagues regularly if she could observe and be observed, without relying on the supervisor's visit. She explained that:

The peer coaching programme helped [Nasreen] a lot. She didn't depend only on the visits of the senior teacher, or of the supervisor, to observe her performance, but she was asking her colleagues continuously to observe her or her to observe them. These visits didn't cause any harassment or annoyance to us because it was arranged between us and without a mandate or command from the administration. For example, I observed Nasreen and she observed me, and we met for feedback, but I didn't have the opportunity to observe her again to see the improvement in her performance. However, my colleagues observed her. (Jawaher 2, White School, 9:218)

Another volunteer teacher, Sharifa, from Blue School, reiterated the benefit of the peer coaching programme for her as a new teacher: "...[it] came in the appropriate time, when I really needed the help of my colleagues" (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 1:21). Sharifa described her experience when she started teaching in that school in detail, explaining how the programme helped her to benefit from her colleagues' expertise, as they collaborated with her to overcome the difficulties she faced:

...It is true that I know the content of the subject as I was teaching it as private lessons, at home, but I was poor in methods of teaching in classrooms. I didn't have any experience in teaching it inside the classroom. I did not know what ways there were to teach it. At first, I was very nervous. So I went and asked Nahed about methods of teaching this subject. I told her that I felt afraid because I would teach inside a classroom. She told me not to be afraid, to come to her as she would teach me how to teach. So she started training me. She started with me from scratch. She took a piece of paper and wrote on it the objectives of the lesson and how to prepare for this lesson. She explained to me how I should start the lesson, and what to ask them at the beginning as an introduction to start the lesson. She explained to me how to teach them about the title of the lesson and why they gave it this title. The lesson was about the biography of Prophet Mohammed (peace is upon him). So she explained with all the details. I told her "I know everything you said because I explained this to my children at home, in the private lessons" She replied "if you know all of this, then why are you afraid?". (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 3:74).

Sharifa went on to talk about the specific benefit she gained from the peer coaching programme:

I started practising the programme from the beginning as I started teaching. To be honest, the programme came at the right time as I was truly in need of such a programme and such training. I benefited greatly from the programme because it helped me to manage teaching in the classroom. The programme helped me in controlling the pupils in the classroom. All of this was because of my visits and my continuous observations of the teachers and their continuous visits to my class, observing my performance and my way of teaching. They helped me in everything. I became capable of setting goals for my lesson. I felt a significant difference between the first day I entered the classroom and the last day. Even the parents were happy with my way of teaching their children. (Sharifa 1, Blue School, 3:101)

An experienced teacher, Salma, expressed her belief that the programme benefitted all teachers: "[It] facilitated many things for me as I can take advantage of other teachers' expertise. I can also help my colleagues in the field that I have experience

in” (Salma 2, Blue School, 13:347). In addition, Dana from Yellow School considered that the procedure of the implemented programme was beneficially flexible. She also described how collaboration with her colleagues made her feel relieved. She explained that, in the past, they:

...were forced to agree to observe or be observed, while now the procedure is more flexible. The visits in the peer coaching programme are based on both parties consenting; therefore the relationship between the teachers became stronger and friendlier ... the implemented programme was different than the previous peer observations we were used to practising. ...in peer coaching I felt myself. I felt psychological comfort when I sat and discussed with my colleagues our needs. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 4:85)

Positive observation 31: Collaboration among teachers from different and same levels. The data presented above shows that the implemented programme had a positive impact on the new teachers as well as on the in-service teachers, as they all collaborated in order to meet their needs.

The data presented in this chapter has highlighted the importance of the mechanisms of the implementation in the programme’s effectiveness, which help to increase teachers’ motivation in applying those mechanisms. Furthermore, giving the teachers a role in arranging their visits and identifying the visits according to their professional needs, meeting after observation for feedback session, and choosing their partners, created a positive feeling which helped them to facilitate the implementation of the programme, as well as improve classroom instruction.

The data shows that teachers who implemented the programme did not need intensive preparation for the observed lesson. Therefore, its application was experienced as easy and uncomplicated, in addition to making the teaching process effective. The implemented programme developed the teachers’ pedagogical reasoning as it supported them in transferring to each other the pedagogical content and knowledge they needed to be effective teachers. Data also shows that teachers from all levels of experience, from the new to the in-service teachers, benefited from each other’s expertise as they collaborated to develop their teaching skills in order to increase their pupils’ academic achievement.

However, some limitations emerged during the implementation, such as lack of time for observation and feedback.

The next chapter in the study will discuss the educational changes that occurred after the implementation of the peer coaching programme, based on what was mentioned by the teachers during the interviews. The chapter will demonstrate how and why the teachers changed their beliefs and attitudes toward their old observation practices.

Chapter Six

Changes in teachers' perceptions after the implementation of the peer coaching programme

“Take any 100 books on change, and they all boil down to one word: motivation”
(Fullan, 2007: 41)

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I report on the findings from the in-depth interviews which were conducted with eleven teachers (as mentioned in Table 4.1) after the implementation of the peer coaching programme. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the educational changes that occurred and highlights teachers' perceptions of these changes. The second section takes the model described in Chapter Two (Figure 2.3) designed by Wagner and French (2010), and adapts it for use as a theoretical framework for interpreting the results of my study.

6.2. Findings and discussion

Researchers (e.g. Guskey 2002, Fullan 2007, and Kise 2006) emphasise that educational change is not an easy process among teachers. For example, Guskey states that

...change brings a certain amount of anxiety and can be very threatening. Like practitioners in many other fields, teachers are reluctant to adopt new practices or procedures unless they feel sure they can make them work. (2002: 386)

Fullan argues that,

...change will always fail until we find some way of developing infrastructures and processes that engage teachers in developing new knowledge. (2007: 29)

The data showed that the programme was successful in this regard since in interviews, teachers contrasted the flexibility and ease of implementation of the new programme with the reciprocal visits conducted prior to the implementation which were experienced as imposed from above. This led to a change in their perceptions towards their observational practices. For example, in her interview, Dana (as discussed in Chapter Four) revealed that, at the beginning, she and her colleague were against participating in a workshop on the implementation of the peer coaching programme as they considered it “another kind of programme from the Ministry, and that we would be forced to apply it” (Dana 1, Yellow School, 2:38). She stated that the Ministry of Education prompted the teachers to schedule visits with each other to exchange expertise, and agreed that teachers “...needed these visits, but not in the way that the school was preparing them for us” (Dana 1, Yellow School, 2:46). She described the programme implemented as part of this research as a simple, easy strategy to implement, and said that it made the teachers feel comfortable while practising it.

Moreover, Dana’s interpretation of the educational change was clear when she stated that “The visits [prior to the implementation of the peer coaching programme] were not based on teachers’ needs, as was applied in the peer coaching programme” (Dana 1, Yellow School, 1:11). She explained that, during the previous visits, teachers were not allowed either to choose their observing partner or determine the time of the visits, but “The visits were based on who was free and could accompany the group for observation” (Dana 1, Yellow School, 1:12). Thus, she stated that she and her colleagues “...felt as if we were forced to accompany the group for observation” (Dana 1, Yellow School, 1:15).

Deena’s experience was similar in terms of the imposition of the visits on teachers, as she described:

...teachers did not like these kinds of visits. They felt stressed from these visits. The visits were specified and prepared by the senior teacher as they were mandatory. They were

the opposite of the implemented peer coaching programme. The implemented programme gave us the chance to specify the purpose of the visit. It gave us the chance to make up our minds and come to a decision on our needs for a visit. (Deena 1, White School, 1:5)

These views echo Nolan and Meister's (2000) findings based on their experiences as teachers in public schools over a long period. They argue that for any change to be implemented successfully, it must address teachers' needs and concerns. They go on to explain:

...most innovations began as top-down mandates often made by district administrators with superficial or no input from the faculty. Because of this lack of collaboration, teachers often did not implement top-down mandates for various reasons. First, many teachers did not have the know-how or the self-motivation to learn how to implement the changes successfully. Second, many teachers resented the administration's disregard for their professional knowledge and insight. Third, veteran teachers believed that the innovations would be discontinued since no one was monitoring or assessing the implementation. (2000: 26)

Jaber referred to the educational changes which were introduced through the mechanism of the imposed observation practices, describing how the teachers did not have any role in the preparation of these visits during the old practices. He mentioned that the coordinator in his school was responsible for preparing the visiting agenda (as discussed in Chapter Four): "The coordinator was the one who arranged for these mutual visits between teachers to exchange expertise. He decided who visited who and when" (Jaber 2, Orange School 2, 1:17). During the implementation of the new programme, he highlighted how it made him feel: "[it] gave me the opportunity to express my needs and at the same time the freedom to choose the partner for observing" (Jaber 2, Orange School, 13:366).

Sami (1, Orange School), referred to the reduced role of the administration in terms of determining the visits and the role of the teachers as, with the new programme, it was changed from one of full authority to a purely organizational role. Salma emphasized the more organisational aspect of the administration's role during the implemented programme, explaining thus:

Even if I have a class at that time, the administration prepares a replacement teacher for my pupils in my absence. I felt a lot of flexibility in the programme. The previous visits

were imposed on us. They were held in our free hours. Actually we needed these free hours for correcting, for revising our lesson preparation, or make any changes in the preparation. (Salma 2, Blue School, 4:93)

Deena affirmed that now teachers “visited each other for reciprocal expertise without any pressure”. She added that they did this when they “...needed to observe, and reflect on what we observed with each other. We did it, for example, to learn a certain teaching strategy” (Deena 1, White School 1:16). Moreover, Deena explained that teachers

...were used to class visitations. We visited each other whenever we were asked by the senior teacher. And now, with the peer coaching programme, we also visit each other but the difference is that the visit now firstly it is with benefit because we need it and we have specified the purpose of the visit. Secondly, although we were used to class visitation before, there was extra preparation for that lesson because we had to present a model lesson. Now, there is no extra preparation. Moreover, we don't prepare all kinds of activities for that lesson except the ones that were already planned for that lesson. (Deena 1, White School, 4:102)

In her interview, Amal indicated that during the old practices, the visits were considered a demand rather than a need. She compared her previous practices and her practice during the implementation:

... [I] found it [the implemented programme] different, firstly because, in peer coaching, we ask for the visit, according to our needs, and it was not compulsory to do it. Secondly, now we choose the teacher who will observe while, before, it was mandatory for teachers to join the observing team, the team which observes the teacher for evaluation. Thirdly, we were used to noting down what we observed on the observation sheet and then giving it to the senior teacher, while now we don't give the observation sheet to the senior teacher but we only inform her that we, the teachers, are visiting each other for organizational purposes. Fourthly, determining the purpose of the visit; as I said earlier, the purpose of the visit was because it was a demand or a requirement, while now it is a need, I ask my colleague for her help and my colleague asks me to help her. (Amal 2, Pink School, 2:50)

Moreover, Noora's comparison between the two practices was based on the change that happened in identifying the purpose of the visits. She exposed that from being potentially associated with being assessed, the purpose of the visits became clearly and explicitly formative. She stated that “...the purpose of the visits is to learn from

each other and to exchange expertise, while before we were forced to visit each other because the visits were based on assessment” (Noora 1, Pink School, 5:112).

Jaber referred to the fact that he used to visit his colleagues without having any information about the observed lesson and that, in the previous practice, he did not even know the reason for observing a specific lesson, as he described:

I knew that the observation was going to be in that specific period and that specific subject but which lesson the teacher is going to teach and specifically why I am observing, I don't know. We used to go to the class, observe, write our notes, and then gave the observation sheets to the coordinator. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 3:57)

With regard to the visits conducted during the implementation of the programme, Jaber also indicated his positive attitude, stating that he:

... found the peer coaching programme better because the teacher enters the classroom only to observe what he needs. Moreover, the observer and the teachers observed meet before observing and specify the purpose of the observation. At least, the observer has got an idea about what is happening. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 4:99)

Therefore, the changes that were noted by the teachers in the implemented peer coaching programme so far can be summarised as follows:

Change 1: From imposed to self-decision. The observations were changed from an imposed strategy by the administration into ‘self-decision’ by teachers. Visits were based on teachers’ professional needs, teachers choosing the observation partner, and teachers determining the time of observing.

Change 2: Teacher’s role from passive to active. Change in the teacher’s role during the visits was evident. They changed from being passive teachers, as the receivers of orders, to positive teachers, because of their effective participation in the preparation of the visits’ arrangements.

Change 3: Administration’s role from full authority to purely organizational. The administration had been responsible for all aspects of visits, such as identifying the needs, visitors and time. Their role was changed to a supportive organisational one as the teachers became more self determining.

Change 4: Random visits to aimed visits. The mechanism of the visits was changed from visits without setting goals in advance, to visits based on pre-set goals.

The second aspect of the programme was that it enabled genuine collaboration between peers. As discussed in Chapter Two, there has been much research on peer learning and its potential role in implementing educational change. For example, Fullan states that “Successful change involves learning during implementation. One of the most powerful drivers of change involves learning from peers, especially those who are further along in implementing new ideas” (2007: 85).

However, teachers do not automatically find learning from others easy to do. For example, Kise (2006) found that teachers saw using other teachers’ ideas as ‘copying’. Kise (2006: 10) states that “Asking teachers to change their practices often means asking them to do things that sound absolutely hostile to them”. She goes on to illustrate the difficulties teachers had with changing their beliefs about team working:

When I first began working in schools, the lack of teaming astounded me. I asked Lisa Hartman, a friend who headed the world language department at a large high school, why teachers didn’t work together more. She said ‘Deep down, many view it as stealing. It took me years to get the other teachers to share lesson plans. “Competent teachers do it themselves” was their message back to me. And finally, when they used something I’d created, students said, “Ms. Hartman, did you know someone stole your idea?” I made sure my name didn’t appear on anything after that! (Kise, 2006: 54)

Therefore, to allow change to occur, it is necessary to change teachers’ behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs.

Kise (2006) divides collaboration into three levels: superficial, segmented, and instructional collaboration. According to this classification, the teachers who implemented the peer coaching programme in the present study come under Level III ‘Instructional collaboration’, as they engaged and interacted together:

Level III: Instructional collaboration. Teaching teams engage in deep discussions about teaching and learning, serving as resources for each other in developing curriculum and lessons that meet the needs of all learners. (Kise, 2006: 54)

Kise states that in order to improve instruction, teachers needed to partake in the practice of any new approach or strategy, so they will be able to understand the differences between the old and the new. That is evident in Kise's (2006) emphasis on the importance of putting the new strategies into practice, suggesting that teachers need to understand the differences between the strategies they are practising. Her indication is that, after practice, teachers will be able to decide whether to take on or reject a new strategy:

...an opinion is formed and decisions are made regarding whether or not to use a particular innovation. Specifically, teachers will decide whether they want to adopt the new practices and decide how this change will influence their pedagogy and the goals of the curriculum. Lastly, teachers must use the new practices in an actual lesson. This action reinforces or disconfirms beliefs regarding the role of the new instructional practices. (Kise, 2006: 10)

Robbins and Alvy (1995) argue that it is experiencing the new practice that can lead to a change in their beliefs. They state that:

Often, people are asked to change behavior before they have developed the new beliefs or values implicit in the change. This brings a feeling of discomfort. For long-lasting change to occur, individuals must first be provided with experiences through which they will come to develop the values and beliefs that drive the desired behaviors. Experiences change beliefs. Beliefs do not usually change without experiences. Many teachers have to experience positive results with students before adopting a new way of doing something. (Robbins and Alvy, 1995: 74)

As discussed previously, in Chapter Two (Figure 2.1.), Guskey's Model of Teacher Change (2002) implies that the change occurs when teachers experience the new practice, and achieve a positive result in terms of student learning outcomes. Guskey believes that:

...change is predicated on the idea that change is primarily an experientially based learning process for teachers. Practices that are found to work – that is, those that teachers find useful in helping students attain desired learning outcomes – are retained and repeated. Those that do not work or yield no tangible evidence of success are generally abandoned. (Guskey, 2002: 384)

Moreover, Guskey argues that:

...change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs is primarily a result, rather than a cause, of change in the learning outcomes of students. In the absence of evidence of positive change in students' learning, it suggests that significant change in the attitudes and beliefs of teachers is unlikely. (Guskey, 2002: 386)

Fullan (2007) discusses the reason for successful change, saying that:

All successful change processes have a 'bias for action'. There is a reason for this, which is wrapped up in several related insights. Dewey mentioned it first when he said that people learn not by doing per se but by *thinking* about their new doing. (Fullan, 2007: 41)

The literature presented above supports the data gathered from the interviews conducted with the teachers after they implemented the peer coaching programme. Implementing the programme helped them to evaluate their previous and their current teaching practices. For example, Dana 1, yellow school - explained her change in attitude by stating that, during the implemented programme, the relationship between the teachers was built on trust and without fear of the implications of the observation. She said that the new programme:

...made us think that we are all teachers, we are all alike, and we work as one group. Being critical of my colleague or not, in the end we are all working together for the benefit of the pupils and to increase their achievement. Furthermore, if teachers talk to each other in any manner, eventually it becomes a friendly way as there is no assessment and no judgment. I mean, what happened inside the classroom was between me and my colleague ... what happened inside the classroom will not affect my annual report. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 4:89)

In her interview, Amal stated that, prior to the programme, she was not comfortable with the visits:

...I didn't like to visit anyone; at the same time I didn't like anyone to visit me, but now I think I have changed my mind. I don't find any difficulties in us visiting each other. On the contrary, I have found it helpful, observing each other, learning from each other, teaching each other, and helping each other. (Amal 2, Pink School, 3:79)

Jawaher highlighted the change in the relationship between her and her colleagues because of the implemented programme. Prior to it she "did not accept anything from them as she considers that a kind of destructive criticism" (Jawaher 2, White School, 4:83). She went on to describe the degree of awkwardness in the

relationships between the teachers during the old practice, and the fact that these relationships were built on privacy during the implementation of the previous practice. However, after her participation in the implementation of the new programme, she revealed that one of the important features of this programme for her was confidentiality:

The teachers maintain confidentiality in their work. What happened inside and outside the classrooms was completely between the observer and the observed teachers and no one else. This method [the peer coaching programme] gives us a kind of privacy, while there was a kind of awkwardness in the relationships between the teachers in the previous method. (Jawaher 2, White School, 3:74)

Furthermore, and as discussed in Chapter Five, the data showed how the relationships between teachers changed after the implementation of the programme; from individuality and isolation in work to collegiality and collaboration. Initially, the idea of visits was unwelcome with the teachers: thus, they rejected being observers or observed. However, the peer coaching programme encouraged the teachers to become more collaborative, and the relationship between them developed as they conferred with each other, and sought advice from others. For example, Dana stated that she was not happy with the visits before the implementation of the programme. She considered that the aim of the observers was to:

...observe the weakness in my teaching. And I always thought that the teachers who participated in the observation only came to criticize. That is why the old visits hampered relations between the teachers a little. Moreover, we were forced to agree to observe or be observed, while now the procedure is more flexible. The visits in the peer coaching programme are based on both parties consenting; therefore the relationship between the teachers became stronger and friendlier. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 3:81)

The data presented above is supported by Fullan (2007), when he states:

The theory of change ... points to the importance of peer relationships in the school. Change involves learning to do something new, and interaction is the primary basis for social learning. New meanings, new behaviors, new skills, and new beliefs depend significantly on whether teachers are working as isolated individuals or are exchanging ideas, support, and positive feelings about their work. The quality of working relationships among teachers is strongly related to implementation. Collegiality, open communication, trust, support and help, learning on the job, getting results, and job satisfaction and morale are closely interrelated. (Fullan, 2007: 97)

In addition, Fullan (2009:12) explained how to develop a culture for learning among teachers. He stated that it "...involves a set of strategies designed for people to learn from each other (the knowledge dimension) and become collectively committed to improvement (the effective dimension)" As he demonstrated:

Developing a climate where people learn from each other within and across units, and being preoccupied with turning good knowledge into action is essential. Turning information into actionable knowledge is a social process. Thus, developing learning cultures is crucial. Good policies and ideas take off in learning cultures, but they go nowhere in cultures of isolation. (Fullan 2009: 12)

This leads to set out a further change brought about by the implemented peer coaching programme.

Change 5: Isolation to collegiality. The data presented above shows the changes which occurred in teachers' relationships. These changed from teachers being isolated and not wanting to deal with each other, to collegiality as they accepted each other, and worked collaboratively.

The data also shows how the mechanism of the visits changed in terms of feedback sessions. As discussed in Chapter Four, teachers were not trained how to observe each other and how to give and receive feedback from each other. This was because the majority of the teachers had not accessed training courses related to skills in peer observation, or in giving and receiving feedback. Therefore, the teachers stressed the significance of meeting each other after the completion of each visit to discuss what had happened during those visits. They also referred to the importance of the observation sheets being handed to the observed teachers and not to the senior teacher. Salma explained what this meant to her:

Though it is the right of the observed teacher to see the comments, the senior teacher doesn't show her. Now, in the application of the peer coaching programme, the observation sheets are not sent to the senior teacher, but they stay with us, between the observed and the observer. We specify the purpose of observing, we determine the time of the visit, and we sit with each other for the feedback. That is why I found it a flexible programme. The programme was between us, the teachers. We were free in the visits, and we can say that we felt the benefits of the observing visits when we applied the peer coaching programme. (Salma 2, Blue School, 12:331)

In her interview, Deena discussed the changes which occurred in this practice. She stated that previously “the observed teachers received feedback from the senior teacher or the supervisor but not from the teachers” (Deena 1, White School, 2:40). One of the reasons why she liked the implemented programme was that “...at the end of the observation, we [teachers] sat together for feedback” (Deena 1, White School, 2:51).

Badreya described in detail the feedback sessions that took place in the previous practice:

...after the reciprocal visits the senior teacher tells us her perceptions and writes down on the sheet the points which need adjustment or improving. The senior teacher gives the teachers observation sheets. The teachers write what they observed and then they give these sheets back to the senior teacher. The observed teacher does not see what is written on those sheets. (Badreya 1, Pink School, 3:73)

In addition, Amal revealed that:

...we were used to noting down what we observed on the observation sheet and then giving it to the senior teacher, while now we don't give the observation sheet to the senior teacher but we only inform her that we, the teachers, are visiting each other, for organizational purposes. (Amal 2, Pink School, 3:54)

Thus, there was a significant change in the kind of feedback teachers received and in their perception of feedback as a form of professional development through their participation in the peer coaching programme..

Change 6: Feedback sessions. From being experienced as critical and judgemental, feedback sessions became effective learning opportunities. Teachers perceived the visits as positive experiences, as beneficial and conducive to reflection on their beliefs and practices.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Five (sub-theme 3), the data showed how preparing for the observed lesson had a great impact on the effectiveness of these classroom visits. Teachers reported that, in the previous programme, they suffered from the large amount of preparation that was required for the observed lesson. In contrast, they did not need to prepare vast amounts during the implementation of the

new programme as the lessons were not intended to be model lessons. Dana expressed what it meant to her not to be pressured in that way:

...in peer coaching I felt myself. I felt psychological comfort when I sat and discussed with my colleagues our needs. We met each other before and after the observation. While in the previous observation, we had a lot of preparation which led us to be fatigued. Visits were more tiring because of the amount of materials we had to prepare for the lesson, as it had to be a model lesson. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 4:100)

Amal's perspective on the previous visits was that they caused anxiety to the observed teacher. She attributed the reason for this to the amount of preparation the teacher had to do for that lesson. She interpreted her colleague's acceptance to be observed by her [Amal] in the new programme was because:

...I would not cause her any stress as she would not need to do any extra preparation for that lesson and for that visit. Before that, we used to get ready preparing the lesson and preparing the pupils, in order to ensure their excellent performance in front of the visitors. The most preparation, and the most difficult, was the psychological aspect, because we would always be thinking 'will the visit succeed? Will the head teacher like the way I explain the lesson? Will my way of explaining satisfy the supervisor? And so on. That is why the visits were a heavy burden on the teachers, and teachers felt irritated from just hearing the word 'visit'. But in practising, peer coaching, I found it different. I found it easier. (Amal 2, Pink School, 2:39)

Jaber preferred not to be informed about the visit, so he would not be fully focused on preparing for that lesson. He stated:

I would prefer if they come to observe me without informing me in advance that they are coming. Because if they inform me that they are coming, I will do intensive preparation for that lesson, while the lesson will be a normal lesson if they visit me without telling me in advance. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 3:65)

Jawaher revealed that she was used to being observed by the teachers from her school or from the cooperative schools whenever she was asked by the senior teacher. Although she was accustomed to those visits, this did not diminish the amount of intensive preparation she did for them. She explained further:

I have got used to classroom visitations. When the senior teacher tells me that she and teachers from my school or from the cooperative schools will visit my classroom and observe me teaching, I accept the request because I have got used to these classroom

visits. I don't have any problem with them. Although these visits need time to prepare for the lesson ... Whenever the teachers come to visit my classroom, I would prepare more for the lesson because it needs more accuracy, and besides it needs more activities. I must present the best in front of them; therefore, I need at least one day for planning. (Jawaher 2, White School, 2:27)

In contrast, Jawaher's comments on the implemented programme reflect the change she perceived in terms of preparation:

I felt that this programme was easy to implement and was intended for a specific purpose, a specific reason; therefore, there was no extra preparation for the lesson (Jawaher 2, White School. 2:35).

and its advantages:

...[I] benefited from the programme in terms of time, and ease. So, whenever my colleague wants to observe me I welcome her because I didn't need to prepare for that lesson (Jawaher 2, White School, 2:50).

Thus a further significant change was in terms of both the emotional and physical impact observation had on the teachers and this was largely due to the fact that teachers in the new programme did not feel obliged to prepare extensively for these sessions.

Change 7: From tiring visits to comfortable visits in terms of preparation.

Being observed in the previous observation practice required an enormous amount of preparation on the part of the teacher being observed, placing a considerable burden on their shoulders, as these were considered model lessons and thus teachers felt under scrutiny. During the implemented programme, by contrast, the visits took place smoothly and without great effort, as it was treated as a normal daily lesson.

Data shows how after the implementation of the programme, teachers changed their attitudes towards classroom observation visits. For example, Deena confirmed that she "...benefited from the peer coaching programme. My visits were very useful. I was being myself and I did not try to please the others" (Deena 1, White School, 11:261). Therefore, she made the following suggestion: "I would like the programme to be applied to all the educational levels and not only to the second primary level"

(Deena 1, White School, 11:265). Amal agreed with this, explaining that “the programme was easy, comfortable, and light. It would be better if it was applied at all stages. It would be great if the teachers understand that there is no pressure or stress in this programme” (Amal 2, Pink School, 4:86). She stated that “...the programme made me change my idea of ‘unbearable visits’ to ‘go and learn from these visits’” (Amal 2, Pink School, 2:35).

Jawaher emphasized the effectiveness of the visits, saying:

This visit was based on the size of the required goal. Therefore, it has a significant impact on teaching, especially in terms of speed. (Jawaher 2, White School. 2:40)

Thus teachers experienced the peer coaching programme as easy to implement, non taxing and based on their needs. For example, Jawaher commented, “I found this procedure easy and not complicated because we may benefit from each other as it was according to our desire, our needs, and our choice” (Jawaher 2, White School, 14:354). She found that “...the visits became easy as they were held without fatigue and without harassment for the teacher” (Jawaher 2, White School, 15:366).

In addition Salma found the flexibility of the implemented programme made her “...not have any suggestions or additions, but just to say that I was happy with it” (Salma 2, Blue School, 12:341). Therefore, she suggested the following:

If my colleagues approve the implementation of the programme, I may apply it because I believe that I can benefit more from observing a practical application than attending workshops. I consider the workshops are just talking. The peer coaching programme is easier than what we were doing before. It facilitated many things for me as I can take advantage of other teachers’ expertise. I can also help my colleagues in the field that I have experience in. (Salma 2, Blue School, 12: 344)

Jaber stressed that they “...used to go [visit] just because we have to do it as it is a requirement from the Ministry” (Jaber 2, Orange School, 4:102), but after the implementation of the peer coaching programme he changed his beliefs about those visits. He opined that “The new programme gave meaning to the class visitation and to observation. It showed us and explained to us things that we needed” (Jaber 2, Orange School, 4: 105). Furthermore, he explained that:

I found it different than what we were doing, especially in specifying the purpose of the visit. I was happy with it. I was happy in myself while practicing it. What I liked most was the flexibility of the programme. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 3: 75)

Jaber's suggestion for further implementations of the peer coaching programme revealed the change in his attitude, as he stated:

I hope to be the first to apply this programme and publish it in schools, and to be the link between the programme and the schools. I hope we can change the old applications in the Ministry to what is in the interests of teachers and, therefore, in the interest of pupils, because the traditional things in the Ministry remain unchanged, though a lot of theories have changed. (Jaber 2, Orange School, 14: 373)

Dana also noted the change in teachers' attitudes and behaviours during the implementation of the programme. She made the following comment:

...Even the suggestions and the recommendations were given more simply. Maybe we found it simpler because we liked it. I noticed that even the way we talked to each other changed. For example, we said to each other 'Try to do it that way', or 'Come and observe my teaching; maybe it will work with your pupils'. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 4:105)

Therefore, Dana suggested it would be better if:

...the programme were authenticated by the Ministry of Education and applied in all the schools in Bahrain, and thus, school administrations would be forced to give the teachers sufficient time to implement the programme. (Dana 1, Yellow School, 7: 193)

Mariam stated that she and her colleagues "...found peer coaching a comfortable programme, especially as there wasn't any assessment" (Mariam 1, Pink School, 6:142). She explained that the implemented programme

...is a flexible programme that doesn't cause any tension or stress or pressure on the teachers. Besides, it is an uncomplicated programme and easy to apply. (Mariam 1, Pink School, 17: 414)

Noora explained how she and her colleagues benefited from the implemented programme during the critical period of time the country was facing:

Although we were going through tough times because of the crisis which our Kingdom has been through, we didn't meet with any difficulty in implementing the programme, but

we benefited from the application especially in that period of time as it helped us to go faster in finishing the curricula. (Noora 1, Pink School, 17: 418)

The data presented above shows the importance of experiencing a new practice to bring about effective educational change. It was necessary to engage the teachers in the peer coaching programme, in order to ascertain whether the implemented programme could make the aspired changes.

The data highlights that positive educational changes occurred in the participants' teaching practices after the implementation of the programme. Teachers changed their attitudes and beliefs towards classroom visits due to their satisfaction with the peer coaching programme. In our discussions, I suggested that Guskey's (1985 & 2002) work be used as one of "the conditions" for the positive changes, as he believed that teachers will not change their attitudes and belief unless they are successful in any new practice. He stated that:

The crucial point is that it is not the professional development *per se*, but the experience of successful implementation that changes teachers' attitudes and beliefs. They believe it works because they have seen it work, and that experience shapes their attitudes and beliefs. (Guskey, 2002: 383)

Furthermore, the data supports Robbins and Alvy's (1995) assertions regarding the successful implementation of a practice and change:

If the change is successfully implemented, eventual satisfaction should be observed throughout the system. The teachers should display satisfaction with the change, students will know of the change and talk about what has taken place, and site and district administrators will be a part of the process, as will the parents. A key characteristic should be more school wide interaction. In the end, change must be systemic. (Robbins & Alvy, 1995: 79)

The teachers' comments also point to a change in their attitudes towards peer coaching.

Change 8: Intolerable visits to beneficial visits. Teachers changed their attitude towards and beliefs about classroom visits from being unwelcome to being beneficial.

The data discussed in this chapter shows that the implemented peer coaching programme helped the teachers to change their attitudes and beliefs towards observations and classroom visits. The programme helped the teachers to collaborate and interact in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses in instruction and thus, to improve their instructional practices and develop their professional skills.

6.3. Theoretical framework for the study.

In this section I will illustrate my use and adaptation of the model mentioned in Chapter Two, Section 2.3.2 [Figure 2.3] (Motivation, work satisfaction, and change in practice: Wagner and French, 2010), as a theoretical framework for interpreting the results of my study. I decided to use this model because it identifies key elements in the motivation of teachers to practise CPD and I wanted to further analyse the elements that had contributed to the success of the PC programme in the Bahraini context. Whilst Karabenick and Conley's model (2011) [Figure 2.2] usefully proposes the dynamic role of teacher motivation in their participation in effective professional development programmes, I wanted to understand what had motivated the teachers in my study to successfully implement the PC programme. The Wagner and French model addresses the question of what actually makes teachers motivated. Since this model is also based on more specific details concerning the aspects that make teachers motivated within the field of professional development and the context of their working environment, it more closely matches my research findings.

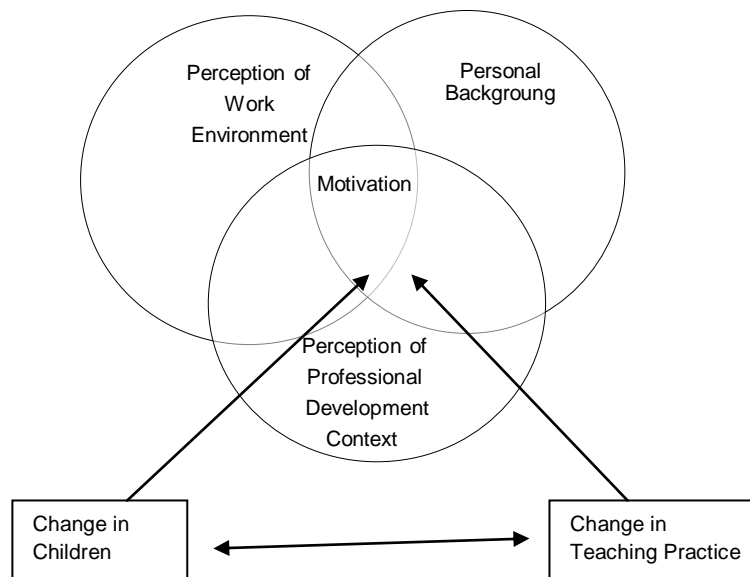


Figure 2.3 Motivation, work satisfaction, and change in practice

(Wagner and French, 2010: 163)

The findings of Wagner and French (2010), suggest that three components of teachers' satisfaction within the school, as well as the relationship between those aspects, will enhance the motivation of teachers to practice effective professional development programmes. These aspects are: personal background, perception of professional development context, and the perception of the working environment. However, I have used and refined this model according to the data I have collected in the Bahraini context because I have identified that there were some differences in the sub-categories. In addition, there were individual differences in the data collected from each of the teachers involved in my study. These differences are illustrated diagrammatically in Appendix L using the adapted model for each teacher.

In the following sections I will take each of the categories of the refined model in order to further identify the different sub-categories from the combined teachers' results.

6.3.1. Personal background

Questionnaire 1 showed a uniform data return for the personal background dimension for the teachers. The data confirmed that all the teachers in the study

were Bachelor of Education Degree holders, making them fully qualified in their field of work. This category did not yield any sub-categories in the refined model.

6.3.2. Perception of professional development context

Wagner and French argue that their research results showed that teachers' perceptions "of the professional development context itself influenced their intrinsic motivation for the professional development program" (2010: 167). Their designed model (Figure 2.3) shows that teachers' perception of professional development context varies.

Findings from my study have highlighted the following sub-categories for teachers' perception of professional development context, as illustrated in the model below. (Figure 6.1 – Refined model: Perception of professional development context).

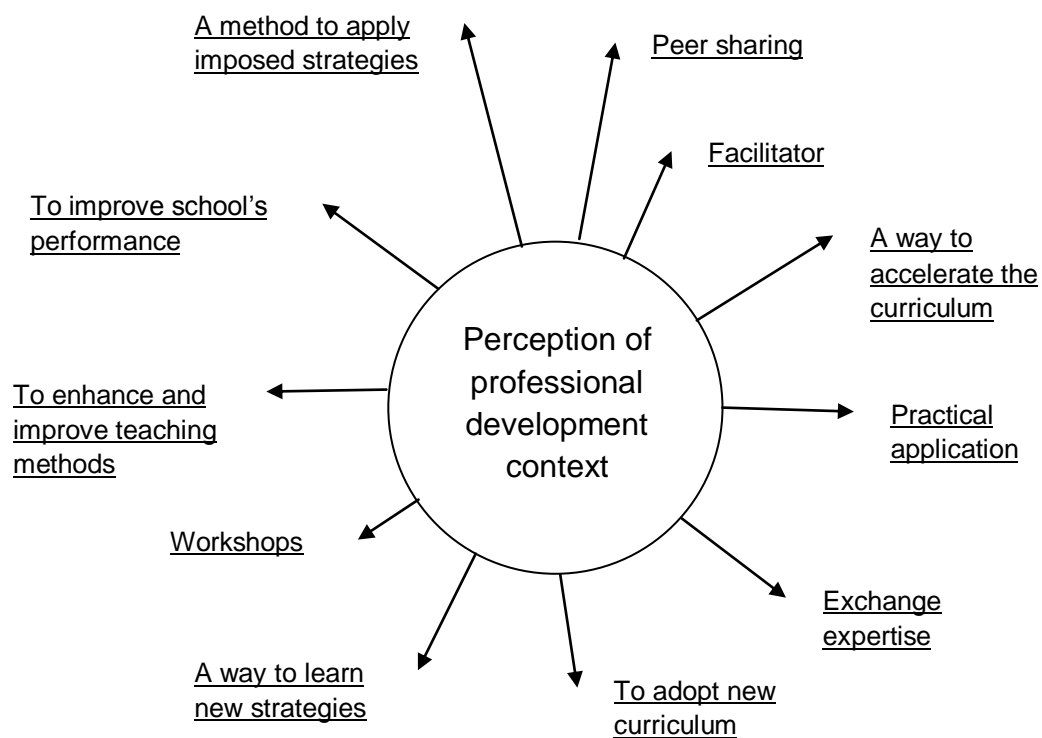


Figure 6.1 – Refined model:

Perception of professional development context

The data from my interviews shows that all the teachers preferred the practical application (practicum) of professional development, rather than workshops, although again there were individual differences. While some teachers considered workshops to be 'just talking', others found workshops useful to develop their skills.

For example, Salma from the Blue School – 2 (12: 344) said;

If my colleagues approve the implementation of the programme, I may apply it because I believe that I can benefit more from observing a practical application than attending workshops. I consider the workshops are just talking. The peer coaching programme is easier than what we were doing before. It facilitated many things for me as I can take advantage of other teachers' expertise.

On the other hand, Sami from the Orange School – 1 (2: 44) shows a positive perception of workshops. He referred to the importance of workshops for learning feedback skills. He stated that “although it is important, we have a lack of these kinds of courses or workshops”. But he also illustrated to the benefit of observation as a practicum. He stated that;

Jaber taught the lesson and I observed him. The observation helped me a lot in adapting to the new curriculum. Instead for searching for new methods of teaching the lesson, it was easier to visit my colleague and observe a practical application in the classroom. Moreover, this observation saved me time and my effort, and made me more confident when I taught my class the same lesson. (13: 357)

The above excerpt suggests that the participating teachers found the implemented peer coaching programme to be a beneficial practicum which helped them to gain new strategies, enrich and enhance their methods of teaching, and which was efficient in terms of time and effort.

Moreover, findings in Chapter Five showed that teachers came to perceive peer coaching as a way of facilitating the teaching and learning process. It also helped the teachers to adopt each others' pedagogical strategies as well as exchanging expertise by integrating a variety of instructional methods to improve their pedagogical practices in the classroom.

6.3.3. Perception of the work environment

My data shows that the sub-categories of support, collegiality, and choice/control in the Wagner and French designed model (Figure 2.3) mapped onto the refined model. However, the data also provided further insight into these sub-categories. In accordance with the findings that have emerged from the interviews, I have made some refinements in the sub-categories of the refined model - for instance: the implementation mechanism (teachers taking ownership of what they are doing – as will be discussed in section 6.3.2.4) in terms of equality, and preparation. A further sub-category which emerged was the issue of support.

6.3.3.1 Support from teachers and administration.

My data showed that teachers appreciated two types of support from colleagues. (Figure: 6.2 – Refined model: Perception of work environment – Support from teachers and administration);

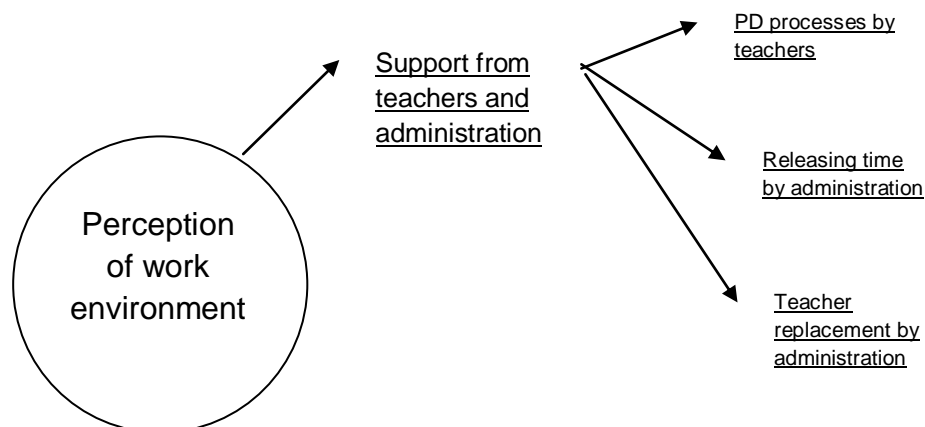


Figure 6.2 – Refined model:

Perception of work environment – Support from teachers and administration

6.3.3.1.a. Support from other teachers

Other studies, for example Johnson (2009: 102), have found that:

The non-hierarchical social relationships and instructional arrangements of Peer Coaching create opportunities for teachers to guide their own learning and development while engaging in goal-directed dialogic mediation with a non-evaluative and trusted peer. (2009: 102)

While Bubb and Earley state that:

If individuals understand how they learn and can appreciate that others have different learning styles, then they will be more able to support the learning of both young people and colleagues. (2007: 15)

Johnson (2009) summarises here what Wolf and Robbins (1989) had previously mentioned:

Peer coaches have been found to give feedback in multiple ways but the most common are: (1) mirroring – the coach records data and gives them to the teacher to analyze or make sense of; (2) collaborative coaching – the teacher and coach work together to find ways to improve teaching; and (3) expert coaching – the coach acts as a mentor who gives specific suggestions. (2009: 102)

The teachers in my study were in agreement about the importance of the support of their colleagues for their professional growth and they adopted all three types of feedback as discussed above by Johnson. The kind of support that the teachers needed was specifically emphasised as being in the form of feedback from their colleagues to help them develop their classroom practice, rather than for administrative purposes.

For example, Dana said that the process of conducting feedback between the teachers, for both the observer and the observed, was one of the reasons that the peer coaching was successful “...the visits became meaningful” (Dana, Yellow School 1, 3: 68). In addition, Salma referred to the process of feedback by the teachers as a reason why she “...found it [the peer coaching programme] as a flexible programme” (Salma, Blue School 2, 12: 335).

6.3.3.1.b. Support from administration

The teachers did, however, explain that they needed support from administration in other aspects, such as releasing time from the curriculum for their professional development opportunities. The teachers also needed the support of administration in terms of reducing the time which was previously allocated for other school activities. For example, to decrease the burden on teachers as well preventing delays in the curriculum, Dana suggested that

Administration should reduce a bit from the time allocated for the activities...and instead, to give an adequate time for teachers in order to achieve a fruitful feedback meeting. (Dana, Yellow School – 1, 6: 152)

Moreover, Salma (Blue School – 2, 4: 93) pointed towards the administration support in terms of making available a replacement (supply) teacher whenever she needed cover for the purpose of CPD. She said

Even if I have a class at that time, the administration prepares a replacement teacher for my pupils in my absence. (Salma, Blue School – 2, 4: 93)

On the other hand, Sami's (Orange School 1, 1: 29) perception towards teacher replacement was negative. He indicated the preference of not requesting the administration for a replacement teacher and to arrange the case by himself, because he considers that "...this replacement upsets the teacher or he finds it difficult to go to my class". He prefers observing whenever he is free "...when I don't have classes, so there's no need for anyone to replace me".

In respect of administrative support, Zepeda (2007: 239) states that:

Given the complex nature and specific context of each school, the type of administrative support needed to develop, implement, and assess the overall value of a peer coaching program will vary. For coaching to flourish, the principals must

- *Allocate resources*: Provide substitute teachers to cover classrooms while coaches coach; schedule release time for teachers to coach each other and conduct pre- and postobservation conferences; procure professional development materials on techniques under construction; obtain funds to develop a professional library for teachers (journal, videos)
- *Arrange for initial and ongoing training...*

- *Provide emotional support and encouragement ...*

To a certain extent, my results concur with Zepeda but I would propose greater flexibility to let the teachers decide if they wish to utilise teaching substitutes. Zepeda goes on to conclude that:

Administrative support is essential to peer coaching efforts. More importantly, peer coaching as a tool for teachers to examine their practices in ways that makes sense to them will not flourish until teachers feel valued and supported in their efforts to improve instruction. Effective supervisors focus their attention here. (2007: 241)

Meanwhile Johnson (2009: 102) has suggested that:

Overall, the non-hierarchical social relationship and instructional arrangements of Peer Coaching create opportunities for teachers to guide their own learning and development while engaging in goal-directed dialogic mediation with a non-evaluative and trusted peer.

6.3.3.2. Collegiality

The findings in Chapter Five demonstrated how teacher's collegiality enhanced the peer coaching programme's efficacy and that the programme increased collegiality through the sharing of good practice and feedback on practice brought about by the visits and peer discussions.

Lee et al. point towards the important role of community on teachers' efficacy (1991: 204). They state that good relations between teachers help to increase teachers' productivity and strong staff collegiality helps the classes to be "less likely to be characterized by disorderly behavior" (1991, 196). They also suggested that "Schools in which teachers feel more efficacious are likely to be environments in which human relationships are supportive" (1991: 204). They argue that,

...because of this collegial communication, a participant in such an organizational culture has access to both intrinsic and extrinsic sources of information about his or her performance. Such teachers are better able to establish external, goal-directed criteria about their performance. (1991: 193)

Wagner and French also refer to the significant role of collegiality. They state that teachers specified that,

...connecting with other teachers, sharing ideas, and ... problem solving and collaborating with them was the most valuable part of the program. (2010: 166)

They added that,

...collegiality that was encouraged and facilitated within the context of the professional development program helped sustain teachers' motivation to continue attempting to change their practice. (2010: 166)

Kaasila and Lauriala (2009: 854) referred to the significance of teachers learning "...collaborative skills and dispositions during teacher education" as it is considered "as a key factor in teachers' professional development".

In the case of my study, the implemented peer coaching programme encouraged the teachers to peer practice sharing and problem solving (Figure 6.3 – Refined model: Perception of work environment – Collegiality and co-worker relations).

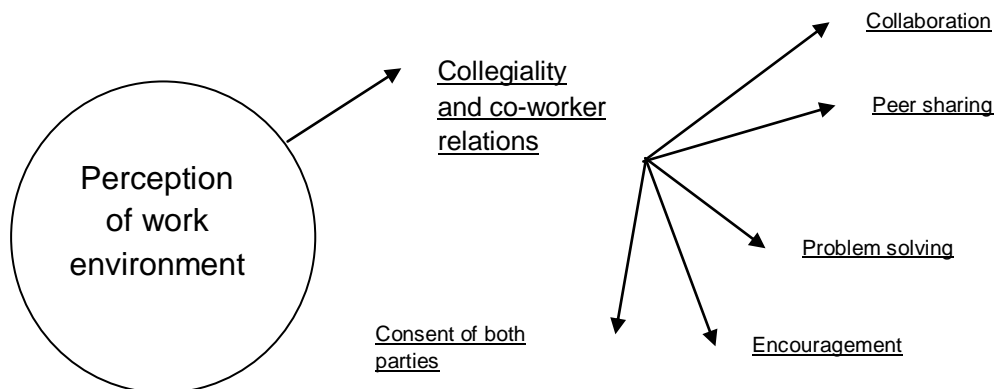


Figure 6.3 – Refined model:

Perception of work environment – Collegiality and co-worker relations

The research interviews showed that the relationship between the teachers implementing peer coaching programme was based on reciprocal collaboration. Dana (Yellow School – 1, 6: 195) disclosed how the implemented peer coaching programme helped teachers to break the barrier of shyness between themselves

leading them towards a healthy reciprocal collaboration. Moreover, Jawaher (White School – 2, 9: 224) revealed how the teachers had collaborated and had worked as a team. She gave the example that after reciprocal visits with her colleague Nasreen, and following the feedback session, she had not been able to repeat the visit to Nasreen, therefore, another teacher had visited Nasreen on behalf of Jawaher.

Jaber (Orange School – 2, 3:76) described the collaboration between teachers as a flexible programme. He stated “The most I liked was the flexibility of the programme; I ask my colleagues when I need their help or they ask me when they need my help”.

Badreya (Pink School – 1, 8: 188) showed that she did not face any problem when teaching about currencies. But her colleague Amal did. Amal made a request to several colleagues, and actively invited them to visit her classroom to observe her way of presenting the lesson.

Dana (Yellow School – 1, 4: 86) revealed that the rapport between the teachers implemented the peer coaching programme was “stronger and friendlier” because the observation was “based on both parties consenting”.

The above data shows how collegiality between teachers facilitates the implementation of the programme.

6.3.3.3. Choice/control (nature of the work itself)

The teachers’ satisfaction with the nature of their work makes them more efficient and more likely to be motivated to apply new professional practices. For example, Lee et al (1991: 204) demonstrated that teachers being in charge of their classroom practices helped them [the teachers] to be more efficacious and satisfied with what they are doing. They also pointed towards the significance of fostering teachers’ autonomy as an aspect of the nature of their work; they explained that:

...fostering cooperative environments and allowing teachers reasonable autonomy in their classroom practices are more likely to foster the efficacy and satisfaction of teacher.
(1991: 205)

Wagner and French (2010: 165) found that teachers’ freedom in decision making increases their satisfaction and their motivation for professional development growth, and thus, changes in their practice.

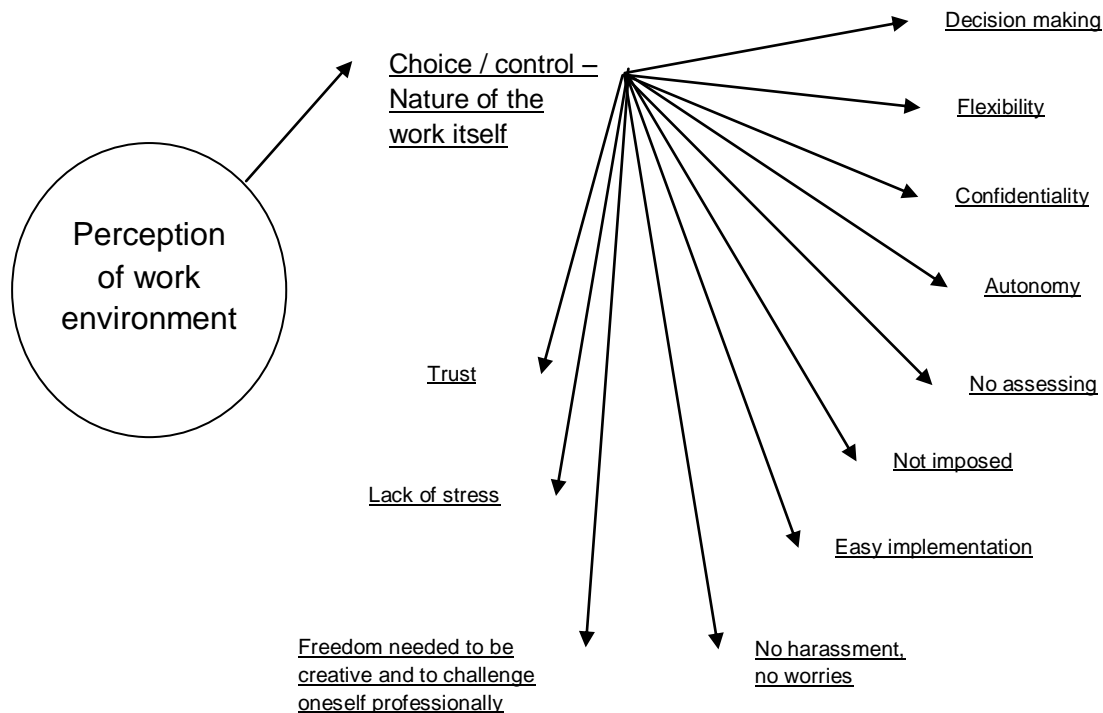


Figure 6.4 – Refined model:

Perception of work environment – Choice / control – Nature of the work itself

Data from the implemented programme in the Kingdom of Bahrain revealed that teachers’ satisfaction with the nature of the work derives from their experience of autonomy, confidentiality and trust within it, and the perception of it as flexible and easy to implement. Salma (Blue School 2, 13: 347) said that by practicing it she “can take advantage of other teachers’ expertise. I can also help my colleagues in the field that I have experience in”. Sami (Orange School 2, 2: 64) illustrates how these characteristics work together to create confidence and ease: “I should feel

comfortable with the chosen teacher and have confidence in him. I trust that whatever happened between us 'me and him' will remain confidential".

Dana (Yellow School 1) and Jawaher (White School 2), describing the peer coaching programme, also mentioned it as easy to implement and referred to a significant difference discussed in the earlier section of this chapter, which is the absence of assessment. They derived satisfaction from the fact that the programme was not based on evaluation by the administration for assessment of their performance; rather, it was based on the intention to develop the teachers' professional practices. In this sense they were content with the implementation as they felt there was a lack of stress. They stated that there were "no worries, no harassment, and no fatigue".

Amal (Pink School 2, 2:33) also referred to the lack of stress while Deena from the White School spoke many times about the ease of implementation during her interview, though in different ways, describing the programme as "without any pressure" (1: 17) "or stress" (1: 16), and of experiencing "no fear and no confusion while visiting" (4: 98). Deena also stated that her "...visits were very useful; I was being myself and I didn't try to please the others" (11: 260) and pointed towards the importance of trust between teachers in implementing the peer coaching programme "I choose the teacher I trust" (2: 25).

Furthermore, the teachers were all satisfied that the implemented peer coaching programme had not been imposed on them and that it gave them significant freedom in decision making. Amal from Pink School explained

I started to visit my colleague because I decided to visit her, I needed to visit her, I wanted to learn from this visit and not because it was a demand or a requirement. (2: 36)

6.3.3.4. The Implementation mechanism: Teachers taking ownership of what they are doing.

The details of the implementation mechanisms of the peer coaching programme have been fully discussed in Chapter Five and are summarised in the refined model Figure: 6.5 – Perception of work environment: Implementation mechanism/ Taking ownership of what they are doing. It demonstrates the teachers' satisfaction with the

implemented peer coaching programme as they were taking ownership of what they were doing on the basis of the implementation mechanism.

Deci and Ryan (2000) consider that if teachers do not know what their role is, they will not be able to judge their performance. Teachers who participated in the implementation of the peer coaching programme were given an active role as they were responsible for specifying the purpose of the observation, selecting the observers, giving and receiving feedback to each other, and selecting the time of the observation according to their own needs.

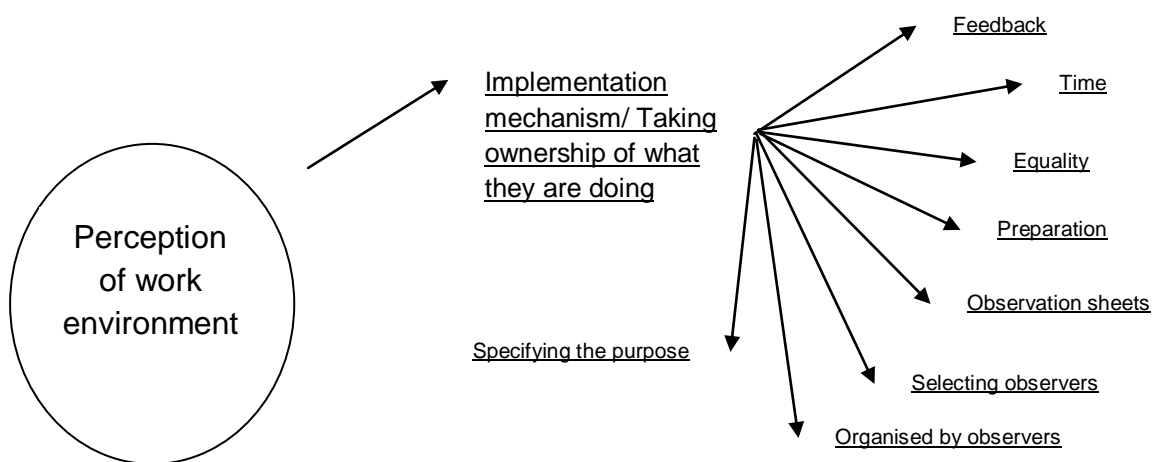


Figure 6.5: Refined model

Perception of work environment: Implementation mechanism/ Taking ownership of what they are doing

For example, Dana (Yellow School – 1, 3: 68) indicated that the “visits became meaningful” She related the reason to teachers “identifying the purpose of the observation”. In addition, the feedback sessions were held by the teachers themselves and not the senior teacher or the principle, excluding the teachers. In addition, and the observation sheets were documented and remained with the observing teachers.

In the Kingdom of Bahrain, new strategies and approaches are imposed upon teachers for application in the curriculum. It is just the way the culture is organised in this country, which has a hierarchical structure. However, teachers’ satisfaction with

the implementation of the peer coaching programme, as a result of taking ownership of what they were doing, motivated them to implement the strategies imposed by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, the points that the teachers raised seem to have a different relevance for each teacher. For example, Jaber (Orange School 2, 6: 166) demonstrated how he benefited from the implemented peer coaching programme for applying the imposed strategies by the Ministry of Education. He said;

I think I can apply peer coaching programme with some modifications. I can mix the peer coaching programme with what is required by the Ministry, which is peer observation and reciprocal expertise for example, the administration asks us to provide them with our plan for class visitations, and I will do it, but in my way. I will do a beautiful mixture of the old style and the new style. So the new mixture will be more self-determination in choosing the observer, in determining the time, and in specifying the purpose of the observation. In this way, I meet the administration's aspirations and, at the same time. I fulfil my needs.

Jaber again illustrates how through the peer coaching programme, he was able to apply the imposed strategies in a way which both met his needs and the Ministry's requirements. He stated:

Our supervisor always encourages us to use collaborative learning. I took the application of the peer coaching programme to strengthen the collaborative learning strategy ... I knew that teacher Sami was brilliant in this strategy. Therefore, I asked for his help ... He explained to me how he designed the collaborative learning objectives. I even asked him how to organize the groups in the classroom. I mean on what basis he distributed the pupils in groups, also in which subject.

The above data suggests that while prior to the implementation of the peer coaching programme teachers had difficulties in applying the imposed strategies required by the Ministry, now they felt more able to apply the requirements because they were taking ownership of what they were doing and were being responsible for the implementation mechanism. This satisfaction is consistent with what Avalos has said;

Not every form of professional development, even those with the greatest evidence of positive impact, is of itself relevant to all teachers. There is thus a constant need to study, experiment, discuss and reflect in dealing with teacher professional development on the interacting links and influences of the history and traditions of groups of teachers, the educational needs of their student populations, the expectations of their education

systems, teachers' working conditions and the opportunities to learn that are open to them (Avalos, 2010: 10)

She goes on to explain that;

The particular way in which background contextual factors interact with learning needs varies depending on the traditions, culture mores, policy environments and school conditions of a particular country. The starting point of teachers engaging in professional development in the Namibian study may not be relevant to teachers in Canada or The Netherlands. On the other hand, there is a similitude in the processes whereby teachers move from one stage to the next in different contexts that appears to be manifestations. (Avalos, 2010: 17)

Amal (Pink School 2, 2: 36) stated that her decision to visit her colleague was based upon her own needs (section 6.3.2.3). In the educational culture and policy environment of Bahrain, such devolution of power is an unusual innovation and one which was clearly appreciated by the teachers involved in the study.

In conclusion, the above demonstrates that the teachers' ownership of the various aspects of the implementation process of peer coaching programme was a key element in motivating them to engage in CPD in accordance with the educational reform strategies of the Ministry of Education.

The next chapter in the study will discuss the impact of training on developing teachers' observational and feedback skills as a way of achieving further success in the peer coaching programme. The chapter will also examine the implications of the implementation in terms of it being funded by the Bahraini Ministry of Education.

Chapter Seven

Reflections on the implemented programme

Introduction.

Building on the findings and discussion that have been presented in previous chapters, this chapter reflects on two themes: 'The acquisition of peer coaching skills' and 'Implementation for policy and practice: two dilemmas?', followed by specific recommendations. Suggestions are offered in Chapter Eight as to how these recommendations might be implemented on a wider scale for teachers, for schools, and for the Teachers' College in the University of Bahrain.

First reflection

Acquisition of peer coaching skills

This section gives details of teachers' perceptions regarding the significance of acquiring observational skills. They considered that their lack of ability in this area was one of the hindrances during the implementation of the programme and explained that this was because they had not attended workshops about observation and feedback skills.

This first reflection is divided into three parts in order to identify the benefits of obtaining observational skills for successful peer coaching practice, and positive reflections on the implemented programme.

Part one: Establishing more appropriate procedures

Richards and Farrell (2009) stress the importance of training teachers in coaching skills because,

Coaching can be demanding if coaches are not clear about their exact roles in the peer coaching relationship. For this they need to be trained somewhat in the basic skills of mentoring and coaching. Additionally, peer-coaching relationships can sometimes be unpredictable. This can be especially true if both the teacher and the coach feel unclear about their roles and responsibilities. (Richards & Farrell, 2009: 154)

Wand and Nicotera (2005: 5) point out that insufficient training is one of the problems associated with peer coaching, and they put an emphasis on "...quality training for the coaches to develop an effective professional development program". Zepeda (2007: 236) also suggests that teachers be trained in the areas of communication,

supervision and data collection, as a condition for the successful practice of peer coaching. This focus in the literature on the significance of teacher training and the acquisition of observational skills supports the idea that a lack of skills may impact negatively on the success of a peer coaching programme.

The limited data obtained from the observation sheets and the teachers' reflective journals, two of the research instruments given to the participants in the present study, shows that there was a lack of observation skills among the teachers. Therefore, structured interviews were conducted with the teachers who participated in the implemented research programme (as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.10). The data from these interviews revealed that the teachers were keen to acquire these skills. For example, Sami highlighted the importance of becoming skilled in observing, explaining that:

I would like to learn these skills. These skills are very important to us because the observer may write anything in his records, but if he was competent and had these skills, he would be better in recording what he observed because he will know what to observe, what to focus on, and how the dialogue should be between the observer and the observed. Although it is important, we have a lack of these kinds of courses or workshops. (Sami 1, Orange School, 2:44)

Amal said that she had accessed many courses related to methods of teaching, but nothing associated with observation skills. However, after the implementation of the peer coaching programme, she noted the importance of the acquisition of observational skills, stating:

.... Maybe if I develop my observation skills it will help me a lot when I visit my colleagues. I didn't think of it before. As I said earlier, I didn't like to visit anyone ... but now I think I have changed my mind. (Amal 2, Pink School, 3:76)

Recommendation one:

Obtaining observational skills may help teachers to practise effective peer coaching.

Part two: How to make the best use of feedback sessions.

Gottesman (2000) refers to the importance of teachers gaining feedback skills, as she considers that

Just getting and giving feedback is a paradigm shift that will require a period of adjustment and deliberate thought. Potential coaches must spend a great deal of time practising this skill. (Gottesman, 2000: 91)

Research conducted by Rajab (2009) demonstrates how the teachers who participated in her research did not participate in the feedback sessions after observations had taken place; even their observation sheets were “not submitted to the observed teacher after the observation session, but to the senior teacher, who keeps the forms in her observations file” (Rajab, 2009: 68). However, the conclusion drawn, based on the senior teachers’ perspective, regarding the cause of the non-participation of the teachers, was that:

...the teachers are not trained to give feedback, sometimes the way they write on the forms is like judgement and this hurts the observed teacher. Then the observed teacher will react negatively and there will be a kind of a problem between the teachers. So I prefer not to give the observed teachers these forms until all the teachers are well trained for this kind of visit. (Rajab, 2009: 68).

Rajab’s research is supported by the data gathered from Questionnaire 1 (Figure 4.16), and Questionnaire 2 (Figure 4.17) in the present study. For example, data from Questionnaire 1 shows that the teachers had not participated in any training

courses related to observation or feedback skills. Moreover, only the senior teachers had accessed workshops related to feedback skills.

The data from the semi-structured interviews also revealed that the teachers did not receive any feedback from their peers following observations carried out prior to the implemented programme, as mentioned previously (Rajab, 2009). For example, Deena stressed that she was happy with the implemented peer coaching programme, particularly in terms of feedback sessions, as teachers had been deprived of any sessions on this skill:

I attended many courses but nothing related to observation skills or giving and receiving feedback. The observed teachers received feedback from the senior teacher or the supervisor but not the teachers. What we were doing was completely different to the peer coaching programme. We, the teachers, didn't sit together for feedback with our peers.

(Deena 1, White School, 2:38)

Noora explained that although she taught herself how to receive and give feedback, she had not been able to put it into practice prior to the implemented programme because “the senior teacher observes and after that she sits with us and shows us her observation form, the feedback notes, so we will see her notes only” (Noora 1, Pink School, 4:85).

Recommendation two:

Acquiring feedback skills helps teachers to conduct effective feedback sessions on their own; their observation sheets can then become an effective component of their professional development.

Part three: Positive reflection on the implemented programme.

Fullan (2007: 82) explains that the procedures taken before any programme commences may determine its success or failure:

The process of initiation can generate meaning or confusion, commitment or alienation, or simply ignorance or the part of participants and others affected by the change. Poor beginnings can be turned into successes depending on what is done during implementation. Promising startups can be squandered by what happens afterwards.

One aspect of this is to establish good working relationships from the outset. Research conducted by Rogers (1967) revealed three significant attributes for the trainer, in operations based on a 'person centred approach'. He stated that:

...we can see that ... three of the core conditions of a person centred approach were in operation. ... the classroom participants ... displayed congruence (which, in this context, might be considered as a real and genuine way of working with others); unconditional positive regards (acceptance of, and respect for, those with whom you work) and empathy (understanding of another's thoughts and feelings). (Rogers: 1967)

The above-mentioned conditions were made clear in my way of contacting the teachers, and I believe that this impacted positively on the programme. When I first met the teachers, I explained the peer coaching programme in a friendly way and, at the same time I paid attention to, and expressed great interest in, their comments, ideas and suggestions. I conclude therefore that my way of dealing with them may well have made them more open to the programme and, thus, more constructive and positive.

The data gathered from the semi-structured interviews support this hypothesis, as the teachers considered that the implemented peer coaching programme was a positive experience in their professional development. Evidence also shows that they

enjoyed supporting each other by discussing their needs, sharing ideas and providing mutual feedback.

Recommendation three:

The trainer's personality may also be taken into consideration as a factor which will have a positive or negative impact on the teachers involved in the programme, and therefore will influence its success.

On the whole, the collected data presents a positive picture. This is remarkable because, at the time the study was taking place, Bahrain was experiencing a crisis (as discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.5). Bearing in mind that the teachers were under pressure, as the implementation of the programme coincided with this period, it would have been clear from their reactions if they felt harassed or unhappy with the implemented programme. This would have been even more evident after the implementation of the programme and yet, as demonstrated, they were very positive in their reaction.

Second reflection

Implementation for policy and practice: two dilemmas?

The second reflection focuses on how the positive results of the implemented programme may cause two dilemmas when considering implementing the programme more widely:

Dilemma 1: If teachers undertook formal training in observational skills would this make peer coaching even more successful?

Dilemma 2: Would teachers feel as positive about a peer coaching programme funded by the Ministry of Education?

Dilemma one: If teachers undertook formal training in observational skills would this make peer coaching even more successful?

Before my research began, I had assumed that the teachers who participated in the implemented programme would be more experienced in observational skills. I presumed that they had been involved in observation as they were encouraged by the Ministry of Education to visit classrooms on the basis of exchanging expertise (as discussed in Chapter Two). Moreover, the teachers were prompted by the Ministry of Education to put peer observation into practice as a tool for professional development. The data illustrates that the teachers were able to observe, give and receive feedback, but it appeared that they were not able to write down what they had observed or their feedback. However, they used what skills they had without any

apparent feeling of imposition, and they appeared to take ownership of the new programme.

As discussed in reflective response 1, the peer coaching programme was implemented successfully without including any specific training in any observational skills. Thus, the positive results that emerged from the implementation of the programme may have been an honest and happy 'accident' that came about unexpectedly and without any prior preparation. It seemed that the teachers taking ownership of the programme enabled them to be creative and to take responsibility for its development.

This supports what Ball (cited in Wilson and Berne, 1999: 176) refers to when he indicates the importance of teachers' ownership of their professional development.

He states that:

Teacher development is considered especially productive when teachers are in charge of the agenda and determine the focus and nature of the programming offered. In the name of professional autonomy, many argue that teachers should determine the shape and course of their own development.

The dilemma is, if the teachers had been trained to conduct formal observations, would the programme have been so successful? Is training to acquire observational skills important? Would they still have appeared to take ownership of the new programme? Perhaps the programme can stand as it currently is for all, but advanced, optional programmes could be added for those who want to acquire the technical skills of observation which would then enable them to investigate more subtle aspects of classroom practice.

Dilemma two: Would teachers feel as positive about a peer coaching programme funded by the Ministry of Education?

The data suggests that the success of the implemented programme is because there was no imposition during the implementation. The peer coaching was based on teachers' needs, and they decided when and who to observe without any interference by the administration, except in the matter of organizational issues. This raises some further challenges: in the case of the programme being funded by the Ministry of Education; what are the implications? Would the Ministry need to assess the teachers? If so, might teachers feel pressure? Their performance might be affected if they thought that it was another programme imposed by the Ministry. Therefore, it may have a negative impact on the programme. Possible answers to these questions will be addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

On-going national education reform in the Kingdom of Bahrain has highlighted the need for teachers' professional development so that they can adapt to the continuous changes brought about by the reforms, as well as discuss and reflect on their educational practices. Despite these requirements of the Bahraini Ministry of Education, and its encouraging stance towards teachers with regard to putting into practice peer observation as a tool for teachers' professional development, a number of obstacles and difficulties to this have emerged over time and needed to be considered. Therefore, the primary purpose of my study was to explore whether peer coaching could become a useful strategy within CPD for educational change in the context of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The study implemented and evaluated an innovative peer coaching programme for primary school teachers with the aim of providing suggestions for educators to help them overcome the above mentioned difficulties.

A secondary purpose of the study was to evaluate the use of peer coaching as a means of enhancing teacher motivation to engage in CPD, and thereby, to consider how this might contribute to understanding of its use in a broader context.

In this chapter I will reflect on the study as a whole, draw some conclusions and propose some recommendations.

8.1. Evaluation of research design

I adopted a mixed methods research design, undertaking quantitative and qualitative methods for the purpose of data collection and analysis. I also used this approach for the purpose of triangulation, in order to improve the quality of the study, and to

enhance the credibility of the findings and their interpretation so as to achieve the aim of the study. The research process is summarised in chronological order according to the development of the study:

- Questionnaires: As discussed in chapter three, I applied two types of questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the senior teachers. All the participants responded to both questionnaires and all the questions were answered fully and provided useful background information. Thus, both questionnaires were effective. The data gathered from the two questionnaires helped in designing the implemented peer coaching programme.
- The designed peer coaching programme: A peer coaching programme was designed and trialled by the teachers to identify the effectiveness of the practical elements of the programme as a form of professional development. The way I set the programme up gave the teachers freedom to choose the type of coaching they wanted and according to their needs. However, the observation sheets and reflective journals which were prepared for the participants to record their observations and reflect on what they observed were not well received and provided very little information about what the teachers observed and their reactions to the programme (discussed in Chapter Three). This may have been because of teachers' lack of observational skills, particularly in recording what they had observed. At this point, I decided to interview the teachers in order to evaluate the implementation of the programme.
- In-depth interviews: Although not all the teachers who implemented the peer coaching programme took part in the interviews, the interviews went well and provided a rich data set which added considerable insights into the issues of different approaches, i.e. the Ministry's and mine – to peer coaching. The number of teachers who did participate was representative of the schools that formed the context of the study.
- Research diary: This was helpful as it assisted me in keeping an accurate record of the research process specifically during my fieldwork, for example, recording the dates and the places each teacher preferred for conducting the interviews.

One limitation of the study was that I did not look at the students' achievement and therefore I was unable to measure the impact of the implementation on the students' academic progress. I recommend that this be part of any future research (see section 8.3 and 8.5).

8.2. The impact of the implemented peer coaching programme on pedagogy

The implemented peer coaching programme helped the teachers to develop their pedagogical thinking. It supported the teachers' transferral of the pedagogical knowledge they needed to one another. In addition, it integrated strategies in order to facilitate the learning and teaching process. The programme:

- helped the teachers to practise the pedagogical strategies required by the Ministry of Education, such as collaborative learning.
- highlighted the importance of the teacher's role as an organizer, which facilitated the learning process and encouraged the pupils to collaborate together.
- helped the teachers to exchange expertise by integrating a variety of instructional methods into their teaching to encourage pupils to participate in the classroom and thereby to attain success.
- helped the teachers to transfer pedagogical expertise, such as linking between subjects, to each other. Moreover, they benefited from each other's pedagogical expertise in terms of game-based activities to increase and enhance pupils' learning.
- helped the teachers to learn from each other about some pedagogical practices, such as pupils' enhancement, that motivated the pupils to engage positively in the classroom.
- encouraged the teachers to collaborate in order to learn and improve their instructional practices.
- encouraged the teachers to collaborate in order to facilitate the content and make transferring the knowledge to pupils easier.

- supported the teachers in transforming their pedagogies effectively by working collaboratively with each other, and without anxiety.

To summarise, the research questions have been addressed.

8.3. Recommendations

The study demonstrated the implementation of peer coaching programme as a strategy which is integral to a larger instructional improvement plan that coincides with the Ministry's initiatives to develop teachers' professional skills in order to improve the schools and, thus, the process of education in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, despite the success of the implementation of the programme, some dilemmas remain unresolved. Therefore, for the study to be fully successful, I would recommend:

- the peer coaching programme be one of the courses included in the teachers' professional development module at Bahrain Teachers College in the University of Bahrain.
- peer coaching be one of the topics of training courses provided by the Directorate of Teacher Training in the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- peer coaching programme be one of the teaching strategies to improve and support teaching and learning, used by the School Review Unit when putting the QAAET's recommendations into practice.
- the Ministry of Education be less anxious about the programme and, rather than frequently monitoring the teachers' progress, to check the pupils' achievement at the end of the academic year. If I am correct in my assumptions, peer coaching develops a professional development practice which will eventually improve pupils' academic outcomes.
- the members of the Ministry of Education think again about the purposes of teachers' continuous professional development in order to enhance teacher quality and, more importantly, pupils' learning outcomes.

- more training for teachers in order to acquire observational skills, particularly recording their observations, and skills in giving and receiving feedback.
- the trainers of the new peer coaching programme be open, constructive and positive with teachers and encourage them to adopt future developmental programmes.
- future studies on peer coaching as a CPD strategy for other age groups and in other countries of similar educational and broader cultural contexts.
- more broadly, future studies on different types of teachers' continuing professional development provision.
- this study would be an appropriate topic for future research to ascertain whether similar results would be obtained with different age groups and in different educational and cultural contexts.

8.4. Contribution

The research questions and the objectives of this study refer both to the enrichment of teaching practices and to the enhancement of teachers' professional development in the context of a process of educational reform. In this regard, an important finding emerged from my research (as mentioned in Chapter Six): a crucial aspect of peer coaching's effectiveness was that teachers were able to take ownership of it as an implementation mechanism. It was shown that the recognition of the teachers' ability to arrange and organize the implementation mechanism according to their own needs, and affording them the right to do so, boosted teachers' participation in peer coaching as a CPD programme.

None of the reviewed literature about PC studies have so far emphasized the importance of teachers taking ownership of the implementation mechanisms of peer coaching; the current study has clearly highlighted this as a key factor. The implementation mechanism of the programme is perceived here as a catalyst for the teachers to implement this programme, and thereby, for the desired changes to happen. Consequently, teachers' satisfaction (as discussed in Chapter Six) with the implementation mechanism enables educational change to occur. The study

demonstrates that giving the teachers a role in preparing for their reciprocal visits helped them to apply the programme positively. This positive engagement in turn has the effect of developing their professional skills in order to increase their pupils' academic achievement.

The study shows that the implementation of the peer coaching programme was successful because teachers had a positive role to play in this, as they were given the opportunity to make their own decisions regarding all aspects of the observations (as discussed in Chapter Five). This positive role for teachers had been missing in the previous peer observation programmes conducted by the same teachers.

The data shows that giving the teachers the opportunity to take ownership of the implementation mechanisms of peer coaching programme helped to increase their enthusiasm for applying the programme positively and developing their professional skills (Chapter Five - Theme One).

It has been found that any strategy which is imposed by an authority such as the Ministry of Education may not be well received by teachers because it is an extra demand on their time. However, the peer coaching strategy (Chapter Five) did not meet with such resistance because it was implemented according to the teachers' preferences regarding arrangements. The fact that the teachers were given freedom to interpret a directive, in terms of applying changes imposed by the Ministry of Education (positive observation 4, page 138), helped them to implement those changes. This autonomy to determine the implementation mechanisms of the implemented peer coaching programme was therefore one of the keys to its success.

In response to the data collected, the study found how the teachers may be motivated. Thus, the data enabled me to extend and refine Wagner and French's model of motivation, work satisfaction, and change in practice (2010). The study gave more detailed information on how to enhance teachers' motivation to implement CPD strategies effectively. Such knowledge may be used to inform planners of future CPD programmes with a view to increasing teacher involvement and satisfaction.

8.5. Suggestions for further research

As far as I am aware, no study has been carried out at any educational level in the Kingdom of Bahrain or in any other countries in the Arabian Gulf region such as the present one. I believe that much remains to be done in different contexts, different schools and different countries, particularly concerning teachers' participation in the implementation mechanism, in order to verify my claim about its importance and effectiveness in peer coaching practice.

Moreover, research needs to be conducted to find out if teachers continue to implement the peer coaching programme, and then to evaluate its impact on pupils' achievement, to study the outcomes of this approach in different contexts, and thus, to verify if this programme is applicable in these contexts. It is in this direction that concerted efforts should be made to develop both teaching techniques and appropriate observation skills.

A common concern should be the development of the peer coaching programme at all levels. This is in order to ensure that our teachers are given the opportunity of being responsible for the implementation mechanism of the peer coaching programme, as well as executing it according to their needs.

THERE ARE TWO MAIN STRATEGIES we can adopt to improve the quality of life. The first is to try making external conditions match our goals. The second is to change how we experience external conditions to make them fit our goals better.

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1992: 43)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قَالَ سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِأَخِيكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطَانًا (35)

صدق الله العظيم

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

***We will strengthen your arm through your brother, and give
you both power (35)***

Allah, the Almighty has spoken the truth

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Appendix – A

Provisional Plan
First year (2009/2010)

Date	Activity		Place
Oct 09	Induction and registration		UEA
Nov 09	Literature Review	Early field work preparation (<u>informal</u>):	Bahrain
Dec 09		Visiting the schools, meeting teachers, meeting head teachers, visiting the directorate of training and professional development	
Jan 10		Identify research methodology type	
Feb 10		Proposal to Ethics Committee	UEA
Mar 10	Update Lit. Rev. + first draft	Research methodology in details:	UEA
Apr 10		Tool -1: questionnaires for teachers before peer coaching / pilot study (validity / reliability)	
May 10			
Jun 10			
July 10			
Aug 10		Early field work (<u>formal</u>):	Bahrain
Sept 10		Letter to the Min of Edu in Bahrain from UEA	
		Letter from the Bahraini Min of Edu to the cooperative state primary schools, my research context. Visiting the mentioned schools (applying tool 1 / questionnaires)	

Second year (2010/2011)

Date	Activity	Place
Oct 10	Gathering and analysing the data.	UEA
Nov 10		
Dec 10	Design a peer coaching programme + ethics committee + pilot test + translation + Bahrain Min of Edu approval to access schools	UEA
Jan 11		
Feb 11	Start my field work:	Bahrain
Mar 11	Implementing tool-2	
Apr 11	Teachers' training:	
May 11	Explain what is peer coaching – the aim of practicing it – how it helps in professional development – benefits of peer coaching (financially – students achievement) – the role of each teacher while coaching each other- the importance of meeting before observing / observation / and the feedback after observing)	
Jun 11	Head teachers:	
July 11	Cooperate + organize specific time for the coach and coached for feedback.	
Aug 11	Reflective journals tool-3	
Sep 11	Teaches write their experience while practicing peer coaching.	Bahrain
Oct 11	Questionnaire tool-4: to be applied to the same teachers at the end of the implementing peer coaching programme	Bahrain
Nov 11	Gathering and analyzing the data.	UEA
Dec 11		

Updating Research Methodology

Research Tool-6: Research diary

Third year (2011/2012)

Date	Activity	Place
<p>From Sep 11 to Apr 12</p>	<p>Tool-3+4: Analysing</p> <p>Tool-5: interviews: (to the same teachers) Their perspectives</p> <p>Do they find it easier/ Does it help them in teaching – does it improve students' achievement ...)</p> <p>Analysing + writing up + finalizing</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Bahrain</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">UEA</p>
<p>May 2012</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">V I V A</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UEA</p>

Appendix B

Consent form - Questionnaire

Title of Project: The Role of Peer Coaching Teaching in Teachers' Professional Development in Bahrain Primary State Schools.

Name of Researcher: Suhaila Ebrahim Rajab

Position and Contact Address of Researcher:

The United Kingdom:

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Please put (x)
in the box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

=====

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
.....

Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
.....

Appendix C

Respondent's sheet - Questionnaire

Dear Respondent:

The researcher would be grateful if you would take part in her study by answering the questions in the attached questionnaire, an instrument of the study conducted by the researcher at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, the United Kingdom, under the title: "The Role of Peer Coaching Teaching in Teachers' Professional Development in Bahrain Primary State Schools".

A brief summary of the study:

The study at hand attempts to explore whether peer coaching teaching is an effective strategy for the second primary level in the first cycle of Basic Education in Bahraini state schools from the point of view of the Class-System teachers, the senior teachers, and the head teachers.

Objectives of the study:

The study aims to act the role of peer coaching in the primary state schools, revealing the effectiveness of this method of training in the area of teachers' professional development in Bahrain.

Dear colleagues,

The researcher confirms that the information you provide in this form will be dealt with confidentiality and will not be used for any other purposes except the present study.

The researcher appreciates your response to the questionnaire, and hopes that the teachers, students, and all the staff working in the field of teaching and learning in the state schools in Bahrain, will benefit from the results of this study.

For more information and any questions, please contact the Head of the School;

Dr. Nalini Boodhoo
Tel +44 1603 592620
e-mail: n.boodhoo @uea.ac.uk

Or contact the researcher;

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Best wishes,

The researcher,
Suhaila Ebrahim Rajab

Appendix D

Questionnaire 1

The role of peer coaching teaching in teachers' professional development
in the Kingdom of Bahrain primary state schools

I – Background Information:

Kindly answer the following questions by putting (x) in the appropriate box:

1	Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
2	Type of school	<input type="checkbox"/> Boys' school	<input type="checkbox"/> Girls' school
3	Occupation	<input type="checkbox"/> Head teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Class teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior teacher
4	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 30 years <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 years <input type="checkbox"/> 51 and over
5	Qualification	<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Master	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
6	Years of class teaching experience	<input type="checkbox"/> 1– 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 7 – 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 – 6 years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 and over
7	Years of experience with peer observation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1– 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 7 – 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 – 6 years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 and over

II – Questionnaire items:

Below are some factors correlated to peer coaching strategy (peer observation while teaching). Each factor consists of some related items.

Kindly circle your opinion on the scale:

1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= undecided 4= agree
5=strongly agree

Factor	Items	Measure					N/A
A – Teachers practice peer observation teaching:	1/ I feel motivated when having someone observing me while I am teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	
	2/ Practicing peer observation strategy causes delay in the school curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	
	3/ Practicing peer observation contributes in developing teaching and learning process.	1	2	3	4	5	
	4/ It is difficult to me practicing peer observation because I am overwhelmed by the amount of administrative work which is not related to teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	
	5/ Lots of time and efforts expended in preparing for peer observation.	1	2	3	4	5	
	6/ I learn from my colleagues more than workshops.	1	2	3	4	5	
	7/ It is difficult to me practicing peer observation because I am not the one who chooses teachers to observe my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	
	8/ Peer observation is for exchanging expertise.	1	2	3	4	5	
	9/ I have specific time for feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	
	10/ It is difficult to me practicing peer observation because I am involved in many school committees, activities and projects.	1	2	3	4	5	
	11/ Peer observation is evaluative.	1	2	3	4	5	
	12/ I feel worried and stressed when having someone observing me while I am teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	
	13/ Practicing peer observation decreases pupils' participation in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	

Factor	Items	Measure					N/A
B- Peer observation strategy as a tool for continuous professional development	14/ Peer observation enhances and enriches methods of instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	
	15/ I benefit from reciprocal visits implemented by school teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	
	16/ Peer observation in my school is not to enhance and improve the teachers' professional development.	1	2	3	4	5	
	17/ Peer observation helps me to gain new ideas from watching my colleagues teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	
	18/ Peer observation doesn't facilitate the challenges which I face in implementing the new curricula.	1	2	3	4	5	
	19/ Peer observation improves and develops the vocational career of new teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	
	20/ I do not benefit from reciprocal visits implemented by cooperative school teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	
	21/ Peer observation improves and develops the vocational career of in-service teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	
	22/ Peer observation is not based on my professional needs.	1	2	3	4	5	

Appendix E

Questionnaire 2

The role of peer coaching teaching in teachers' professional development
in the Kingdom of Bahrain primary state schools

I – Background Information:

Kindly answer the following questions by putting (x) in the appropriate box:

1	Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
2	Type of school	<input type="checkbox"/> Boys' school	<input type="checkbox"/> Girls' school
3	Occupation	<input type="checkbox"/> Head teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Class system teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior teacher
4	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 30 years <input type="checkbox"/> 41 – 50 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 40 years <input type="checkbox"/> 51 and over
5	Qualification	<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Master	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
6	Years of class teaching experience	<input type="checkbox"/> 1– 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 7 – 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 – 6 years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 and over
7	Years of experience with peer observation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1– 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 7 – 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 – 6 years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 and over

II – Questionnaire items:

Below are some factors correlated to peer coaching strategy (peer observation while teaching). Each factor consists of some related items.

Kindly circle your opinion on the scale:

1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= undecided 4= agree
5=strongly agree

Factor	Items	Measure					N/A
A – Teachers practice peer observation teaching	1/ Practicing peer observation strategy causes delay in the school curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	
	2/ Practicing peer observation contributes in developing teaching and learning process.	1	2	3	4	5	
	3/ Teachers find difficulties in practicing peer observation because they are involved in the administrative work which is not related to teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	
	4/ Teachers learn from their colleagues more than workshops.	1	2	3	4	5	
	5/ Peer observation is for exchanging expertise.	1	2	3	4	5	
	6/ Teachers are provided with specific time for feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	
	7/ Teachers find difficulties in practicing peer observation because they are involved in many school committees, activities and projects.	1	2	3	4	5	
	8/ Peer observation is evaluative.						

Factor	Items	Measure					N/A
B- Peer observation strategy as a tool for continuous professional development	9/ Peer observation enhances and enriches methods of instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	
	10/ Teachers benefit from reciprocal visits implemented by school teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	
	11/ Peer observation in my school is not to enhance and improve the teachers' professional development.	1	2	3	4	5	
	12/ Practicing peer observation helps teachers gain new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	
	13/ Peer observation doesn't facilitate the challenges which the teacher face in implementing the new curricula.	1	2	3	4	5	
	14/ Peer observation improves and develops the vocational career of new teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	
	15/ I believe that reciprocal visits carried out by cooperating schools are not beneficial.	1	2	3	4	5	
	16/ Peer observation improves and develops the vocational career of in-service teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	
	17/ Peer observation is not based on teacher's professional needs.	1	2	3	4	5	

C – Teachers' training:

Kindly answer the following questions by putting (x) in the appropriate box:

18 / Did you access training courses related to peer observation skills? Yes No

If your answer is **yes**, Please fill out the data in the following table.

Field of training	Course	Duration	Date	Place
Special training course(s) for peer observation skills				

19/ Did the class system teachers teaching the second primary level in your school access training courses related to peer observation skills? Yes No

20 / Did you access training courses about giving and receiving feedback skills? Yes No

If your answer is **yes**, Please fill out the data in the following table.

Field of training	Course	Duration	Date	Place
Special training course(s) about skills of giving and receiving feedback				

21/ Did the class system teachers teaching the second primary level in your school access training courses related to peer observation skills? Yes No

Appendix F

Consent form

Title of Project: The Role of Peer Coaching Teaching in Teachers' Professional Development in Bahrain Primary State Schools.

Name of Researcher: Suhaila Ebrahim Rajab

Position and Contact Address of Researcher:

The United Kingdom:

School of Education and Lifelong Learning
University of East Anglia
Norwich – NR4 7TJ
Tel +441603592614
Fax +441603593446
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/edu>

Kingdom of Bahrain:

Villa 1154, Road 3433, Block 734
Mobile no: 39644817
House no: 17644817
Email: s.rajab@uea.ac.uk

Please put (x)
in the box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree the interview consultation being audio recorded.

5. I agree to be observed in my class by colleagues participating in the programme.

6. I agree to use quotations from the observation sheet and the reflective journal as anonymised for the thesis.

=====

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
.....

Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
.....

Appendix G

Participant's sheet

Dear participant:

The researcher would be grateful if you would take part in her study and be a member of the peer coaching study teams, as well as to practice whatever changes the faculty has decided to implement. The peer coaching programme will be implemented by the researcher at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, the United Kingdom, under the title: "The Role of Peer Coaching Teaching in Teachers' Professional Development in Bahrain Primary State Schools".

A brief summary of the study:

The study at hand attempts to explore whether peer coaching teaching is an effective strategy for the second primary level in the first cycle of Basic Education in Bahraini state schools.

Objectives of the study:

The study aims to act the role of peer coaching in the primary state schools, revealing the effectiveness of this method of training in the area of teachers' professional development in Bahrain.

The researcher confirms that the information you provide in this form will be dealt with anonymity and will not be used for any other purposes except the present study.

The researcher appreciates your participation in the peer coaching study team, and hopes that the teachers, students, and all the staff working in the field of teaching and learning in the state schools in Bahrain, will benefit from the results of this study.

If you have any complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Head of the School;

Dr. Nalini Boodhoo
Tel +44 1603 592620
e-mail: n.boodhoo @uea.ac.uk

Or contact the researcher;

Suhaila Ebrahim Rajab, PhD Student
School of Education and Lifelong Learning
University of East Anglia
Norwich
NR4 7TJ
Tel +441603592614 – Fax +441603593446
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/edu>

Best wishes,

The researcher,
Suhaila Ebrahim Rajab

PEER COACHING

Prepared by
Suhaila Ebrahim Rajab

WHO

```
graph TD; WHO([WHO]) --> TT[Teacher + Teacher]; WHO --> TGT[Teacher + Group of teachers]; WHO --> GT[Group of teachers]; TT --> Bottom([Peer coaching is a non-hierarchical structure...]); TGT --> Bottom; GT --> Bottom;
```

Teacher
+
Teacher

Teacher
+
Group of
teachers

Group of
teachers

- Peer coaching is a non-hierarchical structure (only teachers of similar status, but not supervisors, principles, senior teachers or any person holding positions of appraisal or evaluation take part)

- Peer coaching can be used in a larger context such as a school or a grade level.

WHY



- To improve teaching quality.
- To enhance a teacher's promotional opportunities, professional practice and career.
- To build new skills.
- To make teachers more efficient.
- To increase a teacher's self confidence.
- To increase a teacher's motivation.
- To keep teachers in touch with the latest methods and strategies.
- To renew a teacher's professional practice.
- To increase pupils' achievement.

HOW

Teachers ...

- observe each other's classes
- discuss and share their teaching practices
- promote, assist and support collegiality
- guide their own learning and development

The coaching relationship is built on ...

- confidentiality
- trust

The programme ...

- may be used in a larger context such as a school or a grade level
- focuses on improvement of instruction rather than on exposing weaknesses.



PROCEDURES

Observed teacher asks her/his colleague to pop into the observed teacher's classroom to observe and focus on certain points (previously agreed on by the observed and the observer in a pre-conference meeting) which affect the teaching and learning process; then give feedback.

Observed teacher asks her/his colleague if s/he (observer) would come and observe her/him as s/he (observed) is facing some specific professional difficulties.


Observed teacher asks her/his colleague(s) (group of teachers as observers) to pop into the observed teacher's classroom to share some successful practices and watch some new techniques s/he is practicing which, for example, facilitate the teaching and learning process.

Observed teacher, who already went to a workshop and would like to transfer what s/he learnt, invites her/his colleague(s) to observe her/him, while s/he is practicing what s/he learnt in her classroom.

Group of teachers work together to identify and solve a specific problem.



Teachers



Peer coaching
members



Senior teachers

The role of the teacher

The teacher who is requesting an observation (to observe or be observed) should determine her/his own needs, such as:

- Facing some professional difficulties
- Practicing new techniques and would like her/his colleagues to learn these techniques
- Conveying what s/he learnt from a workshop to her/his colleagues

The teacher who is requesting an observation (to observe or be observed) chooses her/his own peer coaching partner, or may ask for the assistance of the senior teacher in finding a suitable partner .

The observed teacher determines the possible dates and times for observation in consultation with senior teacher.

The teacher who is requesting an observation (to observe or be observed) will inform the senior teacher about the need for another teacher to replace him/her.

A trusting relationship between the observer and the observed. They should act as colleagues while sharing their professional knowledge and skills.

The observer gathers information as requested by her/his colleague (they are not there to judge professional practice).

The role of the senior teacher

Administrative and organizational support
Emotional support


Administrative and
organizational support

1- Senior teacher is responsible for organising sessions for teachers to develop their observation skills.

2- Senior teacher is responsible for organising sessions for teachers to build skills for giving and receiving feedback.

3- Senior teacher holds a meeting with the teachers, explaining to them that s/he (senior teacher) is responsible for arranging the following with the administration:

- Time for feedback.
- Place for feedback.
- A replacement teacher for the class whose teacher is involved in the peer coaching process.
- Contact cooperating schools to arrange for observation if appropriate.



Emotional support

Senior teacher holds a meeting with the teachers to stress:

A- Encouragement:

- Senior teacher encourages the teachers to practice peer coaching;
- Senior teacher reassures teachers that s/he will help them overcome the obstacles they face.
- Senior teacher conveys to teachers that peer coaching is implemented to enhance and improve the learning and teaching process, and not because what they are doing is incorrect.

B- Confidentiality:

Senior teacher reassures teachers that all the information obtained during peer coaching situations is confidential and will remain completely between teachers as critical friends, and is not related to teachers' evaluation or appraisal.

Observation sheet

This is a confidential form to be shared and utilized by the peer coaching partners

Pre-observation

The teacher who is requesting observation (to observe or be observed) will fill in this part, which determines the focus of the observation.

Date: _____ Time: _____

Place of pre-observation meeting:

Name of observer:

Name of observed:

Purpose of observation:

Observation

The teacher who has been requested to observe her/his colleague will fill in this part. S/He will observe and record observable behaviours and actions.

Date: _____ Time: _____

Place of observation (classroom):

What is observed:

Post-observation

The teacher who observes her/his colleague will fill in this part as feedback. The observer does not evaluate the lesson, but helps the teacher to become more reflective about the session.

Date: _____ Time: _____

Place of post observation:

Comments:

Reflective journals

The observed teacher is required to complete the reflective journal with the following information.

Date of observation:

Time and place of observation:

Name of observer:

Name of observed:

Purpose of observation:

Purpose achieved:

Yes

No

Most beneficial:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Barriers encountered:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Most beneficial / Barriers encountered:

- Delay in the school curriculum.
- It enhances and enriches methods of instruction.
- Facilitates the challenges which I face in implementing the new curricula.
- Pupils' participation is/is not decreased.
- Enhances and improves my professional development.
- I feel motivated when I have someone observing me while I am teaching.
- I have/do not have specific time for feedback.
- Improves and develops my vocational career as new/in-service teacher.
- I exchange expertise with my colleague.
- I feel worried and stressed because I have someone observing me while I am teaching.
- I gained new ideas from watching my colleagues teaching
- Well-/Not well-organised by the administration ...
- I feel motivated because I choose my peer for observation.
- I learn from my colleagues more than workshops.
- I benefit from reciprocal visits implemented by school teachers or by cooperative school teachers.
- Distraction from ...

Teachers accessed training courses related to peer observation skills/giving and receiving feedback ...

- The course helped/didn't help me in practicing peer coaching.
- Others.

Appendix I

Consent form - Interview

Title of Project: The Role of Peer Coaching Teaching in Teachers' Professional Development in Bahrain Primary State Schools.

Name of Researcher: Suhaila Ebrahim Rajab

Position and Contact Address of Researcher:

The United Kingdom:

School of Education and Lifelong Learning
University of East Anglia
Norwich – NR4 7TJ
Tel +441603592614
Fax +441603593446
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/edu>

Kingdom of Bahrain:

Villa 1154, Road 3433, Block 734
Mobile no: 39644817
House no: 17644817
Email: s.rajab@uea.ac.uk

Please put (x)
in the box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree the interview consultation being audio recorded.

5. I agree to use quotations from the interview as anonymised for the thesis.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

.....

.....

.....

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

.....

.....

.....

Appendix J

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
School of Education & Lifelong Learning
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH PROJECT

This form is for all staff and students in the School of Education who are planning research that requires ethical approval. Applicants are advised to consult the school and university guidelines before preparing their application.

Completed applications (including the required attachments) must be submitted electronically to Dawn Corby d.corby@uea.ac.uk

1. APPLICANT DETAILS	
Name:	Suhaila Rajab
School:	Education and Lifelong Learning
Current Status (delete as applicable):	PGR Student
If Student, name of primary supervisor and programme of study:	
Dr Anne Cockburn	Doctor of Philosophy (full time study)
Contact telephone number:	07540304642
Email address:	Suhaila.binrajab@gmail.com

2. PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT DETAILS:	
Title:	The Role of Peer Coaching Teaching in Teachers' Professional Development in Bahrain Primary State Schools
Start/End Dates:	1 Oct 2009 – 30 Sept 2012

3. FUNDER DETAILS (IF APPLICABLE):	
Funder:	Ministry of Education – Kingdom of Bahrain.
	Has funding been applied for? YES NO Application Date:
	Has funding been awarded? YES NO
Will ethical approval also be sought for this project from another source? YES NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	If "yes" what is this source?

3. DECLARATION:

I am satisfied that all ethical issues have been identified and that satisfactory procedures are in place to deal with those issues in this research project. I will abide by the procedures described in this form.

Name of Applicant:	Suhaila Rajab
Date:	30 June 2011

Supervisor declaration (for student research only)

I have discussed the ethics of the proposed research with the student and am satisfied that all ethical issues have been identified and that satisfactory procedures are in place to deal with those issues in this research project.

Name of Supervisor:	Dr Anne Cockburn
Date:	30 June 2011

4. ATTACHMENTS:

The following should be attached to your application as necessary – please indicate if attached and list any additional materials:

- Additional field work Project Information Sheet (for participants)
 Participant Consent Form(s) Other Supporting Documents

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

Considered by Chair: _____ (Date)

Considered at Committee Meeting: _____ (Date)

Minute reference:

Recommendation:

Accept		Amend and Resubmit	
Amend		Reject	

Comments:

Appendix K

Interview transcripts

Yellow School 1

Interviewee: Dana

Interviewer: Suhaila

Wednesday, July 13, 2011 – 8:00 pm – mobile.

Suhaila: Have you done any observation before? And how was the procedure?

Dana: Yes. I did lots of observations, but not like the peer coaching programme. The application of the peer coaching programme was very different to what we did before. We, the teachers, were used to being observed by the senior teacher, the head teacher, the deputy head teacher, or supervisors from the Ministry of Education. Besides, whenever they decided to come to observe us, they would invite the teachers to accompany them. Sometimes they would invite teachers from neighbouring schools, cooperative schools, to accompany them as observers. However, they visited us for assessment, while the teachers visited us for reciprocal expertise.

The visits were not based on the teachers' needs, as was applied in the peer coaching programme. The visits were based on who was free and could accompany the group for observation. Sometimes we didn't like joining the group. We didn't want to observe even if we were free, simply because it was our free time. In addition, we didn't need to observe. Sometimes we felt as if we were forced to accompany the group for observation. The funny thing is that they didn't force us, but we were forced to go. For example, when the senior teacher or the head teacher or any observer decided to observe a certain teacher, the senior teacher used to call the teachers and invite them for that observation. Moreover, she invited them to accompany her or accompany the head teacher. Here, we were allowed to say that we didn't want to join the observation team, but we found it inappropriate to refuse the participation as it might affect our annual report. The senior teacher and the administration always encouraged reciprocal visits between the teachers so they can exchange expertise. Those reciprocal

visits were not held only by teachers, but also by the senior teacher, or the supervisor from the Ministry, or the head teacher, as they take advantage of these visits to assess the teachers' performance. At the same time, they invited us to observe to exchange expertise. And of course, the observed teacher would be informed by the senior teacher of the name of the observers, the day and date of observation, and also the time and which lesson. The senior teacher and the administration arranged everything for the observation, but no one asked us, the teachers, what we needed to observe. Although these reciprocal visits were required by the administration and the Ministry of Education for teachers' professional development, they were not welcomed by the teachers.

When you came to our school with your new 'peer coaching programme', and when the senior teacher called us for a meeting with you and for a workshop, my colleagues and I didn't want to take part. We were annoyed because we thought that the programme you brought was another kind of programme from the Ministry, and that we would be forced to apply it. We thought that it would have a negative impact on our pupils' achievement. That is why we were upset and not happy when we came to the workshop. But when you started explaining what the programme was, we found that it sounded different from the other kinds of observations we were used to applying. That is why when I came out of the workshop, I was wondering if we could implement the programme like you told us. Then I said to myself 'why not?'

The Ministry of Education was encouraging us to do reciprocal visits to exchange expertise between teachers, and in fact we needed these visits, but not in the way that the school was preparing it to us. So why not apply peer coaching programme and get some benefit from these visits? We, as a group of teachers, have a strong relationship with each other. We have a strong rapport with each other. Therefore, as long as the visits were based on our agreement, we didn't find any difficulties or any trouble in observing each other. Furthermore, the psychological comfort helped us in visiting each other

Suhaila: What were the procedures of the previous observations?

Dana: As I mentioned earlier, the head teacher or the administration were responsible for preparing for the observations. Therefore, we used to go and observe without identifying the purpose of the visit. We knew that it was for reciprocal expertise, but what specifically? We were not the ones who decided what, what kind of expertise I need, what I need to learn from my colleague. The other concern was the feedback issue. Whenever we had free time, we would sit and talk to each other for nearly ten minutes, but if we were not free, it was not important to arrange for a meeting for feedback. The reason was that the teacher would get the main feedback from the head teacher or the senior teacher but not from us, the teachers. Moreover, the observation notes we wrote while observing would be given to the senior teacher and nothing remained with us. So nothing was documented and kept by the teachers; everything was documented by the teachers but kept by the senior teacher. Now, in the peer coaching programme, the visits became meaningful. We didn't observe or be observed before identifying the purpose of the observation. Moreover, the feedback was between us the teachers, and the observation sheets also remained with us, the teachers. No one else can look at the observation sheets.

Suhaila: On what basis did you choose the observing teacher? On the other hand was the peer coaching programme helpful and has it had an impact on your practice?

Dana: From our daily discussion in the teachers' room, I can notice strengths and weaknesses in my colleagues. And of course I know what I need to improve and the points that I need to strengthen. So firstly I choose the teacher who is strong in the point I need. Secondly, although we have a strong rapport with each other, I ask for my colleague's permission to visit her, or she asks for my permission to visit me.

I didn't like to be observed before because I always thought that the head teacher or the senior teacher was visiting me to observe the weakness in my teaching. And I always thought that the teachers who participated in the observation only came to criticize. That is why the old visits hampered relations between the

teachers a little. Moreover, we were forced to agree to observe or be observed, while now the procedure is more flexible. The visits in the peer coaching programme are based on both parties consenting; therefore the relationship between the teachers became stronger and friendlier.

The peer coaching experience that we have put into practice now made us think that we are all teachers, we are all alike, and we work as one group. Being critical of my colleague or not, in the end we are all working together for the benefit of the pupils and to increase their achievement. Furthermore, if teachers talk to each other in any manner, eventually it becomes a friendly way as there is no assessment and no judgment. I mean, what happened inside the classroom was between me and my colleague; I will not get worried that maybe she will talk with the others about what happened inside the classroom. I will not get worried that what happened inside the classroom will affect my annual report or will affect my grades.

The differences between the two observation procedures were that in peer coaching I felt myself. I felt psychological comfort when I sat and discussed with my colleagues our needs. We met each other before and after the observation. While in the previous observation, we had a lot of preparation which led us to be fatigued. Visits were more tiring because of the amount of materials we had to prepare for the lesson, as it had to be a model lesson.

While in peer coaching, I felt the situation was simple. I felt, as I said earlier, psychological comfort while teaching. Even the suggestions and the recommendations were given more simply. Maybe we found it simpler because we liked it. I noticed that even the way we talked to each other changed. For example, we said to each other 'Try to do it that way', or 'Come and observe my teaching; maybe it will work with your pupils'.

In addition, peer coaching helped me a lot when I had ideas but I found some difficulties in delivering them to the pupils. For example, the observation (**yellow 6**) held between me and my colleague Batool, where I needed the help of my

colleague. The lesson was about time, how to tell the time, as well as how to write it, and how to use clocks, but I found some difficulties in teaching this lesson to the pupils. At the same time I heard from Batool that she was happy about the lesson she taught her pupils and the materials she used in her teaching, such as the smart board, and that the pupils were very interactive in the lesson. Batool was very clever in using the smart board in the classroom. So I asked her if I could visit her and observe her while teaching the same lesson.

Batool agreed to be observed; therefore, we sat together and identified the purpose of the observation together. The purpose was 'Employing technology in teaching the clock lesson'. I observed the lesson and recorded what I observed in the observation sheet. I observed a practical application, where I noted several points and benefited from those points. For example, I benefited from the diversity of the learning strategies she used in the classroom. I liked the way she employed the smart board in teaching. She followed the narrative style of 'story telling' on the smart board. She told them a story of a girl who was eight years old, and what time she wakes up every day, washes her face; eats breakfast, and so on, till she goes to sleep at night. As she was telling them the story, the pupils were listening and looking at the pictures on the smart board. The beautiful thing was how teacher Batool was linking old expertise with new expertise. She started showing them a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a circle. She showed them the circle and then coloured the area of a quarter on the circle as a quarter of an hour. She did the same thing with the $\frac{1}{2}$, as half of an hour. Here teacher Dana correlated the concept of fractions such as $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$, which she had taught earlier in a maths lesson, to the science subject through the clock lesson. At the end of the story, she linked what happened in the story to the pupils' life by asking them what time they woke up every day and what time they went to school, and so on. At the end, she correlated the lesson to the subject of Arabic language by asking the pupils to build sentences orally, and then writing them as a paragraph.

After the observation we met for feedback. Although I was the one who asked Batool if I could observe her while she was teaching, I also provided some

suggestions. For example, I suggested enriching the self-learning corner by providing the corner with tangible activities like clocks and watches for pupils to perfect reading the time. I also suggested using the electronic lesson prepared by teacher Batool in the other classes when teaching the same lesson. I also mentioned in the reflective journal that there was no specific time for feedback. What I meant was that I needed more time for feedback. I sat with Batool for only ten minutes, but I needed more than that. Sometimes ten minutes is enough but sometimes it is not, so there should be more flexibility in the time.

Administration should reduce a bit from the time allocated for the activities which increases the burden on teachers, and instead, to give an adequate time for teachers in order to achieve a fruitful feedback meeting. It is indicated in all the reflective journals how time was an issue for us. It even caused delay in the curriculum.

Suhaila: Do you mean that putting peer coaching into practice caused delay in the curriculum?

Dana: No, I meant that most of the time was devoted for the activities imposed by the administration, and the time allocated for the feedback was not sufficient. It was not enough for an efficient discussion. All the teachers faced the same problem; spending a lot of time on administration activities.

In the peer coaching programme I felt I was responsible for what I am doing, responsible for what I need, and what I want to improve. When I find myself in need of developing or changing my way of teaching a specific subject, I discuss the problem with my colleagues and find solutions to it. In this situation, I identify the problem and then the solution. I didn't wait for the senior teacher to decide what I needed and who to observe.

Moreover, I didn't feel shy asking teacher Batool about the strategies she used in teaching her pupils about how to read and write the time. I didn't feel shy because we needed each other. She helped me in using the smart board in the

“clock” lesson and how she correlated that lesson to other subjects... and I helped her in employing the brainstorm strategy (**yellow 9**) in the classroom.

Observation (9), teacher Batool and I met before the observation and identified the purpose of observation which was ‘to employ the brainstorm strategy’. She wanted to see a practical application in teaching by using the brainstorm strategy. Therefore, I invited her to observe my way of teaching. Batool recorded what she observed in the practical application; such as the increase in pupils’ motivation to participate, as well as correlating the practical situation to the real expertise. Here I presented some problems and the pupils put forward some good ideas to solve these problems and clarify them. You can notice from Batool’s reflective journal how she mentioned the benefits she got from this observation. She said that the observation taught her a new strategy and how to apply it. At the same time it enhances and improves the teaching methods, and develops teachers’ performance.

Observation sheet (**yellow 4**) was between me and teacher Arwa. The senior teacher encouraged us to put collaborative learning into practice. At that time, I was facing difficulties in teaching verbal problem-solving in the subject of Maths. Therefore, teacher Arwa invited me to observe how she applied collaborative learning in teaching verbal problem-solving in the Maths lesson.

Suhaila: Do you have any suggestions or additions you would like to add to the peer coaching programme?

Dana: No, but I hope the programme would be authenticated by the Ministry of Education and be applied at all the schools in Bahrain, and thus, school administrations would be forced to give the teachers sufficient time to implement the programme.

Blue School 1

Interviewee: Sharifa

Interviewer: Suhaila Rajab

Thursday, July 14, 2011 – 9:45 am – My house.

Suhaila: Have you done any peer observations before? And how was the procedure?

Sharifa: I didn't practice any peer observation as I am a volunteer and I do not have any experience in teaching within the school. I used to teach private classes for primary pupils for the children of my friends, neighbours and relatives. I teach them and in turn they pay me money. So, up to now I have been giving private lessons at home for primary and intermediate levels. This is the first time for me teaching within school and in a classroom.

Suhaila: But did you have any idea about peer observation? Have you heard about teachers visiting their peers to exchange expertise and to develop their teaching strategies?

Sharifa: Actually as a beginner in teaching, I didn't know what these strategies were. But when I volunteered to teach as a service to the country, the senior teacher explained to me in general what is meant by class visitation and exchanging expertise between teachers, and then she told me that teachers teaching the second primary level will attend a particular workshop about peer coaching, a kind of peer observation, and that would help 'me' to learn a lot from my colleagues' methods of teaching and any kind of help which relates to the curriculum, class control, assessment and other things. So practicing the peer coaching programme was the first time for me to practice an observation strategy. This programme came at the appropriate time, when I really needed the help of my colleagues. What happened then was that I visited my colleague and observed her way of teaching and how she dealt with the pupils. Then I practiced what I learnt in my classroom. Moreover, I invited my colleague to observe my work and also to provide me with her feedback. I felt it was the perfect programme for teachers in my situation. In addition, the teachers were very helpful. I didn't have any experience teaching inside a classroom and I didn't know any methods of teaching. The programme helped me a lot in terms of asking for the help of my colleagues to observe me while teaching, as well as me being able to visit them and observe their way of teaching and benefit from their experience.

All the teachers helped me, and also the administration and the deputy head teacher. I would ask the teachers, I would refer to a particular thing and tell them that I didn't know what it was, and asked them 'Please can you explain it to me?'. For example, I was going to teach geography and I didn't know how to use the map while explaining the lesson. So I asked for the help of teacher Jenan. She taught me how to teach, the way of teaching that particular lesson, how to use the map in teaching and also how to use the whiteboard.

Suhaila: Did the teachers explain to you inside the classroom or outside?

Sharifa: Teacher Jenan explained that particular lesson to me in the teachers' room in her free time. She said "I am free now... I can help you". She took the map and said to me, "At the beginning, you have to explain to the pupils what Bahrain is... its location... in which part". She explained the way of teaching the lesson with all its details. Then I practiced everything I learnt from her in the class with my pupils.

Suhaila: Did you visit her in the classroom to observe her work?

Sharifa: At the beginning I was not allowed to visit the classrooms. The head teacher didn't allow us, the volunteer teachers, to visit the basic teachers in their classrooms. But then the deputy head teacher (I will never forget her role) explained the situation to the head teacher. She told her, "We have to allow the volunteer teachers to visit their colleagues because they need to observe their colleagues while teaching to learn some methods of teaching, to learn how to deal with the pupils, how to control the classroom, how to prepare their lesson plans and how to achieve the lesson's objectives", and so on. So then the head teacher agreed and allowed us to visit our colleagues. We even accompanied the supervisors from the Ministry of Education when they visited our school to observe our colleagues. But usually most of our observations were arranged between us, the teachers, between me and the teacher I asked for help.

Suhaila: Did you start teaching from the first day you volunteered?

Sharifa: No. At the beginning the head teacher said that we, the volunteer teachers, will be like supply teachers. But then the deputy head teacher said to me: 'Why you don't teach the pupils?'. She knows that I give private lessons at home and, at the same time, my son is studying in the same school and he was an outstanding student. So she told me "You are teaching private lessons and you know the content of the lessons, and we can see this in your son's results... so why you don't start teaching the class?". So I told her: "I am ready to teach if you wish. I basically came to help the students. I came to fill any vacancy in the school for the benefit of my sons and to help them. To help my children so they

do not miss the academic year. I came in response to the call of the nation and to serve the nation. Also, in this way the students would be completing their studies without any delay and not have to repeat this academic year. So she (the deputy head teacher) talked to the head teacher, who agreed. Thus, I started to teach in the classroom where I had been a supply teacher.

At the beginning, I was teaching Islamic Education as their teacher was absent. It is true that I know the content of the subject as I was teaching it as private lessons, at home, but I was poor in methods of teaching in classrooms. I didn't have any experience in teaching it inside the classroom. I did not know what ways there were to teach it. At first, I was very nervous. So I went and asked teacher Nawal about methods of teaching this subject. I told her that I felt afraid because I would teach inside a classroom. She told me not to be afraid, to come to her as she would teach me how to teach. So she started training me. She started with me from scratch. She took a piece of paper and wrote on it the objectives of the lesson and how to prepare for this lesson. She explained to me how I should start the lesson, and what to ask them at the beginning as an introduction to start the lesson. She explained to me how to teach them about the title of the lesson and why they gave it this title. The lesson was about the biography of Prophet Mohammed (peace is upon him). So she explained with all the details. I told her "I know everything you said because I explained this to my children at home, in the private lessons". She replied, "If you know all of this, then why are you afraid?".

That was at the beginning of my work with the school. Then the administration asked me to teach Year two as a class system teacher. I started to teach this class and practiced the peer coaching programme with my colleagues as a team.

I went to the class and I taught the pupils, who were happy. When the absent teacher returned to school the pupils went to her, telling her that they wanted me back. So I felt embarrassed and also had my tears in my eyes. I hugged them and told them "It is not nice to talk to your teacher like this. You should be happy because she is back. We are both your teachers. Whenever one is absent, the other will come and teach you". So the pupils went and apologized to the teacher.

I started practicing the programme from the beginning as I started teaching. To be honest, the programme came at the right time as I was truly in need of such a programme and such training. I benefited greatly from the programme because it helped me to manage teaching in the classroom. The programme helped me in controlling the pupils in the classroom. All of this was because of my visits and my continuous observations of the teachers and their continuous visits to my class, observing my performance and my way of teaching. They helped me in

everything. I became capable of setting goals for my lesson. I felt a significant difference between the first day I entered the classroom and the last day. Even the parents were happy with my way of teaching their children.

I had a very weak pupil in my classroom; I noticed that from the first day I taught in that classroom. But by the end of the academic year his performance level had changed from weak to good. Everyone was surprised. All the teachers and the administration were surprised. They asked me “What did you do Sharifa?” I told them that from the first day I noticed that he was weak. So the first step I took was to win his trust. Because he trusted me, he started to like the subject. If the kids like their teacher, they will like the subject, and if they like the subject, they will study it well and try their best to be good in it. But for a weak pupil like him, if you give him the text from the first day and tell him ” read” and of course he is unable to read, he will hate the subject. Or you give him an activity from the first day and he doesn’t know how to do it, he will always be negative towards the subject and towards school. At the beginning, I tried to find out his weaknesses so that I could help him. I started with him step by step. On parents’ day, his mother came to meet me and she was very happy. She couldn’t believe how her son had changed. Then I told her “Your son has changed because he wanted to”. If he liked the teacher and liked the school, of course he would like the subject and would like to study, and of course he will pass. Thank God he got a pass in all the subjects. I saw him the day he came to school for his certificate, and he was very happy.

Observation:

Sharifa and Sameera

One of my observations was with teacher Sameera. I told her “Please I want you to show me how to teach reading aloud and oral conversation. How do we explain the lesson? What must the pupils do? And what about the teacher?”. She told me “Come and visit my class”. I visited her and saw her way of reading the text. I observed how the teacher should be clear in her reading in front of the students. How she used the vowelling (pronunciation of the vowels) while reading. How she used the punctuation marks, such as question marks, the comma, the full stop, and so on... I observed how the pupils started reading after their teacher and how they gained experience from the teacher. I liked her technique in reading. She let one of the boys read and the others correct his mistakes. She let one of the boys be the leader, the reading leader to correct his friends. For example, one of the boys was reading and he made a mistake in the

word (الثعلب) 'fox'. He said the word correctly but the vowelning (pronunciation of the vowels) was wrong. So the leader stopped him. He said "One minute Ahmed, the pronunciation of this word is like this", and he pronounced the word for him. I liked teacher Sameera's way; first she read, then the cleverest pupil, then the other pupils but supervised by the leader. The leader was the cleverest boy at reading. This technique created a beautiful positive response among pupils. Then the teacher started explaining the lesson as a story and as if we lived the events of the story. Then she started to ask questions about each paragraph. She explained the story of 'the fox and the ant' in a very interesting way that attracted all the pupils' attention to the lesson. I asked her if I could practice the same way with her pupils, with the same group. She agreed. So the next day I tried that in her classroom and then I practiced it in my classroom. She observed me in both classes. Then we sat together for feedback. I liked the way she encouraged me. I felt I became capable in my teaching.

Moreover, I saw how she dealt with the pupils. She dealt with them as if they were her children, her sons. I never heard her shout at them. I didn't notice any inappropriate way while talking with the pupils. She made the children love her. If a pupil didn't know how to read, she went to his desk and try with him in a very soft way, encouraging him to pronounce the word without saying "No, this is wrong" so the pupil felt comfortable. He didn't feel embarrassed. I learnt from teacher Sameera how to deal with pupils, how to teach them to read aloud, and how to encourage them to read aloud. Another thing drew my attention; we were at the beginning of the lesson and the pupil opened his book at the last pages of the lesson. The teacher saw him, so she went to him and, in a very calm way, she told him "My son, we are at the beginning of the lesson. Why did you go to the end? We are here" - pointing to where we were in the book. I was surprised she didn't get angry. The other distraction was that another pupil was not paying attention to his colleague's reading. Teacher Sameera noticed him so she told him "Don't be distracted my son, pay attention to your colleague's reading" but in a calm way. I really liked her way of talking to pupils. I learnt about oral discussion from her also.

Suhaila: On what basis did you choose your partner?

Sharifa: Actually, all the teachers helped me. They provided me with all kinds of help regarding training, inside and outside the classroom. But I chose teacher Sameera for most of my observations, because her class was beside mine. It was the nearest classroom to mine. So it was easier for us to visit each other as I have a kind of disability. I can't walk easily; I walk slowly. Therefore, I found it better for me to visit her classroom instead of wasting time with my slow walking. So I told teacher Sameera about that and she helped me and welcomed me in

her classroom. I am on good terms with all the teachers. I didn't choose teacher Sameera because I felt more comfortable with her than the others, but because her classroom was the nearest.

Observation:

Sharifa and Jenan.

The other observation was between me and Teacher Jenan. It was about the using of 'al alshamseya' and 'al alqamareya'. As I told you earlier, I know the content of the lesson because I teach private lessons but I needed to know how to explain this to 30 pupils together, and what techniques to use to make it easier for a big group of students and how I can make the lesson attractive for them. I observed teacher Jenana and her interesting way of teaching. I also learnt other skills from that observation; like the way she wrote the objectives of the lesson on the smart board. So, whoever enters the classroom can see what the objectives of the lesson are. She also kept her preparation book with the lesson plans open on her table.

Suhaila: How did you arrange for your observation? Did you ask for the help of the administration, for example for a replacement teacher?

Sharifa: I didn't need the administration's help with a replacement teacher. If I have to observe my colleague in a certain lesson and I am not free in that time, I ask to change that period with the sports teacher, or the design and technology teacher, or the English teacher. So we arranged it between ourselves. We didn't need the administration.

Observation: (Sameera & Sharifa)

Suhaila: The observed teacher liked how you prepared for the introductory activity, how you started the lessons, and how you organised your pupils.

Sharifa: At the beginning I didn't start explaining the lesson but I played with them. I did competitions for them. I brought with me presents for the winners and for those who didn't win, to build a good relationship with them and to let them like me and like the lesson. During the games and competitions I explained to them about good manners; how I want them to be in the classroom, no disturbance, staying calm, well organised, and so on... So the teacher liked the way I dealt with my pupils.

Suhaila: Did you benefit from the peer coaching programme which you practiced in the school?

Sharifa: Yes. As I told you earlier, the programme came at the right time as I was really in need of it. By practicing peer coaching, I gained a lot of experience, new teaching strategies, how to control the classroom, and how to attract the pupils to the lesson. I learnt how to manage the time; the time I set in my lesson plan was enough for the lesson.

Suhaila: Do you have any suggestions or changes for the programme.

Sharifa: Not at all, because it was a very good programme. I personally benefited from the programme. It facilitated the teaching process in the classroom.

Blue School 2

Interviewee Salma

Interviewer: Suhaila Rajab

Monday, August 22, 2011 – 4:30pm – home.

Suhaila: Have you done any observations before? And what was the procedure?

Salma: Yes. We are required to exchange visits between each other for the exchange of experiences among teachers. So we have to visit and observe each other. The administration decides these visits. The senior teacher arranges our schedule of visits and we go for these visits. Sometimes, we accompany the senior teacher or the head teacher, and other times they are only between teachers. It is a scheme from the Ministry that all teachers should exchange visits, and thus, exchange expertise.

Suhaila: But were you in need of these visits? And were they done according to your needs?

Salma: In fact, some of these visits were very useful. For example, once I visited a qualified and efficient teacher. I liked her lesson. I was dazzled by her performance. I liked the way she applies the e-lesson. Though I am not a new teacher, I felt that I really benefited from that visit and I needed it. I have six years experience as a class system teacher, I am not new to teaching. However, this school I am teaching in is now implementing the project of His Majesty the King, which is e-learning. I have one year of experience in it. The school is applying the smart board project, so it is necessary for us to visit each other to be more skilled in how to use it. Not all the schools implement this project, but the Ministry is now trying to apply this project in all the schools.

These visits, as I mentioned before, were required by the Ministry, and were planned for us. The senior teacher decides who needs these visits. For example, I only went once to the teacher I told you about and I didn't need to go again. Even the senior teacher said that I didn't need to visit that teacher again, because she, the senior

teacher, visited me and saw how I applied the lesson using the smart board. So she decided I didn't need more visits in that field.

The senior teacher is supposed to follow up her teachers' work. Therefore, through her visits to us, she sees the aspects that we need to develop and then she plans a schedule for us; who to visit, what lesson, what time to visit, and so on.

Suhaila: How were the visits applied?

Salma: To be honest, the visits upset the teachers. We have an improvement team in our school, so we are trained to receive any visitors and at any time. But the teachers are still not happy with it because they always have to be fully prepared for visitors.

We know that this team focuses on, and encourages teachers to apply collaborative learning. The team also want to know how we prepare activities for the pupils. Activities should be of three levels; high level, average, and low achieving level. We also bear in mind that the improvement team may visit us at any moment. Therefore, we are always prepared for all these kinds of activities. But, although we should be ready for any visit at any time, teachers still feel uncomfortable.

Suhaila: What do you mean by an improvement team in your school?

Salma: The improvement team relates to the programme of School Performance Improvement, which emerged from the School Review Unit, and that was affiliated to the Quality Assurance Authority of Education and Training. The School Review Unit is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the performance and the quality of education in government schools, and reporting them to determine the areas of strength and the areas that need improvement and development. Therefore, the School Performance Improvement programme has been launched. The improvement team is one of the committees that emerged from the programme to improve the performance of schools. Our school's standard was judged to be unsatisfactory, so the Ministry dedicated a team of professional educators and supervisors to monitor and improve the school's performance. We call this team the 'improvement team', and its members have the right to visit us and our classrooms at any time. So we are trained and prepared on the basis that the team can come and

visit the teachers at any time and without any prior appointment. We are ready for anyone that comes to visit us. It has been one year since the team began working with our school. Before that they used to inform the school about their visits, and the administration asked us to prepare an educational situation (to prepare for illustrating a lesson to be observed). Then they came and visited. Sometimes they didn't want special preparation for an educational situation but to visit the normal daily work of the teacher.

The old visits were more about assessment, and they calculated them as an achievement. For example, I say that I observed teachers or teachers observed me. Or that I invited teachers to observe me, they came and observed me and I observed them too. These were calculated as hours of experience for the teacher, whether it is a decision from the school or from the administration or the teacher. Hours of experience were added to me even if the visitor is the supervisor from the Ministry. Time is measured; for example, how long the supervisor stayed in my classroom. All of this is calculated by minutes and then recorded in my file as hours of experience.

Suhaila: Do you mean that the visits before the establishment of the improvement team with your school were based on assessment? I mean that the head teacher or the supervisor used to visit you for assessment?

Salma: Yes. They visited to assess teachers' performance. But the teachers accompanied them to increase their expertise.

Teachers sometimes came with the senior teacher, or with the supervisor or any one else from the administration to exchange expertise, and other times they came by themselves. I mean only teachers. For example, the head teacher informs the observed teacher that she will visit her; she tells her the date, the period, the time. So the teacher will be fully prepared for that observation. Or sometimes, the head teacher wanted to visit a certain teacher but she couldn't as she didn't have time to visit that teacher. But she found herself free at the time specified by the teachers to observe that particular teacher. So she joined the group of teachers to observe. Some of the teachers felt annoyed by these visits, but I didn't. It was normal for me to have visitors at any time. We must not forget that we should be fully prepared, as I said earlier, for any visitor and any unannounced visits to assess our performance.

Moreover, we are required to allow such visits. That is why it became something normal to me.

The visits were determined by the administration and not by the teacher, or not according to our needs. But after applying the peer coaching programme we found some differences as it is a flexible programme. The thing I like most in the programme is that it is based on the two partners. That is why I was encouraged to apply it. I choose my partner and I determine the time that I want to go for a visit, and according to my needs. Even if I have a class at that time, the administration prepares a replacement teacher for my pupils in my absence. I felt a lot of flexibility in the programme. The previous visits were imposed on us. They were held in our free hours. Actually we needed these free hours for correcting, for revising our lesson preparation, or make any changes in the preparation. So we have a lot of work to do in these free hours, but the administration told us to do the visits in these hours. They used to tell us: "You are free this period, so you can go and visit so and so, because she has such and such a lesson now".

The peer coaching programme helped me to determine the visit according to my needs. For example, in the field of collaborative learning between pupils; although I have experience in this field, I liked seeing how my colleagues were applying it. I wanted to compare their way of application to mine to find the most appropriate and most effective way for the application. I visited my colleague and I benefited from that visit.

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Observation: 10 - observer: Salma - observed: Jenan.

Suhaila: Here I noticed that you wrote 'activate new strategies'. Do you mean another strategy besides collaborative learning, and how?

Salma: Yes. As I mentioned, I visited the teacher to observe the way she practiced the collaborative learning strategy. Through the implementation of that strategy and

while she was teaching, I observed some interesting strategies. Different strategies than I expected to observe, and I liked them.

Suhaila: Can you give me more details about them?

Salma: I remember the teacher used the smart board in a reading lesson. She scanned the reading text on the smart board. Thus, the pupils looked at the smart board while reading aloud. Each pupil stood up and read. It encouraged them to read and, most of all, they were all concentrating on the reading. The teacher used the smart board for reading aloud in a very interesting way. She used the smart board in a smart way while I was letting each pupil look at his own book to read. I found her way was more attractive to the pupils.

Another strategy was the way she started applying collaborative learning and the way she ended it. I observed her using a small bell. She rang the bell to inform the pupils that it was the beginning of collaborating and working together. It was amazing. Each pupil knew his role, as if she had told them that the competition had started. Also, at the end she rang the bell again, informing them that the time was over, they had reached the 'finish line'. Each pupil also knew what to do. It was really wonderful. I hadn't done that before.

Suhaila: You mentioned also time management and reciprocal expertise.

Salma: Yes, the time was managed very well because she trained her pupils very well. So everyone knew what to do.

I mentioned reciprocal expertise, because I benefited a lot from her experience.

Suhaila: What was the impact of peer coaching implementation on the curriculum?

Salma: Implementation of the programme helped me to accelerate the curriculum. It helped me in the speed of completion of the curriculum.

Suhaila: In one of the observations, which was between you and teacher Suad, in the Arabic language lesson about the application and activation of collaborative learning, you mentioned in the reflective journal, in the obstacles part, that the

application caused delay in the curriculum. Can you explain to me how it caused delay?

Salma: Yes, that is true. That was an obstacle I faced in observation 6 with Suad, because when I and my colleagues agree on a visit, we agree on the time and the place of the visit, and we specify the purpose of the visit as well. We arrange for everything to be in place to achieve that visit. So if the observer comes late to the class, this will cause delay. For example, I arranged for a visit with my colleague, and we arranged for that visit from all the aspects. My peer was supposed to be in the classroom before starting the lesson, and in particular before starting with the introductory activity. But she came late and I had to wait because I didn't want to start teaching and restart again when she came. The repetition of such issues and frequent repetition causes a delay in the curriculum. Therefore, the issue of commitment in terms of time must be stressed. You know very well how precious class time is, and we plan for each minute in the lesson particularly. So my colleague being five minutes late made a lot of difference, because this particular time was arranged for the introductory activity or the introduction of the lesson. I don't like anyone entering my classroom while I am teaching, so I postponed the educational situation till the observer entered my classroom. This was what I meant by the delay in the curriculum.

Suhaila: Can you give me more details about that visit?

Salma: It was an Arabic language lesson. The title was "I am your friend". It was about trees. The purpose of the lesson was the application and activation of collaborative learning. I formed groups, reading groups. They read, and then each group was given written questions to answer. There was a competition between them, and the winning group was the one which finished first and all their answers were right. The collaboration in this situation was based on the cooperation of the members of the group in answering the questions. Each group had its own question paper to answer, with questions that were suitable for the level of the pupils. The group who responded to questions quickly and finished, in terms of speed and accuracy, of course wins.

One of the tasks that we have, and especially this year when I joined this school, was the application of collaborative learning. They trained us to apply this strategy; in fact, we had been trained before but we didn't apply it firmly. So, as I told you earlier, we were under the supervision of the school performance improvement committee, and collaborative learning was one of the required strategies for learning improvement. Therefore, we were more serious in applying this strategy.

I divided the classroom into groups, each consisting of five or six members. Each member had a special role to perform in that strategy, and I told the pupils that each member in the group had a particular duty, so each one knew his job. For example, one was responsible for getting the materials that the group needed, such as the papers, the pencils, or the colours. Another one was the leader. He knew that his duty was leading the group, for example, in terms of debate. Of course I always choose the cleverest pupils to be the leader. The leader discusses the questions and the answers with the pupils and so on. The editor is the one who writes down the answers which have been already discussed, or sometimes he does some drawings, if necessary. The others are group members, and all the members, of course, should participate in preparing the answers. I walk between the groups; that was how we were trained, that the teacher walks between the groups to check the pupils' work and observe how the pupils are debating, or what the group leader is doing, or to observe if a pupil is participating or is isolated. Of course, our role is to encourage all pupils to participate. Each pupil has a card identifying his job; such as leader, editor, member, or holder. Each one should be wearing his card and know his role. We were required to encourage the pupils to put on their identification cards.

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Observation: 8

Observer: Suad - Observer: Salma

The purpose: Applying differentiated education.

Salma: I mentioned earlier, that we prepare three levels of activities for the pupils.

Suhaila: Please Salma, before explaining more about the observation, can you explain to me on what basis the visits were held; was it because she was a new teacher, or a volunteer or what?

Salma: What happened was that teacher Habiba and teacher Mariam of second primary level, who were experienced in teaching, were transferred to teach third primary level. As you know, because of the crisis that occurred in Bahrain, and the participation of some teachers in the strike and in the crisis, some of these teachers were suspended from work. Teachers Nargis and Amina, teaching the third primary level, were suspended too. Therefore, the senior teacher suggestion to the head teacher and the administration to transfer the teachers Habiba and Mariam who were the second primary level teachers to teach the third primary. So that created a problem, and a need arose to fill that gap urgently. The solution was to let the volunteer teachers teach the two second primary classes. But the volunteer teachers didn't have teaching experience so we were watching them, training them, and helping them in everything; preparation of lessons, preparation of questions, and also the activities. Because of that, the work pressure increased on us. We were in the second semester, which is the end of the academic year, so that put a lot of pressure on us.

At the end of the academic year we, the teachers of the second primary level, were used to prepare evaluation questions for the pupils, and we helped each other with this. So we agreed that each teacher would prepare questions for a specific subject. But because of the extraordinary circumstances this year, we couldn't let the volunteer teachers prepare questions or activities because of their lack of experience in education. Therefore, all the pressure was on us, me and teacher Shahraban. We were in-service teachers and we prepared all the questions for all the subjects.

We were required to practice peer coaching for second primary level, so it was a good opportunity to transfer our expertise to the volunteer teachers through the class visitations, their visits to us and our visits to them, as well as during private meetings or sessions with each other outside the classroom, such as on how to prepare a lesson. We put peer coaching into practice, but we were in need of this programme.

The volunteers were in need of that kind of coaching and watching a practical application in front of them. At the same time, they needed the feedback after our visits to them.

I visited teacher Suad. It was the Islamic Education subject, about “Hadith”. Of course we can’t say the lesson was a model lesson but, as a lesson presented by a volunteer teacher, a beginner and without previous experience in education and in methods of teaching, we consider the lesson acceptable.

Suhaila: What did you mean with “application of differentiated activities?”

Salma: We were required by the Ministry of Education to apply a differentiation education strategy. As we are under obligation to apply this strategy, we prepare differentiated activities for our pupils.

I divided the white board into three parts, and I wrote different questions in each part. The pupils had to write the questions and the answers in their note books or activity sheets because at the end of the lesson we evaluate the pupils. The questions were for all the pupils, but not one question for all the levels, because there were different levels of abilities in the classroom. There were the excellent, the good, and the weak pupils. We prepared questions for the high levels, where they needed to think about the answers as the answer should be from their memory. The questions for the good level pupils were easier. But for the weak pupils, their questions were “yes/no” questions, or multiple-choice questions, and the pupils had to tick the correct answer. We prepared questions for the weak pupils in a way that suited their level and they could answer them. We didn’t want their feelings to be get hurt as they couldn’t answer the other questions.

Suhaila: What do you mean by dividing the whiteboard?

Salma: Usually we photocopy the activity sheets. We prepare the activities and give it to the administration for photocopying. But we face a problem with the photocopying as sometimes it takes two or three days or sometimes more.

Unfortunately, they were not ready at the time we needed them, but I didn’t postpone my lesson just because the activity sheets were not photocopied. So the alternative is to write the questions on the whiteboard. I divided the whiteboard into three parts,

and I named each part. For example, part A, part B, and part C. I also divided the pupils into three groups; group A, group B, and group C. So group A would answer the questions written in part A, group B from part B, and group C from part C. Each pupil knew which group he was in because, from the beginning, I put them in groups. I put the clever pupils in group A, the good ones in B, and the others in C. But they didn't know why they had been divided. The pupils knew that if they were from group A, they should answer the questions written in group A, but they didn't know that they were in group A because they were clever. Actually, some teachers gave the groups different names, instead of A, B, C or 1, 2, 3. For example, they gave them the names of colours. So the pupils knew that the names of colours or letters or numbers were just kind of organising the groups in the classroom.

This was when the activities were not photocopied. But when I have the chance to get them photocopied, the way of doing the activity would be different, and I wouldn't use the whiteboard. I would prepare three kinds of activities, each for a particular level. For example, activity A for pupils in group A, activity B for group B, and C for C. Of course I knew my pupils and in which group they were, so I distributed the activity sheets according to the groups that I had formed earlier.

Suhaila: I understand that you visited your colleague to observe how she applied that strategy "the application of differentiated activities" - is that correct?

Salma: Yes. She divided the pupils to three groups. It was not an easy strategy, and the teacher needed more training. Knowing the strategy doesn't mean it is easy and that the teacher would be proficient in applying it. It needs a lot of practice. So it needs an experienced teacher who has a long history in the field of teaching.

At the beginning, this teacher visited me and observed the way I applied this strategy and then I visited her to observe how she was going to apply it. To apply this strategy, the teacher needs to know the educational levels of the pupils, and it is difficult to know unless you are an experienced and an efficient teacher. I visited her and observed her way. It was Islamic Education.

Suhaila: You mentioned in the feedback "The application of an introductory activity, and the application of differentiated activities". What did you mean by that?

Salma: Actually, the teacher applied these strategies, but in a simplified way. For example, she applied the introductory activity by asking a simple question before starting the lesson, as an introduction to the lesson.

Suhaila: Is the introductory activity to introduce the lesson or could it be any kind of a question, even if it not related to the lesson?

Salma: No. The introductory activity is an outside activity which is not related to the lesson. It should be at the beginning of the school day. For example, once I started the school day by giving small pieces of paper to the pupils. I asked them to write on the piece of paper what they wanted to be in the future. Of course, I received different kinds of answers, and I discussed their future dreams with them for five minutes about and then started the lesson. That was all at the beginning of the school day just to activate and stimulate the pupils for studying. And at the beginning of each lesson, I give my pupils a question which is related to the lesson.

The teacher applied the strategy but she needed more training. After the observation, we sat together for ten minutes and I explained the methods to her. Actually, we met the next day, because on the day of the observation, we didn't have time to meet each other. I was busy and my colleague was busy too. So we met the next day for feedback, and I showed her the points that needed to be strengthened.

In the lesson that I observed, she was supposed to write the 'Hadeeth' on the whiteboard, or she could scan it on the smart board, so the pupils can see the 'Hadeeth' in front of them while reading. Usually when we explain 'Hadeeth' or 'Sorah from the holy Quran', the pupils must read the 'Hadeeth' or 'Sorah' which is in front of them. We write it on a chart and hang it on the whiteboard in front of the pupils or, as I said, scan it on the smart board. So pupils read it from the board but not from their books. Besides, the smart board facilitates the procedures, as we scan the text easily and put it on the smart board, using the same text as in their books but in a larger font. That was what I told her; using the smart board facilitates the procedure.

Suhaila: Can you please tell me how was the procedure for the application of the peer coaching programme?

Salma: We met before the observation to specify its purpose, as well as to determine the time of the observation. Before, the administration or the senior teacher determined the time of observation, the purpose, etc. Then we observed and recorded what we observed on the observation sheet given to us by the senior teacher. After the observation, we gave it back to her, without any feedback meeting with the observed teacher because of lack of time. It was just the visit. I would go to the observation with the senior teacher, but then the senior teacher would meet the teacher who had been observed for feedback, without me. I would have liked to have been with her for the feedback, to hear their discussion and take advantage of the comments of the senior teacher and try to avoid the same errors in my lesson. But we didn't have time to meet together for feedback. The administration or senior teacher didn't determine a specific time for such a meeting. Maybe if the observed teacher asked me to show her my observation sheet, I might show her, but formally I am not allowed. These sheets remain with the senior teacher, in her files. She doesn't show the observer's notes to the observed teacher. Though it is the right of the observed teacher to see the comments, the senior teacher doesn't show her. Now, in the application of the peer coaching programme, the observation sheets are not sent to the senior teacher, but they stay with us, between the observed and the observer. We specify the purpose of observing, we determine the time of the visit, and we sit with each other for the feedback. That is why I found it a flexible programme. The programme was between us, the teachers. We were free in the visits, and we can say that we felt the benefit of the observing visits when we applied the peer coaching programme.

Suhaila: Do you have any additions or suggestions you would like to add to the peer coaching programme?

Salma: To be honest, the flexibility I found in this programme means that I don't have any suggestions or additions, but just to say that I was happy with it.

Suhaila: Are you thinking of applying the peer coaching programme next year?

Salma: If my colleagues approve the implementation of the programme, I may apply it because I believe that I can benefit more from observing a practical application than attending workshops. I consider the workshops are just talking. The peer

coaching programme is easier than what we were doing before. It facilitated many things for me as I can take advantage of other teachers' expertise. I can also help my colleagues in the field that I have experience in.

White School 1

Interviewee: Deena

Interviewer: Suhaila Rajab

Thursday, July 14, 2011 – 12:00 noon – Mobile.

Suhaila: Have you done any observations before? And how was the procedure?

Deena: Yes. We did observations. We visited each other's classrooms and observed each other. These visits were determined by the school administration but not us, the teachers. In general, teachers didn't like these kinds of visits. They felt stressed from these visits. The visits were specified and prepared by the senior teacher as they were mandatory. They were the opposite of the implemented peer coaching programme. The implemented programme gave us the chance to specify the purpose of the visit. It gave us the chance to make up our minds and come to a decision on our needs for a visit. Especially for new teachers; teacher with no experience or with few years of experience, and new teachers who were in need of the expertise of the experienced teachers.

There were many differences between the implemented peer coaching programme and the way we visited and observed our colleagues before. We applied the peer coaching programme according to our needs, our time, and our acceptance for our colleagues to do the visits. I mean that, while implementing the peer coaching programme, we visited each other for reciprocal expertise without any pressure. Moreover, we did it because we felt that we needed to observe, and reflect on what we observed with each other. We did it, for example, to learn a certain teaching strategy. We did it with no stress and no pressure. There is a difference when you do something you feel you like or want to do, rather than feeling you are forced to do it. It is good when you do something you feel will help you especially when there is a lack of time rather than if it causes a lack of time. Furthermore, I am the one who chooses who observe me while teaching, and not the senior teacher. I choose the teacher I trust and the teacher

I feel comfortable with. Besides, I and my colleagues arranged for the visits to take place when we had spare time.

I would prefer to visit my colleagues from all the educational levels rather than to visit my colleagues from the same level, second primary level. When implementing the peer coaching programme in my school, I requested the help of a teacher teaching third primary level. She was using a useful strategy, so I asked for her permission to visit her while she is teaching to learn how she used this strategy. I observed a practical application and then I applied it in my classroom.

We implemented peer coaching once a week and sometimes once a month. It was according to our needs.

Suhaila: Have you been to courses about observation skills? Or about giving and receiving feedback skills?

Deena: No, Nothing. I attended many courses but nothing related to observation skills or giving and receiving feedback.

The observed teachers received feedback from the senior teacher or the supervisor but not the teachers. What we were doing was completely different than the peer coaching programme. We, the teachers, didn't sit together for feedback. We didn't even determine the aims of the observation, but the senior teacher used to inform us like this: "I am going to visit teacher A, in such a lesson, on such a day, so if you would like to attend the lesson with me". So we attend the lesson, we observe, and we write what we observed, but at the end we give the observation sheets to the senior teacher and not to the teachers observed. We don't even sit together for feedback. The reason why I liked the peer coaching programme was that we were not obliged to apply it, but we agreed among ourselves how to apply. At the same time, we wrote down the purpose of the visit and, at the end of the observation, we sat together for feedback.

Observation sheet: 8 – observer: Deena – observed: Jawaher.

Purpose: Identify new strategies (Introductory activity, Ice breaker between the pupils, pupils' interaction, group work, correlate the subjects with each other) – enhancement – differentiation in; question and activities.

The lesson was 'I am your friend'. The teacher correlated this lesson to the other subjects. She linked Arabic language, Maths and Islamic Education together. For example, the lesson was about trees talking about themselves, where each one said "I am your friend". One was an apple tree, another was an orange tree... The teacher started the lesson as an Arabic language lesson. She explained about the tree and its fruits. She talked about the apples and the oranges. Then she linked the trees' fruit with the price of the fruit in the classroom shop. Here the lesson was linked to Maths in adding the price of one kilo of apples to one kilo of oranges. Then she transferred from Maths to Islamic Education as she started explaining God's graces and God's creation. So Arabic language was the explanation about the tree and its fruits; Maths was the classroom shop and the prices of the fruits in the shop; Islamic Education was about God's graces. Three subjects in one lesson. It was a wonderful link between the subjects.

The teacher used differentiation in asking questions. The level of the questions was appropriate to the levels of the pupils. She asked the smart girls questions which suited their levels, also the less intelligent were asked questions which suited their level. And thus, all the pupils participated in the classroom activities and in answering the questions.

The new strategies – collaborative learning.

The teacher brought an activity and let the pupils employ the activity; cut pictures, stick them together to make a proper tree on a poster and then write the benefits of the tree.

Rope game:

The teacher brought cards to the classroom. Each card had a word written on it. Each word contains “Al Elshamseya” or “Al Elqamareya” (writing two letters, the ‘A’ and the ‘L’ at the beginning of a word. But the letter ‘L’ is pronounced in some words; the ‘Al’ in these words are called “Al Elqamareya”, and not pronounced in others, so the ‘Al’ in the other words is called “Al Elshamseya”). The teacher asked the pupils to choose all the words which contained the “Al Elshamseya” and hang each one on the rope, and the same thing with “Al Qamareya”. The cards were hung on the rope like clothes that had been washed. It was a beautiful and useful strategy which made all the pupils participate in the activity and there was significant interaction from the pupils.

Collaborative learning:

The teacher divided the pupils into groups. Each group consisted of a leader, an assistant, and members. All the group members worked together. Each member had a role. The teacher’s role was to set rules for the group about collaboration, quietness, participation and so on...

The reflective journal

It was written by teacher Deena.

Reciprocal expertise – Enhance and enrich methods of teaching – Increase teacher’s self confidence – No fear and no confusion while visiting – Introduced to some educational games like ‘rope game’.

Suhaila: What was helpful in the peer coaching experience? What was its impact on your practice?

Deena: It is true that we were used to class visitations. We visited each other whenever we were asked by the senior teacher. And now, with the peer coaching programme, we also visit each other but the difference is that the visit now firstly it is with benefit because we need it and we have specified the purpose of the visit. Secondly, although we were used to class visitation before, there was extra

preparation for that lesson because we had to present a model lesson. Now, there is no extra preparation. Moreover, we don't prepare all kinds of activities for that lesson except the ones that were already planned for that lesson.

Observation sheet: 10

Observer: Deena

Observed: Shereen

Purpose: Identify learning and teaching methods and strategies – Reading games.

I wanted to know more about strategies and methods of teaching inside the classroom. I wanted to know more how the teacher deals with the pupils inside the classroom. How the teacher deals with the subject and how she presents the lesson – Pupils' interaction – How the teacher deals with all the specifics – and how to expand the subject.

Reading games

Here the teacher asked the pupil to read the lesson. For example, she said "Read the lesson and find for me a sentence which shows happiness and another showing sadness. The pupil read and searched for sentences showing happiness and others showing sadness and then read those sentences only.

Feedback:

Collaborative learning – individual differences

I would like the teacher to concentrate more on collaborative learning and on individual differences. The teacher took into account individual differences but not in the required form, as it should be more focused.

The reflective journal:

Identify new teaching and learning strategies.

I gained new ideas. I gained a new teaching strategy which was the games, teaching by games.

It was an Arabic language lesson. The teacher used games as a teaching strategy. The title of the lesson was 'The smart bird'. The lesson was about the using of "Al Elshamseya" and "Al Elqamareya". The game the teacher used in that lesson was for rewarding the pupils. She used the 'rabbit board' to reward the pupils. The 'rabbit board' was a picture of a sun and a moon drawn on the board and there is a rabbit with some carrots. Also there were cards. On each card the 'al alshamseya' words or 'al alqamareya' words were written. The pupil read the word properly then stuck it with the right picture; the 'Al Elshamseya' word in the sun and the 'Al Elqamareya' word in the moon. If the answer of the pupil was correct, the rabbit would be rewarded with a carrot, and if the pupil's answer was wrong, the rabbit would lose the carrot.

Introductory activity:

Another game was used as an introductory activity. It was the box game. The teacher and the pupils played that game to break the ice between them. The teacher covered the box and asked the pupils "What is inside this box?". Then she made some movements in front of the pupils to help them guess what was inside that box. Every day the teacher changes the game so the pupils will not get bored. Another game was that the teacher hid something under one of the pupils' chairs or their desks then the teacher asked one of the pupils to search for it.

Also there was the balloon game... The teacher put a puzzle in the balloon and then that balloon would be thrown from one group to another while music was playing. Each group would throw the balloon to the other till the music stopped. The girl who had the balloon when the music stopped, would burst the balloon, then take the puzzle out from it and read it. If she answered the puzzle correctly, the teacher would give her a present. In all other games, if the pupils' answers were right, they would get a present.

Observation sheet: 7

Observer: Jawaher

Observed: Deena

Purpose: To identify the characteristics of the interactive board. (Science lesson)

Deena: We only started using the interactive board this year. This is the first time we have used it. We were trained to use it but still we needed each other's help. My colleague Jawaher wanted to know more about it, so I invited her to my class. I told her that I have an e-lesson called 'I dream', and will employ the interactive board in the lesson.

I started the lesson with an introductory activity which was the box game and pupils guessing. Of course this activity doesn't need to be related to the lesson that I will explain later; rather it is an activity to break the ice between pupils, warm them up, and to stimulate them for the coming lessons. Then I utilized the imagination style to access my lesson. I used the imagination style in the science lesson. The lesson was about electricity. I asked the pupils to close their eyes and imagine that we don't have electricity "What will happen to food without electricity?". The pupils closed their eyes and started to imagine... no electricity, nor refrigerators, no freezers... so what about food which needs cold temperatures?... the importance of electricity... if we didn't have electricity what

would happen to things?... life will be disrupted... food will be rotting... and so on. So what are the implications of the lack of electricity? Then I started to use the smart board in my explanation and also to show pictures.

Feedback:

It was teacher Jawaher's suggestion that instead of taking the pupils to the e-class, I let them stay in their classroom and benefit from the classroom environment. Maybe the use of the classroom corners will be more beneficial than the e-class. I have made it clear to teacher Jawaher that I use the classroom corners in teaching the same lesson but not on the same day, as I use different strategies for teaching the lesson. The plan for this lesson was to take the pupils to the e-class and use the electronic board.

Teacher Jawaher noticed some chaos when she arrived at the classroom at the beginning of the lesson. The reason was that I was busy with the supervisor's visit in the previous lesson. As soon as she finished, I took my girls quickly to the e-class. So there was some chaos till I controlled the pupils.

Observation sheet: 4

Observer: Nasreen

Observed: Deena

Teacher Amani wanted to gain more ideas about teaching methods. Moreover, she wanted to know more about differentiation in asking questions.

Teacher Nasreen is a volunteer teacher, as well as being a new teacher with no experience in the field of teaching; she needed some help to identify some

teaching strategies and the differentiation in asking questions which suit the pupils' levels. So I invited her to my classroom for observation.

Teacher Nasreen observed the educational games, introductory activity, and easy shift from one subject to another as I employed the lesson in different subjects. Moreover, I prepared different questions that were suitable to all the levels in the classroom.

Observation sheet: 8

Observer: Nasreen

Observed: Deena

Islamic Education

Teacher Nasreen wanted to be sure how the pupils interacted in a specific lesson. The lesson was about the Prophet's tradition about 'good neighbours' in a 'Hadith' (a 'Hadith' is a word of the Prophet Mohammed peace be upon him), as she didn't get any interaction from her pupils in the classroom while she was explaining that lesson. Therefore, she was asking herself 'Why?', and 'How I can get my pupils to be more interactive in the Hadith about 'good neighbours'. She asked if she could observe my class when I teach the same lesson. Of course I welcomed her as her visit did not bother me. Actually she came to observe what she needed.

I used collaborative learning in this lesson. Moreover, I let my lesson be pupil-centred. The pupil was the centre of the learning and teaching process. Teacher Nasreen benefited from this strategy a lot. I started the lesson with an easy dialogue between the pupils in a simple role-play about being a good neighbour. It was about a pupil who didn't go to school because she was sick. So her friend

in the classroom visited her house and asked her “Why you didn’t come to school today? Why did you stay at home?” The visitor took a present with her. She gave it to her sick friend and wished her a quick recovery.

Moreover, in the same lesson, I explained to the pupils about some of the bad manners of some neighbours (some children), for example, throwing rubbish in front of the neighbour’s door. I connected what I explained to the ‘Hadith’ lesson, how the Messenger received harm from the Quraysh people when they were throwing dirt at the door of the Prophet. I turned to the lesson about the Prophet and his neighbours in a simple way. But there was a girl who knew the story of the Messenger and his neighbours, from her mother. She stood up and told the story in details. The pupil transferred the expertise she gained from her mother to the classroom.

The lesson was a completely pupil-centered process... The pupils perceived a situation about the neighbours, and then they acted it out. For example, they gave me examples about joy and sadness in the month of Ramadan... about folk customs among neighbours in that month... about how they visit each other.

Differentiation in class activities:

I gave the acting roles to each pupil according to their level. I started by asking the pupils simple questions. I asked them “If you have a poor neighbour, what you give them?” The pupils mentioned, money, food, and so on... Gradually I changed the level of the questions, from easy to more difficult.

Observation sheet: 11

Observer: Deena

Observed: Nasreen

Math: numbers rounded to the nearest 100.

Nasreen, the volunteer teacher, asked me to observe her pupils' strengths and weaknesses while she was teaching a Maths lesson. Nasreen taught my pupils, in my classroom. I wanted to see if my pupils interacted with her, and her way of teaching, like they interacted with me and my way of teaching.

Feedback:

I mentioned to teacher Nasreen that it would be good to have diversity in methods of teaching as well as to correlate between the subjects.

Suhaila: After implementing the peer coaching programme, did you find any differences in the observation procedures between the previous observations and the peer coaching programme? What was helpful in the latter programme?

Deena: I benefited from the peer coaching programme. My visits were very useful; I was being myself and I didn't try to please the others.

Suhaila: Do you have any changes you are willing to suggest for the peer coaching programme?

Deena: I would like the programme to be applied to all the educational levels and not only to the second primary level.

White School 2

Interviewee: Jawaher

Interviewer: Suhaila Rajab

Friday, July 15, 2011 – 10:30 am – Mobile.

Suhaila: Have you done any observation before? And how was the procedure?

Jawaher: There were many reciprocal visits between me and my colleagues. They were held at the request of the senior teacher and not at my request. Besides, they were not based on my needs. For example, the senior teacher tells us that she is going to visit teacher Deena, so she invites us to accompany her to observe teacher Dina's performance.

I and my colleagues used to ask each other about the activities we used in the classroom. For example, I ask my colleague "What activity did you present in that specific lesson" or "How was the pupils' interaction in that specific lesson". But these were only questions we used to ask each other when we met in the teachers' room, and we got immediate answers to those questions. A teacher asks and another answers, but we don't visit each other. We don't ask for a visit.

Another kind of observation was held between the cooperative schools. For example, in the first academic term, and as part of the Ministry of Education's plan for mutual visits between cooperative schools based on reciprocal expertise, the senior teacher requested me to present a model Arabic language lesson for the boys' school, our neighbour school, one of the cooperative schools. I agreed, and I presented the model lesson. At the end of the lesson, teachers gave their notes to the senior teacher. So the senior teacher was the one who decided and arranged for the visit. She invited the teachers and not me. My role was not more than receiving orders and implementing them.

There were more types of visits. For example, I had a project about healthy food, about 'Integrated diet'. I presented the project in the school hall. I invited the

teachers in my school, but I also invited the senior teacher, and the supervisor from the Ministry of Education to observe my presentation and to assess my project as I wanted to highlight my work.

I have got used to classroom visitations. When the senior teacher tells me that she and teachers from my school or from the cooperative schools will visit my classroom and observe me teaching, I accept the request because I have got used to these classroom visitations. I don't have any problem with them. Although these visits need time to prepare for the lesson, I am used to it. Whenever the teachers come to visit my classroom, I would prepare more for the lesson because it needs more accuracy, and besides it needs more activities. I must present the best in front of them; therefore, I need at least one day for planning. But it is different in the peer coaching programme. I felt that this programme was easy to implement and was intended for a specific purpose, a specific reason; therefore, there was no extra preparation for the lesson.

While implementing the peer coaching programme, I didn't need to allocate a full day to think about how I should present the lesson to satisfy the observer. I didn't need to focus too much on that issue. I presented the required clarification for the observer. The visit was based on the size of the required goal. Therefore it has a significant impact on teaching, especially in terms of speed. For example, if I was a new teacher, I would find the peer coaching programme a useful programme which helps me to benefit from the experience of my colleagues. Thus the new teacher feels comfortable when she visits or invites her friends to visit her, and at the same time she learns a lot from them. But in my case, I have experience in teaching; my benefit somehow is different than the new teachers'. I benefited when they visited me. The visits didn't bother me because I didn't need to prepare for that lesson but I presented the lesson as needed by the teacher that asked me to identify the specific things... So I benefited from the programme in terms of time, and ease. So, whenever my colleague wants to observe me I welcome her because I didn't need to prepare for that lesson.

The old visits were requested by the senior teacher, and we agreed on them... we don't sit with the observed teacher to identify the purpose of the observation. The visits take place without a pre-conference or post-conference. For example, when a visit takes place by the supervisor from the Ministry of Education accompanied by the teachers, the supervisor requests to sit with me before and after the observation, while the teachers who were invited at the same time, who accompanied her for observation, don't sit with me before or after the observation. I didn't even receive the observation sheets as they were all given to the senior teacher. Sometimes we ask each other in a friendly way. For example, I ask my colleague how the lesson was and she answers "if you did this or that it would be better"... but of course it was just talking but nothing was documented.

The Ministry's programme for improving the performance of schools requests that supervisors visit the schools and observe the teachers' performance. The Ministry asks for the observation sheets to analyse teachers' performance as one aspect in improving the school's performance. Therefore, the supervisor conducts pre-observation and post-observation meetings with the teacher observed.

Suhaila: After implementing the peer coaching programme, did you find any differences in the observation procedures between the previous observations and the peer coaching programme? What was helpful in the latter programme?

Jawaher: Yes. The difference I liked the most and found it supportive to implementing the peer coaching programme was confidentiality in the work. The teachers maintain confidentiality in their work. What happened inside and outside the classrooms was completely between the observer and the observed teachers and no one else. This method gives us a kind of privacy, while there was a kind of awkwardness in the relationship between the teachers in the previous method. For example, the teachers didn't like any advice or feedback from their colleagues especially when the observer came and asked them "Why did you use this method?" or

“Why you didn’t you use that method?”. And of course the observer here is receiving advice from the observers who she didn’t invite them to her lesson. She didn’t need them to observe her. Thus, she did not accept anything from them as she considers that a kind of destructive criticism.

Observation sheet: 12

Observer: Deena

Observed:Jawaher.

Purpose: To identify the procedures used in the “I am your friend” lesson.

Teacher Madina asked if she could observe my lesson. I agreed. She visited me. She observed the introductory activity, the pupils’ interactione, how to break the ice between the pupils, and how I encouraged the pupils. She observed the questions and the activities I prepared for the pupils. They were divided into three sections or three levels (level one, level two, and level three). One level was for the weak pupils, another for the average pupils, and the last one for the clever ones. Each level has its own activities.

Collaborative learning:

The lesson “I am your friend” was about the tree. At the beginning I gave them an introductory activity. Then I started with my lesson. I gave each group parts of a tree and each group fitted the given parts together and discovered the type of the tree: apple tree, orange tree, palm tree... The pupils distinguished between the trees. They also distinguished between the trees and the palm tree. Each group had a type of a tree. Each group had the picture of the parts of a tree. Each pupil in the group did something. One cut the pictures; another pasted them on the tree in the correct place, and so on till they completed the picture of the tree. So

each pupil in the group participated. The pupils cut, placed, and pasted the pictures till they completed a picture of a tree. Pupils discovered the type of the tree and wrote its name under it. At the end they compared between each tree in each group. In that lesson the pupils collaborated with each other. At the end, the pupils chose one of the group members to present and describe the picture.

All the pupils participated in the group to make a picture of a tree. After that the group members elected a pupil from their group to be their representative. The representative stood up, carried the picture and described it. My role as a teacher was to observe them while they were working together. I walked among the pupils and watched them work, and observed what each pupil and what each group were doing. I encouraged the weak pupils to collaborate with their colleagues, to cut and to paste the pictures. I distributed the working materials to all the members of the group so the weak pupil would be forced to work and join her colleagues in the group. The girl who had the scissors cut the picture, and the one who had the glue pasted the picture. One girl would cut out the picture of the apple, another would cut out the trunk or the clouds, because I even drew clouds in the picture, a picture of a landscape.

Variation in asking questions

I prepared questions before starting the lesson. In the lesson, I asked those questions and pupils answered them. The pupils' answers led me to create some new questions spontaneously that I hadn't prepared earlier. For example, I asked them 'What does a tree need to grow?' Or 'What is the benefit of the sun?' , and one of the pupils answered 'It gives us vitamin D'. Therefore, immediately the pupil's answer led me to new questions which were higher than their levels. Then I gradually started to increase the information. So the pupils benefited from the extra information they got.

Moreover, I distributed empty worksheets to the pupils. I asked them to write down some information about the palm tree. The pupils wrote about the palm tree. Or sometimes I took advantage of there being a specific event, an event on

that specific day, such as Mother's Day. So I ask the pupils to write about it. All the pupils benefit from that information. Pupils bring this information from outside the classroom. They bring it on the day that they study the lesson which is related to it. For example, I have a lesson about the palm tree, the next day pupils bring to class information about the palm tree. The procedure was that at the beginning of the year, at the beginning of the semester I gave the pupils the newsletter, informing them that I am distributing worksheets for the pupils. These worksheets are for the pupils who would like to write about the lesson, who would like to bring more information about that lesson. This method of 'searching for information' is considered to be a motivational initiative for the pupils. This procedure encourages pupils to know how to use research tools and how to research. The clever girls bring information regularly, while the weak girls rarely bring information. My role here is encouraging them continuously. There were pupils whose situation at home was difficult. It was difficult for them to bring such information regularly. For example, their parents were not educated. So I encourage them by saying that I will provide marks for their work. Therefore, they try their best to bring the activity. And sometimes I let them do this work in the classroom. I ask them to write what they understood from the lesson.

Observation sheet: 5

Observer: Nasreen

Observed: Jawaher

Purpose: Educational aids (educational charts) + taking into account individual differences

Teacher Nasreen requested this and I agreed. She asked to visit my classroom to observe the way I use educational charts and correlation between subjects.

The lesson was about fashion; a power point presentation and a fashion show. At the beginning of the lesson the pupils presented their fashion show, and it was about fashion in Arab countries. Then I presented the fashion of countries in the world by power point. The pupils enjoyed that lesson. They were happy.

I asked the pupils to bring Arabic costumes. The introductory activity for that lesson was the pupils' preparation for the fashion show. Then we discussed all together the costumes they were wearing. After that I presented the power point about the world's fashion, the costumes in other countries, and again I discussed with the pupils about the world's costumes.

Correlating between the subjects

I correlated the lesson to other subjects. I linked the lesson about fashion with the map of the world, so I linked Arabic language to social studies, to geography. Then I indicated the Kingdom of Bahrain and neighbouring countries, followed by the capitals and the cities. After that I entered into the subject of water and land. For example, when we were talking about fashion, I started by asking the pupils about the costume of each country. Then I asked them "Do we live on water or land?" Ok we live on the land. The pupils pointed to the continent on the map. So it shows that we have continents surrounded by water, by oceans. Gradually we transferred from fashion -Arabic language- to the countries and the map -social sciences- till I reached water and land. Then we transferred to Islamic Education by talking about God's graces and how we live on the land and how it is surrounded by water.

Reflective journal

Teacher Nasreen reflected on how a beautiful atmosphere was created in the classroom that broke the atmosphere of teaching and that was by playing music in the fashion show. It was a kind of change from the daily routine atmosphere. The oral teaching aids were conversation and dialogue. The concrete educational teaching aids were the charts and the maps.

Observation sheet: 1

Observer: Jawaher

Observed: Nasreen

Purpose: Clarify the concept of pull and push

Teacher Nasreen asked me to observe her teaching and her performance as she was a volunteer teacher.

Teacher Nasreen utilized concrete things like toy cars and chairs to illustrate the lesson. A pupil pushed a toy car hard and another pushed it slowly, and this was to measure the impetus. She used pulling a chair to measure the drag force. However, there was no diversity in methods of teaching or teaching strategies. The lesson had the same routine. The teacher didn't change the places of the cars, and at the same time she followed the same procedure. Moreover, there was no diversity in the teaching aids which led to boredom among the pupils, and they started looking outside the classroom, through the window so the pupils were distracted and the teacher couldn't control the pupils in the classroom. That was all because of there not being any diversity in the teaching methods, something which attracts the pupils' attention to the lesson.

In addition, the teacher focused only on one group. She only asked that group. I put this down to her being a volunteer teacher and, at the same time, new in the teaching field. So I mentioned to her that it would be better to change the pupils in the groups. It would be better if each group consisted of different levels; from weak to clever girls. Nasreen's excuse was that the classroom was not her classroom, and that she didn't arrange the groups, as they were arranged in that way before she came into the classroom.

The other thing was that the teacher was using slang language in the classroom, which we don't use with the pupils in the classroom.

I mentioned in the feedback that teacher Amani needs to have some variety in the introductory activity. Furthermore, she didn't correlate between the lesson and other subjects. She only gave a science lesson, though she could have correlated that lesson to other subjects

All these notes were because she was a new teacher, as she was a volunteer. She didn't have sufficient experience in the field of education. So she benefited from these notes. The peer coaching programme helped her a lot. She didn't depend on the visits of the senior teacher only, or the supervisor to observe her performance, but she was asking her colleagues continuously to observe her or her to observe them. These visits didn't cause any harassment or annoyance to us because it was arranged between us and without a mandate or command from the administration. For example, I observed teacher Nasreen and she observed me, and we met for feedback, but I didn't have the opportunity to observe her again to see the improvement in her performance. However, my colleagues observed her.

Reflective journal

Using concrete tools... toy cars.

The teachers used the toy cars as cars are something familiar to the pupils and attractive to them.

Using a style of encouragement... continuous encouragement.

Observation sheet: 3

Observer: Jawaher

Observed: Deena

Purpose: To identify the characteristics of the interactive board.

I visited my colleague Deena to identify the characteristics of the interactive board. Teacher Deena attended many workshops about the interactive board in other schools. Therefore, she was more experienced than me in this field. I tried to learn by myself, but I asked her to teach me how to use the interactive board in applying this lesson. She allowed me to visit her and observe her way of teaching. So I observed a practical application.

The introductory activity she presented was not related to the lesson. It was about a specific character. The pupils were requested to discover who that character was. She asked them who that character was. Pupils discovered the character and imagined that they were dreaming that they were talking to that character... it was a dream and not reality... This was an introductory activity. Then she linked the activity to the lesson. Instead of showing the pupils some characters, she showed them some countries, some places where people like to visit. She presented the lesson with power point. She asked the pupils about these places and the pupils answered. She correlated Arabic language to Islamic education subject. She used the imagining style in this lesson.

The feedback:

I mentioned that it would be better if the observed teacher concentrates more on the pupils' answers; encouraging them to answer in a particular way. Usually pupils like to answer randomly without putting their hands up. This is normal but the teacher should guide the pupils and teach them the proper way. For example, she tells them 'I will not let you answer if you don't put your hand up'.

Observation sheet: 3

The focus was on the interactive board and it was in the electronic classroom. If the lesson was in their regular classroom, the teacher would use the classroom

corners, so there would be movement in the classroom. Instead, an electronic lesson that is focused on the interactive board means that the pupils will not move. If the lesson was in the classroom, the pupils would act, role play, and perform additions and subtractions and so on.

Reflective journal

Good employment of the electronic board.

Observation sheet: 7

Observer: Shereen

Observed: Jawaher

Purpose: Learning by games – role play.

The lesson: I am your friend – the tree.

The lesson was about the 'al elshamseya' and 'al elqamareya' letters. The pupils categorised the letters which related to the 'al elshamseya', and those which related to the 'al elqamareya'.

I had a rope held at both ends by two girls and I put all the twenty-eight letters of the alphabet on the ground. Each pupil got up from her chair and picked one of these letters and categorised it as the 'al elshamseya' or the 'al elqamareya'. Then the pupils hung the letters on the rope like hanging washing on the washing line.

Role play

I let a girl talk about the tree like a poem. For example, I am your friend... I am the tree... and so on. She acts the role of the tree. She wears clothes in the form of a tree and talks about herself, about the tree, as if she is a tree.

Introductory activity

It was a rhyme about God's creatures. The teacher correlated the introductory activity to the lesson. The rhyme was about the God's creatures and the tree is one of God's creatures, then we moved on to the lesson which was about trees.

I had a pupil who had limited abilities, but she liked acting. She liked role-playing. She was talented in role-playing. Although her abilities were limited in other skills, she was excellent at acting. I used to give her a chance in this activity as she would learn more by using this strategy. Her performance was remarkable in terms of diction. It was a unique performance and she was competent in diction. She forgets quickly so I gave her longer to memorise her role in the play, but her performance was amazing. I give the girls a chance to memorise the words but I gave this girl a longer time. I always encourage her to participate. Although her level is average or below, I always let her participate as this has helped her to learn a lot. Her sister was clever and she also acts, so I used to give the girl with the limited abilities her role and tell her 'Let your sister help you to memorise or study'. Her sister liked to help her.

I always let all the pupils participate. The clever girls or the weak ones, they will all have a role in the lesson. I don't let one pupil sit still or silently in the classroom. In the 'tree' lesson I distributed the roles according to the pupils' levels. I gave the role of the apple tree and the orange tree to the cleverest girls, as there is a lot of talking in these roles, and the role of the palm tree to the girls with fewer abilities as there is less talking in it. The girl carries the palm tree in her hand. The palm tree was a big serving spoon used in the kitchen. I took this serving spoon and covered it with cloth. Then I gave the pupil a simple sentence to memorise. At the beginning she hides the palm tree, and says the sentences as a puzzle "I am your friend. You take dates from me. Who am I?". The pupil

who is the palm tree says the riddle which reminds the pupils with simple sentences and the pupils answer.

Types of strategies

Reflective journals

Using the classroom corners... I pasted the cards on trees, on the leaves... The 'Al elshamseya' and 'Al elqamareya' letters were written on these cards. I make it easier for the pupils by drawing a sun on the 'Al elshamseya' letters and a moon on the 'Al elqamareya' letters. This was for the pupils with an average level or below. The cards were always hung on the classroom wall. I can ask the pupils to count how many trees we have in the classroom and so on... so that way I transferred to Maths. The pupil was the centre of the teaching and learning process.

Observation sheet: 2

Observer: Jawaher

Observed: Shereen

Purpose: To clarify educational games to illustrate concepts – To classify the 'Al elshamseya' words and 'Al elqamareya' words.

The educational game was a wooden board and a picture of a rabbit and carrots on it. (already explained in other interviews).

The pupils liked this game because it was a challenge game.

Teacher Shereen also used a cognitive map. She presented cards in the context of the lesson; she presented a map clarifying the place, the time, the characters, and the title of the lesson.

Feedback

It would be better to remind the pupils always about the 'Al elshamseya' and 'Al elqamareya' letters. The pupils are young 'young learners' so they forget quickly, and repetition allows them to learn more easily.

Classroom control... This was the same classroom which teacher Nasreen taught in. The pupils were very active. The pupils in this classroom were known for their excessive fidgeting.

Reflective journal:

The cognitive map consisted of cards with different names written on them. Some cards had written on them the names of some of the characters mentioned in the lesson. Others had names of places written on them and others expressions of time and so on. The pupils classified the characters all together by putting the names under each one, then they did the same with the places and with the 'time' cards.

Suhaila: Do you have any suggestions or changes you are willing to add to the peer coaching programme?

The peer coaching programme was easier for the teacher. For example, I found that my colleague was applying a strategy which I felt it would help me with my pupils, so I asked her to explain how without any complications. She did that and I didn't feel shy about my request even though I was asking a new teacher. Maybe she had less experience but she had new teaching methods. So I may benefit from what new things she brings to the classroom. Moreover, I found this procedure easy and not complicated because we may benefit from each other as it was according to our desire, our needs, and also our choice.

It was true that I always find answers for my questions when I ask my colleagues, but we used to ask and answer each other in the teachers' room. We didn't ask each other for observations. We didn't like to observe or be observed because of the observation procedures we were applying. We didn't benefit from that style of conversation because maybe that way will not suit my pupils. But when you observe the teacher applying this information inside her classroom, as we say a 'practical application', it could be better. The visit and the observation will help me to clarify the level of the pupils. Because from my observation I can identify if the way my colleague explained something to her classroom could be beneficial for the level of my pupils or not. The visits became easy as they were held without fatigue and without harassment for the teacher.

Orange School 1

Interviewee: Sami

Interviewer: Suhaila Rajab

Monday July 11, 2011 – 11:00 am – My house.

Suhaila: Have you done any observations before? And what was the procedure?

Sami: Yes. We did observe each other, but not documented. Nothing was written. We did informal observations. Whatever I need from my colleague or my colleague needs, we ask each other immediately “how do we do this and how do we do that?”. It was not formal, not written, but verbal. It was mostly without visiting each other’s classroom. We ask each other when we are sitting in the teachers’ room, I say to my friend “I have a problem in such and such” so he explains how to do it. Or another teacher, Saman, says “I don’t know how to use the smart board”, so he asks what he should do, so I explain to him what he should do by using my laptop. We all ask each other in the teachers’ room and sometimes we visit each other if the issue is about teaching procedures, but nothing was written, plus we do not dedicate a special lesson for observation but we observe each other in our free time. We choose whenever I am free and whenever my friend is free, we visit each other. We did not inform the administration that we would observe each other, because we did not need a replacement teacher for the classroom where the teacher is observing as we were arranging that between ourselves and during our free hours.

Other formal observations were for evaluation. The head teacher, the senior teacher, or the supervisor from Ministry of Education visits me to evaluate my performance. Sometimes, the senior teacher invites other teachers to come and observe my performance too. But the teachers don’t give me any feedback. The feedback I get is from the head teacher, the senior teacher or the supervisor.

Suhaila: After implementing a peer coaching programme, did you find any differences in the observation procedures between the previous observation and the peer coaching programme”? What was helpful in the latter programme?

Sami: There were similarity in some aspects and differences in others. For example, I find it difficult to find a replacement teacher for my class or the other teacher’s class. It causes a problem for me... you need to inform the administration to send you a replacement teacher. But maybe this replacement teacher upsets the teacher or he finds it difficult to go to my class. Therefore, I prefer not to ask the administration for this arrangement. I prefer to do it by

myself. I prefer to do the observation when I am free, when I don't have classes, so there's no need for anyone to replace me. I used to do it in this way and I did the same in the peer coaching programme. But the difference now is that everything became documented. Plus I inform the senior teacher and the administration about this observation just to let them know that there is a classroom visitation and reciprocal visits between me and my colleagues and not to find a replacement teacher for my classroom, because I am practicing it in my free time when I don't have classes, as I said I don't want to disturb other teachers.

Suhaila: Have you been to courses about observation skills?

Sami: No.

Suhaila: What about giving and receiving feedback skills?

Sami: No. I would like to learn these skills. These skills are very important to us because the observer may write anything in his records, but if he was competent and had these skills, he would be better in recording what he observed because he will know what to observe, what to focus on, and how the dialogue should be between the observer and the observed. Although it is important, we have a lack of these kinds of course or workshops.

Suhaila: What was helpful in this 'peer coaching' experience? and has it had an impact on your practice?

Sami: Yes. Actually, documenting our work helps a lot. Because in future, if you have the same problem, you don't have to go and ask your colleagues and you don't have to see how they do it. But instead you will go back to your file, to the observation sheets, to the reflective journals and solve your problems. For example, when my colleague visits my classroom to observe how I utilize the interactive board and how I use the activities, of course he can't depend on his memory to remember everything, maybe he forgets a step 'operating step for example', in this case, he doesn't have to ask me or observe me or or... What he needs is to go back to the documents, the written observation sheet and the reflective journal, and find the solution, it's as easy as that.

Suhaila: How did you choose your colleague?

Sami: I chose the teacher according to his skills, his competency, and his efficiency in what I need. Moreover, I should feel comfortable with the chosen teacher and have confidence in him. I trust that whatever happened between us

'me and him' will remain confidential. He will not go and tell the others about me and about what happened inside the class.

For example, regarding using the smart board... most of the teachers from different levels in the school, whenever they face difficulties in operating the interactive whiteboard, they come and ask me about it, because I have got a few more skills in operating the interactive whiteboard.

Moreover, if I want to visit the teacher, Salman, because I need to learn some new teaching strategies, but what I discovered is that he went and told other teachers that the teacher Sami visited me because he is weak and hasn't mastered these skills and and... No I will never visit this teacher ... If I don't trust this teacher, I will not visit him and will not let him visit me, unless he is visiting me in a formal way where I am forced to receive him and forced to tell him welcome - 'No trust, no visit'.

Observation sheet (orange – 1)

Social sciences: The lesson was about the calendar.

Sami: I observed the teacher Salman.

I wanted to know how he presented the lesson – The lesson was about teaching the pupils ways of using the calendar.

At the beginning of the class Salman asked the pupils: what day/date is it today? What day/date is it tomorrow?

He started asking the pupils these questions because he wanted to elicit from the pupils that some days are special occasions, and that these days, these special occasions are documented on the calendar. For example, Fridays (the holy day), or 21st of March which is Mother's day, or 16th December which is the National day of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Salman emphasised the importance of having a

calendar at home for the pupils to know the days and the occasions. So the pupil recognises the importance of having a calendar and especially at home. The pupil knows what a calendar is and how to use it. The pupil looks at the calendar and says “Aha today is such and the occasion is such, mother’s day, or the first day of Ramadan” or another date

Suhaila: You mentioned that the teacher asked different questions and took into account the individual differences... Can you explain to me please how you noticed that?

Sami: When I see that nearly all the pupils are answering the questions and participating, even the weak pupils were participating and putting their hand up to answer... this shows that the questions which were asked suit the pupils’ levels, because the pupils with low abilities will not answer the high level questions. Therefore, they will not participate... On the other hand, clever pupils will not answer the low level questions, as there is no challenge. It will be a boring lesson to them. The same thing happens with the medium level. In all the cases not all the pupils will participate and answer.

Moreover, I know the pupils’ levels. I know the pupils with limited abilities. I know the different abilities in my colleague’s classroom. Although this is not my classroom, I know the pupils’ levels, because when their teacher is absent, I replace him whenever I am free and don’t have classes. We, the class system teachers, are used to replacing each other and helping each other. We are not like other departments. And if I replace him, I will teach his class. I know what Salman is teaching and he knows what I am teaching. So if I go to his class I will teach his pupils or at least do a revision class. The next day when I meet him, I ask him “How is this pupil? And how is that?” or “that pupil didn’t participate” so he answers “yes, he is weak”. He tells me about his pupil and what he needs and what is his weakness. The same thing happens for the clever pupils. How do I know? From their participation. In addition, I explain to Salman what I noticed about this clever pupil, and Salman confirms what I have said. Therefore I know

his pupils and he knows mine. We the class system teachers who teach the three levels, first, second and third primary levels, we know each other's pupils, as I said because we replace each other and teach our colleague's pupils whenever their teacher is absent.

Suhaila: Do you have any changes you are willing to suggest for the peer coaching programme?

Sami: As I said earlier, I like the peer coaching programme because it is optional and not compulsory. I would prefer here if the programme stays the same, I mean that the programme is not imposed by the supervisor or the senior teacher or the head teacher, not a compulsory programme. For example, the supervisor visits us. She asks if there are any reciprocal visits between the teachers... we answer "no"... so she says "No. You must visit each other, there should be reciprocal visits between you and your colleagues"... Here, this compulsory visit makes me upset, makes me unhappy, because when you force me to visit this teacher or that, it shows that I am weak in some points that is why you are forcing me to visit the other teachers... or the opposite, maybe the other teacher is weak and she wants me to evaluate his performance.

However, if the programme is optional, I mean if the observation is optional, the reciprocal visits will be very easy, because I am not forced to visit my colleagues, but I visit them or they visit me because there is a need to this visit. Plus, when we define the purpose of the visit, the observation will be limited to this purpose. Therefore, maybe the visit will be for five minutes or ten minutes and then I will leave the classroom. There is no need to stay for the whole lesson.

I liked this programme because it is not compulsory but we practice it according to our needs. Moreover, I like this programme because the administration is not going to interfere in the programme, I mean in the visits, and no evaluation for our annual report. Between me and my colleague there is this paper "the observation sheet", so there is no need for the administration to ask "how was your visit to Salman?". Then they write whatever I said in their records and in

their reports and then they tell Salman “you had weakness in this and that... weakness 1 and weakness 2...” and so on. I liked the peer coaching programme because the visits and the observation sheets and the feedback are between us the teachers only. The senior teacher’s role and the administration’s role is that they know there are reciprocal visits and that we the teachers are visiting each other, but they don’t ask to see the observation sheets.

I will tell you another kind of visit done by the supervisor from the Ministry of Education. For example, she visits me and observes the lesson. Then she says “you had mistakes in such and such 1,2,3,”... I say “Ok but I have my reasons for doing it this way, I have reasons to choose this style or this strategy or this activity”. This happened when the supervisor came to our school. She said “I want you to make a test in maths to assess the pupils”. I prepared a test of ten questions which included adding and subtracting... when the supervisor came and saw the questions... she said “no, these are too many questions. The test should include four questions only”. I explained why I prepared ten questions. I told her “Each question has its own aim which is different from the others. Here we have addition... and there we have addition but with bearing the other number above the next column... and here we have subtraction... and there we have subtraction with borrowing numbers from the next column, and other kinds with subtraction with one column, others with two columns and again with three columns...” and I explained to her the aim of each question. She answered “What you have to do is four questions”. But I have aims and I have to achieve my aims... I have to assess my pupils... So how, if she sees the observation sheet which is between me and my colleague, how will she evaluate?... she will keep on checking me always “did you do this, did you do that” but when it is between me and my friend, I will benefit and he will benefit too. “Yes, Salman, how we do this or why it happens in because of this or that.” in this case he will justify the reasons. I will express my point of view. Maybe he will convince me, or I will convince him. So each one of us will explain his point of view according to his experience and at the end each will try the way which benefits his pupils best.

In the reflective journal no1 I mentioned that I benefited from Salman's way of asking questions... how he started to ask simple questions from their daily life till he reached his aim which was the calendar, how to use calendars and how to recognise the days, the holidays, the occasions...

Suhaila: You described the teacher that he was 'amblé when asking questions and that he was patient with the pupils' what do you mean here?

Sami: I mean here that the teacher was asking his different questions to all levels of pupils... but whenever he sees that some pupils are not participating, he starts asking them directly, asking questions gradually from the simple ones till he reaches the question that the pupil was not answering. But this time the pupil answers it. So the teacher was very patient and, in the end he enabled all the pupils to participate.

The teacher asked the pupils about their date of birth. The teacher brought a list of the pupils' names and their date of birth from the administration. He asked the pupils "when is your birthday?" but some of the pupils don't know the date... so he started to teach them when their birthday is. He was telling them "Your birthday is February 14th" or "Your birthday is December 1st" and so on.

Observation sheet – orange 5

Arabic language: Activities.

I observed the teacher Salman.

I asked Salman if I could observe him teaching this lesson. Because it is difficult for the pupils to distinguish between the letter "ة" and the letter "ه" because/when they are at the end of the word. The teacher knows how to

distinguish but how do you transfer this and explain this to the pupils. It is not easy. The pupils were reading the words (فتاة – مدرسة - مياه). So how could the pupil distinguish between the last letters of these words? That is why I wanted to know how my colleague explained the lesson and what teaching methods he used in that lesson.

Pupils' interaction:

The pupils participated. They started to give words ending in the letter “ة” and the letter “ه”. The teacher wrote words which contains “ه” and “ة” but without the dots above on the smart board. So the pupils started to add the dots above the correct letter and read them (with their movements).

Suhaila: How long did you observe for?

Sami: Not the complete lesson but only half an hour because I went there for a specific aim. I wanted to observe how he presented the lesson, how he explained the lesson, and how he asked questions. As soon as he finished that, I left the class. I went at the beginning of the lesson but, as he moved to another step, I left the class. Actually he told me that he was going to start evaluating the pupils, so I left the class.

Suhaila: You mentioned that the teacher used interesting strategies. Can you explain what these strategies were, please?

Sami: The teacher used pictures... the pupils say the name of each picture... each name ended in the letter “ه” or “ة”... the pupils distinguished between these two letters... Another strategy was a written activity... sheets were distributed to the pupils... words ending with “ه” and “ة” were written on the sheet... and below these words there were two columns - one for the letter “ه” and the other for “ة” so each child would read the words and then write them in the correct column.

Observation sheet (orange – 6)

Arabic language: How to use the interactive board.

I observed the teacher Salman.

I mentioned earlier that I have more experience in using the smart board than my colleagues. So whenever they face any problem, they come and ask me. In this lesson, we use the interactive board to show the pupils a picture and they write a sentence about this picture. The correct sentence is already written on the smart board, but it is hidden. So how do we hide the correct sentence in a way that the pupils can't observe it? At the beginning we let the pupils write their own sentences and then we compare them to the hidden sentence. We write the hidden sentence with the secret ink. "How do we do this? How do we hide the correct sentence and let the pupil write his sentence on the board beside the picture without observing the hidden sentence?" Salman asked me in the teacher's room early in the morning before the pupils lined up. He had already prepared the lesson but wanted to know how to do this technique which is to hide the correct sentence... I explained to him... "we write the sentence then we put a square on it. We put the square on the three levels. The smart board consists of three levels. You write on the upper level...we want to transfer this sentence to the lower level to hide it. So we draw a square on the upper level... and we colour it white... so the sentence is hidden. All these steps are done with the secret ink. There's no need for the teacher to write the correct sentence again but only wipe the board, and the hidden sentence will appear... actually all these steps need to be prepared before going to class.

I explained all of this to Salman. Then I visited him in his classroom to observe how he was teaching and using the interactive board, and to see how he used the secret ink on this board.

Nearly all the pupils participated in the class. They looked at the picture and described what they saw. They wrote words or sentences on the board.

The pupils liked the lesson. The lesson had become a challenge for them... The teacher asked the pupil... "What did you write? Can you read it for me? Ok, let us see if your sentence is right or wrong"... So it became a challenge to the pupil... The teacher wiped over the hidden sentence and the correct answer appeared. The pupil read the correct answer... He recognised what is right and what is wrong. Then the pupil asked the teacher to allow him to write the sentence again. He wanted to prove his efficiency in the lesson.

We taught the pupils how to operate the interactive board... how to put the wires and the plugs... how to connect the wires to the laptop... pupils go to the teachers' room just to take the laptop to the classroom... connect the wires... turn on the computer and prepare it for the teacher... We teach the pupils all of these steps, such as, writing, painting, drawing, turning the page... they are used to doing all these steps, but not saving the lesson.

Observation sheet (orange – 4)

Arabic language: taa marbutah and ha (collaborative learning).

The teacher Salman observed me.

The supervisor asked us to practice the collaborative learning strategy in our classrooms. Whenever she comes to our school she keeps on saying "Try to practice this strategy"... so we decided to practice it. We decided to give the pupils the opportunity to work in a group. Each group collaborates on one activity. Each group has a leader. In this activity I chose the leader according to his efficiency because I needed him to explain to his colleagues whatever they didn't understand.

At the beginning of the class, I explained the lesson to the pupils. Then I gave them an activity... I asked them to give me words ending with taa marbutah and others ending with ha... Of course I don't allow one pupil to give me all the

words... but each pupil in a group gave me one word. So each pupil from the group gave me a word or two words or three as it is an activity for the entire group. The leader of the group helped his colleagues. He explained to them what they didn't understand... in the end each one of them would have given me at least a word. Because I told them from the beginning that I didn't want to hear the words from one pupil but I wanted them to share this activity, each one would do a part of it... and of course I told them that the group which participated with all its members in the activity would get two stars as a reward and each pupil would also get two stars.

I asked each pupil: "What did you do? Which word did you choose? Ok, please write it on the board"... this is to check that this pupil is the one who did the activity and not his friends... Therefore, any activity we practice, we ask each member of the group to say what he did and write what he did on the board... and of course in their own simple way .

Some pupils like to participate to get points or stars, but others don't. So I asked each pupil, even if they didn't put their hand up. The pupil answered me, but when I asked them to say this to their colleagues, they refused because they felt shy to stand up in front of their colleagues and talk... then I asked them to write the word on the board... they liked it in this way - not to talk in front of their colleagues because they feel shy, but it is ok to write the words on the board.

A sense of cooperation emerged between the pupils... "I know, I'll show my colleague"...

In the activities which were done by only one pupil, I told them "your answer is right but sorry, no star because you didn't help your colleagues". Moreover, we didn't achieve our aim 'collaborative learning'. The pupils didn't help each other. So next time, they bear this in mind to get more stars, that each member of the group should participate.

This kind of activity we try to use it in each lesson, in Arabic language, in maths, and also in Islamic Education. For example, in Islamic Education, I ask the group to write one 'sorah'... the sorah consists of five or six 'aya'... so each member of the group is required to read one 'aya'... I ask the group to memorise the 'sorah'... the pupils try their best to memorise 'for each other'. Then I start to ask each pupil randomly to read one 'aya'.

Practicing collaborative strategy helps the pupils a lot to understand the difficult aspect of the lesson, because the pupils understand from their colleagues more. At the same time, we make it clear to the pupil who is explaining that he shouldn't answer the question for his colleague, but help him to understand the lesson and let him answer by himself... I also make it clear to him that he shouldn't tell his friends that he is explaining to his colleague because he is weak and that his colleague doesn't understand, and if anyone does that, I will not let them be the leader of the group anymore... Exactly like what is happening in the peer coaching programme, we do not tell the others what is happening between me and my colleague.

Collaborative learning was required by the supervisor, but we practiced it between each other when we practiced peer coaching.

Observation sheet (orange – 4)

Arabic language: taa marbutah and ha (collaborative learning).

The teacher Jaber observed me

Then the teacher Salman observed me.

Classroom environment... we arrange the classroom according to our lesson... for example, some teachers arrange the pupils' sitting in a U shape... but because I was going to practice the collaborative learning strategy, I arranged them in groups of equal numbers... each group consists of five or six pupils....

Observation sheet (orange – 2)

Science: Methods of teaching science for 2nd primary level.

In our school, each class system teacher is responsible for his class and teaches all the subjects, except Jaber. Jaber taught only science for the first and the second primary level. In the beginning of this term, the Ministry of Education transferred one of the class system teachers to another school; therefore the head teacher decided to replace him with Jaber, and that I and Salman would teach our classes all the subjects including science. So in this case we needed the help of Jaber. He has four years' experience in teaching, while I have twenty-three. Despite this, I needed his help, I needed his expertise. The reason was that the science curriculum was changed, and Jaber had started with the new curriculum, while I and teacher Salman hadn't taught science since then.

So, we both needed the help of Jaber in teaching a lesson about objects... For example, the definition of objects... what is an object? How do we distinguish between objects? And so on... I asked Jaber how he taught this lesson... so he invited me to observe him teaching the lesson... He brought some objects to his class... he pointed to the book on his table and explained to the pupils that this is an object... the same thing with his sunglasses, his pen, his bag, the table, and the papers on the table... he explained that an object is something that occupies a space and has weight... then he let the pupils pick up the objects and asked them "how much does it weigh?... Is it heavy or light?" then he let the pupils pick up a different object, asking them "Do these two objects look the same? Do they weigh the same? Are they the same colour?"... then the teacher started to explain that objects are different... they have different sizes and different weighs... and so on...

Jaber taught the lesson and I observed him. The observation helped me a lot in adapting to the new curriculum. Instead of searching for new methods of

teaching the lesson, it was easier to visit my colleague and observe a practical application in the classroom. Moreover, this observation saved my time and my effort, and made me more confident when I taught my class the same lesson.

Suhaila: Were you comfortable asking for help from a teacher who is younger than you and has less experience than you?

Sami: Yes. I asked him for help without any embarrassment, because as I told you earlier, I chose my partner, and I trusted him. If there was no trust between each other I wouldn't ask him for any help... whatever happened between me and my colleague will remain confidential. My colleague will take into consideration that one day he will need my expertise.

Orange School 2

Interviewee: JaberElmurshed

Interviewer: Suhaila Rajab

Wednesday, August 24, 2011 – 10:00 pm – Coffee shop.

Suhaila: Have you done any observations before? And what was the procedure?

Jaber: Yes. Usually teacher Salman, our coordinator, prepares a programme of reciprocal visits for a year. We had specific forms for those kinds of visits. The observer and the observed teachers used to write their notes and what they observed in those forms. Moreover, we used to visit other schools; the cooperative schools. So we exchange expertise between teachers inside and outside the school; internal and external visits. But in both kinds of visits, the coordinator should participate. If the observation was within our school, our coordinator joined the visitors who came to observe in our school, and if we were visiting another school, the other school's coordinator joined us, the observers.

At the beginning of the academic year, the visiting schedule for the internal visits is put on the wall in our room, the teachers' room. It mentions the name of the teachers to be observed and the observer, the time, the date, and which lesson to visit. So every one was aware of their visits and knew when, what and where to visit.

Suhaila: Do you mean that you were not the one who decided what and where and when to visit?

Jaber: No, no. The coordinator was the one who arranged for these mutual visits between teachers to exchange expertise. He decided who visited who and when. These reciprocal visits were a requirement from the Ministry. Teacher Salman was responsible for the first, second, and third primary level. So he arranged visits between teachers teaching these three levels. Of course the teachers accompanied the coordinator, when he wanted to visit a new teacher. But sometimes, when an experienced teacher wanted to visit another experienced teacher, the coordinator didn't go with them. But someone from the administration should come just to be sure of the operational plan, as these visits are the department's plan. The

administration benefited from those kinds of visits to assess the teachers. The administration considered these visits as indicators, and not as a final adjudication. They indicate that the department is active; teachers are visiting each other and not sleeping.

Suhaila: Do you mean that you put peer observation into practice because it was a requirement?

Jaber: I mean there is no self initiative, because sometimes teachers do not initiate this unless it is imposed on them. In both cases, the imposed or self initiative, we benefited from those visits. Usually the administration meets the teachers asking them to put peer observation into practice. They encourage the teachers to practice reciprocal visits to exchange ideas and experiences. Once the deputy head prepared for us a schedule for reciprocal visits and that was authenticated by the administration. Then we started visiting each other. I benefited from these visits.

Usually the coordinator is the one who prepares the schedule. He is the one who decides what to observe and who and when to observe.

One time, the administration sent us an empty table asking us to write down the time and the period we prefer to observe each other. That was an idea, to help the teachers visiting each other whenever they like, and whenever it is suitable to them. What happened was that most of the teachers chose the first or the second period. Therefore, the coordinator preferred to select the time and the period for observation by himself. Also he as a coordinator, he knew the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher. For example, teacher Jaber has some weaknesses in math and teacher Salman was good in maths, so Jaber visits Salman. The coordinator felt that I needed to visit my colleague in that particular subject. But I can't say I don't want to observe or I don't need to observe because maybe he will think that I don't have any initiative. In school issues you must be somewhat flexible.

Suhaila: Before applying the peer coaching programme, what was the visiting procedure, and did you meet your colleague to determine the purpose of the visits?

Jaber: To be honest, no. We used to go directly to the classroom and then after observing we, the teachers, sit together for a normal discussion; normal chatting

such as “Why did you do this and why did you do that?”. But before observing, we don’t meet to determine the aim of the visit - why to observe. I knew that the observation was going to be in that specific period and that specific subject but which lesson the teacher is going to teach and why specifically I am observing, I don’t know. We used to go to the class, observe, write our notes, and then gave the observation sheets to the coordinator. It was the role of the coordinator to sit with the observed teacher for feedback. We do not sit with them. I don’t know. Maybe lack of time.

Suhaila: Were you happy with that way of observing? And if so, why?

Jaber: It depends. Sometimes you don’t feel you are in yourself. Sometimes you get upset because it affects the curriculum plan and will cause a delay. I would prefer if they come to observe me without informing me in advance that they are coming. Because if they inform me that they are coming, I will do intensive preparation for that lesson, while the lesson will be a normal lesson if they visit me without telling me in advance. The second thing, I don’t feel comfortable if the visitor sits at the back. I usually tell them please sit here, beside me or with the students, because I don’t like them to sit at the back of the class which is in front of me, because I don’t like to see their pens moving. This action causes distraction to me. I feel that this will make me concentrate on the observing teachers and not the students.

Suhaila: How did you find the peer coaching programme?

Jaber: I found it different than what we were doing, especially in specifying the purpose of the visit. I was happy with it. I was happy in myself while practicing it. The most I liked was the flexibility of the programme; I ask my colleagues when I need their help or they ask me when they need my help. For example, I wanted to know more about self-learning and how to practice it with my pupils. My colleague invited me to his classroom to observe how he practiced that strategy. Sometimes I invite my colleagues to observe my lesson. For example when I practised a new strategy, the strategy of using smart board in teaching, and found the positive reaction of the students and their interaction in the lesson, I informed my colleagues about it and invited them to my class to observe the lesson. I also asked my colleagues in the teacher’s room, whenever I feel that I needed help, or I needed to clarify some points, or to know more about a specific strategy. The visit should be specified on the size of

the demand. Thus, because we specified the purpose of the observation in advance, the visiting time was specified too. For example, I don't need to visit my colleague for the whole lesson. Maybe I need only ten minutes or half an hour of visiting, only to satisfy my needs. Maybe I don't need the introductory activity or the end of the lesson. Maybe I need the teacher's explanation or the teacher's practice for a specific subject or specific activity for ten minutes only... Thus I enter the classroom only for that specific reason. Of course here, when I and my colleague identify the purpose and the time of the visit before observing, I tell him "please send one of the pupils to let me know when you reach this point". This is what happened to me. My colleague sent one of his pupils to inform me, and I entered the classroom only for that specific purpose and went out. I didn't stay the whole lesson because I needed only those ten minutes to observe.

So, I found the peer coaching programme better because the teacher enters the classroom only to observe what he needs. Moreover, the observer and the teachers observed meet before observing and specify the purpose of the observation. At least the observer has got an idea about what is happening. We used to go just because we have to do it as it is a requirement from the Ministry. We take the observing forms go inside the class, observe, write our notes, and back to the coordinator giving him the forms, and finish. Do you know what I mean? The new programme gave meaning to the class visitation and to observation. It showed us and explained to us things that we needed.

I liked the observation forms which you gave us. I liked the way how you divided the form into stages; for example, pre-observation, observation, and post-observation. The form was simple. I hope the Ministry will put peer coaching into practice. I hope the Ministry circulates this programme to all the schools and applies it formally.

I liked the programme mostly because the partners determine the reason for the visit and thus decide the time of the visit according to its purpose. So the visit was much more focused and didn't take from the teachers' time, both teachers who are the observers and the observed teachers.

Some of the previous visits were a bit long. The visit lasts for three periods. The old method caused me to fall behind in delivering the curriculum. In the week I applied

that long visit, I got confused in my teaching as the week went on. Usually the supervisors from the Ministry visit us for three periods and they usually choose the last three periods. So those visits caused many obstacles and delay in the curriculum for a week or two. They made me panic in my work. Usually I assess the pupils in the last three periods. So the day the supervisor visited me, she damaged my assessment of my pupils. She hindered the plan of the entire week. Their visits caused me a lot of problems. When I put peer coaching into practice, I went exactly to the point I needed to, and not trying to waste my time or my colleague's time. There wasn't any inconvenience in the practice. Rather, relations between teachers were naturally free of any harassment. I know that the teacher will visit me for this specific reason, and I will provide him with what he needed exactly. I don't have worries about other things. Moreover, the observer is not assessing me and not saying this is wrong or that is right. And most importantly of all, my partner will not speak about me with any one outside the classroom. Teachers fear nothing more than this point as some teachers maintain the confidentiality of the work while others do not. So it depends on the teacher's character. Some teachers transfer whatever they observe to the administration. But we have to bear in mind that maybe that teacher on that specific day had particular circumstances which affected him in teaching. I and my colleagues always try to cover for each other in a positive way. We don't keep silent about any mistakes but we do not expose him. For example, if I notice any weakness with any of my friends, I don't inform the administration but I call him to observe my lesson. My friend will do the same thing with me.

Suhaila: On what basis did you choose your colleague?

Jaber: In the workshop you set up in our school, you suggested applying this programme with the second primary level teachers. So I and my colleagues always worked together. As I mentioned earlier, we chose our partner according to our needs. But sometime we needed the help of the coordinator to tell us which teacher is more skilled in the subject we need. Of course, the coordinator, and on the basis of his experience, knows the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers. Therefore, he can identify the most efficient teacher, who can meet my needs.

Suhaila: Do you have any changes you are willing to suggest for the peer coaching programme?

Jaber: I think it will be a good idea if we apply this programme between all the teachers from different levels and not just in a particular level. For example, in our school, the teacher who teaches first primary level will move with his pupils to the next level. I mean the teacher who taught first primary, moves to second primary, then third primary, after that he will come back again to the first primary level, and so on. In this case if I have any problem in delivering maths for second primary, I can ask my colleague who is teaching the third primary level as he has experience of the second primary curriculum. Or maybe I can ask for the assistance of teachers from first or third primary levels in how to use a specific technology in teaching.

As I mentioned, the programme was flexible in terms of who to choose for observing my work, and determining the exact time for observation. Moreover, it was well organised in terms of time allocation to decide the purpose of observation and the feedback. I meet the teacher, decide why I need him to observe me, we agree with each other on the exact time to observe, then he observes and, at the end, we meet with each other for feedback.

Suhaila: Do you think you can apply the programme next year though it is still not authenticated by the Ministry?

Jaber: I think I can apply peer coaching programme with some modifications. I can mix the peer coaching programme with what is required by the Ministry, which is peer observation and reciprocal expertise. For example, the administration asks us to provide them with our plan for class visitations, and I will do it, but in my way. I will do a beautiful mixture of the old style and the new style. So the new mixture will be more self-determination in choosing the observer, in determining the time, and in specifying the purpose of the observation. In this way, I meet the administration's aspirations and, at the same time, I fulfil my needs.

Observation:

Observer: Teacher Sami

Purpose: Methods of teaching science

Jaber: I have adequate experience in the new curriculum in science. The Ministry applied the new curriculum four years ago and, at that time I started working as a teacher. So I started my career by teaching the new curriculum. I taught only science for first, second and third primary level. My colleagues taught the other subjects. So they didn't have to concentrate more on the new curriculum as they were not going to teach it. But things were changed this year. We are asked to teach all the subjects. Therefore, teacher Sami asked to visit me to see how I apply internet in the classroom, and how I relate it to the science lesson. Teacher Sami visited me and observed how I connected the internet and opened a specific web page. The new science curriculum - the approach, the activities and the assessments were loaded on that website. He observed how I used the internet and how the lesson was already loaded in the system in terms of explaining to students, or using the activities. The website was divided in order; verbal and written. It was divided by the number and the title of the lesson. You simply press the button; everything is seen in front of you. It is very interesting.

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Observation: 7 observer: Jaber - observed: Salman

Purpose: Silent reading strategies

I wanted to know more about silent reading strategies, so I asked teacher Salman, the coordinator, as he has experience in this area. I knew that he was very good in that aspect. I met him in the teachers' room. We discussed together the advantage of silent reading. I told him I wanted to see a practical application of silent reading strategies, because the supervisors always recommend applying it. They direct us a

lot to use it but I do not know the exact mechanism in using it. I asked him about the possibility of visiting him while he was teaching and using that strategy. He told me “this week I will apply this strategy so you can come and visit me”. He determined the day and the period to be observed. He also showed me his lesson plan, and of course he wrote down the procedures of the lesson and the behavioural objectives he designed. Then I visited him. It was an Arabic lesson. I entered the classroom at the beginning of the lesson. He was preparing and arranging the pupils for the lesson, and they were sitting quietly. The teacher gave them the chance to read silently from their books and he taught them that every pupil should put his finger on the word to be sure of the word he is reading. You know this is a feeling; pupils feel what they are reading by pointing to the words. They feel assured of their reading. He made them feel responsible for their reading. He asked the pupils to underline the difficult words while reading -that was his strategy. After that he, teacher Salman, read the text out loud. Then he gave each pupil a worksheet with an empty table on it, asking them to write individually the words that were difficult for them in that table. After that, he discussed the meaning of these difficult words with them. At the end, he asked them to put each of these words in a sentence.

After the observation we met again in the teachers’ room, and I asked him to explain to me how he designed the behavioural objectives for that lesson.

In the reflective journal (4th May), I mentioned the importance of silent reading and how it helps pupils to read in a library. I found that the strategies used by teacher Salman were very useful for use in the library. Therefore, I practiced that strategy with my pupils in a library. Teacher Salman applied that strategy in the classroom and I applied it in the library.

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Observation: 8

Observer: Jaber - observed: Salman

Purpose: The advantages of individual encouragement.

We all know the importance of students' enhancement in terms of raising students' motivation and enthusiasm, especially for pupils in Basic education.

The teachers, I mean we give the pupils enhancement, even if it is verbal enhancement. As you know there are types of enhancement: materialistic and verbal enhancement. Even saying 'well done' that means a lot to the pupil. It will raise his motivation even if his answer is wrong. There is negative enhancement and positive. I visited teacher Salman for positive individual enhancement. I know that collective enhancement is for groups of pupils. The teacher uses stars or points to reward each group.

I met teacher Salman in the teachers' room. I asked him that I would like to know more about ways and techniques of giving individual enhancement. He invited me to his lesson, which was the third period on 21st of April... I visited him and observed his classroom. He was hanging a large board with pupils' photographs on the wall. Beside each photograph there was a circle. The teacher asked questions and, if the pupil's answer was correct, all the pupils clapped for him or the teacher put a star in the circle beside his photo. Teacher Salman's way of enhancement was by clapping or giving stars, or material enhancement. Therefore, the pupils were very interactive. They challenge each other on the basis of who will get more stars.

I asked teacher Salman about the stars, what the pupils will do then with these stars. So he explained to me that, by the end of each week, the pupil with the most stars will be rewarded and his name will be put as the star of the week in the school's weekly bulletin, which will be distributed to all the parents. Moreover, all the pupils in the second primary level will see the picture of the star of the week. They will know that so and so from such a class has obtained the largest number of stars, and that is why he is the star of the week... Here, the individual enhancement is related to the parents and to the local community. It is related to the classrooms next to the winner's classroom, the second primary level classes.

Then, I and my colleagues thought about gathering all the basic levels; first, second, and third primary, in one joint weekly bulletin... At the end of each month, we collect the stars of the past four weeks and honour them in the morning assembly.

The most beautiful thing was that the idea of putting this kind of news in the bulletin expanded, and reached the other schools, such as the cooperative schools, as these bulletins were reaching all the houses in the area. I knew about this when I met with the teachers from one of the cooperative schools, they were our neighbours. One of the teachers said that they applied the same method as an individual enhancement. She said they started to put the photos of the pupils winning the largest number of stars in the weekly bulletin.

I benefited greatly from the diversity in methods of individual enhancement which teacher Salman was practicing in his classroom. Diversification in enhancement methods is important because pupils get bored with repetition. Therefore, teacher Salman, as I said earlier, related individual enhancement to community. He also related it to the curriculum. For example, he discusses with the other subject teachers, like music, arts or sports to know who is the cleverest pupil in their class or the well-behaved pupils. So whenever he goes to the classroom, he tells them that the music teacher praised such and such a pupil, and we must applaud him, so all the pupils clap for him. In this case, pupils feel that they must make an effort in all subjects and not only in a specific one. This kind of enhancement affects the pupils' motivation. It encourages them to participate as they will be rewarded. It gave pupils self-confidence. Pupils raise their hands to answer and come and write the answers on the whiteboard.

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Observation: 3

Observer: Teacher Sami

Purpose: Collaborative learning.

Our supervisor always encourages us to use collaborative learning. I took the application of the peer coaching programme to strengthen the collaborative learning strategy. Though I applied it in my classroom, I still needed to be more familiar with it. I knew that teacher Sami was brilliant in this strategy. Therefore, I asked for his help.

I met him in the teachers' room. We had a conversation about practicing collaborative learning strategy. I told him that I wanted to know more about this strategy and I would like to observe a practical lesson using this strategy. So he invited me to his classroom. We determined the suitable period for both of us. Then I visited him. In the pre-observation meeting, he showed me his lesson plan. He explained to me how he designed the collaborative learning objectives. I even asked him how to organise the groups in the classroom. I mean on what basis he distributed the pupils in groups, also in which subject. Does this strategy suit all the subjects, or only specific subjects? The lesson I observed was science, with an experiment. So it was very appropriate to use this strategy for this lesson.

I visited teacher Sami. I observed how he divided the pupils in groups in the classroom. The number of pupils in his classroom was very large, so the numbers of pupils in the groups were not equal. Moreover, the size of the classroom was small. However, he arranged them in a comfortable way and distributed the tools of the scientific experiment to each group. He also distributed the role of each member in the group. He appointed the leader and his assistant. He gave each group a model paper to write on it what they found. So there was a challenge between the groups, and the first group to finish had to raise their hands and then hang the answer sheet on the white board. Then teacher Sami took each sheet and called each pupil to read the answer of his group. Of course, the teacher helped them in their reading and, at the same time, corrected the answers and wrote them on the whiteboard.

I liked how he related the collaborative learning to this subject as it was not suitable for all subjects. It was also interesting to see how the pupils changed their places. Sometimes the group sat on the floor and worked, and sometimes they went out of the classroom, if the weather was ok, to work.

The obstacles:

Pupils need time to know what their roles are, and that they are working in a group. The other thing was the large number of pupils in a classroom. They were twenty-nine, so there was a large number of pupils in one group or a large number of groups in the classroom.

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Observation: 9

Observer: teacher Salman - observed: Jaber

Purpose: Introduction and correlation to other subjects.

Teacher Salman visited me once to see the introductory activity which I practiced in my classroom. It was a new approach from the Ministry of Education to improve schools' performance. The Ministry encourages the teachers to practice an introductory activity at the beginning of the day to 'break the ice'. Not like what we used to do. Now the introductory activity has become a requirement. It is different than the introduction of the lesson, what we were doing before. We were used to starting each lesson with an introduction which is related to the lesson. But now, we are required to practice an introductory activity at the beginning of the day. Moreover, it is not a condition to be related to the lesson, but an activity to be started at the beginning of the day, before starting the lesson, as I said to break the formality in the classroom and to motivate the pupils for the coming lessons. These activities may be of any kind; such as a sporting activity, a puzzle, or anything. Sometimes I give them an activity related to the lesson but not in a direct way. I give them maths problems about addition, as a puzzle, but without mentioning that this is related to addition. For example, I ask them "Amer caught three birds, and then the father of the birds, so how many birds are with Amer?" This kind of question attracts the pupils' attention. They keep on thinking and trying but don't know that this is related to their lesson. Sometimes I bring a small ball and throw it in the middle of the classroom ... at this point, if anyone enters the classroom, they will say 'What is this? What are you doing? What is this mess in the classroom?' But it is not a mess because when pupils come to school early morning, they feel kind of sleepy and with these activities they will feel energetic and enthusiastic.

I remember once I had to teach a lesson about animals, it was in science. As I mentioned before, the Ministry of Education encourages teachers to practice an introductory activity at the beginning of the day as one of the ways to improve

schools' performance. Therefore, to meet the requirements of the Ministry, I invited teacher Salman to observe how I do this in my classroom. That day, I was going to teach them science and it was about animals. I started asking the pupils indirect questions about animals and farms as an introductory activity. I asked them "Have you ever visited a farm? What kind of animals did you see there? Have you ever been to Alarreen Safari Park? What animals did you see there?" Pupils started talking about pets and wild animals, and I wrote the names of these animals on the whiteboard. I grouped the animals. For example, I put the birds together in a blue circle and the wild animals in a red circle, and so on. Then I asked them "What do you call the animals in the red circle? And what do you call the animals in the blue circle?" And so on. After that I started my lesson. Sometimes I feel that I need to relate the introductory activity to my lesson but the way I present it is informal, as if we are talking about general information, about what we did or what we do, or about what we like or dislike.

In the feedback meeting, teacher Salman commented that the activity took longer than expected, but I expressed my belief that this activity facilitated the lesson. It took longer because it was an introductory activity, as I and the pupils were having a chat about general information in our daily life, and at the same time it was an introduction to my lesson. Therefore, in the reflective journal he wrote that he benefited from the way I presented the introductory activity and, at the same time, how I was encouraging the pupils. From the beginning of the lesson you could feel how the pupils were happy and motivated for the lesson.

Suhaila: Do you have any additions you would like to add to the peer coaching programme?

Jaber: I would like to mention that peer coaching programme gave me the opportunity to express my needs and at the same time the freedom to choose the partner for observing. It gave me the chance to discuss with my colleagues what aspect I need to be more familiar with, so they can help me, without thinking that this may affect my annual report or maybe they will say that I am a weak teacher. Moreover, deciding the exact observation date, period, and time made the observation easier, so that it will not hinder the teacher's work.

I hope to be the first to apply this programme and publish it in schools, and to be the link between the programme and the schools. I hope we can change the old applications in the Ministry of what is in the interests of teachers and, therefore, in the interest of pupils. Because the traditional things in the Ministry remain unchanged, though a lot of theories have changed.

Pink School 1

Interviewees:

Mariam + Noora + Badreya

Interviewer: Suhaila Rajab

Tuesday, July 19, 2011 – 5:00 pm – Mariam's house.

Suhaila: Have you done any observations before? And what was the procedure?

Mariam: Yes. I and my colleagues, always observe each other. We accompany the senior teacher or the head teacher or the supervisor during the evaluation (assessment) visits. Usually we visit each other once each term. Sometimes there are two visits - one by the head teacher and the other by the senior teacher. This term, the last academic term, we had more than one visit. They were unannounced visits by the senior teacher and the deputy head teacher.

Noora: When I came to this school, as I was transferred to this school three years ago, most of the visits were for assessment and others were exploratory visits... when I was a new teacher, the senior teacher visited me as an exploratory visit... then she visited me with the head teacher or the deputy head teacher for assessment once each academic term and that is it, finish... so whenever they visit us, it is for evaluation, but as we say, they hit two birds with one stone, because when they visit for assessment they invite five or six teachers to accompany them so that they exchange experience while they visit each other.

My colleagues and I have gained from the expertise inside the school in different ways. We take advantage of break time. For example, we teach the same educational level, we have the same lesson plan besides, the same joint

quarterly plan, and we teach the same lesson in a week but maybe the differences are in the days. So whenever we have problems we discuss them together. The teacher who faced difficulties will say “I did this lesson today. I faced difficulties in such and such. What about you? How did you put it into practice?” so I explain to her what I did, and how I explained the lesson. So, all we do is explain to each other but without any visiting or observing our colleagues.

Suhaila: Did the administration request your approval for the teachers' attendance?

Noora: Yes... what happened is that the senior teacher prepares a schedule. She writes the names of the observed teachers, names of the teachers who will observe, the day, the date, the time, and which lesson it is. When I was at my previous school, between 2000 and 2008, visits were held between the collaborative schools. There weren't many reciprocal visits between the teachers from the same school but with other cooperative schools. For example, the administration agrees the visit with the observed teacher, that a delegation of teachers from a certain school will come and visit her in her classroom, in the Arabic language lesson using the collaborative learning strategy... of course they ask the observed teacher for her approval as the visitors are from other schools.

At my previous school, the senior teacher used to observe the teachers during their evaluation visits. She used to note the observed teacher's weaknesses and what aspects need improvement. So the senior teacher arranges for a visit to a teacher who is efficient in that specific point. Then, for example, the senior teacher indirectly tells the teacher who is in need of improvement “Teacher, on such a day you have a visit to a listening lesson in such and such a school. So she will send the teacher to observe a lesson in another school... you will think why the senior teacher sent me to that school and why to that specific lesson, listening lesson... so the senior teacher is the one who decides what we need as

she observes and finds our weak points, and sends the teachers to take advantage of the experience of another teacher in that lesson. For me, this way didn't bother me. Although it was tiring, because you have to go out of the school and the weather is hot, but I liked it as we gained expertise from other teachers.

The other thing is that the lesson plan is the same, maybe I will add one or two more lines, but I will make an effort in other preparation for the lesson. I used to prepare many charts, of course now the smart board helps us a lot as it gave us a lot of pictures we need for the lesson, but of course there must be diversification between the tangible and non-tangible things. With the smart board you will present electronic pictures but you also need to show things in reality for the pupils. We also display models. Preparation to make these models takes time. This causes a problem. For example, for a person like me, I can't do anything on weekdays. I can't go out on weekdays, so whatever preparation I need for these models has to be at weekends. At weekends I need to think and decide what I need for the educational situation, what charts I need for that day. So if the senior teacher informs me on Monday that the panel will visit me on Wednesday or Thursday... what can I do? How can I go and buy the materials for the models I want to present or the charts or anything? It will be a disaster because I can't do any shopping during the week. So I tell them "please could you make it next week so I will be able to prepare myself". The problem here is the time, lack of time. Nowadays the smart board and the internet have facilitated these things. It has saved us time and it has also saved us money, but not the things you have to buy. What about the materials you need for the model you want to present? The charts? The coloured charts? And so on....

Badreya: What I want to say is the same as my colleagues but I would like to add here that after the reciprocal visits the senior teacher tells us her perceptions and writes down on the sheet the points which need adjustment or improving.

The senior teacher gives the teachers observation sheets. The teachers write what they observed and then they give these sheets back to the senior teacher. The observed teacher does not see what is written on those sheets.

Noora: I would like to mention here, that if the senior teacher showed us those sheets, nothing would happen. I think it is a normal situation because when a teacher observes her colleague I don't think she will criticize her colleague harshly, but her criticism will be constructive. It will be just observations; it will be more like giving ideas.

Suhaila: Have you been to courses about observation skills, or about giving and receiving feedback skills?

Noora: I taught myself about feedback but I couldn't put it into practice, because the senior teacher observes and after that she sits with us and shows us her observation form, the feedback notes, so we will see her notes only, and besides, sometimes we see these notes late.

Suhaila: Were the visits according to your needs?

Noora: No. To be honest we scheduled the visits just to say that we, the teachers, have visited and observed each other and we practiced peer observation and exchanged experiences between each other. The visits were not the kind of visits we needed because we didn't identify the purpose of the visit. For example, two years ago, when we applied the new science curriculum, the supervisor didn't inform us that she was coming to visit this specific teacher in this specific lesson but she said that she would come to observe a science lesson, meaning any lesson. The visits were decided by the senior teacher or the supervisor. Also, when we applied the new maths and science curriculum the supervisor used to say that she benefited from those visits to our classes because it was a new curriculum and she was observing a practical application in the classroom. We followed the methods and the techniques which the senior teacher and the supervisor wanted us to, and which were mentioned in the teacher's guide. In any case, the teacher was the one who controlled her classroom. She might change her strategy in teaching according to the pupils' level and their ability to understanding.

Suhaila: Did you benefit from the peer coaching programme?

Noora: Although you asked us to apply the peer coaching programme at a very sensitive time in Bahrain and there was pressure because of a lack of time to finish the curricula, our group was happy with the programme. One of the advantages in this programme is that it takes less time and helped us to speed up and finish the curricula.

Actually, the purpose of the visits are to learn from each other and to exchange expertise, while before we were forced to visit each other because the visits were based on assessment. Even so, I don't think in-service teachers with ten years' teaching experience and more need assessment. I think it is enough. Or teachers with 23 years' experience, they should be exempt from these assessments, except if there is a new programme like what we are doing now, the peer coaching programme, as it is a new strategy for reciprocal expertise, and at the same time you feel comfortable when you apply it as it is a flexible strategy.

Suhaila: On what basis did you choose the observer in peer coaching programme?

Noora: Actually the relationship between me and my colleagues is very good; therefore it helped me in the visits. Moreover, I chose the observers according to their experience. I have colleagues with 23 years' experience and also with 18. Furthermore, they also have experience of the place, the school, and also experience of pupils in that area. It is true that I have 14 years' experience teaching as a class system teacher, but I have only 3 years' experience in this school and specifically in this area while my colleagues had more experience in teaching in this school. They had experience in dealing with the pupils, their levels, the level of their thinking, and their way of thinking. In all these aspects, they were more experienced than me. As I told you before, three years ago I was transferred to this school. I was in a school with a different environment to the current school environment. The nature of the people was different. Most of the pupils in the previous school didn't go to kindergarten but directly to the school.

Therefore, they were different than the pupils in the current school. They were different in their way of thinking, their experience, and their educational background. I benefited from the experience of my colleagues with the pupils in this school, as they have been in this area for longer and they have more experience of the girls in this area.

Mariam: I would like to mention here that the relationship between me and my colleagues in this school is very good. We are like sisters. So when I observe my colleague it is as if I am observing my sister. Therefore, we found peer coaching a comfortable programme, especially as there wasn't any assessment.

Observation sheet: 6

Observer: Amal

Observed: Mariam

Purpose: Punctuation marks.

Mariam: The lesson was about punctuation marks and how we apply them in writing. It is not an easy lesson. Usually young learners find difficulties in this lesson, but when I explained the lesson to my class, the pupils benefited from the explanation. Therefore, I told the teacher, Amal, about my lesson and invited her to come and observe me while teaching the lesson. I applied the lesson and found that the pupils had benefited from the lesson, so I was happy to let my colleagues take advantage of my way of teaching and of the strategy I use in this lesson.

Suhaila: What did you mean by the interesting presentation for the lesson?

Mariam: I gave the pupils kind of roles to play. The pupil will act as if she is the punctuation mark. The pupil will play a sort of model of the punctuation mark. I drew the punctuation marks which they were studying, such as the question mark, the colon, the semicolon, the full stop, the comma, and the exclamation mark as cartoons on pieces of cork. I put ears, eyes, and legs on the cartoons to make it more interesting for the pupils. I also prepared some written sentences. The activity was that pupils pick up sentences and others pick up punctuation marks. Each pupil will read the sentence and then match it to the correct punctuation mark. So pupils categorized the sentences according to the punctuation marks.

I also let the pupils work as a group. I gave them cards, with sentences written on them but without any punctuation marks. The pupils had to add the punctuation marks. I laminated these cards so the pupils could write in colour on the cards and also clean the card so we can use the cards again. I did lots of cards for each group as a competition. The pupils worked in groups. I gave them a large amount of cards. They worked on these cards together. Of course I gave the group which won a present. I also gave them individual activities so each girl would work by herself.

Through feedback and intensive training, pupils learnt a lot. They mastered the skills very well. They showed efficiency in the lesson as they worked together. In the next lesson, I exchanged the cards. I took the cards from each group and gave it to another group. There were many cards with many sentences. I found that the pupils were happy when they mastered the skill. They seem to be happy when they finished with their cards and gave them to their colleagues in the other groups.

Observation sheet: 5

Observer: Amal

Observed: Badreya

Purpose: Currency unit

Badreya: This unit was one of the difficult lessons for the pupils, but I didn't experience problems when teaching this lesson, like my colleagues did. Therefore, when Amal asked me about the currency unit, I invited her to my class to observe the way I presented the lesson, how I was teaching the currency unit, and how pupils dealt with the money. I photocopied the notes then I laminated them. I asked the pupils to do the same, to bring photocopied money if they could. I set up a shop in one of the classroom's corners and we called it the shop corner. The shop corner was created so the pupils would be able to use the money in it. What happened is that every day the pupils ask "Please teacher, can we open the shop?" or "please teacher, let us buy from the shop". Although it was a difficult lesson, the pupils enjoyed it.

The presentation of the lesson was interesting and we dealt with the money in different ways.

Here, we used role play strategy. The pupils priced the items in the shop corner and they had their own money. The pupils played the seller and the buyers and they act like when they go to a cold store and buy things.

Another way was that one of the pupils priced an item without the knowledge of her colleague, and her colleague started estimating the cost of the item.

Mariam: We have a problem in the currency lesson because the pupils can't master this lesson easily so we try out many methods. We benefited a lot from

some methods, such as the shop corner. Sometimes in this lesson, the weak pupil shows that she is better than the cleverest one because the weak girl has more experience with money as she is used to playing outside the house and taking money from her parents and then buy from the cold stores. While the clever girl, her family don't give her money in her hand to buy by herself. Her parents get whatever she needs for her. That is why she will never gain experience like the weak girl... therefore, the weak pupil is cleverer in this unit than the cleverest pupil.

I noticed this with my daughter, she is in another school, but when she was in the first primary, I was teaching first primary too. Now she is in second primary as I am teaching the same level in my school. When she started with the money unit, of course I don't know how her teacher taught her, but I started teaching her and I tried as much as possible to show her and clarify the money unit for her as well as the value of each unit of currency, but I found she still had some weaknesses in this lesson. I decided to give her the chance to deal with the money in real life by herself. So I gave her money every day and let her buy food for herself from the school canteen... I used to give her a packed lunch to take with her, so she would not waste her time standing in the queue buying food. But I discovered that my daughter lost a lot of experience which she can get easily from her daily life. She didn't know how to deal with the money.

Observation sheet: 4

Observer: Amal

Observed: Noora

Noora: Amal heard me talking with my colleagues about the words which contain letters that can be pronounced but not written. So she asked me about the possibility of observing my class while I am teaching. I welcomed her, and she

visited me because she wanted to learn. In fact, Amal was a very flexible teacher who likes to help and at the same time doesn't feel shy to ask for help.

(Intensive training for spelling on the white board)

At the beginning, I presented a story as access to the lesson.

Suhaila: Was it an introductory activity to the lesson?

Noora: No, an introductory activity is different. An introductory activity doesn't have to be linked to the lesson but it is a way, as we say, to warm up the classroom, to create an atmosphere, and to motivate pupils to be ready to start the lesson. So I started the lesson with a story and an activity. The activity was pieces of white paper with the words which were the purpose of the lesson written on them - words contains pronounced but not written letters (هؤلاء، ذلك، هذا، هذه). This was the letter 'alef'. I wrote these words on the pieces of paper but I wrote the letter 'alef' with them. I didn't remove the letter. I put them in a way that the pupil can remove them easily later. The pupil can take away the letter 'alef' and the correct word will be shown. I put them in transparent envelopes. I showed the girls these words and started the story. I said that these (I point to the four words) are four sisters. They went out for a walk but they were obstructed by the river. They wanted to get from this bank of the river to the other bank on the other side. So one of the sisters suggested that each sister take her letter 'alef' and, putting them together, we can build a bridge with them, then we will be able to move from the bank, across the bridge to the other bank. So the pupils removed all the 'alef' letters from the written words, stuck them together, with magnets, like a bridge to let the sisters move across the bridge. The story was very interesting... The pupils liked it. Actually I learnt it from my colleague from the other school I was in... I liked it, so I practiced it with my pupils and found it very useful.

I also have laminated cards words with written on them which contain letters that can be pronounced but not written. These words were written with big computer fonts. I hang the cards on the wall. So they are in front of the pupils every day.

We usually take a particular skill throughout the entire week. For example, we have a spelling skill, spelling of words which contain letters that can be pronounced but not written. I let the pupils read this spelling line every day. I tell them “Look at these words, no word contains the letter ‘alef’. Look at them carefully. Read them. I don’t want you to make mistakes. I don’t want any one of you to make any mistakes in these words. If you make mistakes I will not talk to you anymore”. The children laugh when I talk to them like this and they try their best not to make mistakes. I gave them spelling lines for three days and the fourth day, it will be assessment. For example, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday there will be spelling line every day and, on Wednesday, assessment. Or I start from Monday and the assessment will be on Thursday. I prefer to start with perspective dictation, so the pupils will observe these words, then repeat these words and at the end, audio dictation, for assessment.

Perspective dictation means that I let the girls look at the spelling line which contains the skills I want them to learn. For example, I write the spelling line, but I write the words which contain letters that can be pronounced and not written in a different colour or I put a red line under them so these words will stand out for the pupils. We read it in the class several times. Then I tell them “try it yourself. Read the sentence silently” till the form of the word will be printed in the pupil’s brain, even its pronunciation. Then I let them practice the skill by pronouncing the words and write them in air. After that, I cover the words, so the pupils are not able to look at them during the dictation. For three days, the pupils were trained in this skill till the fourth day. The fourth day they will have assessment, audio dictation. It is worth mentioning that on the fourth day all the pupils master the skill except one or maybe two. I think the story I presented at the beginning of the lesson will not let them forget the form of the words.

Observation sheet: 11

Observer: Noora

Observed: Badreya

Purpose: Currency unit

Noora: We take advantage of break time for talking about our needs. I was searching for new strategies for the currency unit as I was facing many difficulties in this lesson. I wanted to see the others, how they presented this lesson. Maybe they were better than me in the way they presented it.

(How pupils deal with the currency)

Pupils dealt with the currency in the shop corner. They liked role playing. It attracted them. Sometimes they bring real money to use in the shop corner. Every now and then, pupils say “we want to buy from the shop”. This repetition helps the pupils to understand and at the same time it creates a kind of fun in the classroom.

In addition to the shop corner in the classroom, the teacher presented the lesson on the smart board. She presented clear pictures of currencies. Besides, the pupils feel happy when we present anything on the smart board. As I said earlier, it is a new strategy. This is the first year for us using the smart board.

This diversification in strategies helped us in teaching and helped pupils to understand the lesson easily.

Observation sheet: 8

Observer: Badreya

Observed: Noora

Purpose: Punctuation marks

Badreya: As Noora said earlier, we talk about our needs in the break time. So I needed to know more about the punctuation marks and the strategies my colleagues use in teaching this lesson. We use punctuation marks continuously, in every lesson, five days a week. We don't use it in dictation only but in composition also. For example, every day we give the pupils a spelling line and composition but we don't need to access and observe all the lessons during the week. We observe only one lesson because we are not free as we have classes to teach, but we talk about and discuss the other lessons and what happened inside the classroom in the break time.

(Method of presenting punctuation marks)

Badreya: Noora wrote the punctuation marks on cards and then she laminated them. The first step, she asked questions and presented the card with the question mark. The next step, she said a sentence and displayed punctuation marks. The pupils chose the suitable mark. So pupils distinguish between the marks. Then pupils say sentences orally and chose suitable marks for them.

(Employment of linguistic structures in simple sentences)

Badreya: Our role is to make complicated things easy for our pupils. We facilitate the required phenomenon. We write a sentence for them in their exercise book and they employ the sentence in writing.

Noora: By linguistic structures, we mean grammar. We use the word grammar for the fourth primary and above, but for the first, second and third primary we call it linguistic structure. Here we use grammar, like (ان واخواتها، كان واخواتها، حروف الجر) in the sentences. For example, how do we employ prepositions in a sentence? We use prepositions in a specific sentence and, at the end of it, we put a full stop or a question mark, so if we put a question mark, the sentence will turn into a question. So here we can see how linguistic structures are used to teach punctuation.

That is why the teacher should be familiar with all subjects. They should know Arabic language and, at the same time, science, and maths and so on, so they can deliver the information in an easy way. Moreover, the pupils know the type of sentence and which punctuation to use from the tone of the voice. For example, when you say “Where did you go” and you say it in an asking tone, the tone will help the pupils to recognize which correct punctuation mark to use. Of course they will say question mark and put its card up. But when you say a sentence like “How amazing this place is”, but you say it in a surprised tone, immediately the pupils will put the card of the exclamation mark up.

Observation sheet: 3

Observer: Mariam

Observed: Noora

Purpose: The methods of solving math problems – reciprocal expertise.

Noora: When I teach math exercises I start my lesson with a story. I tell the story and through it, I present a specific problem, so we need to follow mathematical steps and methods to solve this problem. The investigation and the data we get from the story help to put in place steps and methods to solve the problem.

The mathematical exercises could also be presented in the shop corner. We take an exercise and act it, act the story.

Some of the girls need individual learning. Although I follow an interesting strategy which is telling stories, the girls with limited abilities need more help. I have to choose a story which suits their level of understanding.

(The advantage of using different strategies at the same time).

Mariam: I mean by different strategies here - role play, telling stories, using the smart board, but the girls with limited abilities needed to be dealt with individually.

Noora: Furthermore, at the end of the lesson, I gave them a mathematical exercise as an assessment to take in the lesson more. I present the exercise on the smart board. For example, I write on the smart board that this person says $700 - 200 = 500$, while the other one says $700 - 200 = 300$, which answer is correct? And how do you know that? This was at the end of the lesson. I evaluate the pupil's higher skills, higher thinking skills. But I gave drills to pupils with limited abilities.

Observation sheet: 2 Observer: Mariam Observed: Noora

Purpose: Reciprocal expertise for better educational achievement for pupil.

Noora: It was the same story telling presented in (observation 4) which was about words that contain letters which can be pronounced but not written. I and Mariam thought of exchanging expertise, and this strategy helped the pupils to understand the lesson easily.

Mariam: (feedback – the use of fingerprint cards for assessment)

Fingerprint cards are mini-cards which the girls wear as rings. We write on them the words which contain letters that are pronounced but not written. We prepare these cards for the pupils; they can wear them, read the words by themselves

and move their fingers as required. For example, I say the word (هذا) and the pupils put up their finger with word (هذا). Or they point with the finger which has got the correct word.

In the break time, my colleagues and I identify what are the difficult subjects the pupils face. We also agree and concentrate on what expertise we need to observe; expertise like how to teach the words which contain pronounced but not written letters, or the 'tashkeel'/the movement used with the words like 'tanween', or solving some verbal exercises... and so on. So each teacher will observe her colleague's expertise.

(Follow-up the method of correcting mistakes)

Mariam: We show the pupils words and then they say if they are correct or wrong. If the word is wrong they have to correct it. For example, I gave them a word like (هاؤلاء), pupils look at it and found it wrong, so I ask them to correct the mistake. They correct it by removing the letter "alef" and write it again as (هؤلأء). Here the pupils found the mistake and corrected it by themselves.

Observation sheet: 7

Observer: Badreya Observed: Amal

Purpose: The difference between the two letters (ت) and (ة).

(The letters (ت) and (ة) are pronounced [t] but each has a different shape and different use)

Badreya: I asked my colleague Ibtisam about the possibility of observing her teaching the letters (ت) and (ة). The similarity between the two letters (ت) and (ة) is in pronunciation, both are pronounced [t], while the difference is in the form

and in the meaning. The pupils were suffering with this problem. They found it difficult. Therefore, I wanted to observe my colleague, how she delivered it to her pupils.

Observation sheet: 10

Observer: Noora

Observed: Amal

Diversity in methods of teaching

Mariam: Mostly I depended on cards in both individual work and group work. As I said earlier, the girl stands up, carrying the card and saying what is written on it, or talk about what is drawn on it as if she is talking about herself.

Suhaila: Do you have any comments or any changes you are willing to suggest for the peer coaching programme?

Mariam: Actually, I have nothing to say more than it is a flexible programme that doesn't cause any tension or stress or pressure on the teachers. Besides it is an uncomplicated programme and easy to apply.

Badreya: Yes, it was a flexible programme.

Noora: Although we were going through tough times because of the crisis which our Kingdom has been through, we didn't meet with any difficulty in implementing the programme, but we benefited from the application especially in that period of time as it helped us to go faster in finishing the curricula.

Pink School 2

Interviewee: Amal

Interviewer: Suhaila Rajab

Wednesday, July 13, 2011 – 5:00 pm – My house.

Suhaila: Have you done any observations before? And what was the procedure?

Amal: Yes. We are used to observing our colleagues. We visited them but accompanying the head teacher, the senior teacher or supervisors from the Ministry. As requested by the administration, we observe, and then we write about what we observe, and give the observation sheet to the senior teacher. The teacher who is observed does not see these sheets, and the observer does not sit with that teacher for the feedback.

We observe each other because it is a requirement of the administration for 'reciprocal expertise', and we agree to be observed because it is a requirement for our annual report, a requirement by the senior teacher and the head teacher to assess us. Furthermore, when the senior teacher or the head teacher visits any teacher, a group of teachers go with them. These kinds of visits make the teachers, those observed and even the observer, feel uncomfortable. The administration doesn't give us the option of visiting and observing according to our needs. That is why when they invite me for any observation, I feel uncomfortable and I feel it is a waste of time because I do not NEED to observe my colleague as I am efficient in the particular subject of the lesson, and my colleague does not NEED me to observe her. In fact, she doesn't like being observed but she agreed because, if she refuses, it will affect her annual report.

My colleagues and I used to discuss problems with each other and ask each other for help. For example, when I face any difficulties in any specific lesson, I ask my colleague about how she explains that lesson, and she explains her way of doing it... she explains and clarifies the lesson; besides, she shows me all the activities she uses in that specific lesson. All this discussion happens in the teachers' room or anywhere else but not inside the classroom. No visiting and no observing. We do all this discussing and all the explaining in the teachers' room. We don't visit each other

because we always think that the idea of visiting is quite unbearable and intolerable. We got this idea from the visits that were held by the senior teacher, or the head teacher, or the supervisors and the amount of preparation we have to do for these visits.

Suhaila: After putting the peer coaching programme into practice, what was helpful in this experience? And has it had any impact on your practice?

Amal: It was helpful. Peer coaching programme was helpful because there was no stress and no intensive preparation that exhausts the teacher. To be honest, the programme made me change my idea of 'unbearable visits' to 'go and learn from these visits'... I started to visit my colleague because I decided to visit her, I needed to visit her, I wanted to learn from this visit and not because it was a demand or a requirement... At the same time, my colleague accepted my visit because I would not cause her any stress as she would not need to do any extra preparation for that lesson and for that visit... Before that, we used to get ready preparing the lesson and preparing the pupils, in order to ensure their excellent performance in front of the visitors. The most preparation, and the most difficult, was the psychological aspect... because we would always be thinking 'Will the visit succeed? Will the head teacher like the way I explain the lesson? Will my way of explaining satisfy the supervisor?' And so on... That is why the visits were a heavy burden on the teachers... and teachers felt irritated from just hearing the word 'visit'... But in practicing, peer coaching, I found it different... I found it easier...

Suhaila: How do you find peer coaching different?

Amal: I found it different, firstly because, in peer coaching, we ask for the visit, according to our needs, and it was not compulsory to do it. Secondly, now we choose the teacher who will observe while, before, it was mandatory for teachers to join the observing team, the team which observes the teacher for evaluation. Thirdly, we were used to noting down what we observed on the observation sheet and then giving it to the senior teacher, while now we don't give the observation sheet to the senior teacher but we only inform her that we, the teachers, are visiting each other for organisational purposes. Fourthly, determining the purpose of the visit; as I said earlier, the purpose of the visit was because it was a demand or a requirement, while

now it is a need, I ask my colleague for her help and my colleague asks me to help her.

Another example of putting the peer coaching programme into practice is that, for instance, a teacher explained punctuation marks to her class. Then she told her friends “I taught this lesson. At the beginning, it was very difficult for the pupils to understand, so I used this strategy and also that strategy, and I did this and I did that and so on... and the pupils benefited”... so we said to her “We would like to visit you as you have become proficient in this lesson”. So, the proficient teacher who has mastered her lesson explains to her colleagues what she did in her class, and how this impacted on the pupils’ outcomes. Moreover, the teachers ask to visit her to increase their expertise.

One more example is that when I face a problem in a specific lesson, I ask my colleagues “how did you explain this lesson? And did the pupils understand?”, so every teacher explains their way of teaching that specific lesson. Then I ask one of my colleagues if I can visit their class to observe a practical application.

Suhaila: Have you been to courses about observation skills or courses about giving and receiving feedback?

Amal: No, I haven’t. I went on many courses related to methods of teaching, and to the subjects I teach, but nothing related to observation skills or feedback. Maybe if I develop my observation skills it will help me a lot when I visit my colleagues. I didn’t think of it before. As I said earlier, I didn’t like to visit anyone; at the same time I didn’t like anyone to visit me, but now I think I have changed my mind. I don’t find any difficulties in us visiting each other. On the contrary, I have found it helpful, observing each other, learning from each other, teaching each other, and helping each other.

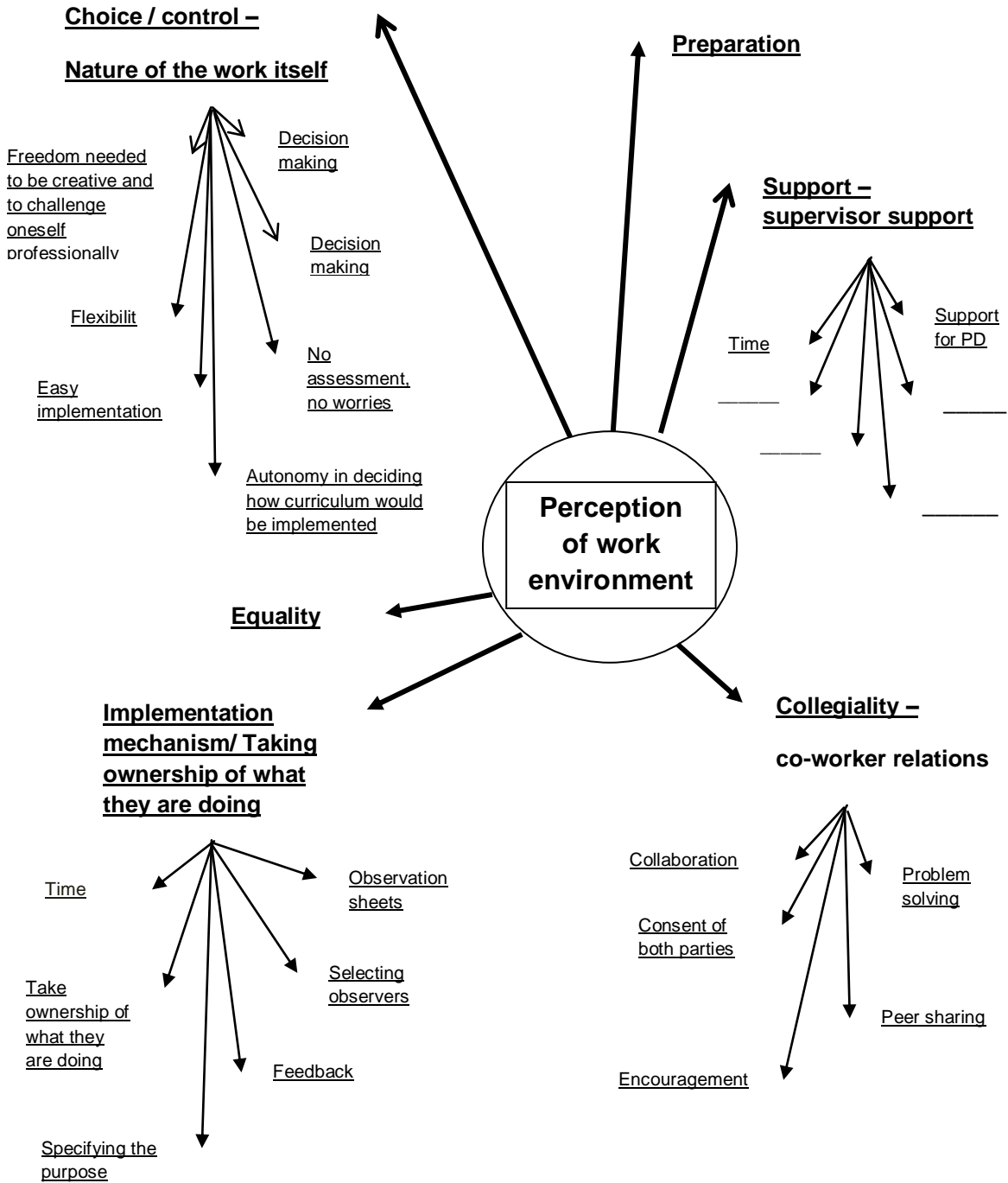
Suhaila: Do you have any changes you are willing to suggest for the peer coaching programme?

Amal: The programme was easy, comfortable, and light. It would be better if it was applied at all stages. It would be great if the teachers understand that there is no pressure or stress in this programme.

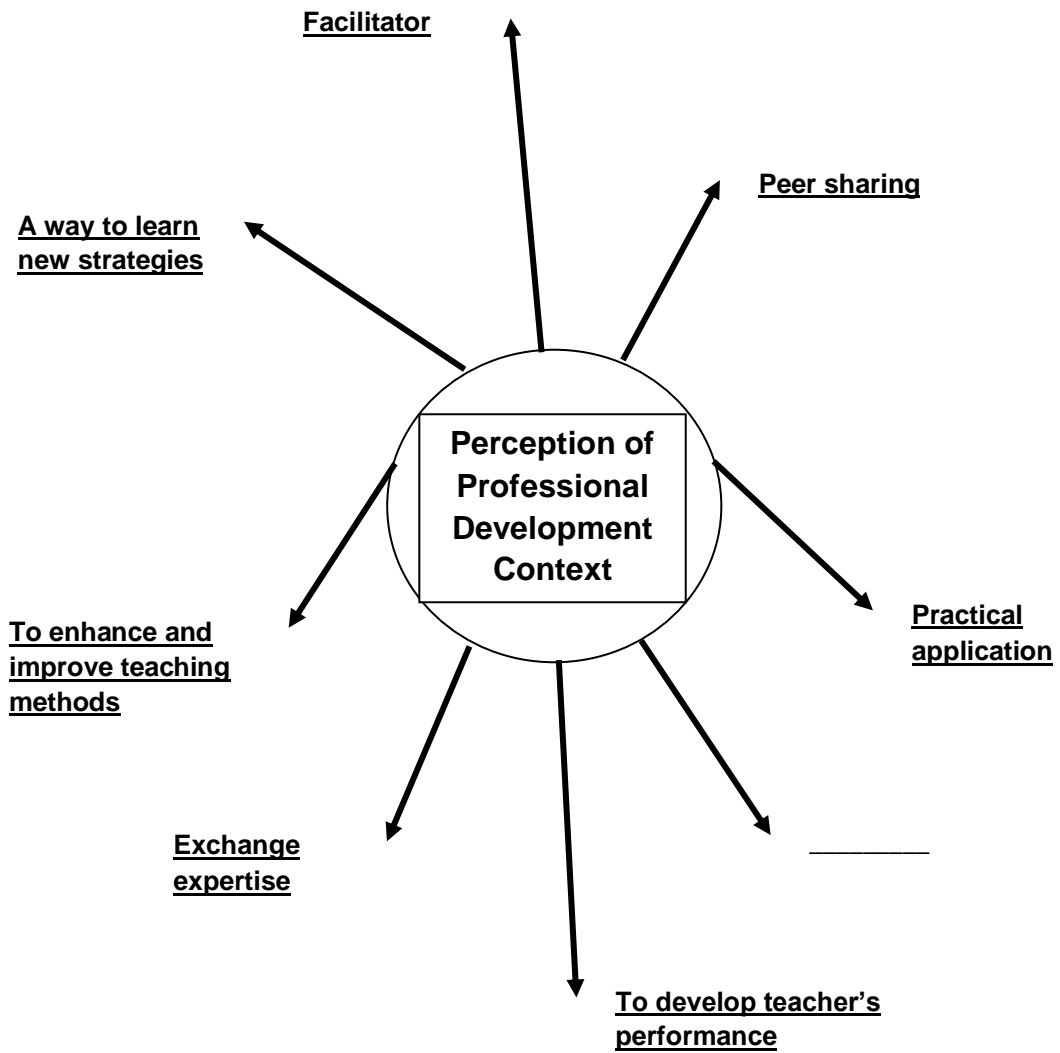
Appendix L

Theoretical framework charts

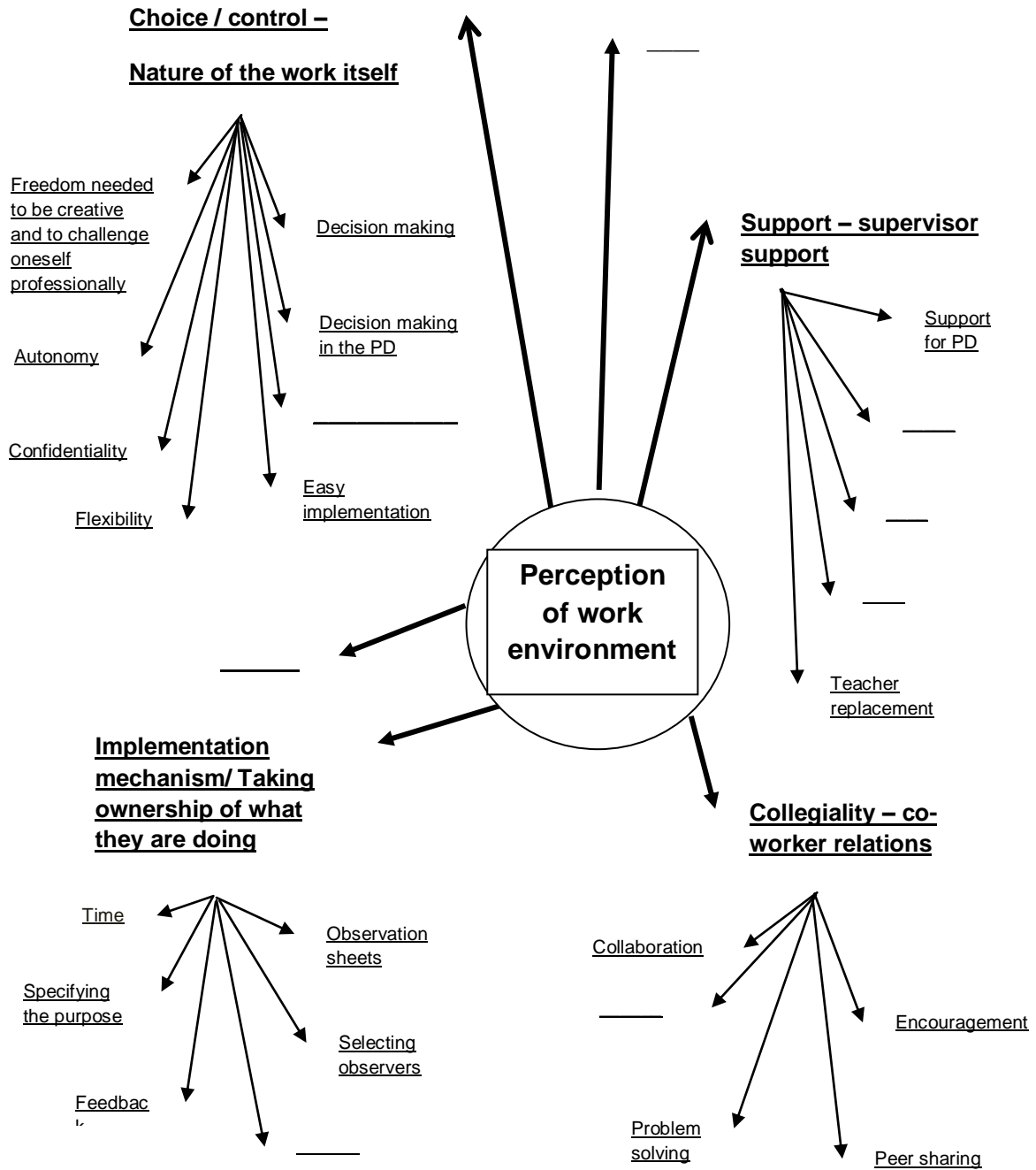
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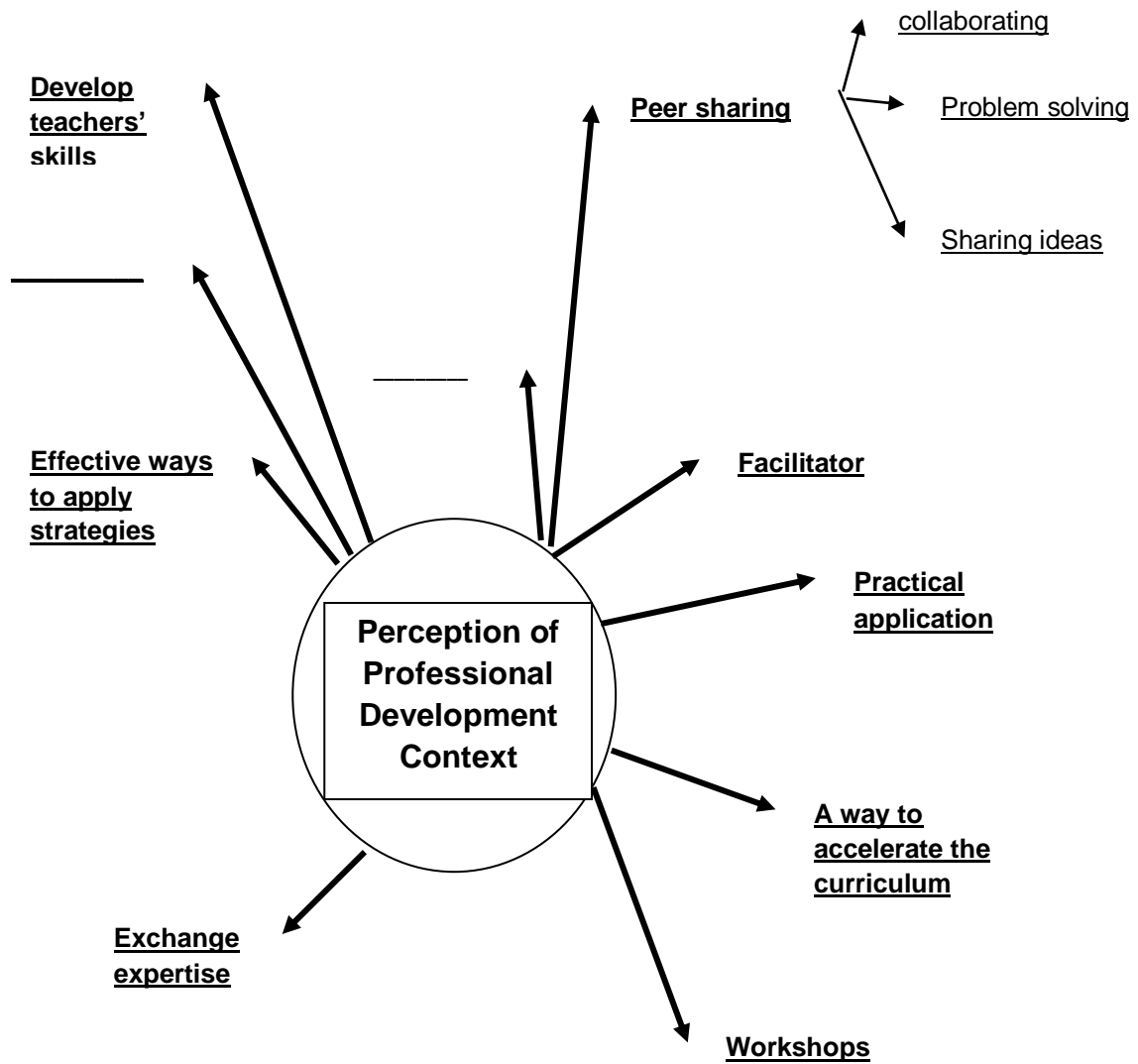
Yellow School – 1 – b (Dana)



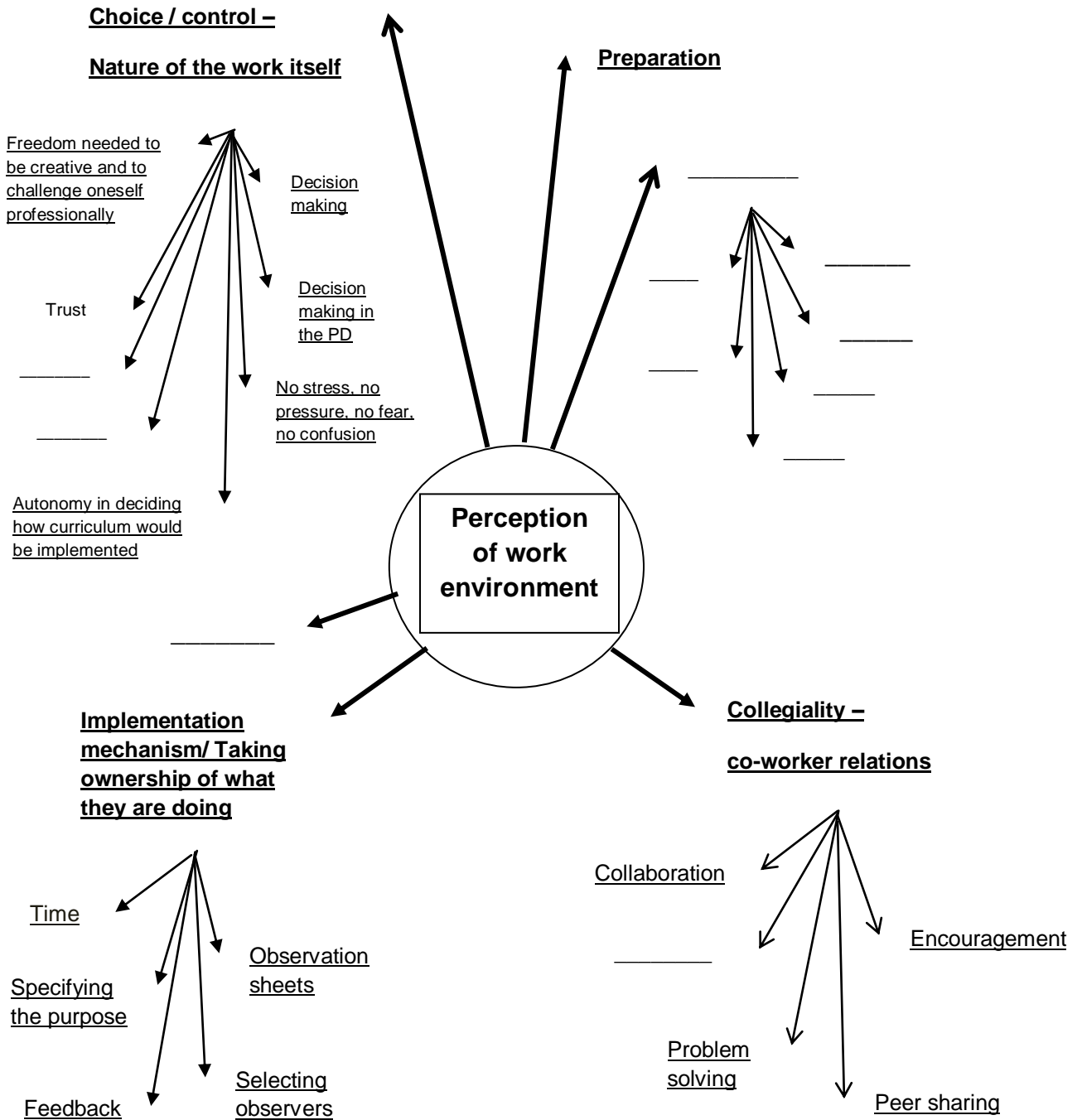
Blue School – 2 – a (Salma)



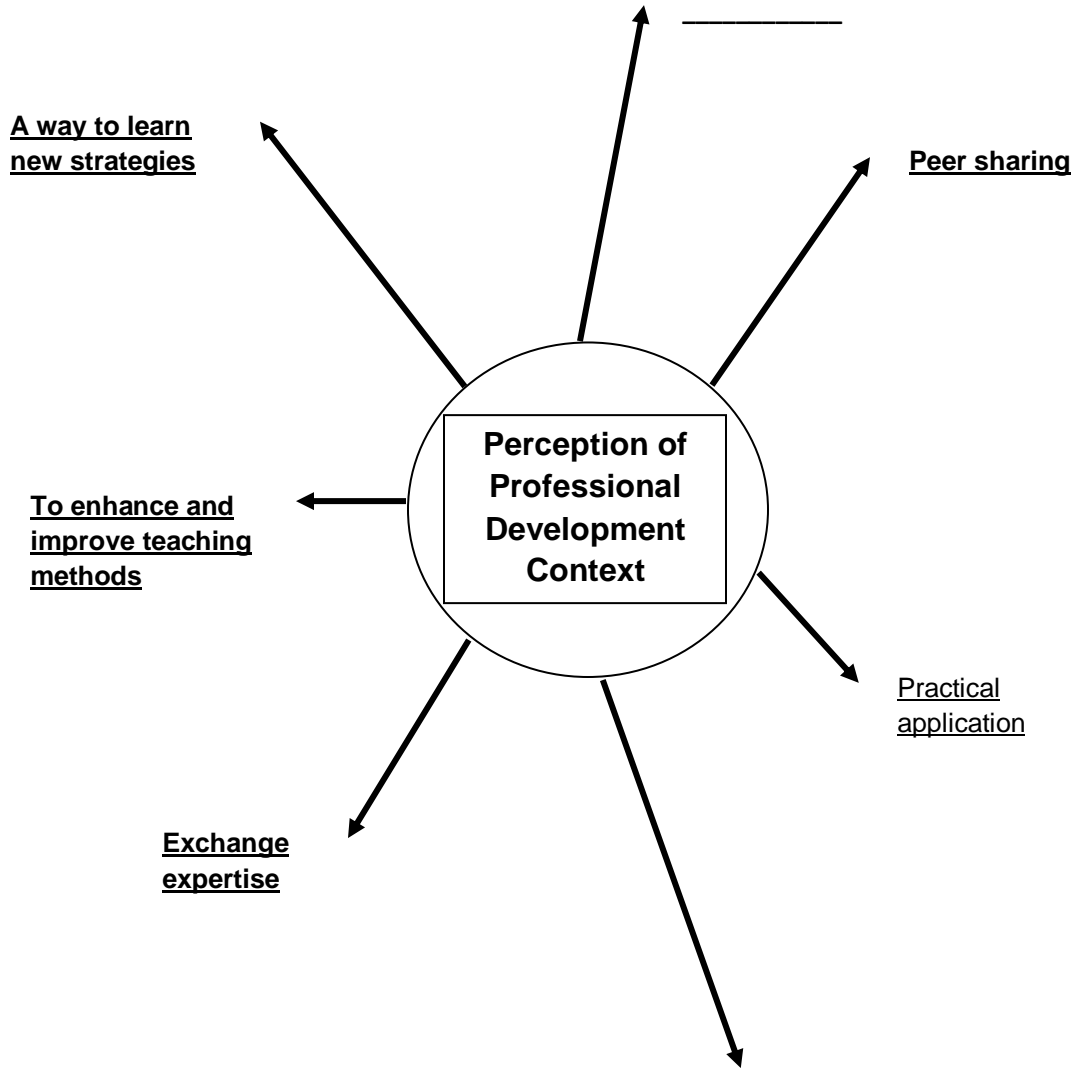
Blue School – 2 – b (Salma)



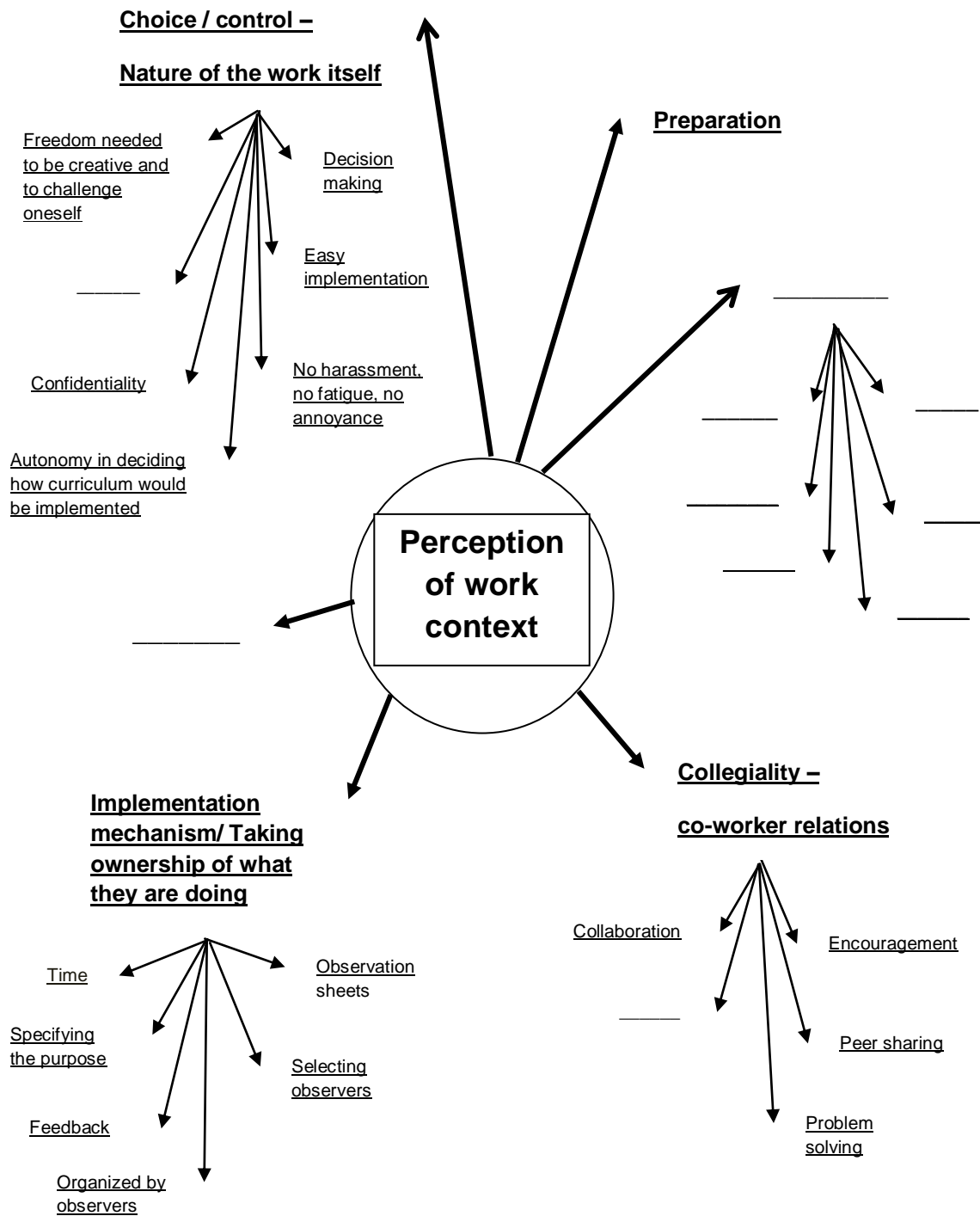
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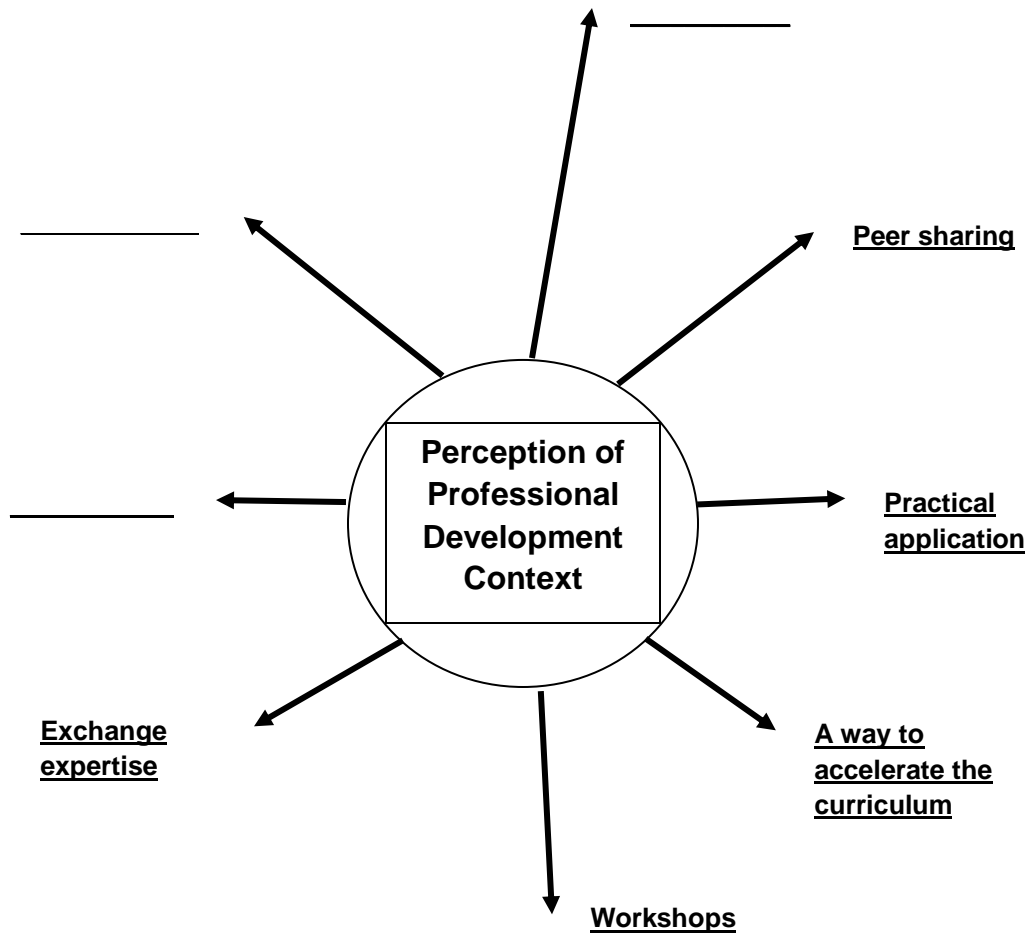
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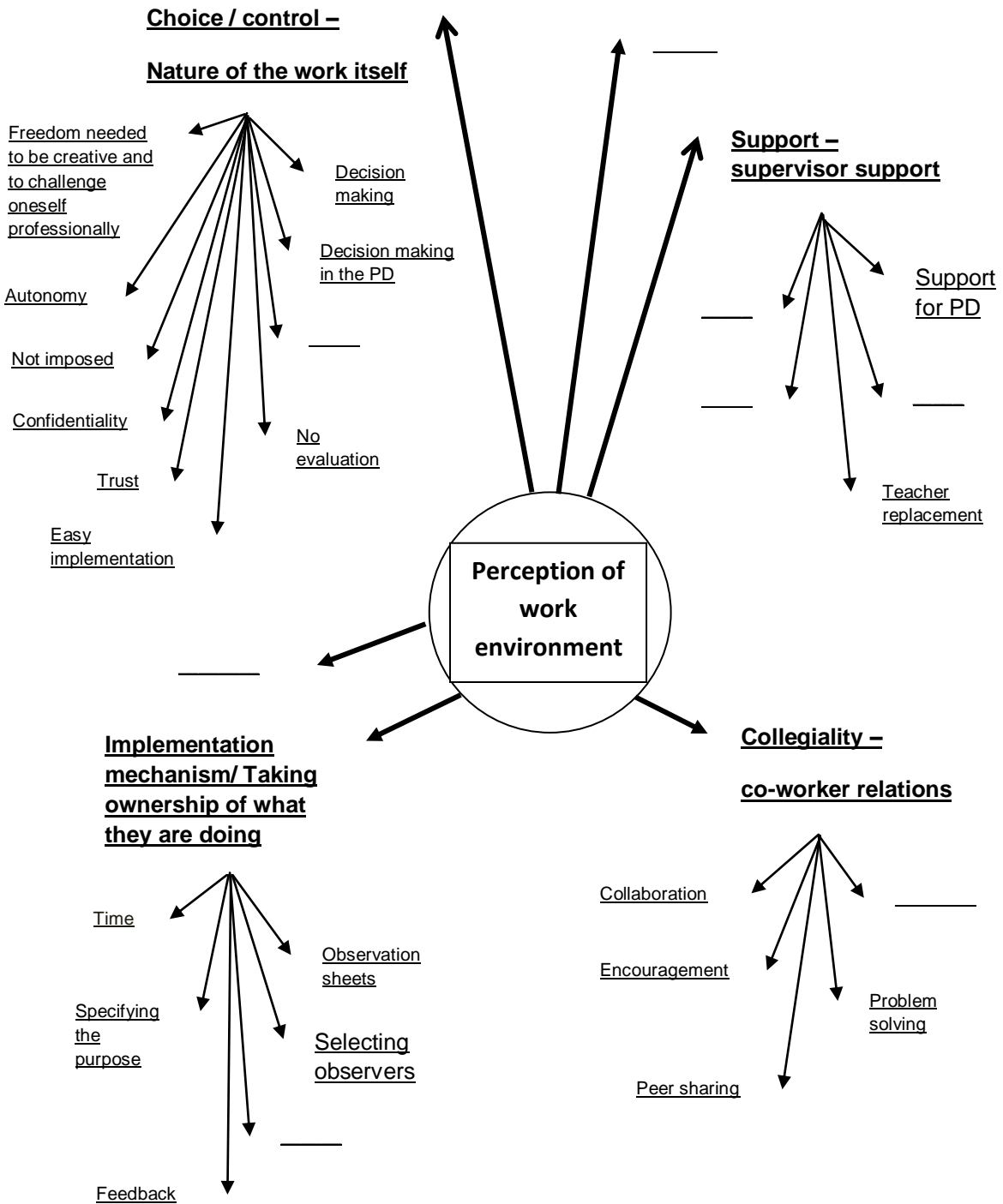
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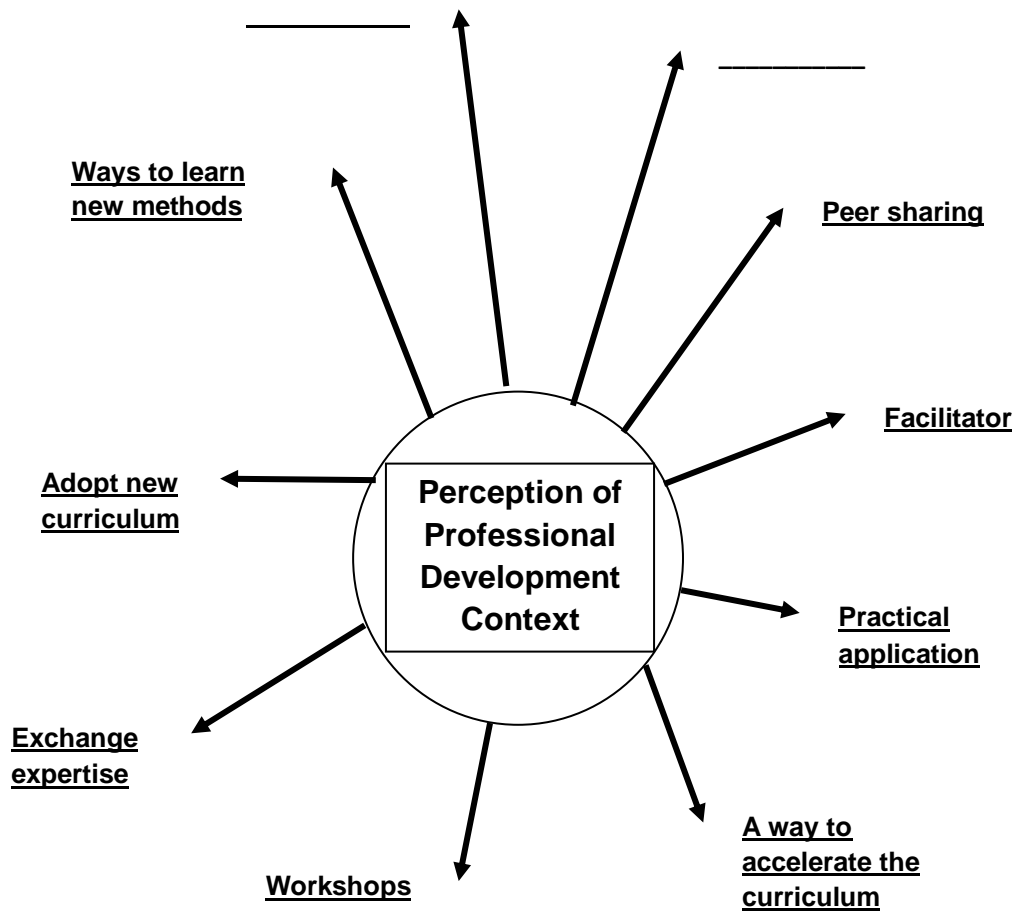
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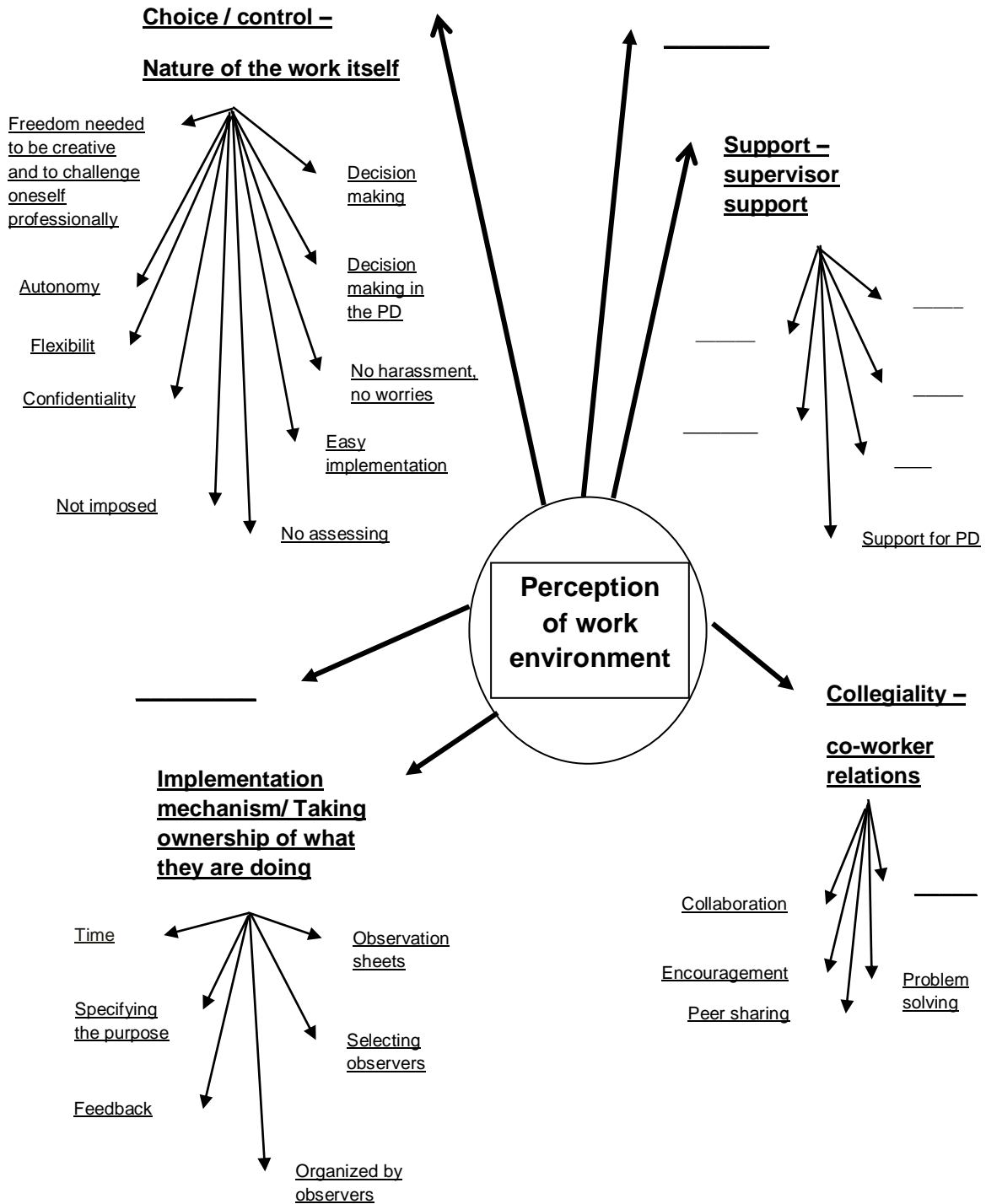
Orange School – 1 – a (Sami)



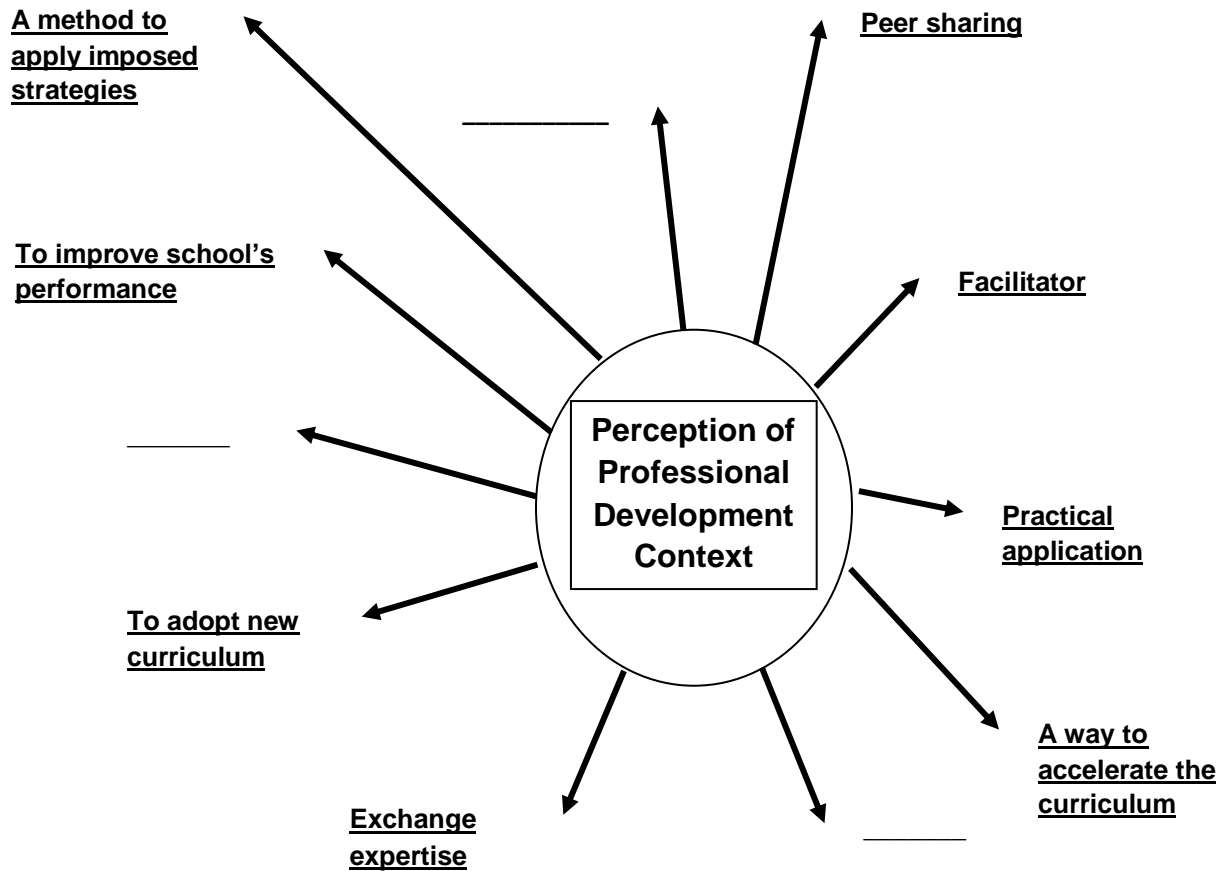
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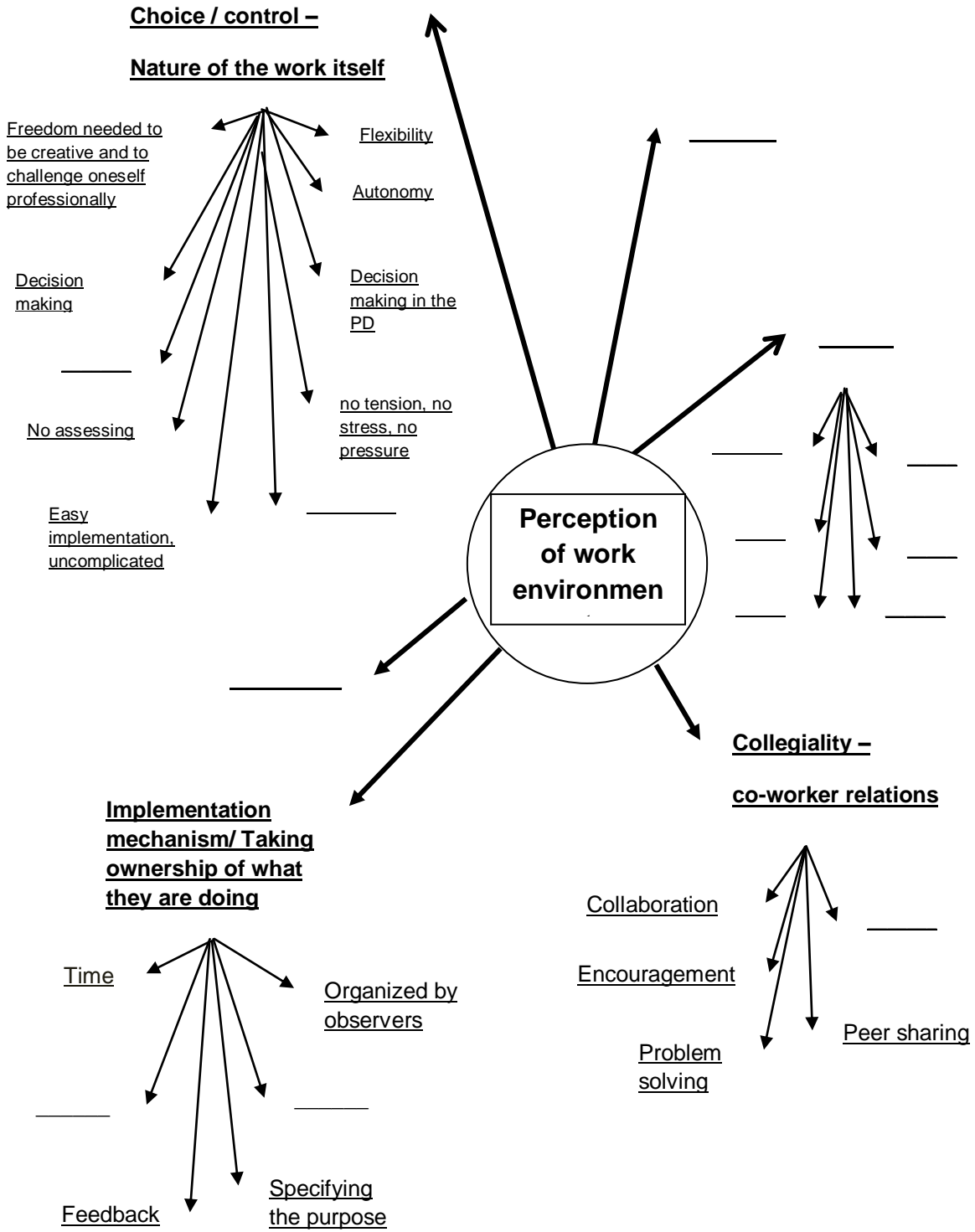
Orange School – 2 – a (Jaber)



Orange School – 2 – b (Jaber)



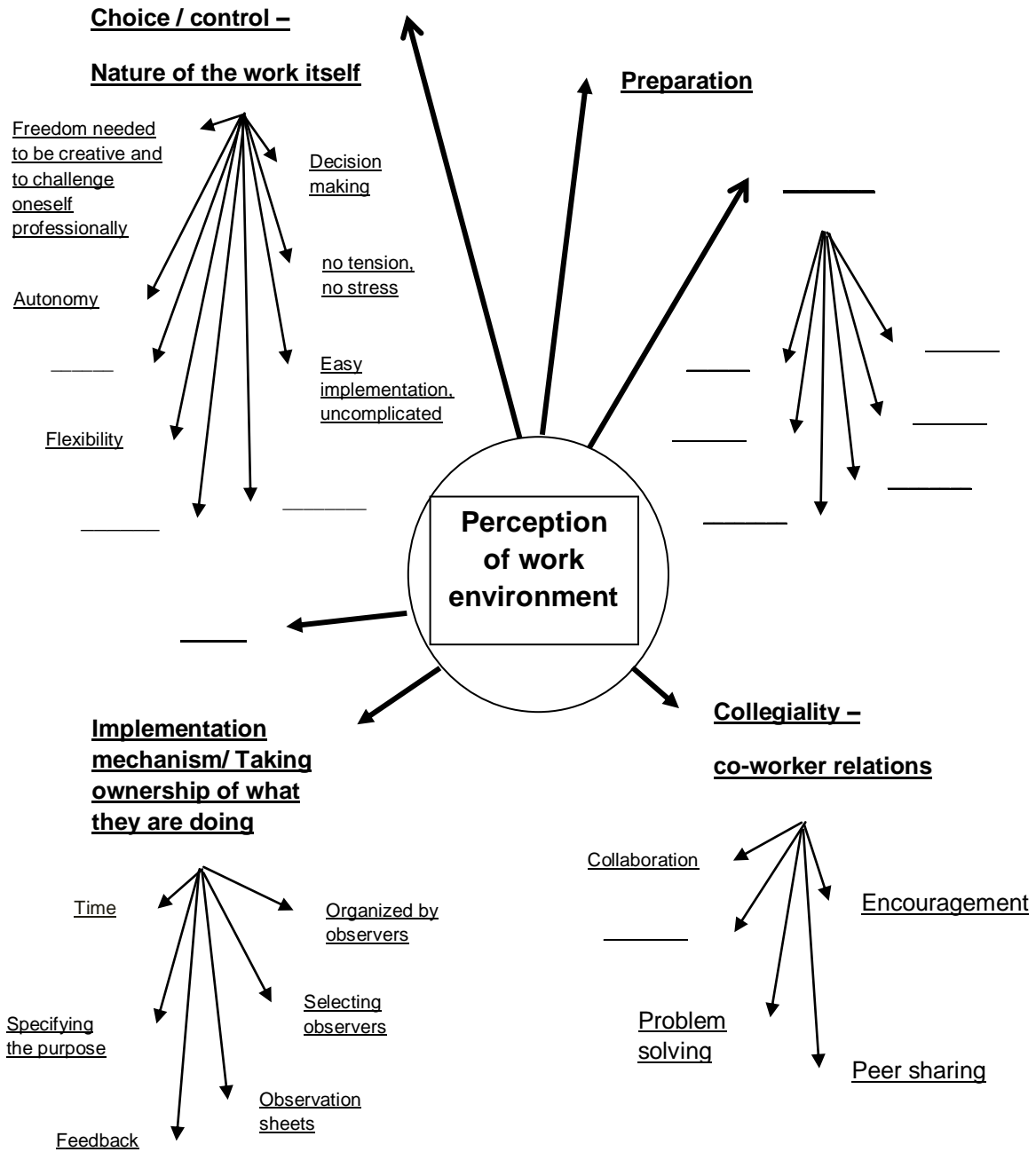
Pink School – 1 – a (Mariam + Noora + Badreya)



Pink School – 1 – b (Mariam + Noora + Badreya)



Pink School – 2 – a (Amal)



Pink School – 2 – b (Amal)

