

USING CRT-BASED FORUMS TO DEVELOP SELF-EFFICACY OF SECONDARY EFL TEACHERS' IN KUWAIT

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of this study was to assess the impact of critical reflective thinking (CRT)-based forums in developing EFL teachers' self-efficacy in Kuwait. Subsidiary aims of the study include: ascertaining EFL teachers' perceptions of their own teaching skills and motivation strategies both before and after CRT-based forums implementation. The quasi-experimental research design was seen to be the most appropriate for fulfilling the aims of the study. Data were collected over two phases. At the pre-intervention phase data were collected via two instruments. These were (1) Self-Efficacy Scale for Teaching Skills (SESTS) and (2) Self-Efficacy Scale for Motivation Strategies (SESMS). To assess the impact of CRT-based forums at the post-intervention phase, participants were asked to respond to the same scales in addition to a self-reflection form that asked them to articulate their reactions and assessments of the professional development experience they participated in. Participants' responses to both scales were analyzed quantitatively whereas their responses to the self-reflection form were analyzed qualitatively. The study participants were 93 female secondary school EFL teachers in Kuwait. They belonged to fairly common academic, social and cultural backgrounds. The CRT-based forums addressed thinking maps as a teaching learning strategy that could be successfully implemented in EFL contexts. Analysis of data indicated a positive impact of the CRT-based forums on developing female secondary school EFL teachers' self-efficacy as for their own language teaching skills and motivation strategies. Findings of the study were discussed and a set of implications and recommendations were highlighted.*

KEYWORDS: Critical-Reflective Thinking (CRT), Self-Efficacy, Thinking Maps, Language Teaching Skills, Motivation Strategies

INTRODUCTION

It is claimed by McKernan (1991) that all teaching ought to be based on research but that research and curriculum development should be the preserve of teachers who gain understanding of their work through studying their own problems and effects. This means that teachers should reflect on what they do and how to do it in a critical way since part of effective teaching is the ability to reflect on what is happening in the classroom, and to identify any differences in what was planned and what actually occurred. By conducting "systematic, intentional inquiry" within his/her own classroom, the instructor builds a better understanding of his/her own practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 7). As this understanding develops, different teaching strategies may be suggested to better support student learning.

Critical reflection is advocated in many areas of professional development and practice including TEFL contexts, as it encourages practitioners to gain insight into their own professionalism through their experiences. EFL education programs generally require some

form of fieldwork to be closely integrated with academic study. Consequently, there is wide variation in the techniques and approaches used in the practice of critical reflection. Approaches may range from informal discussions to highly structured formats. Guidelines in the literature on how to determine, facilitate and assess critical reflection in practice appear to be limited (Leijen et al., 2012; Smith, 2011).

Critical reflection is used in education to encourage the integration of theory and practice while enhancing teachers' performance, and consequently student learning. This suggests there is scope to explore the role of critical reflection in and the development of a theoretical basis in cooperative education. There is increasing interest in the concept of critical reflection (Boud & Walker, 1998) in work-integrated education and research (Brookfield, 2009).

Context of the Problem

It is strongly believed that most of EFL teachers in Kuwait have entered the teaching service with unexamined beliefs and assumptions of problematic conceptions of the academic role of teacher in both teaching and motivation. It is widely, yet mistakenly, believed that graduating from any university institution, and holding a university certificate in a specific language is a guarantee to teach that language and motivate its learners as well. Therefore, seeking solutions requires a critical reflective process from educators that extends beyond strategy implementation in case these teachers have taken for granted that teaching skills and motivation strategies are just routines, individual practices and standing explanations. For the researcher, as a teacher educator having considerable expertise in initial teacher education, efforts to promote critically reflective practice with EFL teachers' field practices would help support the development of their teaching skills as well as motivation strategies via a number of a CRT- based forums.

The Pilot study

Feeling this problematic situation, the researcher conducted a pilot study to ascertain the difficulties or the issues that helped to create this dilemma. Two types of surveys were conducted. The first was a survey named a Self-Efficacy Scale (SESTS) to ascertain female secondary school EFL teachers' - in Kuwait- training needs for teaching skills, and a Self-Efficacy Scale (SESMS) to ascertain their motivation strategies from their viewpoints. Results of data analysis of both types of surveys were consistent in most cases highlighting a need to train EFL teachers on both teaching skills and motivation strategies. Results of analysis indicated the following:

1. They lack both knowledge of different teaching strategies and how to use them.
2. EFL teachers lack both the knowledge and skills needed to relate visual language learning to students' lives by providing them with concrete language learning experiences through language activities.
3. They lack both knowledge and skills of using Thinking Maps in teaching and knowledge of how to enable learners with different learning styles to communicate what and how they are thinking.
4. They lack knowledge of adapting their lessons to match students' target language background.

As far as motivation strategies are concerned, results of analysis indicated the following:

1. EFL teachers lack knowledge of how to create supportive and warm climate in the EFL classroom so that their learners can participate more effectively.
2. They do not know how to use wait time appropriately.
3. They lack both knowledge and skills needed to address students' language errors/mistakes and the appropriate feedback/correction strategies that would help.
4. Their knowledge of different types of questions and questioning strategies is insufficient. Besides, their attempts to use them appropriately and maintain interest and momentum in the EFL classroom are inadequate.
5. They hold misconceptions related to feedback provision strategies.
6. Inability to use a variety of student grouping strategies in the EFL classroom.
7. Inability to use different motivation strategies to meet students' individual differences.
8. Inability to direct and pace students' activities in the target language.
9. Facilitate student participation in the target language classroom.

Statement of the problem

Female secondary school EFL teachers in Kuwait lack the language teaching skills and motivation strategies due to different reasons including lack of knowledge and skills owing to their deeply held conceptions about different aspects of language teaching skills and motivation strategies. This emphasizes EFL teachers' needs for training on language teaching and motivation. The weaving of critical reflective thinking has proved effective in teacher training, especially when the training initiatives seek to induce change both in trainees' classroom teaching behaviours and their deeply held conceptions (e.g. Carrington & Selva, 2008; Harrington, et al., 1996; Lay & McGuire, 2010; Shandomo, 2010; Smith, 2011; Thompson & Pascal, 2012; van Woerkom, 2010; etc.). This justifies this study's use of CRT-based forums to develop EFL teachers' language teaching skills and motivation strategies. Following are the research questions of the study.

Research questions

This study aimed to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are EFL teachers' perceptions of their own language teaching skills?
2. How effective is the use of critical reflective thinking (CRT)-based forums in developing EFL teachers' perceptions of their language teaching skills?
3. What are EFL teachers' perceptions of their own motivation strategies?
4. How effective is the use of CRT-based forums in developing EFL teachers' perceptions of their motivation strategies.

5. How effective is the use of CRT-based forums in developing EFL teachers' motivation strategies?
6. What are EFL teachers' reactions to CRT-based forums?

Purpose of the study

This study aimed to:

1. Ascertain EFL teachers' perceptions of their own language teaching skills and motivation strategies.
2. Assess the effectiveness of using critical reflective thinking (CRT)-based forums in developing EFL teachers' perceptions of their language teaching skills and motivation strategies.
3. Ascertain EFL teachers' reactions to CRT-based forums.

Significance of the study

- The marriage between teaching and motivation adopted by this study is significant since it is based on a strong conviction that teaching and motivation are inseparable. Most of teacher education research addressed both aspects discretely. Namely, it focuses on one aspect apart from the other and disregards the interconnectivity based between both.
- In-service teacher training courses have always focused on the method-fashion and disregarded the role of the thought processes that teachers have at their potential to develop their own teaching and motivation. This study is using critical reflective thinking as an interventionist variable to induce change in EFL teachers' classroom teaching skills and motivation strategies and not as an end. This is because teachers' critical reflection on their own beliefs and deeply held conceptions and practices have more sustainable impact on their professional development than any external enterprise that would aim to induce change in teachers' classroom practices.
- Learning is enhanced by critical reflection, which involves the "creation of meaning and conceptualization from experience" (Brockbank & McGill, 1998, p. 56). Teacher educators need to facilitate critical reflection to enable trainee teachers to move beyond a superficial understanding of their world. For Mezirow (1990), "*reflection enables us to correct distortions in our beliefs and errors in problem solving. Critical reflection involves a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built*" (p.1). By creating a reflective environment for and with trainee EFL teachers, the educational experience will lay the foundations of a critically reflective member of the teaching community.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the study seeks the relationship between critical reflective thinking and EFL teachers' self-efficacy via what can be called CRT-based forums, this review will shed light upon three dimensions, namely (1) critical reflective thinking and its role in teacher professional development, (2) EFL teachers' self-efficacy and the factors affecting it, (3) CRT-based

forums and the whys behind using forums specifically as an interactional intervention for developing self-efficacy of the secondary school EFL teachers' self-efficacy in Kuwait.

Critical reflective thinking (CRT) and teacher professional development

Critical reflection can be seen from different lenses to mean very different things and fulfill varied objectives (Boyd & Fales, 1983; Brookfield, 2009; Gardner, 2009; Harvey, et al., 2010; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Smith, 2011; and van Woerkom, 2010), and it varies within individuals and contexts. Critical reflection ...

- Is recognized as a key component in the learning processes of individuals and is advocated in many areas of professional practice (Brookfield, 2009; Jarvis, 2010; and Leijen, et al, 2012), especially within programs where there is rich learning possible through specific experiences (Harvey et al., 2010).
- Is an “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it includes, a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality (John Dewey, 1933).
- Is “a process of testing the justification or validity of taken-for-granted premises” (Mezirow, 1990).
- Involves describing and questioning taken-for-granted feelings and actions and can be a means of developing a teaching philosophy and strategy (Walkington, et al., 2001).
- Involves problem identification or framing, reflection on the basis of that identification (perhaps historical, social, or cultural in nature), and action planning to address the perceived problem (Brookfield, 1995; and Shandomo, 2010).
- Prompts examinations of how teachers reflect on question identification and their understandings for problem solving, researchers have conceptualized CRT in a variety of ways (Loughran, 2002; Rodgers, 2002; and Shandomo, 2010).
- Is complex in nature, requiring introspection about how one’s beliefs, assumptions, and experiences influence perceptions of self and the social world (Shandomo, 2010).
- Is an opportunity for teachers to “reflect on the moral and ethical implications and consequences of their classroom practices” (p. 90), a process that requires examination of how one’s personal and professional belief systems might impact students and their learning (Larrivee, 2008).
- “refers to questioning the integrity of assumptions and beliefs base on prior knowledge. It often occurs in response to an awareness of a contradiction among our thoughts, feelings and actions, (p.9)” (Mezirow, 1990).
- Is to “validate the long taken-for-granted meaning perspective. It is not concerned with the ‘how- to’ of action but with the ‘why’, the reasons for and consequences of what we do” (Mezirow, 1990, p.13).

From the aforementioned definitions and many others, it can be deduced that there are some things in common , which is that CRT is a process of questioning our beliefs, values, and

behaviours in order to justify why we do things the way we do, and what other views or behaviours contrary to our own might be. Thus, CRT in this study is meant to refer to a process through which teachers test and question the validity of their own beliefs, values and behaviours related to language teaching skills and motivation strategies in order to justify the way they do things the way they do, and examine other views of behaviours different from their own. When they engage in this process, teachers become more aware of and control their learning by actively participating in reflective thinking- assessing what they know, what they need to know, and how they bridge that gap – during learning situations.

Many teachers enter the teaching job with unexamined beliefs and assumptions of students, as well as problematic conceptions of the role of schools in society; yet it is imperative that teacher educators and recruiters develop stances that allow them to view “problems” from multiple perspectives and actively question assumptions, routines, practices, and standing explanations that are taken for granted (Carrington & Selva, 2010 and Loughran, 2002). That is, teacher trainers must help trainee teachers identify why a problem exists and examine the factors that have influenced its identification.

To Brookfield (2009), critical reflection is an adult learning strategy of four processes. This first is assumption analysis which describes the activity adults engage in to bring to awareness beliefs, values, cultural practices, and social structures regulating behavior and to assess their impact on daily activities, describes how relationships should be ordered, and then makes explicit our taken-for-granted notions of reality. The second is contextual awareness, which is achieved when adult learners come to realize that their socially and personally created in a specific historical and cultural context. The third is imaginative speculation that provides an opportunity for adults to challenge prevailing ways of knowing and acting by imagining alternative ways of thinking about phenomena. The fourth is reflective skepticism which is the outcome of assumption analysis, contextual awareness and imaginative speculation. It is the questioning of any universal truth claims or examined patterns of interaction. Critical reflection then addresses the question of the justification for the very premises on which problems are posed or defined in the first place.

Critical reflection is advocated in many areas of professional development and practice, including areas of professional development, initial teacher education, teaching, management, and research, as it encourages practitioners to gain insight into their own professionalism through their experiences. This generally requires some form of fieldwork to be closely integrated with academic study. Consequently there is wide variation in the techniques and approaches used in the practice of critical reflection. Approaches may range from informal discussions to highly structured formats. Guidelines in the literature on how to determine, facilitate and assess critical reflection in practice appear to be limited (Leijen et al., 2012 & Smith, 2011).

In teacher education, critical reflection about teaching is important for six reasons: It (1) helps us make informed actions with a better chance of achieving desired outcomes; (2) helps us develop a rationale for practice, and the underlying principles behind our practice; (3) helps us keep perspective about limits to our abilities in the classroom; (4) enlivens our classroom; and (5) increases democratic trust enabling students to feel safe in their own opinions and beliefs (Brookfield,1988). This study is designed to foster a greater understanding of the impact of critical reflective teaching for 12 university EFL teachers, with an examination of how critical reflective thinking-based workshops help develop their perceptions of both their language teaching and language testing skills.

Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Departing from the notion that self-efficacy beliefs are a component of human competence, and teacher self-efficacy relates to the beliefs teachers hold about their own perceived capability in undertaking certain teaching tasks, Bandura (1997, p.3) defines self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments”. Consequently, thought patterns and emotions that support classroom actions are affected by self-efficacy since teacher self-efficacy is considered a powerful influence on teachers’ overall effectiveness with students.

Self-efficacy is grounded in the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory, emphasizing the evolution and exercise of human agency—the idea that people can exercise some influence over what they do (Bandura, 2006). Bandura (2006) maintained that in this conception, people are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. He emphasized that people form intentions, set goals, anticipate likely outcomes, monitor and regulate actions, and reflect on their personal efficacy. This theory underscores the interactions among personal factors (e.g. cognitions), behaviors, and environmental conditions. From this perspective, self-efficacy affects one’s goals and behaviors and is influenced by conditions in the environment (Schunk & Meece, 2006). Efficacy beliefs determine how environmental opportunities and impediments are perceived (Bandura, 2006) and affect choice of activities, how much effort is expended on an activity, and how long people will persevere when confronting obstacles (Pajares, 1997). Bandura (1986, 1997) pointed out four major sources of self-efficacy beliefs: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological reactions. Mastery experiences are regarded as the most influential source of self-efficacy (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Pajares, 1997). Outcomes interpreted as successful raise self-efficacy, whereas those interpreted as failures undermine it. Vicarious experiences are observations of similar others’ performance on given tasks. This source of self-efficacy is particularly influential when people are uncertain.

Teacher’s self-efficacy may also contribute to promote student’s sense of efficacy fostering their involvement in class activities and their efforts in facing difficulties (Ross, 1998). Hence, it seems important for teachers and teacher educators to realize the influence of emotional arousal and encouragement on initial beliefs on how to motivate students to get involved in class activities. If teachers’ beliefs are too high, students will, therefore, get influenced when they are asked to take their share in class participations, because teachers have entered into practical experience where mastery experience and verbal persuasion act as sources for efficacy. This view is supported by Ben-Peretz (1995) when he reported that field experience is viewed as the most critical factor in the development of teaching skills.

Demiralay and Karadeniz (2010) investigated and evaluated elementary student teachers’ perceived information literacy self-efficacy in terms of the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). They concluded that student teachers would strengthen their perceived information literacy level through having positive experiences on developing skills of accessing information, using information and constructing knowledge. Having positive and continuous experiences in doing researches would have effected development of teachers’ ICT skills and perceived information literacy self-efficacy. Moreover, this study revealed that student teachers’ perceived information literacy self-efficacy is affected by computer experience; skill levels; frequency of computer and internet use; and access opportunities to computer and internet.

Pendergast, Garvis and Keogh (2011) studied the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service student-teachers prior to having any practical experience in the field. They tackled teachers' sense of efficacy. For that purpose, they developed a scale consisting of three subscales: (1) Efficacy for Instructional Strategies (To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation for example when students are confused? How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?); (2) Efficacy for Classroom Management (How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?; How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?; and (3) Efficacy for Student Engagement (How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork? How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?). They found out that when those prospective teachers joined the postgraduate university programs, their higher assessment of their teaching capabilities was surprising, given their lack of classroom experience as teachers. They seem to have influenced by their previous 'apprenticeship of observation' model of Lortie (1975), in which their beliefs were drawn from their experiences of schools as students, or by observations of their own children's schooling, or by positive emotional arousal. Besides, the little exposure to real experience in the classroom might have contributed to the low level of self-efficacy.

Ozder (2011) investigated three aspects related to self-efficacy namely : Classroom Management (Management of Negative Student Behaviors, Student Expectations and Classroom Rules, Coordination of In-Class Activities), Ensuring Student Engagement in Class (Student Motivation and Things Done for Motivation, Motivation of Students with Low Achievement, Ensuring Creative and Critical Thinking), and Using Instructional Strategies in Class(Alternative Strategies for Students' Misconceptions, Evaluation of What is Taught, Rendering Classes Suitable for Highly Talented Students). He found that teacher self-efficacy beliefs of the novice teachers were found to be at a sufficient level. The novice teachers reported that they frequently use "verbal reprimands", establishing classroom rules and routines collaboratively with students", "daily lesson planning", "reinforcement towards student achievement", "multiple intelligences activities", "discussion technique", "concrete exemplification", "visually supported extra activities", "oral questioning", and "interactive teaching methods" in the classroom.

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) examined relations among teacher self-efficacy, perceived collective teacher efficacy, external control (teachers' general beliefs about limitations to what can be achieved through education), strain factors, and teacher burnout. Besides, findings of Bernadowski, Perry and Greco's study (2013) indicate that students' self-efficacy improved when service learning was connected or imbedded in the context of learning and connected to a specific course.

CRT-Based Forums and Self-Efficacy

CRT-based forums can be duplicated from what is known by Wright (2014) as the National Conversation Forums (NCFs) in that they are seen as academic conversations that are characterized by being sustained, purposeful and content-rich, and they contain core skills: elaborate and clarify, support ideas with examples, build on challenge a partner's ideas, paraphrase, synthesis. For those forums to succeed, Wright presents some recommendations for teacher talk. Stressing that Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) discourse often dominates the interactional situation; the teacher or the trainer need to : (a) move IRE to IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) to offer students/trainees alternative interactional

moves(e.g., repetition, recasting, reformulation, prompting), and (b) provide greater independence to students/trainees and opportunities for greater output.

As shown by Figure (1) below, the researcher, therefore, sees CRTF-based forums as , “planned, face-to-face, systematic, reflective, deliberative, transformative, cooperative meetings focusing on the empowerment of language teaching skills and motivation strategies within a Thinking Maps - as a teaching learning strategy–context.”

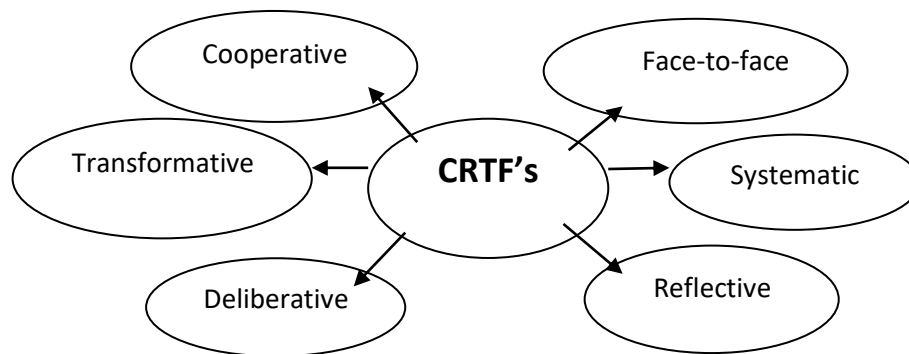


Figure: CRT-Forums as envisaged by this study

Such forums make use of thinking maps specifically to

- Positively affect learner retention of information, (McTighe & Layman as cited in Freiberg & Driscoll, 2000).
- Promote relationships between ideas and information by questioning and discussion during mapping (Stahl Vancil, op. cit., (p. 316).
- Help teachers become self-reflective through looking into their own thinking, and become self-regulated learners, (Hyerle, 2004; Hyerle in Buxton, 2009).
- Give all teachers a common language for meaningfulness, (Danville Public School District, 2000).
- Are tools for all teachers alike – to "read" and reflect on their own minds and thus become self-assessing, (Hyerle, 2000).
- represent the common visual language teachers use to generate and organize ideas, to reflect on sequences of events, to characterize and contrast strong elements as well as to identify causes and effects of such varied topics (Spiegel, 2000).

Besides, those forums might yield rich data from different perspectives, since the researcher can have more control over the content intended to be delivered and/shared.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This study adopted quantitative and qualitative approach to analyze the data, since such an approach seems to be the most appropriate one: first, to show the multidisciplinary and

interdisciplinary activity between CRT-based forums and EFL teacher's self-efficacy; second, when they are integrated and applied to real issues and challenges involving language teaching skills and motivation strategies, they will be embedded in all aspects of professional life.

Participants

Ninety-three female secondary school EFL teachers in Kuwait, who were randomly drawn, constituted the sample of the study. They were told, when the orientation session, that they are free to communicate their views, but following the regulations and ethics of CRT-based forums.

Data sources

Two main sources of data informed the study:

(1) Self-Efficacy Scale for Teaching Skills (SESTS): It focused on the relationship between EFL teachers' perceived self-efficacy and their teaching behaviours. It was administered pre- and post- using the strategy proposed named CRT-based forums. It required the participants to respond to the scale (15 items) before and after having involved in the forums practicing training on teaching skills via thinking maps. The total score of the SESTS was 45 marks: 3 marks for each language teaching skill assessed. This scale was administered twice: before intervention and after intervention (see Appendix A).

(2) Self-Efficacy Scale for Motivation Strategies (SESMS): It has 10 items. It focused on the relationship between EFL teachers' perceived self-efficacy and motivation. It was designed to analyze the study participants' beliefs and perceptions concerning motivation strategies and how they are affected by self-efficacy having the intervention of CRT-based forums using thinking maps. It was also implemented pre- and post- the intervention. The total score of the SESMS was 30 marks: 3 marks for each motivation strategy assessed. This scale was administered twice: before intervention and after intervention (see Appendix B).

(3) Self-Reflection Form: at the post-intervention phase, participants were asked to respond a self-reflection form that asked them to articulate their reactions and assessments of the professional development experience they participated in an open-ended manner (see Appendix C).

Procedure

CRT-based forums are an innovative strategy proposed to develop transferable skills, namely EFL teachers' self-efficacy as for two dimensions: language teaching skills and motivation strategies. Using Thinking Maps as the core of CRT-based forums can elicit deeper and more 'unedited' personal meaning in one-to-one conversation.

Each forum has three phases: (1) the introductory phase, (2) the discussion phase, and (3) the wrapping up phase. In the first phase, the researcher voices the objectives of the forum emphasizing that the discussion would be about personal views and teaching experiences, and therefore there are no right or wrong answers -, but addressing the question of the justification for the very premises on which problems are posed or defined. During the second phase, the researcher introduces some teaching skills and how they are activated via thinking maps as a teaching learning strategy. Discussions are steered concerning the role of

motivation strategies in enhancing teaching skills. Beside, beliefs and personal opinions as for the best practices in EFL context are thought about in a critical reflective way. In the third stage, trainee teachers address how their self-efficacy is shaped by the CRT-based forum. The discussion/conversation within the study group (N=93) forums provided two way communications among the participants and between the participants and the researcher over seven weeks period. However, more importantly, the participants were able to take the time they needed to prepare themselves for the weekly forum expanding scope or content of the issue raised in that forum, then to provide a coherent, objective discussion.

During CRT-based forums the participants got familiar with each other, a positive, informal and relaxed learning climate was set and a code of ethics was established. Critical reflective thinking was the objective for the participants to share their beliefs, perceptions and opinions concerning the best practices in language teaching skills and the most appropriate motivation strategies for the Kuwaiti students. They had to transform, or reconstruct their experience and knowledge. They were asked to project how the learnt knowledge and skills could be utilized in a possible professional situation. The participants were also encouraged to learn from each other, to share their experiences, and to respond to the forces which shape their personal and professional lives. At the same time, shared interests, mutual understanding and positive communication were highly appreciated. Diverse interests, different perspectives and conflicting views had to be tackled objectively.

Four questions were addressed in each forum of CRT:

- *Whether (and to what degree) a teaching skill constitutes a problem;*
- *Whether (and to what degree) a solution is possible and feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;*
- *Whether (and to what degree) a specific action using a specific thinking map is appropriate in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;*
- *Whether (and to what degree) varied motivation strategies are used for different students of different cognitive, social and cultural backgrounds, and of different learning styles?*

Before the intervention, which lasted for five weeks (three hours/week), the study participants' self-efficacy for language teaching skills and motivation strategies were assessed. Then, the intervention took place following the procedures previously defined. Having finished the intervention, the post-test was administered. Both the pre-test and post-test responses were collected and treated statistically.

RESULTS

The data obtained from both types of scales were statistically processed using SPSS (version 22). Both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were used. Presentation of the results will follow the same order of the research questions posed earlier.

Research question no. 1:

What are EFL teachers' perceptions of their own language teaching skills?

As shown by the figures in Table (1) analysis of teachers' responses to the Self-Efficacy Scale for Teaching Skills (SESTS) indicates that teachers' mean scores in the SESTS after intervention are higher compared to their SESTS scores before intervention. This can be clearly observed from the wide difference between the figures representing the teachers' overall total mean scores in both occasions as well as the differences between the mean scores of the individual items representing their teaching skills in both occasions.

Table (1): EFL Teachers' Perceived Levels of Self-Efficacy in Language Teaching Skills

Item no.	<i>As a teacher of English at the secondary school, I can...</i>	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
1	Determine the academic needs of my students.	1.31	.53117	2.78	.43861
2	Develop a coherent and comprehensive lesson plan with behavioral objectives.	1.40	.61041	2.41	.79723
3	Have a review for the content parts previously covered.	1.27	.57369	2.78	.43861
4	Incorporate different activities and tasks into English teaching.	1.58	.71205	2.52	.73148
5	Design varied student-centered activities.	1.33	.59588	2.71	.54335
6	Teach grammar and vocabulary in an effective and interesting way.	1.76	.71320	2.72	.51848
7	Use cooperative learning to help students help each other.	1.32	.57410	2.43	.78571
8	Implement a variety of language teaching strategies.	1.55	.74478	2.76	.45200
9	Use life-like situations to connect English learning to students' life.	1.25	.54486	2.57	.66591
10	Evaluate student understanding of what I have taught.	1.61	.67618	2.69	.55125
11	Pose well-planned questions for different purposes.	1.32	.57410	2.76	.47544
12	Vary the way of delivering questions to meet different levels of individual students.	1.65	.58319	2.35	.82942
13	Use plain language to help students when confused.	1.32	.57410	2.75	.43379
14	Provoke divergent challenging questions for more capable students.	1.55	.74478	2.58	.66468
15	Use a variety of assessment techniques	1.25	.54486	2.69	.55125
	Total	21.47	2.8506	39.52	2.49

This emphasized the positive impact of CRT-based forums in developing teachers' teaching skills.

Research question no. (2):

How effective is the use of critical reflective thinking (CRT)-based forums in developing EFL teachers' perceptions of their language teaching skills?

In order to assess how far the use of CRT-based forums is effective in developing EFL teachers' perceptions of their language teaching skills, t-test for significance was used. Comparing participants' SESTS scores before intervention to their SESTS scores after intervention, as shown in Table (2), indicates that CRT-forums were statistically significant in promoting their perceptions of their own teaching skills and hence their self-efficacy related to teaching skills was promoted.

Table (2): Comparing EFL teachers' perceptions of their teaching skills before intervention to their perceptions of their perceptions of their teaching skills after intervention

	Mean	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed) (p < .01)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Perceptions of own teaching skills before intervention	21.47	72.567	92	.000	21.47312	20.8854	22.0608
Perceptions of own teaching skills after intervention	39.52	153.21	92	.000	39.51613	39.0039	40.0284

Research question no. (3):

What are EFL teachers' perceptions of their own motivation strategies?

As shown by the figures in Table (3) analysis of teachers' responses to the Self-Efficacy Scale for Motivation Strategies (SESMS) indicates that teachers' mean scores in the SESMS after intervention are higher compared to their SESMS scores before intervention. This can be clearly observed from the wide difference between the figures representing the teachers' overall total mean scores in both occasions as well as the differences between the mean scores of the individual items representing their motivation strategies in both occasions.

Table (3): EFL Teachers' Perceived Levels of Self-Efficacy in Motivation Strategies

Item no.	<i>As a teacher of English at the secondary school, I can...</i>	PRETEST		POSTTEST	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Prepare a safe, non-threatening learning atmosphere.	1.58	.71205	2.49	.77493
2	Facilitate student participation in classroom activities.	1.33	.59588	2.61	.55231
3	Vary the motivation strategies for different students.	1.76	.71320	2.53	.71614
4	Develop learning interests in students smoothly	1.32	.57410	2.72	.51848

5	Tell students about the extent of the progress they achieve.	1.55	.74478	2.42	.81190
6	Vary questioning techniques to involve more students.	1.25	.54486	2.78	.43861
7	Provide real-like situations that appeal to students.	1.61	.67618	2.41	.79723
8	Use wait-time effectively.	1.32	.57410	2.78	.43861
9	Call students by their names.	1.64	.58319	2.52	.73148
10	Use different techniques for correcting errors/mistakes.	1.32	.57410	2.71	.54335
	<i>Total</i>	14.70	2.04	25.98	2.090

Research question no. (4):

How effective is the use of CRT-based forums in developing EFL teachers' perceptions of their motivation strategies.

In order to assess how far the use of CRT-based forums is effective in developing EFL teachers' perceptions of their strategies to motivate students, t-test for significance was used. Comparing participants' SESMS scores before intervention to their SESMS scores after intervention, figures in Table (4) below show that CRT-forums were statistically significant in promoting their perceptions of their own self-efficacy to motivate students.

Table (4): Comparing EFL teachers' perceptions of their motivation strategies before intervention to their perceptions of their motivation strategies after intervention

	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed) (p < .01)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Perceptions of own motivation strategies before intervention	14.70	69.42	92	.000	14.69892	14.278	15.119
Perceptions of own motivation strategies after intervention	25.99	119.86	92	.000	25.97849	25.548	26.409

Research question no. (5):

What are EFL teachers' reactions to CRT-based forums?

At the post-intervention stage, participants were asked to articulate their reactions to the CRT-based forums. For this purpose self-reflection open-ended questions were used and responses to which were analyzed qualitatively. Responses, which were overall positive in favor of the CRT-based workshops in general, were categorized and quantified in terms of frequencies, as represented in Table (5) below.

Table (5): Trainees' Reactions to CRT-based Forums

No	Trainees' positive reactions to CRT-based workshops Participation in CRT-based forums provided me with the following....	Frequency of mentions*
1	Awareness of areas of personal strengths and weaknesses.	73
2	Self-appraisal process and techniques.	54
3	Motivation to take part in professional development training in the future.	
4	Awareness of how to use CRT principles and techniques in teaching EFL in the classroom.	
5	Awareness of the necessity of paying attention to my students' learning styles and needs.	83
6	More ability to monitor and assess students' progress.	62
7	How to use a variety of classroom grouping strategies.	79
8	Ability to match my instruction to students' achievement levels and needs.	44
9	Ability to reflect on and in my teaching in order to improve it.	47
10	Participation in collegial activities.	72
11	Ability to teach metacognitive strategies to support reflection on learning progress.	83
12	Different techniques and instructional strategies.	96
13	Setting clearly articulated high expectations for my students in order to motivate them.	68
14	Providing students with meaningful, clear, specific, and timely feedback.	67
15	Varying question type to maintain interest, motivation and momentum.	59
16	Using wait time more effectively during questioning.	51
17	Creating a supportive and warm climate for all students in the EFL classroom.	63

(*N.B. As the participants often made multiple responses to each question, the number reported in the table above can sum to more than the number of respondents)

Discussion, implications and suggestions for further research

Findings of the study indicate that EFL teachers' sense of self-efficacy related to both teaching skills and student motivation strategies could be improved through CRT-forums. This was echoed by other related research studies though not through CRT-forums. Thus, this finding can be considered a contribution since it adds a new dimension which CRT-based forums. This also adds to literature related to EFL teacher professional development. While traditional teacher professional development are based on the belief that EFL teachers can be merely tuned to teach textbooks that are thrown to them by the Ministry of Education, constructivist teacher professional are based on exploring what teachers already know or are able to do so as to move to what they should know or they need to be able to do, something that this study could achieve. The information obtained about teachers' perceived self-efficacy beliefs could be the basis for future planning and implementation of teacher development programmes. The Kuwaiti social and cultural context in general and the research context in particular are rich with contextual factors that have their bearings on the

methodology of research studies in human sciences. It has always been the case in educational research in Kuwait that educational phenomena are expectedly divisible, measurable, always objective and devoid of personal bias.

Initial results of SESTS indicated that EFL teachers perceived themselves to have had low levels of self-efficacy in teaching skills and motivation strategies. This finding contrasts with other research conducted somewhere else (e.g. Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Thu Hà, 2011; Mashhady, Fallah & Gaskaree, 2012; Jafarigohar & Ganjabi, 2012; Heidari et al. 2012; Ozder, 2011; Huangfu, 2012; Hastings, 2012; etc). For example, Eslami and Fatahi (2008) examined the efficacy beliefs of Iranian EFL teachers. The results showed that the teachers perceived themselves to be highly efficacious. In Vietnam Thu Hà's (2011) study showed that both native and non-native English speaker teachers have high self-efficacy beliefs. Heidari et al.'s (2012) study of Iranian EFL teachers' teaching styles showed that EFL teachers hold high sense of self-efficacy. Jahin and Al-Hadi (2014) explored EFL teachers' sense of self-efficacy which results showed to be high.

The findings of the study carry a range of implications for EFL teacher quality and curriculum development in Kuwait. The positive impact recorded by this study of using CRT-based forums highlights an essential asset that can be used for EFL teacher professional development. Basically this positive impact implies the possibility of inducing change within teachers' perceptions or beliefs about their capabilities. The change can be induced if teachers are involved in a process of reflection and critical thinking. This finding can be taken as a call for in-service EFL teacher education enterprises to involve teachers' beliefs or images about themselves as teachers and about their students. This would help enlighten the way towards more effective professional development. However, all attempts to effect a change in EFL teachers must be based on a careful understanding of the atmosphere that teachers work in. This implies that to address teachers' knowledge of teaching methodologies apart from their social and cultural values is naïve and impractical.

As a result of participating in CRT-based forums, EFL teachers' sense of self-efficacy has improved. To further assess the transfer of training, further research is needed to assess the impact of teacher training on their students' achievement and attitudes towards learning EFL.

This study was conducted with only female EFL teachers in Kuwait. Therefore, further studies are needed to investigate male EFL teachers' sense of self-efficacy and the impact that CRT-based forums might have on their teaching skills and motivation strategies and assess the extent to which there are differences between male and female teachers due to gender.

Findings of this study highlighted the positive impact of CRT-based forums on enhancing EFL teachers' sense of self-efficacy. However, this is based on teachers' self-reported evaluations. This necessitates a further study to investigate the extent to which EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs related to teaching skills and student motivation are enacted upon in their classrooms. An observational study would be needed to assess the extent to which teachers' espoused beliefs are drawn upon in their daily teaching situations.

Results of the study indicated that teachers rated themselves as low in using instructional strategies and in using motivation strategies. Thus, in-service training is needed to upgrade these teachers' capabilities in using instructional strategies and in motivation strategies.

The results of this study emphasize the significance of exploring the perceived self-efficacy of a small portion of secondary school EFL teachers'. In this respect, wider scale research studies are needed to investigate EFL teacher self-efficacy at all school levels. Besides, investigation in this study was limited to EFL teachers' self-efficacy. More research studies are needed to include teachers of other foreign languages in Kuwaiti secondary schools.

This study did not investigate the sources of EFL teachers' perceived self-efficacy. Thus, further research is needed to explore the potential sources of EFL teacher self-efficacy and the variety of factors that form, shape and reshape them. Besides, the findings in this study are based on self-reported data, which implies certain built-in limitations. The desirability factor, meaning that teachers may have reported what they perceived to be desirable, is a limitation of this self-reported data.

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APPENDICES OF THE STUDY**Appendix A: Self-Efficacy Scale for Teaching Skills (SESTS)**

Dear participant

This is a scale to assess your perceived levels of self-efficacy related to the language teaching skills that you practice in your EFL classes, called SESTS. You are kindly required to check (√) under the option you find most appropriate.

Item no.	<i>Items</i> <i>As a teacher of English at a secondary school, I can...</i>	Untrue of me (1)	Neutral (2)	True of me (3)
1	Determine the academic needs of my students.			
2	Develop a coherent and comprehensive lesson plan with behavioral objectives.			
3	Have a review for the content parts previously covered.			
4	Incorporate different activities and tasks into English teaching.			
5	Design varied student-centered activities.			
6	Teach grammar and vocabulary in an effective and interesting way.			
7	Use cooperative learning to help students help each other.			
8	Implement a variety of language teaching strategies.			
9	Use life-like situations to connect English learning to students' life.			
10	Evaluate student understanding of what I have taught.			
11	Pose well-planned questions for different purposes.			
12	Vary the way of delivering questions to meet different levels of individual students.			
13	Use plain language to help students when confused.			
14	Provoke divergent challenging questions for more capable students.			
15	Use a variety of assessment techniques			
	Total			

Appendix B: Self-Efficacy Scale for Motivation Strategies (SESMS)

Dear participant

Below is a scale to assess your levels of self-efficacy perceived as for the motivation strategies that you use in your EFL classes called SESMS. You are kindly required to check (√) under the option you find most appropriate

Item no.	<i>Items</i> <i>As a teacher of English at a secondary school, I can...</i>	Untrue of me (1)	Neutral (2)	True of me (3)
1	Prepare a safe, non-threatening learning atmosphere.			
2	Facilitate student participation in classroom activities.			
3	Vary the motivation strategies for different students.			

4	Develop learning interests in students smoothly			
5	Tell students about the extent of the progress they achieve.			
6	Vary questioning techniques to involve more students.			
7	Provide real-like situations that appeal to students.			
8	Use wait time effectively.			
9	Call students by their names.			
10	Use different techniques for correcting errors/mistakes.			
	Total			

Appendix (C): Self-Reflection Form

Dear participant,

Based on your experience with CRT-based forums, respond to the questions below. Feel free to use extra blank paper sheets.

1. What do you think you benefited most from the CRT-based forums? Give examples.
2. Concerning your professional career, how do you think the CRT-based forums were useful to you? Give reasons.
3. Concerning your daily-life teaching context, How far were the CRT-based forums useful? How, do you think, did they add to you as a teacher? Give examples.
4. Concerning motivation, do you think the forums promoted your attitude towards your students? Give examples of how the CRT-based forums enhanced your approach towards motivating your students.

Many thanks for your cooperation