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**Teachers' Perceptions on Reflective Skills in the Context of Private Higher Education
Institutions: AUC and MIU**

A Thesis Submitted by

Samar Ezzat Wahba

Submitted to the Department of International & Comparative Education
June 4, 2018

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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The American University in Cairo
Graduate School of Education

**Teachers' Perceptions on Reflective Practices in Higher Education
Institutions: A Case Study**

A Thesis Submitted to
Department of International & Comparative Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in International & Comparative Education

By Samar Wahba

Under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Skaggs
Summer 2018

Dedication

*To the soul of my mother, I heartily dedicate this work to you. You have been
always a great motivator who taught me not to surrender...*

Here is your dream has come true... I miss you

To the soul of my brother, you have always wanted me to be the best and had faith

in me...

I made it...

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To commence with, I would like to acknowledge my thanks and gratitude to Allah for his bless, help and guidance. I would like to dedicate this accomplishment to my beloved country, Egypt.

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Thank you all

Abstract

This study examines the perceptions of teachers on their reflective practices in private higher education institutions. The aim of the study is to understand how teachers' perceptions on their practices may impact the development of their teaching methods. The research investigates the views of teachers on their reflective practices and examines the teachers' approaches in applying such practices in teaching to establish whether these reflective practices are important and to what extent they benefit the teacher. This research focuses on English departments within the context of private institutions: The American University in Cairo (AUC) and Misr International University (MIU). A qualitative approach was utilized in this study. Ten faculty members voluntarily participated in a one-on-one interview. The study adopts the experiential learning cycle as its theoretical framework focusing on the stages of reflection. The results appear to support the finding that instructors of both AUC and MIU were aware of the significance of reflection because it has positive impact on their teaching. Moreover, self-reflection on practices appeared to be plausible and experienced by individual participants as helpful. Furthermore, they were valuing feedback from students and peers to a great extent. Furthermore, teachers were both self-reflecting to ensure they were doing their jobs properly and meeting students' needs. There was an indication that they wanted to improve in their own performance in order to enhance and enrich students' learning. Data collected and literature in this research have demonstrated that reflective practices should be reinforced and incorporated in teaching because it has positive impact on teacher instruction. Opportunities for future research may involve analysis of the means that can enhance teachers' reflective practices and the way reflective practitioners can be cultivated.

Key words: Reflective Skills - Teachers - Higher education - Development - Teaching methods

Table of Contents

Abstract	IV
Chapter 1	1
Introduction	1
Problem Statement	3
Purpose Statement.....	4
Research Questions.....	4
Chapter 2	5
Literature Review.....	5
Definition and Forms of Reflection	5
The Significance of Reflection	6
The Reflective Teacher	9
The Origin of Reflective Approach	11
Kolb's Cycle on Experiential Learning.....	14
The Experiential Learning Cycle's Contributions.....	16
Theoretical Framework	19
Chapter 3	25
Methods.....	25
Conceptual Framework	25
Research Design	26
Research Context	27
The English language instruction department (ELI) in (AUC)	27
Mission	27
The English language program (ELP) in (MIU).....	28
English language program.....	28
Role of the Researcher	29
Participants	29
Instruments	30
Data Collection Procedures	31
Data Collection Analysis.....	32
Ethical Consideration	33
Chapter 4	35
Analysis of Data and Findings.....	35
Inductive Analysis	35
Major Themes	37
Major Theme One	37
Teaching Experiences	37
Major Theme Two	40
Students' Feedback.....	40
Major Theme Three	44

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES OF TEACHERS IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS

Teamwork and Peer Coaching.....	44
Major Theme Four	45
Teacher's Self-Reflection	45
Major Theme Five.....	46
Development of Ideas	46
Major Theme Six	48
Innovation and Creativity	48
Chapter 5	52
Discussion.....	52
The Reflective Practices of AUC and MIU Instructors in the Context of Kolb's Experiential Cycle.....	52
Chapter 6	57
Conclusion and Recommendations.....	57
Conclusion.....	57
Recommendations.....	60
Practical Recommendations	60
Theoretical Recommendation.....	62
Support	63
Research Limitations.....	63
Future Research	65
References	68
Appendices	75
Appendix A	75
Interview Protocol.....	75
Appendix B.....	77
Institutional Review Board (IRB).....	77
Appendix C.....	78
CAPMAS Approval	78
Appendix D	80
Consent Form.....	80
Appendix E.....	82
Instructor Interview Email.....	82
Appendix F: Sample Table.....	83

Chapter 1

Introduction

The higher education arena is witnessing a great movement of reformation after facing various challenges in the twenty-first century. This evolution led to the realization for the need of education. For example, Sanopao (2016) emphasized that the success of individuals is related to the effective utilization of education. Lowery (2003) suggested that one of these reform endeavors is to create and develop educators who are reflective of instruction and learning process. Instructors need to build the abilities for reflective thinking, look into work that has been done, and research the function in various situations. Duthilleul (2005) mentioned that in order to be able to work in diverse environments, it is essential for teachers to research on the job through developing their reflective practices skills. Consequently, to enhance the instructive needs for students, different styles of teaching must be considered. Mirzaei, Phang and Kashefi (2014) reported that educational reform advances learning conditions and situations that energize meaningful and useful learning as opposed to learning that depends on repetition and memorization, creating an alternate perspective of teaching and learning which are the methods for supporting both education and the learning process.

In consequence, educators started to realize that there is a profound need to better improve students' learning as well as their proficient performance. In addition, educators experience challenges in the strategies that they utilize in their teaching; subsequently, they adjust and think about a superior approach to improve teaching and learning. They analyze their practices to pave the way for a better understanding and learning for the students, and when

accomplished, they are practicing reflective teaching (Sanopao, 2016). Accordingly, the idea of reflection and its significant outcomes started to gain attention by educators and stakeholders. This led to the realization of the necessity of applying such an approach, which is presented in the reflective practices where teachers could enhance such practices through the utilization of the reflective skills' tools by teachers.

Hall (1997) proposed that reflective teaching has turned into a focal theme, either implicitly or explicitly in proficient advancement for scholarly staff all through Australian tertiary establishments. The foundation of this advancement is found in the scholarship going back twenty years. As Hall (1975) argues, the expression "reflective teaching practice" was not regular parlance in tertiary organizations, while Stenhouse (1975, p. 143) alluded that presently, after 21 years, 'reflective practice' is an ordinary and familiar term in tertiary organizations and is never again considered the selective activity of expanded experts. However, nowadays, it could be presently viewed as a basic skill for all experts.

The idea of 'reflection', with its broad meaning is currently utilized as a general practice crosswise over higher education, particularly in proficient settings and in self-awareness development for students. It has additionally been utilized as a general practice within projects and programs of beginning proficient advancement for new individuals from scholastic staff on educating, or scholarly practice in a more comprehensive manner (Grace et al., 2006).

Several studies were conducted to explore the benefits that could be gained from utilizing and exploiting the reflective skills in educational institutions, generally, and in higher education, specifically. In view of the studies reviewed, reflection is undeniably an absolute necessity for experts particularly in education. Therefore, educators ought to reflect on what is going on within the classroom, why students are carrying on the way they do, and what should

be done for the students to manage a decent classroom encounter that will lead to better learning practices. Numerous specialists have directed studies concerning reflective teaching in education (Grace et al., 2006) indicated that the objective of the studies conducted on the adequacy of reflection is to offer an outlook for affecting future practice.

Problem Statement

Being overburdened and occupied with the duties and responsibilities of their job, in addition to the lack of teachers' understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses (Van Manen, 1977) can lead to low levels of teacher's engagement in reflective skills. Freire (1993) argued that time for reflection can be found difficult by busy practitioners. In this manner it is essential to attempt to find the opportunity and space in their busy schedule, to guarantee they maintain their professional integrity and self-sufficiency. In addition, it can constrain educators' capacity to enhance their instruction and teaching methods. Although much of the reflective teaching practice literature portrays the significance and potential advantages of such practices and skills, limited studies depict how educators reflect inside and outside the classroom or how to create reflective professionals (Jaeger, 2013). Numerous teachers lack the skills that they need to engage and take part in reflection (Calderhead, 1989). In other words, they may not have the required practical skills to enable them to take a step back from their instruction because they are essentially so focused on delivering content and keeping order. Subsequently, it is obvious that teachers are consistently overwhelmed by several tasks that make it difficult to take time to reflect on their work inside and outside their classrooms. Marzano (2012) maintained that teachers can be given the opportunity to assess their teaching, apply research-based methods, extend their instructional techniques, and understand the content that will advance students' learning.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate the views of teachers on reflective practices in teaching at private tertiary institutions. The researcher examined the application of reflective competency in teaching in the English language Programs in AUC and MIU. The English department is based on the derived form of a variety of educational practices integrated by their faculty members for delivering the different content. Therefore, different strategies, practices and skills might be articulated in order to enrich the findings of this research, but the main focus is to assess the teachers' views on their reflective practices. In addition, there is a requirement for studies that further clarify and consider instructors' reflection with the goal of adding recommendations in regards to teaching practices. Hence, this investigation will inspect the educators' perceptions' on reflective practices by determining and analyzing how they perceive their reflective skills that impact their teaching. This study will investigate the perceptions of teachers on their reflective practices in private settings through two universities in Egypt: AUC and MIU.

Research Questions

This research was conducted mainly to look into the reflective teaching practices in private higher education institutions in Egypt. The aim of this research is to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways do teachers reflect on their practices?
2. What is the perceived impact of reflective skills on the development of their teaching?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Definition and Forms of Reflection

It can be maintained that there has been several changes concerning the meaning of reflective teaching. As characterized by Dewey, reflective teaching is the deliberate and persevering thought of any supposed form or conviction of cognition in the figure condition to which it is given and the light of the ground that hold it. According to Dewey, reflection incorporates addressing and distinguishing such issues and in the end reflective instructors reflect upon the instructive, social and political settings in which their lessons are tied down (Sanopao, 2016). Eventually, reflection can offer the opportunity for teachers to widen their horizons and not to be limited to specific concerns.

While the idea of reflection has been around since ancient times, lately we have seen a resurgence of enthusiasm for reflection as a method for comprehension and gaining from experiences. As reflection has no exact definition, it is comprehensive of changing theoretical points of view (Hickson, 2011). With the decent variety of definitions and systems for reflection, one point on which authors concur is that there is common subject matter, yet no particular 'right path' to go about reflection. There is likewise understanding about the incentive in reflection; nonetheless, reflection is seen in various ways. A scope of terms was utilized to depict strategies and procedures. These distinctive methods for understanding reflection and the setting in which it is experienced, have a high level outcome of a multifaceted nature in comprehending reflection reasonably, theoretically and practically. There are a number of strategies, apparatuses, procedures and structures for reflection and these techniques can be

utilized independently on the web or by following a self-improvement guide. Additionally, individuals reflect on a wide range of routes; incorporated through discourse or discussion with their director or associate, writing in a diary, journal or communicating their emotions and thoughts innovatively through verse, tune, story or painting (Hickson, 2011). Furthermore, reflection has various forms, which can be depicted through several activities.

York-Barr and her colleagues (2006) mentioned that in order to “embed reflective practices as a social standard in schools,” reflective practice spiral should be developed as an approach. They contend that reflective practice begins with individuals and spreads to larger communities and groups of practice. They depict various activities like journaling and cognitive coaching as well. Prior to being exposed to the significance of reflection, it is crucial to tackle the foundation and basis of the idea of reflection (p. 19).

The Significance of Reflection

Reflection includes: proficient development, personal growth and significant change. Reflection in teaching has developed into an overarching standard around the world where being a productive instructor includes an individual sense of duty concerning thoughtful practice. The debate regarding reflection is profoundly in a state of conflict; however, it can be considered as a basic ability and an image of scholarly depth (Atkinson & Irving, 2013). Additionally, reflection is a powerful approach to self-improvement and self-coordinated learning (Gallacher, 1997). There is no doubt that reflection is essential for proficient development and productive instructing that without reflecting, the learning potential is lost and received experience might be neglected and ignored (Gibbs, 1988). Subsequently, educators can benefit a lot when reflecting on their work as it adds to the learning process.

There is one quality over all that makes a good educator, the capacity to reflect and think about why, what and how things are done and to adjust and build up teachers' practices within lifelong learning. Reflection is the way toward effective learning for educators. As the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) guidelines clarify, reflection is the way to become an expert instructor as it is considered to be a supporting value (Scales & Kelly, 2012). In addition, educators gain more benefits from applying the idea of reflection in their development as experts.

The advantage of reflective practice for educators is a more profound comprehension of their own teaching style and more viability as instructors. Other advantages noted in the current literature incorporate the approval of an educator's beliefs, the advantageous challenges to tradition, the acknowledgment of instructing as a great skill, and the regard for assorted variety in applying theory to classroom practice. A case study of one educator/graduate student attempted to comprehend her convictions and practices about what constitutes great instructing. Her underlying instructional method for educating depends on the conventions and practices of direct instruction. Her traditional socialization to an educating practice made it troublesome to comprehend that her perspectives of good instruction were being tested in her teaching. Nevertheless, the open door for investigation through reflective portfolio work empowered her to recognize and approve what she was realizing and learning (Ferraro, 2000). As such, teachers are able to develop their cognitive and learning skills when reflecting on their practices. Additionally, several elements should be considered when tackling the idea of reflection.

Reflection is associated to components that are key to cognitive advancement and essential learning: the limit to enhance individuals' capacity to consider their reasoning; the limit to judge the nature of their work in light of confirmation and explicit criteria with the end goal of doing better work, the

capacity to self-assess; the improvement of critical thinking, decision making, problem-solving; and the upgrade of understanding the student. (Rolheiser, Bower and Stevahn, 2000, p. 31-32)

For improving instructional methods, teachers take into consideration critical thinking skills. Brookfield (2017) suggests that reflective teaching is determining the essence of teaching. Therefore, instructors must keep reflecting on their methods of instruction to improve their teaching profession (Sanopao, 2016). As a consequence; teachers can improve their instructional methods through considering the notion of reflection.

Farrell (1998) trusts that educators will be saved from constant and unvarying activities when they are given the chance to act in deliberately figured reflection. In consequence, they will not be able to decide and conclude their instructing style outcomes to the various learners. In this manner, they can address issues that should be settled and resolved, which will improve their style of teaching (Sanopao, 2016). The most ideal approach to learn the adequacy of instructing and teaching is through the procedure of critical reflection (Yates, 2005; Gurney, 2007), all of which authorize that successful instruction obliges instructors to have sensible objectives, monitor the progress of students, characterize norms in classroom order and provide feedback, address and analyze issues in classroom. As a result, it advances self-assurance, the consistent accomplishment of teaching objectives, and encourages students to reflect. It is expected that the cooperation of these qualities give an establishment of good instruction forming a powerful environment for learning (Sanopao, 2016). Given the previous points, which tackled the significance of reflection, it is crucial to highlight the characteristics of the reflective teacher.

The Reflective Teacher

Within the century, it has been argued by educators that instructors should be reflective about their work since societies and schools' orders are regularly changing to be able to cope and adequately adapt to such evolving circumstances (Grant & Zeichner, 1984). Alternatively, reflection on experience is the main basis for learning.

Loughran (2002) states that experience cannot help with learning, but rather that reflection on experience is crucial for the sustainability of meaningful reflection. Similarly, Knowles et al. (2014) stressed that experience is transformed into learning throughout reflection; an argument that stresses on the significance of reflective thinking.

It is worth mentioning that when tackling the issue of improving reflective thinking with respect to practitioners, Dewey proposes three attitudes that should be sustained: intellectual responsibility, open-mindedness and wholeheartedness. Reflective practitioners consider intellectual responsibility toward short-term and long-term resolutions on the issues and problems they experience. Open-mindedness alludes to an intellectual openness of options. Wholeheartedness requires a physical, mental and emotional commitment with respect to specialists and practitioners to determine the problems and hence find the solutions (Taggart & Wilson, 2005). Correspondingly; these three mentioned attitudes add on the necessity of applying the idea of reflection by educators.

Regarding the application of reflection, Finlay (2008) maintained that various models of reflection have been progressed in various fields of expert practice and education. There are five novel sorts: hierarchical, iterative, and structured, holistic and synthetic. Models differ in their

levels of clarification, prescription, reflexivity and criticality, yet most offer an attention on reflection as being basically retrospective (Ghaye & Lillyman, 1997).

Quinn (2000) proposed that all the distinctive models have a tendency to include three essential procedures. First, retrospection which is recalling about an event or experience. In order to become reflective, teachers should think and reflect on what they experience in their work. They need to analyze, assess and evaluate the situations they encounter. Second, utilize hypothetical points of view for analyzing the feelings and actions related to the experience. After considering different perspectives and theories, teachers should come up with the results that will help them in taking decisions for future plans. Third, reorientation that is dealing with comparable experiences throughout using the outcomes and results of self-assessment to impact future approaches. Such outcomes will help teachers in developing their skills, practices and methods for better instruction. In consequence, self-evaluation throughout reflection is an essential aspect for teachers.

The previously mentioned aspects led to tackling an essential issue in reflection, which is reflective thinking. Harrison (2008) noticed that observation, judgment, decision making, team working and communication are the core efficient thoughts of reflective thinking skills. The five abilities of reflective thinking including initial instructor education are critical competencies for professional development and are appropriate to all phases of the learning of educators. Instructors can create reflective thinking aptitudes with the collaboration provided through a teaching portfolio, dialogue journal, and purposeful discussion (Cruickshank, 1985). In order to support the skills of teachers' reflective thinking, tools and apparatuses such as learning journal, action research, lesson plan, recording, drawing, photography, writing, portfolio, co-teaching, cooperative professional inquiry and action research can be utilized

(Harrison, 2008). Overall, teachers gain numerous benefits when utilizing their reflective skills throughout various activities for developing their proficiency and better instruction in their classrooms.

The Origin of Reflective Approach

The origin of reflection was the fundamental work of Dewey that was additionally developed by Schön (1983), Argyris and Schön (1996) and Mezirow (1990) that set up the establishments of reflective practice. John Dewey was a leading educational philosopher of the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth century, and still his ideas are relevant. He understood that traditional instruction, as then rehearsed in his native America, was inflexible, static and deficient for the rapidly changing society and economy of the time. Dewey pushed student-centered learning and focused on the significance of every individual's lived understanding as a beginning stage for learning. Such an individual, at the end of the day, is not in charge. They are dragged along by events, unfit to comprehend or transform them. To utilize more up to date terminology, such a person is simply responsive, as opposed to dynamic or proactive events that happen to them; they do not make things happen. We should, as Dewey says, move from routine action to reflective action, which is portrayed by continuous self-evaluation and advancement. The key to Dewey's rationality was the advancement of thinking, especially, reflective thinking (Scales & Kelly, 2012). Some other philosophers emphasize on the idea of reflection such as Schön, especially when it comes to putting it into practice.

Teacher's reflection was put into the spotlight after Schön (1983) interfaces reflective speculation and proficient practice. He communicated that experts confront a progression of difficulties and challenges that cannot be resolved by rational techniques and logical methodologies. He hypothesized an approach that experts can learn through reflection, that is,

reflection in action and reflection-on-action, the reflection that occurred amidst the action and after the action separately (Sanopao, 2016). Schön (1983) built up the ideas of reflection in action and reflection on action. Schön separated among three distinct strategies for reflection: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action. Schön expressed that reflection-in action is an unconstrained reflection amidst the action itself, otherwise called "thinking on your feet". Schön (1983) felt it is natural knowing verifiable in the activity that shapes "what we are doing when we are doing it" (p. 26). He went ahead to distinguish three notable highlights of reflection in action. In the first place, reflection is cognizant, despite the fact that not often able to be explained. Second, it is critical, and third, it offers ascend to unconstrained, on-the-spot experimentation. Conversely, reflection-on action includes thoroughly considering an event after it has happened. In this technique, one deliberately comes back to the experience to reexamine and choose what should be done another way. Reflection-for-action is the desired result of the initial two strategies for reflection and connects with one in reflection to control future action (Ruth-Sahd, 2003). From this point, it is obvious that there is a difference between Reflection-for-action and Reflection-in-action.

Schön (1983) extended his examination and research on proficient education with an accentuation on uncovering further suppositions, differentiating between reflection in action and reflection on action. Reflection in action is the possibility that we take while including a situation, amidst which we end up noticeably mindful and aware of what we are doing, considering, feeling and thinking, and can reflect on the action which takes place at some point later; when we consider the occurred events, and examine throughout reviewing what we were doing, feeling and considering (Hickson, 2011). On the other hand, Kolb was one of the

philosophers who encouraged the idea of putting theory into practice throughout his theory of experiential learning.

Learning through practice and reflective procedures has been elucidated by Kolb (1984) in the terms of his experiential learning hypothesis. The theory proposes that learning; change and development are encouraged by cyclic procedures. Such encounters include reflection on the experience, direct encounters and dynamic concept development from which conduct might be changed to help new encounters. Moreover, reflection has been seen as the connection amongst theory and practice. This leads to addressing the importance of critical reflection (Hickson, 2011). Eventually, in order to put theory into practice the significance of reflection should be considered by educators.

Another perspective comes from Brookfield (2017) who defined critical reflection and contended that we have to incorporate critical thinking, which concerns combining individual experience and involvement with power and social preparation. "In order to have the capacity to accomplish social changes through reflective practice, it is imperative to uncover our major and conceivably overwhelming suppositions about power, our philosophy critique" (Hickson, 201, p. 831). Consequently, the previously mentioned ideas of the theorists and philosophers led to the exploration of the importance of reflection. David Kolb was one of the theorists who contributed to the idea of reflection with his experiential learning theory.

The experiential learning theory of Kolb tackles two levels: a learning four-stage cycle and four separate styles of learning. Kolb's theory is more concerned with the intellectual cognitive procedures of learners. Kolb mentions that learning includes obtaining conceptual and abstract ideas that can be connected and applied in a scope of different situations in a flexible manner. In Kolb's theory, the force for the advancement of new ideas is given by new encounters (McLeod,

2013). Kolb's theory has a holistic view, which includes perception, cognition, experience and behavior.

The experiential learning theory of Kolb is typically represented by a four-stage learning cycle, in which the learner gets involved in all the phases. Concrete experience is a reinterpretation of existing experience, or a new encounter. Reflective observation of the new experience is any irregularities amongst understanding and experience; abstract conceptualization is all about reflection that offers rise to a new thought, or a change of a current theoretical concept; active experimentation is when the learner applies them to their world and general surroundings to perceive what comes as a result. It is worth mentioning that the experiential learning cycle was shown to be efficient in the learning process (McLeod, 2013).

Compelling and effective learning is seen when an individual advance through a cycle of four phases: of (1) having a solid or concrete encounter took after by (2) observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to (3) the arrangement of abstract ideas (examination) and speculations (conclusions) which are at that point (4) used to test theory in future circumstances, bringing about new encounters (McLeod, 2013).

In consequence, both learning stages and cycles of Kolb can be utilized and considered by educators to basically assess the learning provision normally accessible to students, and to grow more fitting learning opportunities and discover ways to improve their teaching.

Kolb's Cycle on Experiential Learning

Kolb introduced his theory on experiential learning more than 20 years ago, which has been well accepted as an efficient pedagogical model of learning. Kolb's experiential learning theory provides clear mechanisms of teaching and learning design, which are strongly underlined with the constructivist view on the way people construct their knowledge

(Abdulwahed & Nagy, 2009). Consequently, it can be maintained that the theory of experiential learning of Kolb contributes to pedagogy and instructional methods.

As stated by Butler (1996) and Oinsky et al. (1998), in the experiential learning process, experience is transferred into enhanced skills and knowledge, and educators might become aware of not only what was effective, but also why it was successful. Pollard and Triggs (1997) mentioned that an instructor could obtain no less than three skills: empirical abilities, which imply collecting data and planning research; analytical capabilities which are concerned about how to figure out and comprehend the data; and, evaluative skills which incorporate making judgments about the educational consequences of practical inquiry outcomes. By utilizing the data, the sequence of events can be analyzed by the teacher in order to disconfirm or affirm the new theory (Osterman & Kottamp, 1993). Kolb et al. (1971) expresses that each of the stages of the model is a distinctive type of adjustment to reality or a learning mode. It can be concluded that a different individual capacity relates to each stage of the model (Kolb, 1984).

Four types of capacities are needed from learners if they are to be productive and effective. These stages are concrete experience abilities, reflective observation capacities, abstract conceptualizing abilities and active experimentation capacities. That is they should have the capacity to include themselves in a complete and straightforward way without predisposition or bias in new encounters. They should be able to think, observe and reflect on their encounters from various points of view. Additionally, they should be able to create ideas and concepts that incorporate their perceptions and observations into rationally sound speculations and theories. In addition, they should have the capacity to solve problems and make decisions by utilizing these theories. Subsequently, teachers should discard old methodologies and create new theories in order to be creative and innovative.

Learning is a procedure whereby information is made through the change of involvement. In like manner, the center of his model of experiential learning is "a straightforward portrayal of a learning cycle, how experience is converted into ideas, which thusly are utilized as aides in the decision of new encounters "(Kolb 1976, p.21). In consequence, teachers are considered to be learners in the learning process cycle as they learn from their experiences and attempt to improve their skills and capacities.

The idea of experiential learning shapes an alluring package for adult educators. It consolidates feeling, spontaneity and profound individual experiences with the possibility of reasonable reflection and thought. Moreover, it preserves the humanistic confidence in the ability of each individual to learn and develop; which is imperative for the idea of lifelong learning. It contains a positive ideology of experiential learning that is clearly vital for the education of adults (Miettinen, 2000). The idea of reflection gives educators the opportunity to discover new horizons and useful dimensions not only for learning but also for developing beneficial theories, which contributes to education.

The Experiential Learning Cycle's Contributions

The application of Kolb's Four Stages Cycle on Experiential Learning proved its success when conducted in various institutions.

This study was conducted on biology lesson through the application of Kolb's learning cycle; prospective teachers' individual learning styles were determined by utilizing Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (KLSI). In this research, experimental and descriptive methods, which are amongst the quantitative research methods, were utilized together and 76 prospective teachers participated. The control group practiced traditional teaching for the lessons while the experimental group was instructed after being configured in accordance with Kolb's learning

cycle. The data was collected through the utilization of achievement test, which was related to cell division, as pretest and posttest; and learning styles of the prospective teachers and the point averages comparison of achievement test in both experimental and control groups.

The descriptive feature of the researches comprised of ‘determining the achievement’ and ‘level of students’ on the learning styles in General Biology I Laboratory lesson and the subject of Cell Division. This feature of the study lies behind the social screening model, which is one of the models that aims to decide the presence or level of progress between two among different variables as a whole (Karasar, 2000). In addition, the test model with pretest and posttest control group was connected in order to analyze the impact of lesson configuration in view of Kolb's experiential learning theory in General Biology I laboratory lesson. Through a random assignment, two groups are created in this model, one of which is utilized as the control group, while the other is used as the experimental group (Karasar, 2000).

In the study, the averages of achievement test scores from the students in the experimental and control groups, as well as the learning styles, were compared. As a result, the experimental group was proved to be more successful than the control group (Güneş, 2017).

This research represents a personal account and assessment of an instructor from a course of organizational learning based on his conversations, observations, notes and reflections of his encounters instructing a management elective at MU. It emphasizes the significance of utilizing experience to additionally enhance and build up one's skills, identity and productivity. It depicts, the various progress stages encountered by the author, from an uncertain, novice to a confident educator and individual, the change from an instructor who depended on customary formal lecture based method of instruction to a more effective, educator able to adequately

explore different avenues with more experiential strategies for teaching comprising of research projects, case studies and discussions.

The educator illustrates how adequately and effectively he applied the model of Kolb's ELT in order to remodel and enhance the Management course 4126 at the undergraduate level at MU and refined his instructing competence. The fundamental objective of the course was to guarantee that students comprehend the significance and pertinence of organizational learning and the tools and aptitudes required to learning associations' design.

The research approach is accordingly qualitative and depends on two years of instructing one to two sections for every fall and spring semesters for a management elective offered at MU. Established basically with the purpose to instruct African American youth, the college confers itself 'students first' as its center institutional values. The data was gathered from students' remarks on student assessment sheets; the teacher's personal notes about his discussions with the departmental chair and dean on a few events; letters dealing with students' complaints passed on from the dean about the course; and, lastly, through an open-ended questionnaire attempted on 35 students about the overall adequacy of the course in Spring 2007 on the request of the dean. The data is thusly complete and comprehensive covering the points of view from the instructor and the students, including the institutional management. It is additionally supplemented with his personal observations, tensions, worries and feelings, which he encountered amid a period of two years (Spring 2005 to Spring 2007) as the instructor of organizational learning course (Akella, 2010).

It can be concluded that the experiential theory of Kolb a well-developed theory that can be successfully used to analyze and explain the methods of instruction and styles of learning in the instructive research community. The characteristics, features and attributes of this theory

are easy to embrace and can be connected promptly to an individual session by one teacher and to a degree program as well. The model of Kolb fosters students and challenges them to create fundamental skills for effective reasoning and critical thinking. The learning inventory of Kolb encourages students to enhance their learning viability in various learning situations (Loo 1997). From this point, it can be concluded that Kolb's four cycle of experiential learning contributed and added to the idea of reflection and the development of educators teaching methods.

Theoretical Framework

In order to accomplish the most significant and fullest experiences for themselves and their students, reflective practitioners and experts are carefully occupied with changing their practices, which can be fulfilled by getting involved in reflective practices.

Kolb's approach is the theoretical framework that underpins this study. David Kolb published his model of learning styles in 1984 from which he built up his learning style inventory. According to Miettinen (2000), the experiential learning conception is a built up approach in the convention of the theory of adult education. Therefore, Kolb's experiential learning four-stage model is a crucial presentation of the approach.

Experiential learning theory is based on a four-stage dialectic and cyclical process experience, observation and reflection, abstract reconceptualization, and experimentation (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). Kolb (1984) trusted that effective learners require the four various types of capacities. That is, they should have the capacity to include themselves in a way that is complete and transparent, without predisposition in new experiences. Moreover, they should have the ability to respond to and observe their encounters from numerous points of view. Furthermore, they should have the capacity to create ideas and concepts that coordinate

their perceptions into consistently solid speculations and they should have the capacity to utilize these theories to solve problems and make decisions (Miettinen, 2000). In this manner, it is imperative for teachers to regard themselves as learners who benefit from their experiences which can lead to the improvement of their teaching skills and hence the development of their instructional methods. Accordingly, teachers can benefit from Kolb's theory of reflection through learning from each stage of the experiential cycle (Figure 1).

The first phase of the cycle provides the foundation for the learning process because individuals learn lessons through open mindedness and adaptability as opposed to a systematic way to the problem or situation (Akella, 2010). In this stage, an individual has a new experience that creates an open door for learning. This experience helps as the foundation for observation. As per Kolb's theory, a person cannot learn by just observing. The objective is for the person to gain from the experience by effectively participating and taking interest in it. According to Osterman (1990), the learning begins with a problem, unexpected event or a troublesome experience. Then, the reflective teacher steps back to examine her/his experience and describe the problem by asking himself /herself, "What was the nature of the problem? What were my intentions?" or "What did I do?"

In the second stage, the individuals gain and learn from their encounters by articulating how and why they happened. They reflect, observe and examine their encounters from all views in a critical way (Akella, 2010). A specific notice is paid to any inconsistencies between experience and understanding. The person reflects on the experience before making any judgments. The objective is for the person to find meaning to the experience by reviewing the situation. The process of observation and reflection requires the teacher to act as a researcher. S/he first monitors and observes the problem and, then collects data about it

including beliefs, values, intentions, attitudes, feelings, ideas and actions of both the students and themselves (Osterman, 1990). Then, s/he critically analyses and evaluates this data in order to make decisions and judgments on them (Çimer, Çimer, & Vekli, 2013).

The stage of abstract conceptualization relates the reflections and observations made amid the phase of reflective observation to the subjective idea or theory. The individual utilizes the ideas and logic instead of feelings to comprehend problems and situations (Akella, 2010). The individual explains and analyzes his experience through developing and creating theories. This analysis changes a previous idea or gives rise to another thought. In this stage, the individual distinguishes between repeating themes, issues or problems that will help with new learning encounters; the main objective is to create ideas that they can apply later in the future. In this phase, the teacher considers alternative ways of thinking and acting. It includes an active search for new information, techniques or process to address the problem. S/he aims at developing alternative hypothesis to explain the events and guide for her/his action (Kolb, 1984; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993).

In the final stage of the learning cycle, an individual will act on the predictions they made after testing and examining the theories. Individuals will then apply what they learned in the experience to another situation (Akella, 2010). People make decisions; solve issues and influence events or people by utilizing their theories. They implement theories and takes risks to perceive what will result with a main goal to discover ways of improvement by testing concepts in various and new situations. Çimer, Çimer, & Vekli, (2013) proposed that in this stage, the teacher makes a conscious decision to act in a certain way to test these new theories, assumptions and knowledge through experimentation. This stage completes the cycle and starts another. The next cycle starts and profits from the earlier cycle whether it focuses in a more

detailed way on the same problem or another (Kolb, 1984; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993).

Therefore, learning and professional development becomes a progressive and continuing process, which adds to the experience of teachers.

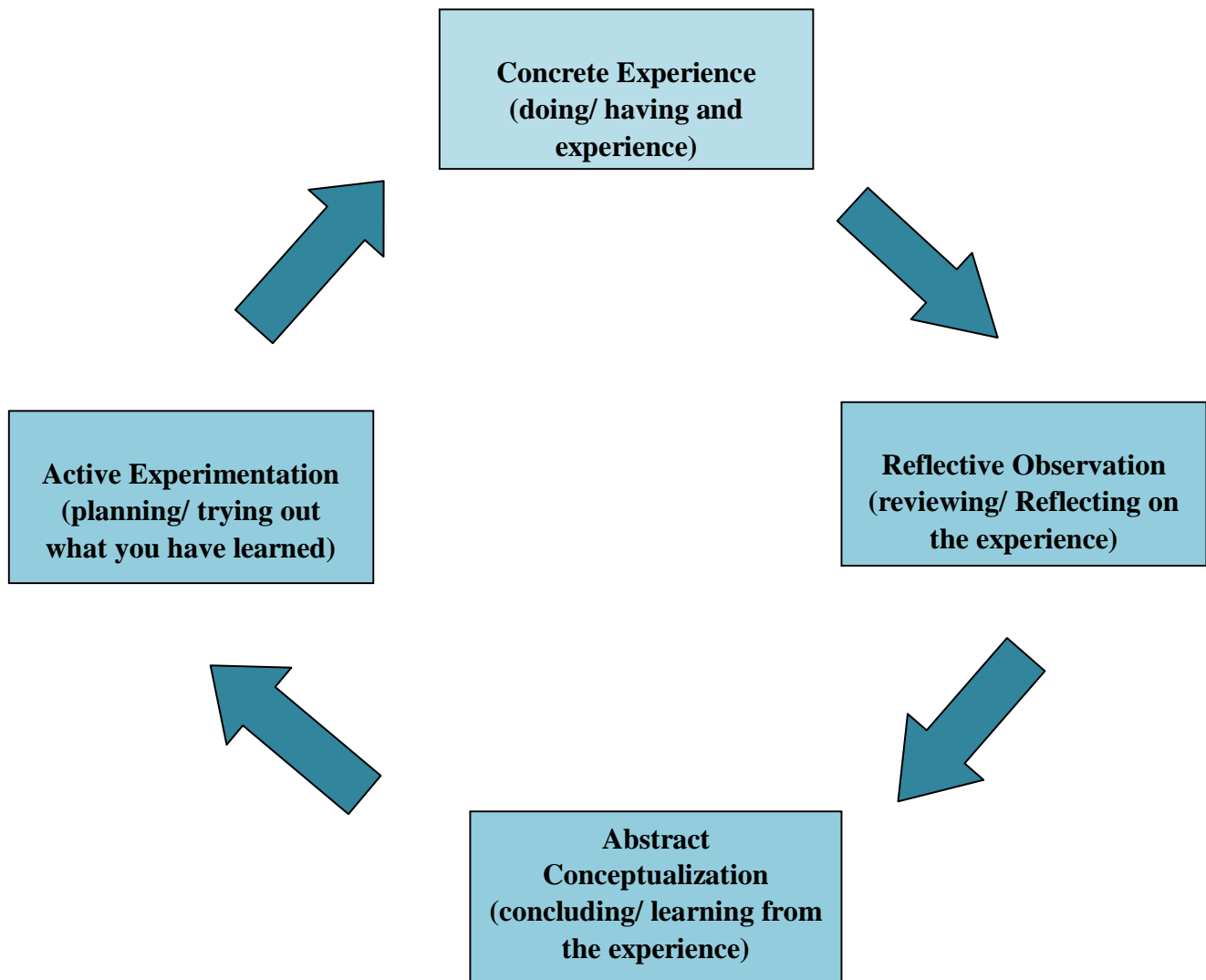


Figure 1. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle - Stages of Reflection

Ultimately, in order to develop their instructional methods, educators should be aware of the significance of reflection which can be fulfilled through getting engaged in their reflective skills. Freire (1993) argued, critical educational practice cannot be considered to be a specific methodology that can be applied without knowledge or insight, yet rather it develops when teachers reflect on their pedagogy and practice teaching from a critical perspective. In order to empower their learners, educators should implement a more critical and reflective pedagogy. Such educators should shape their pedagogy from noncritical to critical. Rather than being individually passive deliverers and recipients, both educators and learners should consider reflection in order to take agency and be insightful. In consequence, educators should find room for reflection and get involved in their reflective skills which help in improving their teaching.

The success and effectiveness of Kolb's theory was proved throughout the collected data. Findings in this research demonstrated that instructors consider themselves as learners who gain from their experiences throughout reflection. Additionally, significant issues appeared to be confronted by instructors in both institutions.

The following chapter discusses the methods implemented in conducting this research. It includes the research questions that were developed from the literature review and the analysis of the collected data. Research questions were formed after the research was done and the main points of interest were merged.

1. In what ways do teachers reflect on their practices?
2. What is the perceived impact of reflective practices on the development of their teaching?

It is important to mention that the research questions in this study fit with Kolb's theory in the way that the first question focuses on the second stage of the cycle highlighting the ways teachers reflect on their practices throughout observation and reflection. On the other hand, the second question looks at the whole cycle and how the instructors do fit into the cycle. When applying reflective practices, teachers develop their methods and techniques that they utilize in their classrooms and consequently this helps in improving their instruction. The following chapter will focus on the methodology of this research of my thesis study. Additionally, it will focus on various sections such as conceptual framework, research design, research context, role of the researcher, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, data collection analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 3

Methods

This chapter presents the various procedures and methods that were followed in the process of data collection and analysis in this study. Accordingly, this chapter sought to answer the research questions by conducting a qualitative method approach that was highlighted in the research context, research design, sample selection, research instruments, data collection procedures, data collection analysis and ethical considerations. In order to achieve this research purpose throughout demonstrating the organization of ideas, a conceptual framework is articulated in this chapter as well.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 2 shows the teachers' perceptions concerning their reflective practices that were used. Additionally, it determined the teachers' views about whether these reflective practices have a significant relationship in the development of their teaching.

The research design includes one instrument, which was used to obtain data for investigating the reflective teaching skills of private universities English teachers. The data was collected using interview questions adopted based on research by Mirzaei, Phang and Kashefi, (2014) on measuring teachers' reflective skills.

The perceptions of English Teachers towards getting engaged in their own reflective skills and the improvement of their teaching were measured through utilizing the interview questions in this study.

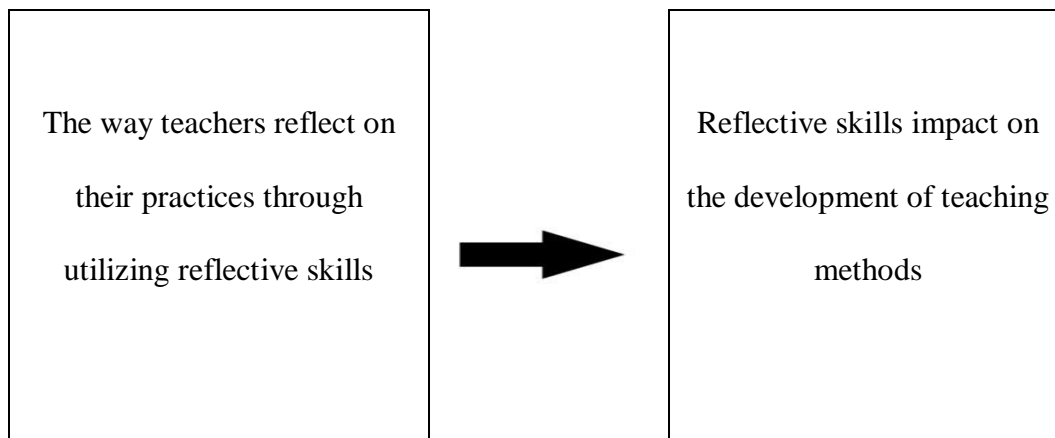


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of the study

Research Design

In order to primarily comprehend and understand the different perspectives of instructors on their reflective skills, a qualitative research approach was utilized. The rationale of conducting a qualitative case study was to help figuring out the participants' views on their reflective skills which led to an in depth analysis. In qualitative research, questions that are considered more general and broad are posed by the researcher to participants who allow them to express their ideas and share their perspectives relatively unconstrained by other's views (Creswell, 2012).

After interviews and research took place, the researcher started to utilize the inductive approach. According to Potter (1996) the inductive approach's purpose is to begin with the data analysis which is followed by searching for common patterns crosswise over separate interviewees experience and information and afterwards contending and arguing for those patterns as having the status of general explanatory articulations and statements (p. 151). From this point, the researcher selected this approach since it starts with an element or perception and then finds connections among these components through the conducted theories in this research.

Research Context

The study took place in the American University of Cairo (AUC) and the Misr International University (MIU). The main focus of this research concerned higher educational universities such as the American University in Cairo and Misr International University in Egypt. As per their description, the American University in Cairo (AUC) was established in 1919 as an English-dialect institution being an American-accredited foundation of higher education. It is considered as a focal point of scholarly, cultural and social life of the Arab world (The American University in Cairo). The reason behind selecting the ELI program to be the context of this study is that it is tailored to prepare students to utilize their critical thinking, analysis and evaluation skills in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century. In order to empower the learners, the faculty use learner-centered and content-based approaches designed to line up with courses at AUC and MIU. Moreover, the researcher assumed that the faculty members were aware of reflection as they had the opportunity to reflect on their practices because they use various strategies and techniques that conform to the nature of the courses they are teaching.

The English language instruction department (ELI) in (AUC).

Mission.

The English Language Instruction Department (ELI) offer courses to prepare undergraduate and graduate students in scholarly English, critical thinking and other scholastic aptitudes that they will require at college throughout intensive, semi-intensive secluded non-credit courses. This is refined by very qualified staff utilizing student-centered and content based methodologies intended to engage students in order to line up with courses at AUC.

The Department of English Language Instruction of the American University in Cairo, Academy of Liberal Arts was established to maintain the CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions, which is authorized by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) for the period August 2015 through August 2025. CEA is perceived by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a broadly recognized certifying organization for English dialect projects and establishments in the US, (The American University in Cairo). Misr International University in Cairo (MIU) was established in the year 1996 with the specific and genuine purpose for addressing the practical realities of the twenty-first century through building up a scholarly foundation (Misr International University, 2014).

The English language program (ELP) in (MIU).

Mission.

The English Language program (ELP) courses are intended to fulfill the English dialect capability required for learning at MIU, since English is the language utilized for instruction. MIU conducts an English placement test for students to determine their levels.

The students who are weak in English are provided with an opportunity to improve and enhance their skills of English language. In order to prepare the students for the job market competition, this program is tailored to address the twenty-first century challenges, and it additionally prepares students to utilize their skills of analysis, evaluation and critical thinking (Misr International University).

The fact that both universities have an English Program, which provides English language skills for undergraduate students from different majors, is the main reason of the case selection. AUC is considered as one of the primary universities that were established in Egypt, while MIU is considered one of the newest in Egypt. Both institutions offer English courses that

are designed to fulfill the English language proficiency required for studying at both universities, since the language of instruction is English.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is an instructor in the English department at one of the universities where the research was conducted. As an educator, the notion of reflection was her great interest. Her research interest is in figuring out the positive impact of reflection on developing teaching methods. Moreover, the researcher approaches the study from an insider's perspective as she has the same academic position of the participants and works in the same department. It is worth mentioning that although I maintained close professional contact with many members of the staff, I did not have much social contact with them. Possible biases will be discussed in more details in the limitations section of this study.

Participants

A sample of teachers' informants was selected in order to conduct this study; moreover, convenience sampling was used to select the participants required to fulfill the purpose of the study. According to Patton (2002), this type of sampling is neither strategic nor purposeful. It would include selecting reports that are easy to access. In this qualitative study, the researcher aimed to interview English instructors at AUC and MIU since convenience sampling applies on the selected participants. The rationale behind choosing the convenience sampling in this study was that the researcher assumed that the English instructors were engaged in reflective skills and could apply them on their practices. Moreover, convenience sampling was utilized due to the researcher's accessibility. In this study, five academics were selected from each university based on their willingness and availability to take part in the interview process, as most of the instructors were occupied with proctoring and correcting exams at the time of conducting the

study. Participants from both universities were teaching language skills in the English program and have different English language degrees. All The participants are females and their age group varies ranging from 30 to 50 years old. All participants are employed as full-time staff and hold the same academic position except two participants who has a senior position (one from each university). They are seniors who are supervising the instructors in the English department. The participants were reached for the first time through messages via email. The teachers were reached by phone to arrange the day and time, and they were informed verbally of the questions that were asked in the interview.

Instruments

The research design included one instrument which was used to obtain data that investigated the reflective teaching skills of private universities English teachers. The data was collected by conducting one to one interviews in order to measure teachers' reflective skills. Interview protocol, included in (Appendix A), was employed to measure teachers' reflective practices.

A list of questions was articulated in the research on teachers' perceptions about reflective skills in AUC and MIU. The participants were able to expand and took after various lines of inquiry that might be acquainted to the interviewee through a rich discussion. For the articulation and explanation of the research, a list of questions on both AUC and MIU were provided to help in building a unique understanding from the interviewer perspective. For the transcribing process and in order for in-depth interview to be recorded, audio recorders were utilized.

Data Collection Procedures

The data was collected by conducting one-to-one, semi-structured interviews to obtain data, in order to indicate the reflective teaching skills of private universities English instructors. The interview enabled instructors to answer the questions and clarify the significance of reflective practices and understanding the gaps if there were between educators' reflective competencies that they require in their instructing. An interview of a semi-structured, open-ended questions nature was conducted in a form of conversation with the participants that was potentially led to a rich, in-depth, detailed discussion for the purpose of answering questions. Open-ended questions allowed the participants to best voice their experiences unconstrained by the findings of past research or any views of the researcher (Creswell, 2012). Using interview as an instrument specifically helped in measuring reflective skills of teachers and hence identifying their reflective competences weaknesses and strengthes in order to find the ways for developing such skills.

Research took place both in AUC and MIU by using individual interviews and each interview lasted approximately 40 minutes. Individual interviews were selected, rather than group interviews or focus groups because one-to-one interview provide the researcher with more accurate data because it gives more freedom for interviewees to express themselves without being affected by groups pressure. In a topic such as Reflective Skills of Teachers, participants in a group discussion may get the feeling that they have to conform to what others say in the group because there is no one correct interpretation or definition to reflection and how it should be applied. For this reason, it is believed that the process of data collection will be more accurate and feasible when arranging for individual interviews.

For data collection, approval was given to the interviewer in addition to a consent contract of Institutional Review Board (IRB) which was needed to be conveyed to the participants (Appendix B). Before the procedures took place, the administrators issued permission. After obtaining the required approvals, the researcher started to conduct interviews to gather the relevant ideas before starting the coding process. Interviews were audio recorded then transcribed and the consent form helped to ensure the participants approval of recording the interviews. Notes were taken manually in a notebook in case the participant felt more comfortable talking without being recorded. Additionally, the researcher kept notes to better understand the recordings and to help in analyzing the gathered data.

The interviewer informed the participating teachers of their role in the research and the purpose of data collection, while the teachers were informed about the focus of the research. The researcher then arranged individual interviews with the participants.

Data Collection Analysis

After conducting the interviews, the researcher started to transcribe the data. The data gathered from the interview was then analyzed using the thematic coding approach. In order to facilitate qualitative data analysis, answers to the interview questions were analyzed and different themes were generated. In qualitative research, coding the data is the further process of analyzing text. According to Patton (1990) the most essential instrument of thematic analysis or content is coding; the way of separating and diminishing text into the analysis manageable units. By reading over all gathered content, the analyst first needs to form meaning units by identifying key words, which can later be characterized into classifications.

As per Creswell (2012) coding is utilized throughout labeling and segmenting the targeted text in order to form broad themes and descriptions in the data. Although there are no

set procedures for coding data, some general guidelines exist. The aim of the coding process is to make sense out of text data, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, divide it into text or image segments, and collapse these codes into broad themes. Therefore, narrowing data into a few themes is an inductive process. Eventually, the researcher selected specific data to use and disregard other data that do not specifically provide evidence for the selected themes and then connect such themes.

The result of the interview was incorporated to serve the purpose of the research, that being the teachers' perceptions on their reflective skills in teaching.

Ethical Consideration

The current study was liable to specific and precise ethical issues. Before data collection, the approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) was required to be obtained by the researcher. The IRB application was required to be filled out through an online website. A signed approval from the Chair of the IRB was sent to the researcher's email and the thesis advisor was copied in the email, which was done as soon as the approval was received (Appendix B) and for CAPMAS (Appendix C).

Regarding their participation in the research, all members reported their written acknowledgment through a briefing letter and a signed consent. In the meantime, sample individuals were requested to sign a consent form and the aim of this letter was to assure the members that their participation in this research is optional and voluntary and that they were allowed to withdraw from it anytime for any reason. Aside from this, participants were completely informed concerning the study's objectives, while they were reassured that their answers and responses were dealt with on confidential basis and utilized only for academic

purposes and only for the objectives of the research. In addition, participants were not abused or harmed, either psychologically or physically, amidst the conduction of the research. On the other hand, the researcher endeavored to maintain and create a comfortable atmosphere.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Data and Findings

In this chapter, the research states the findings, which are followed by a thorough discussion. Themes were developed from the participants' answers of the interview questions. A set of questions answered by the participants in teacher's one-on-one interview discussions (Appendix A). Towards the last interviews data that worked hand-in-hand with the themes that emerged were compiled by the researcher. The main goal is to analyze the data that supports the objective of the research through valuable data, analysis and theories.

Inductive Analysis

The research approach that was followed for the purposes of this qualitative research data analysis was the inductive approach. In accordance with this approach, specific observations are utilized in order to create conclusions and generalized theories drawn from the research. The main purpose behind employing the inductive approach was, firstly, because it considers the setting where the efforts of the research are dynamic; this approach is most suitable for small samples that utilize and produce qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Secondly, the researcher chose the inductive approach as its motives were in line with the research method utilized in this study.

The inductive approach aimed at gathering the raw text into a brief summary format and set up clear connections between the objectives of the research and the findings. This approach helps in creating a model that consists of derived data from the basic structure, perceptions or procedures (Thomas, 2006). The inductive approach led the researcher to integrate teachers' descriptions and portrayals into important categories and incorporate the research purposes and

themes. It additionally seeks to establish and develop a theoretical model on the reflective teachers' development of their instruction (Liu, 2016).

After covering the inductive analysis approach which resonated with the researcher's study and explains thoroughly the purpose of the research, all major themes that the researcher has come across throughout the interview process with the instructors at AUC and MIU were articulated. During the phase of analyzing the interviews, the researcher incorporated the four stages of experiential learning cycle of Kolb, the findings and data analysis in this section. Utilizing four originated major themes: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

Using the theoretical framework of Kolb, the data collected was categorized under the four major components. The selected themes resonate with all the collected data along with the method of qualitative research that was employed. Upon Dewey's definition of reflection, Kolb developed the experiential learning theory through incorporating reflection as a major part of the learning process. Kolb (1984) explained that reflection is one of the four experiential learning cornerstones. In particular, Kolb's theory clarifies that learning includes: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This learning cycle starts with concrete experience, which the learner reflects upon the observation forms. Next, the learner frames generalizations and abstract concepts from the experience, and utilizes these to control and guide actions and activities in similar experiences in the future.

Kolb's model is well-suited to describe the teaching and the learning process. The four stages of Kolb's experiential cycle aim at improving the teaching process and developing teaching methods through enhancing reflective skills of teachers.

The concrete experience would be depicted by the teacher conducting the lesson or watching the procedure being conducted by another peer. Reflective observation would then take place after the procedure because the instructor thinks about what aspects of the procedure went well and what aspects could be improved. Some questions that may be considered are: Did I use the best approach in delivering the lesson? Was the method used properly? Were there any other techniques that could be utilized in conveying the lesson? Following this stage is the abstract conceptualization, which involves the teacher's thinking about what techniques or approach options could improve the lesson for students in the future. In the final phase, active experimentation occurs when the teacher provides alternative models and methods of presenting the lesson for the next class with a similar problem and looks to optimize and improve better teaching methods.

After merging the stages of Kolb's experiential cycle with the interviews data, I was able to extract themes that were brought up from the interviewees and scholarly articles and connect such themes accordingly with the appropriate stage of the cycle.

Major Themes

Major Theme One: Teaching experiences.

The first major theme is related to the primary stage of Kolb's experiential learning cycle is clarifying that educator's experience a situation in class teaching or with faculty member. This makes the instructors realize that they need to reflect systematically in order to learn something new or improve on their existing skills and practices. At this stage they will make a note of the specific situation and simply describe what they see, how they feel and what they think.

Effective teachers are learners who learn from their experiences aiming at developing their proficient and teaching. Reflection is one of the useful tools that can help and support

teachers to improve their skills and become successful. One of the instructors in MIU mentioned “I usually tell my students that I am a learner. I am not only a teacher, but I am a learner as well” (I1-MIU). Therefore, teachers are consistently learning from their experience and the situations occurred in their environment.

As stated by one of the instructors in MIU:

I feel like teachers are limited with their own perceptions, thoughts, personality and their own preferences about teaching and the way we have our first experience as teachers are all affecting the way we as educators see our teaching (I1-MIU).

It is obvious that there are several factors that affect teacher's perception in classrooms. This may interpret teaching techniques and preferences in a very limited form causing different ideologies. The prior experience of teachers may impact their teaching methodology in classrooms. Eventually, teachers vary in using different techniques in their instruction.

Because of the nature of their job as educators, teachers encounter new experiences in their classes or with their students. Such experiences create an opportunity for learning, and, in fact, teachers vary in implementing the methods and modes that they find suitable for their students relying on their prior experience. Successful outcomes of students will not be fulfilled unless teachers attempt to improve their teaching style.

Numerous teachers rely on their past experience and refer to previous methods by integrating them in class. As mentioned above in Kolb's cycle, a teacher has an experience that serves as the basis and foundation for observation. In other words, the individual encounters a new experience that creates an opportunity for learning. It has been determined that few instructors utilize the traditional approach in their pedagogy. As mentioned by one of the MIU

instructors, “I think my teaching methods are traditional but I am totally comfortable with this” (I3-MIU). Some teachers to a great extent feel attached to their traditional style in teaching as they are convinced that it is the best technique to be utilized and adopted in their instruction.

Another MIU instructor stated:

I think I talk too much. every semester, I promise myself that I will not talk too much and I would leave the talking for my students but I cannot help it and because this is an English and language practice so I blame myself for doing most of the talking actually (I2-MIU).

It can be determined that teachers have been exposed to different teaching techniques but are more content with the teaching process they are used to.

On the other hand, teachers who utilize modern and advanced techniques in class are more likely to achieve success in delivering their lectures. Educators should learn from their experience and adapt new models in their teaching. As per Dewey (1938) students should be engaged in the educational process. He suggested that experience becomes "educative" when valuable knowledge is established and developed in an authentic context in a community of practice through a cooperative and agreeable inquiry. As mentioned by an AUC instructor:

I use technological means and I ask my students to develop online posters which is a creative task related to the theme that we are working on. They can use Prezi, posters, charts or whatever they want (I1-AUC).

Some teachers tend to employ modern techniques in delivering their lessons because they believe that such methods make students more engaged in class. As mentioned by an AUC instructor: “I use technological tools to make my practices more engaging” (I4-AUC).

Undoubtedly, Instructors 'usage of modern methods and technological means is very significant

since they develop students' performance, engagement and contribution in class. As proved by Kwek (2011), in order to meet the expectations of the twenty-first century, teachers need to abandon the outdated pedagogical ideas and develop the quality of learning predisposition for their future work and for the interest of their students. This implies investing additional time in trial and error methods of engagement and spending less time clarifying and explaining through instruction.

On a practical basis, teachers apply what they learn from their prior experience in order to improve their teaching. Yet, sometimes, teachers might be confronted with unexpected challenges. Whether teachers follow the traditional way or use technological means in their instruction, there would still be other issues that need to be resolved. As mentioned by an AUC instructor: "Sometimes it is not that the instruction is not working, it is that the students level is weak and they need more instruction and more help" (I2-AUC).

In consequence, when teachers are faced with specific challenges in their teaching, the idea of reflection should be considered.

Therefore, Kolb's responses coincide with the first stage of the experiential cycle learning where an individual has a new experience that creates an open door for learning. Ultimately, this experience helps as the foundation for observation since according to Kolb, teachers cannot learn by just observing. The objective is for teachers to gain from the experience by effectively participating and taking interest.

Major Theme Two: Students' feedback.

Regarding the second theme which is associated to the second stage of Kolb's cycle of experiential learning, the teacher will observe and reflect in both formal and informal ways. The teacher reflects in a formal manner on the lesson he/she explained in class, while reflects in an

informal way through peer's feedback out of class. In other words, the teacher writes down the experience and description by reflecting the outcomes that worked or did not work in classrooms. As stated by an MIU faculty: "After I finish my class I am always interested on writing a feedback on how the class went in my notebook" (I3 -MIU).

Faculty members follow different learning styles and techniques in order to improve their teaching and reflect on their work in various ways as well. Colvin et al. (2009) mentions that instructors confront progressing pressure to enhance students' results, particularly when it comes to academic accomplishment. One feasible procedure mentioned by Colvin et al. (2009) for improving and supporting instructional practices is throughout conducting classroom observations and providing feedback on teacher's performance. Instructors from both universities emphasized on significant means as students' feedback, team work and peer coaching and self-reflection that help in observing and reflecting on their teaching methodology.

Teachers' self-assessment and constructive feedback of students and peers are very beneficial for educators as they give the opportunity for teachers to reflect on their teaching methodology. Effective educators should value and embrace the feedback that they receive from their students and their peers, especially when it supports their development and their student's growth. According to Colvin et al. (2009) researchers have demonstrated that feedback is effective in the institutions, working environment and educational settings. As one of the instructors mentioned "I do observe my work by asking questions and for student's feedback. Sometimes I realize students' reaction and if they are participating or not" (I3-AUC).

There is a variety of means that allow teachers to observe their performance and their way of instruction in class. As an illustration, they can observe the way their students interact and participate in class and consider this as a helpful indicator for the teacher to know whether

she/he is utilizing the appropriate method in their teaching. It is worth mentioning here that teachers can benefit a lot from the constructive feedback of students.

Instructors get involved in evaluation data; however, there are different approaches to gather and reflect on their impact as teachers. Feedback that informs opportunities for professional development for instructors and also focused on learning enhancement for students ought to be seen as an additional focal point that educators can utilize in order to reflect more deeply on their practice. On the other hand, sometimes students' feedback can be used in an inaccurate and unreliable way and loses its essence as a result. The objective of feedback should be for constructive and valuable means (Behfrouz & Pourmandnia, 2013). When considering students' feedback, teachers become aware of what techniques and methods can be employed for better outcomes.

Students and staff feedback is imperative for developing a culture of shared responsibilities, collaboration, and persistent improvement. Teachers can utilize this data to reflect, learn and constantly reinforce practice for the learning of students when feedback is used successfully in a trustful environment (Behfrouz & Pourmandnia, 2013). On the other hand, teachers dread that the feedback from staff or students might be misused or misunderstood, particularly when it assumes a part in their assessment or supervision. An instructor at AUC indicated, "I don't think students fairly evaluate our teaching methods. I think their evaluation is influenced by their emotions" (I1- AUC).

Sometimes, students follow their emotions when evaluating teachers. As one instructors mentioned, "We have to be aware of a kind of biased ideas or biased feelings from students" (I1- MIU). In order to avoid any bias, students' evaluation reports should be based on specific and accurate criteria so teachers can benefit from the comments and feedback in a positive manner.

One of the instructors signified, “I found students' evaluation valuable but only the verbal one” (I2- MIU).

It was proved that constructive feedback is significant especially for educators as it can help teachers decide about employing the methodology that works better with their students in delivering their lessons.

It was apparent that instructors at both AUC and MIU agreed on the idea that they benefit a lot from the verbal comments and feedback offered by students in class. On the contrary, instructors seemed uncomfortable with the regular evaluation report, which they receive every semester since they thought that students can sometimes be biased or might follow their emotions in evaluating their teachers.

Feedback plays a significant role that cannot be denied in lightening teachers' work. Therefore, it is vital to find meaningful and productive approaches to gather and utilize feedback and also to push through the feelings of fear (Behfrouz & Pourmandnia, 2013). One of the instructors in AUC suggested:

We ask students to write a paper reflecting on their experience through the semester to know what they think should be done differently and then based on that I start to make amendments (I2- AUC).

Some instructors came up with the idea of students' reflection since they proposed that they benefit from this written reflection. As an illustration, instructors ask their students to reflect on what they like or dislike about their courses so this ungraded reflection allowed the students to express themselves and voice their ideas freely. This opportunity allowed the instructors to know more about the preferences of their students regarding the methods and techniques utilized by teachers in class. In addition to students' feedback, instructors from both

universities admitted that teamwork and peer coaching could be a useful tool for providing constructive feedback to teachers.

Major Theme Three: Teamwork and peer coaching.

Concerning the third theme which is amalgamated with the second stage of Kolb's cycle of experiential learning, the teacher will observe and reflect in an informal way throughout getting involved in teamwork and exchanging experiences with peers. According to Dewey (1938), teachers who work to capitalize on the generational attributes of researching, evaluating, sharing and cooperating with peers are probably inspiring learners in the teaching practices. One of the instructors in AUC mentioned:

I invite a colleague to come to my class and see how I teach and they write a report and this is very helpful especially when there are suggestions. There is a meeting after the evaluation and we talk about the points that my colleague observed and we negotiate (I5-AUC).

Through getting exposed to a variety of teaching methods can benefit teachers to a great extent as they can apply such methods in their classrooms. Another instructor in AUC noted:

Peer coaching is totally different because you get positive feedback or comments to think about from a professional, which is very informative. Then one needs to think critically and reflect on the received feedback and try to improve (I2-AUC).

It is very important to highlight that instructors from both AUC and MIU approved the idea of peer coaching as long as each instructor teaches different skill. Instructors feel more comfortable and independent while teaching their own classes since every teacher has his/her own style and approach. One of the instructors in AUC declared by saying:

I have done coaching for twenty years and it worked well because we were teaching different skills but if we are teaching similar skills, this could lead to some problems because of the different style and techniques in teaching (I1-AUC).

Subsequently, instructors prefer to teach following their own beliefs and implement their methods of teaching without being compared to other instructors in a convenient environment.

Major Theme Four: Teacher's self-reflection.

The fourth major theme complies with the second phase of Kolb's theory which is abstract conceptualization. Teachers should observe their teaching methods utilized in class, and then they assess and reflect on them to realize their points of strengths and weaknesses.

Afterwards, instructors are required to think and reflect on what they observed as a result to using certain techniques. As reported by Martin-Kniep (2000) as a reflective teacher, it is known that 'reflect' means to 'contemplate; to think seriously.' However, reflection goes far beyond this meaning in an educational setting. It's a critical self-regulation factor that motivates teachers to monitor their performance and evaluates their progress against specific criteria. In order to reflect on their teaching methods, teachers first need to self-assess themselves regularly.

As mentioned by one of the instructors:

I always keep a small notebook in my bag and after I am done with the class and dismiss my students, I take a minute on my own and just write down some notes for myself like next time I will make sure...and I will make the students more involved in whatever activity so I always give myself a kind of a feedback and evaluate myself (I3 -MIU).

In order to check the relevance of their teaching methods, instructors reflect on what happened in class and assess their teaching throughout students' performance and interaction.

Next, instructors sometimes give a task for students to evaluate students' outcomes or ask them

to write a reflection on what they understood from the lesson. Findings will then reflect on the outcomes either being right or wrong. At that point, instructors will think about the results obtained from the assessment done by them in order to find ways to improve their teaching method. As mentioned by an MIU instructor, “I figure out what went right and what went wrong, what was hardly or slowly done and then I try to fix it the following day and in another class” (I2 -MIU).

Eventually, teachers' self-reflection is a beneficial stage that should be considered by educators because it allows them to focus on their points of strength and build on them while working to fix the points of weaknesses.

Generally speaking, the significance of the stage of observation and reflection lies in that it gives a great opportunity for teachers to observe and reflect on their teaching methods utilized in class for the aim of developing new ideas and concepts.

Major Theme Five: Development of ideas.

The fifth major theme conforms to the third phase of Kolb's theory which is abstract conceptualization. After reflection, the instructor would notice the strength and weaknesses for their teaching that has been done throughout constructive feedback and self-reflection then think about what should be done for developing ideas and changing concepts.

Being aware of points of weaknesses and strengths is very crucial for teachers in order to develop their ideas and concepts. Afterwards, they should try to build on their strengths and at the same time try to work on fixing their points of weaknesses in their teaching. As mentioned by one of the AUC instructors:

It helps me to know how to prioritize and plan what I need to work on and to know what areas I need to work on like what would be my next step especially when there are certain challenges that seem to be beyond me (I4-AUC).

When it comes to methods of instruction, it is essential to be aware of one's strengths and weaknesses as it helps for setting future plans for better results in explaining lessons.

Another instructor from AUC pointed out:

If I give a lesson about transitional devices and I find that students are repeating the same mistakes over and over again so the fault is definitely with me so I have to go back and ask them what is wrong and how we fix this and definitely I would repeat explaining the lesson again using a more advanced method (I1- AUC).

It is essential for teachers to realize that they might be employing inaccurate methods in their teaching. Therefore, they should search for new ways to develop their modes for better outcomes.

One of the best ways that can guarantee development of ideas is upgrading one's concepts and beliefs. Change is required when it leads to useful improvement. As declared by one of the AUC instructors:

All the time we are changing the framework, the material to make it up to date. Because what if we are doing something really well but we are not developing or changing or even following the new trend, we will be then lacking behind so we have to pause and say we cannot do what we are doing for years, we need to develop new ideas (I2- AUC).

In addition, it is very helpful for instructors to use advanced tools for enhancing their ideas and for getting exposed to modern devices that suggest new techniques and modes of teaching. One of the AUC instructors revealed:

I usually go back and use searching tools most of the time in order to come up with some ideas to improve certain activities or the understanding of certain ideas so it is all about developing our concepts and ideas (I1- AUC).

Teachers can rely on advanced technology and tools for helping them improve their way in choosing the suitable activities and tasks that support their instruction in class.

Within the third stage, teachers realize their strengths and determine their weaknesses, which consequently, enable them to define strategies and techniques for the challenging situations they confront in their classrooms. Since this is an iterative strategy, educators will start to perceive change. Examining this further will empower them to choose a more applicable objective and create realistic and reasonable plans (Huenges et al., 2017). Eventually, being aware of points of strengths and weaknesses is essential for teachers in order to decide about future plans.

Major Theme Six: Innovation and creativity.

The sixth theme is correlated to the last stage of Kolb's theory which is active experimentation. In the final stage of the experiential learning cycle, teachers should invest what they learned from their experiences, observation, and reflection in the development of their ideas. Teachers will then become more innovative and creative in implementing their teaching methodology. Teachers use their theories and their experiences to solve problems, make decisions and influence people and/or events. As a learner, a teacher takes risks and implements

theories to see what will result (experimentation). The goal is to test the concepts in different and new situations to discover ways to improve.

Instructors should apply what they learned from their previous teaching experience proclaimed in the classroom and implement the best suitable form of instruction that is appropriate. This can be done throughout testing ideas in practice, which will lead to the improvement of teaching methods. In order to achieve such development, teachers should be aware of the significance of reflection.

There are several means that can enhance the development of teacher's instruction like being exposed to different views and various theories implemented by other teachers in different contexts. One of the instructors mentioned, "I watch my peers' presentations; I attend workshops and I travel for conferences for professional development" (I3-AUC).

Furthermore, the improvement of teacher's instruction can be fulfilled through focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher. As an illustration, one of the instructors maintained that:

realizing my points of strengths and weaknesses give me the chance to learn about what should be done in my future plan and this makes me think about developing, improving, boosting and upgrading myself (I5-MIU).

One of the AUC instructors affirmed:

We have a professional development committee and we conduct regular meetings. We talk about strengths and weaknesses. Teachers would give feedback to the committee who looks at it and then makes improvements, suggestions and recommendations for the next meeting (I1-AUC).

An innovator will constantly think of better ways of doing things; and an innovative educator will constantly formulate new ways and approaches to teach and learn to maximize the output i.e. learning.

Innovation is all about developing a novel idea and look beyond what we are doing currently which encourages us to carry out our job in a new manner. Moreover, any invention aims at creating something other than what is expected from what we have been doing, be it in quantity, quality or both. In order to create a transformative and considerable impact, the advancement and innovation must be put to work, which requires large steps for implementation (Serdyukov, 2017). There is no doubt that lack of innovation and creativity can lead to boredom. At this point, teachers should start searching for more creative ways to deliver their lessons.

One of the MIU instructors reported:

I think that I have to be more innovative and more creative. I have to find some other ways to overcome my boredom. To be more enthusiastic towards what I'm doing. Maybe I need to find some other ways. I will try my best to overcome this problem (I4-MIU).

Being bored or not having the enthusiasm to teach is one of the serious issues that teachers confront. For this reason, more reflection on developing techniques and concepts is strongly required especially when having the same routine of explaining lessons on daily basis. One of the most beneficial ways for teachers to become innovative is by utilizing a variety of modes in their teaching. One of the AUC instructors suggested:

Another thing I do is that I make sure I vary styles and activities in my teaching so I don't want to leave the students bored in the classroom so I

change the activity and definitely I have to show them a two or three-minute video segment a day to explain a certain point so I use a variety of activities and techniques (I5 -AUC).

In consequence, being innovative and creative is one way that can lead not only to the success of teachers but to their professional development as well. It is obvious that there were several factors that affect teacher's methodology and instruction. Additionally, it has been determined that applying the idea of reflection throughout the four stages of Kolb's cycle contributes to the effectiveness of the instructors from both universities.

When referring to the previously mentioned data, it is found that this data helped in answering the research questions regarding the ways teachers reflect on their practices and the way they perceive the impact of reflective practices on the development of their teaching. Overall, it is obvious that implementing Kolb's experiential cycle theory is crucial as it may benefit teachers to develop their teaching methods. Applying Kolb's experiential learning cycle into the study allowed for exploring the significant of reflection for teachers. This led to the utilization of different approaches and methodologies by teachers to improve their instruction. Therefore, the idea of reflection contributes to the success of teachers throughout applying reflective practices.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The Reflective Practices of AUC and MIU Instructors in the Context of Kolb's

Experiential Cycle

The aim of this study is to examine and assess the perceptions of teachers at AUC and MIU on their reflective practices as they benefited and gained from field experience and their current participation in this investigation. In this section, the impact of reflective skills of AUC and MIU instructors on the development of their teaching methodology is discussed from the perspective of the experiential cycle of Kolb.

Developing and building up the instructional model of reflective skills for educators' outcomes, supported teachers with an accommodating framework for incorporating certain models of their instruction. Eventually, the model's value is derived from the extent to which the instructors can utilize to meet their instructional objectives efficiently and effectively.

In the first stage of Kolb's experiential learning cycle, educators are considered to be learners who learn from the experience of reflection. They experience different situations in their class teaching or with a faculty member. Teachers deliver their lessons using different methods. They can rely on the traditional method or the modern techniques. In some cases, teachers can sometimes get unexpected negative results from their students. From here, teachers start to realize that they need to reflect in order to learn something new or improve on their existing skills and practices. At this stage they will observe and self-assess themselves by taking notes and comments from students on the specific situation where they describe it in their notebooks or journals.

Regarding the second stage of Kolb's cycle of experiential learning, the teacher will observe and reflect on the lesson he/she explained in class. Teachers reflect through students' feedback in class and peers' comments out of class. In other words, they describe what they experience by reflecting on the results. Regarding observation skills, the results attained for the finding and analysis of patterns appears to support the finding that instructors in both universities appeared to be aware of the significance of receiving their students and peers' feedback to enhance their instruction. In addition, they considered the verbal feedback received from their students to be valuable as it supports them with valuable insights that give them the opportunity to learn about themselves and reflect on their teaching methodology. Notwithstanding, this is opposing to the instructors' responses on utilizing students' evaluation reports to enable them reflect as they did not see such reports as supportive and helpful, on the contrary, they saw them as judgmental. Mainly, based on the results, it would seem that instructors were engaged in reflective skills to improve the quality of their teaching, expectations and personal performance as a tool for developing their instruction. They were not open to the notion of using students' evaluation reports as part of the assessment criteria (Hamilton, 2005), or as a tool for measuring teachers' performance of their teaching to improve their reflective competencies. They may view an association between what they are instructing and practicing. Therefore, instructors appear to value verbal feedback from their students as well as their peers and supervisors.

The results signify that a majority of instructors were self-reflecting to guarantee that they were doing their jobs accurately and above all they were meeting the needs of their students. What they meant is that they needed to develop their own performance with an end goal to enrich and enhance the learning of their students. Ball and Pearce (2009) noticed that

teachers could become reflective of their teaching practices when they change their teaching methods and strategies when required. Additionally, the results implied that the instructors were keen on proceeding assessment of their own discipline. When it comes to the self-reflection section, it is interesting to notice that instructors in both universities connected between what they did in their classrooms and how it could impact the performance of their students. Moreover, they appeared to be inherently motivated to improve as they noticed value in the feedback of their supervisors, peers and students. This finding infers that they are reflective about their own instruction and they gain numerous benefits from external support and direction. Most of the instructors were open to utilizing past experiences to enable them develop and that they are reflecting on them in reality. They seemed to have presumptions about the way they direct their lessons and how it relates to their students. They likewise appeared to own the reflective skills as suggested by Brookfield (2017).

After reflection, the instructor would notice the strength and weaknesses of their teaching that has been done throughout constructive feedback and self-reflection then think about what should be done for developing ideas and changing concepts. Some instructors offered suggestions on implementing modern technology and new methods in order to be more creative and innovative and for better outcomes in their teaching.

In the final stage of the experiential learning cycle, teachers should invest what they learned from their experiences, observation, and reflection in developing their ideas. Teachers will then put theory into practice by finding new ways to become more innovative and creative in implementing their teaching methodology. In order to be able to solve problems of negative outcomes of students and make decisions regarding implementing the appropriate methods in delivering their lessons, teachers will use their developed theories in addition to their

experiences. After implementing such theories, teachers will figure out the results. Eventually, this process will help teachers discover ways to improve their methods after testing them in a new and different situation. Concerning judgment and decision-making skills, it was obvious that instructors in AUC and MIU demonstrated that they were eager to gain and learn from their mistakes. The findings for Making Judgments appeared to support this. They agreed upon the notion of trial and error because they could learn from mistakes and move ahead. They seemed to back research by Boody (2008) and Rudd (2007), which recommends that reflection is a necessary part of the procedure to articulate and analyze problems and issues as well as create a connection with what they do in the classroom.

The overall responses to the interview questions showed a higher frequency for applying and carrying out the experiential learning cycle theory as suggested by Kolb (1984). This theory proposes that a teacher is considered to be a learner who learns from prior experiences. Instructors from both universities agreed that getting engaged in reflective skills helps them improve their teaching, and, they perceived that teachers should reflect on their teaching on a regular basis, which will affect their future plans when preparing for their lessons.

This research study focused on the development of the reflective instructional model for teachers in higher education institutions, not only about how teachers think and reflect, but also about the impact of getting involved in their skills in order to invest in their practices to improve their teaching methods and meet students' needs. Subsequently, this simply requires teachers to reach a level of maturity that enables them to remove themselves from bias, consider different perspectives, learn from mistakes and make independent judgments and take appropriate actions. It is worth mentioning that conducting this study in private universities differs than public universities. Private universities allow teachers to get engaged in the professional

development programs, which are considered to be one of the advantageous that differ these institutions from public universities. The significance of such programs is that they develop teachers' expertise, skills and knowledge. Teachers in private universities have the opportunity to participate in various activities like attending courses, workshops, conferences and seminars. There is no doubt that the financial support might stand as a barrier that restrict the professional development of teachers in public universities, however, teachers can benefit from other multiple activities. For examples, teachers can engage in informal dialogue with peers to learn about how to improve their teaching. Also, they can read professional literatures such as thesis papers, journals, and evidence-based papers in order to get exposed to a diversity of experiences that can benefit them in their field.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The development of teachers' methodology is a significant issue that should be considered by educators. Teachers' reflective skills and practices are an important vehicle for improvement. The participants in this research thought that taking notes, comments and reflecting on their work benefit them and give them permanent images of the effectiveness of their teaching methods. Thinking reflectively gives an image that confirms some techniques to be efficient while highlights others that need improvement. Working to deliberately and thoughtfully reflect on all teaching before, during, and after class has considerable value for the quality of student learning.

In this study, it is concluded that the instructors in both AUC and MIU were engaged in their reflective skills. There was a full understanding in terms of applying the process of reflective skills in teaching; however, all participants appeared to be familiar with the concept of reflective practices. Additionally, data collected in this research has shown that reflective skills should be incorporated in teaching. It was evident that most of the teachers implied that they do think and re-think the teaching and learning process in their classrooms. It was also presented that there was sufficiency in skills and knowledge about the application of effective reflective practices, as much as the teachers were trying to do reflections about teaching and learning. This is obvious in some of the responses provided by the participants in the interview where some participants signified that they do reflections at the end of each class on regular basis. This occurs when they use the learners' feedback as a judgment tool to determine the efficiency of

teaching and learning. It was indicated by the instructors that the reflective thinking skills' application is strongly needed and encouraged in teaching.

The results in this study showed that instructors as a whole utilize the reflective thinking skills due to the fact that their responses showed that they actively practiced the five thinking skills: observation, communication, team working, judgment and decision-making; which according to Harrison (2008) noted that the five reflective thinking skills core competent thoughts were indicative of such practices. All five skills of reflective thinking are important for gaining professional skills and are applicable to all stages of teacher learning, including initial teacher education. Teachers' reflective thinking tools such as recording, writing, reflective journal, portfolio, lesson plan, co-teaching and collaborative practitioner enquiry can be used to support teachers' reflective thinking skills. As per Cruickshank (1985), teachers can develop reflective thinking skills by the interaction provided through a dialogue journal, purposeful discussions, and teaching portfolios.

Although there was ambiguity towards the value of the students' evaluation reports, the instructors were more interested in how they were assessed by their students in a verbal manner. This would imply that they had problems with accepting assessments from individuals who according to the instructors might be following their emotions or biases. According to Sezer (2008), in order to become reflective thinkers, awareness of what is known and what is needed is essential to bridging the gap between learning situations. It is interesting to note that these teachers perceived that getting feedback throughout evaluation reports from students is similar to being judged by them. They appeared to have skills and knowledge and actively participated and engaged in the five skills of reflective thinking. They have high metacognitive awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses; which according to Ball and Pearce (2009) could help

identify barriers to learning and changing strategies to attain goals. Subsequently, such beliefs would also influence the way they teach.

Instructors at both AUC and MIU highlighted the significance of reflection skills and their positive effects on their teaching. For teachers to be able to engage in various reflective thinking skills properly, there is a need for them to have knowledge on what reflective thinking skills are. The researcher proved that all teachers were engaging in the process because they simply know how to do it. Therefore, instructors inherently do reflection on regular basis.

Based on the situation in this study, it is recommended that reflection should be included in teacher training programs and teacher training institutions. This would interpret the significance of reflective thinking to teachers and would also prepare teachers to apply the process of reflective thinking skills in teaching and would support them with the techniques necessary for this purpose. That would help teachers to be flexible and innovative in adjusting to new circumstances they confront, in order to be able to successfully develop their teaching methods. As such, more research should be done and implemented in the area of teacher training programs and how they prepare teachers to become reflective thinkers. It would be significant to this field of knowledge if further studies be carried out to determine the perceptions that instructors have of their students' evaluations and reports. However, this study did not investigate in-depth the perceptions these instructors held about the reports and evaluations of their students. Further investigation on these perceptions and how it influences student-teacher communication needs to be carried out. This study addressed how to bring about the various types of skills of reflective teaching among instructors and how such practices enhanced instructors' teaching. Research should also be done on the different types of reflective practices that would administer this type of technique.

This study highlighted the importance of the reflective practices in the development of teachers within higher education institutions to achieve the best educational outcome for the students as well as the professional development of teachers. This study led to the introduction of Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Figure 1), which was recommended by stakeholders at AUC and MIU. This theory provides room for reflections on the performance of teachers. Lastly, it is imperative to mention that getting engaged in reflective thinking creates an atmosphere that is useful for teachers' development. Education is enhanced when discussions, performances, and written responses are reflectively thought about. Teachers' lessons incorporating reflective skills, which include observation, communication, teamwork, judgment and decision-making will improve student learning.

Recommendations

Practical recommendations.

In this study, instructors gave recommendations and advice in the interviews that will improve the reflective thinking skills of teachers. Firstly, instructors emphasized on the importance of attending workshops, conferences, events and extra courses. They suggest that this will allow for the introduction of the concept of reflective thinking skills as well as broadening their knowledge regarding enhancing such competences.

Secondly, instructors should assess and evaluate their reflective thinking skills before, during and after class, which could be done by creating a teacher assessment form based on detailed and accurate criteria. As suggested by one of the instructors, "assessment form for teachers would be a good idea in order to know what is done and what needs to be done in class" (I4-MIU). It was demonstrated that Reflective Journal is one of the tools that help teachers in reflecting on their teaching and hence developing their methods in class. One of the

Instructors suggested that the idea of reflection needs to be supported, which can be fulfilled by creating a reflective journal for each teacher, she proposed that the policy of the institution should support the idea of reflection. Instructors can go through details of the instructive methods utilized immediately after class. They can benefit from such narratives across terms and years as well. Instructors should take a few minutes after class to write down their own thoughts and reflect on what has been done in class. This reflection allows for realizing points of weaknesses and areas of strength. Such realization will open new dimensions for instructors to emphasize building on their strength and avoid committing the same mistakes in the future. In consequence, teachers should be updated with the latest techniques, methods and all the means that help them improve their teaching.

Thirdly, teamwork and peer coaching was encouraged among the majority of the instructors. They thought that both teamwork and peer coaching allow for sharing ideas and getting exposed to new methods utilized by other instructors in addition to benefiting from the constructive feedback that the instructors exchange. In order to maintain a more holistic view of instruction, it is very important for instructors to utilize multiple data sources, for example, considering teaching from at least two different perspectives. Peer observation can provide teachers with ways to develop their own way of thinking about their teaching. Before making any changes, instructors should be aware that they should review and compare outcome data carefully and reflect on it with a colleague.

The Ministry of Education should consider the idea of reflection in the agenda by enforcing reflective practices in all teacher training institutions, as well as other relevant frameworks for the purpose of encouraging reflective skills of teachers. In other words, stakeholders

should be aware of the importance of the inclusion of reflection in teacher education as it has positive impact on the development of instruction.

The management of the Egyptian universities should hire specialists in reflective practice to conduct workshops on reflective thinking skills at the beginning of each year when the university re-opens. This can be fulfilled prior to the official introduction of reflective thinking skills in all universities. The purpose of this step is to engage teachers in reflective thinking that will equip teachers with the necessary skills. According to Tican and Taspinar (2015), teachers should be taught how to reflect on their own encounters and applications. In order to reflect in a systematic and careful manner; pre-service teachers should be encouraged to question their experiences, conduct activities, create new ideas, generate links between old and new information and find solutions to problems they encounter. In addition, there should be an emphasis on the inclusion of reflective practices in the teachers training programs universities and teaching colleges in Egypt and the world at large. This would encourage professional growth and development of teachers. According to Çimer, Çimer, and Vekli (2013) reflection should be incorporated into both pre service and in-service teacher education courses for the purpose of growing effective teachers. Further research should be conducted in order to find out how they prepare teachers to become reflective thinkers as well as investigating teachers training programs. Lastly, to investigate the perceptions of teachers in any region in Egypt about reflective practices and how their perceptions affect teaching and learning; it would be necessary because it would provide a broader view of teachers' perception on reflective skills.

Theoretical recommendation

Designing and implementing the Experiential Theory of Kolb is essential as it may benefit the development of teachers. Applying Kolb's theory into the study may help in finding

different methodologies and approaches that improves the capabilities of teachers. This may help in the learning process of each student and contribute in developing successful reflective teachers.

Support.

For the ideology of teachers' reflection to be implemented on a practical basis and enhance teachers' reflective skills in an educational institution, various units should be reached. Heads of each department, faculty, and supervisors across the university should be addressed; they are in a direct and regular interaction with instructors.

Those instructors should follow in the four stages as shown in figure 1, to shape the teaching experience and professional development of the instructor by creating a benchmark and model.

This study will be enriched by this type of research and will consider emphatically the presentation of this instructive framework looking for involving teachers' input and participation which will reinforce and improve educators' skills and capacities for better instruction.

Additionally, this will develop the teaching methodology utilized by instructors, which is necessary for their professional development and for improving their students' outcome as well.

Instructors, supervisors and faculty members will benefit a lot from this research as it adds a significant dimension that need to be considered for establishing and developing a superior pedagogical framework, an essential component in institutions of higher education.

Research limitations.

Although the results of the interview and other literature incorporated some of the conclusions reached in this analysis, it is essential to concede that there are some limitations in this study.

Firstly, the researcher is an instructor at one of the universities where the research was conducted, which may have affected the results' interpretations albeit all conceivable precautions were utilized to maintain bias or predisposition. On the contrary, this limitation can likewise be deciphered as a factor that facilitated the elucidation of ideas, given the insider point of view and the teaching experience that the researcher had. Accordingly, the researcher played an important role on clarifying the questions to the participants and establishing a rich discussion during the interview.

Secondly, the interview's low response rate of participation was another issue. The researcher realized that this would be an issue and endeavored to address the head of the English department twice by sending emails to ask for participants and highlighting the significance of this study for teachers' development.

The low response rate reflects the willingness of instructors to take an interest in the interview. Another possible reason behind the low response rate may be that instructors did not feel reflective skills was a topic. Undoubtedly, reflective skills is a personal issue, and despite the fact that the researcher stressed on the confidentiality of the data collected, some instructors may have found the topic excessively risky and too personal. Therefore, it was apparent that the instructors did not have the initiation to participate unless it was required of them (although it was mentioned that conducting the interview would not take up too much of their time).

Another possible clarification for the low response rate was that the instructors in the two universities were typically overloaded with work and did not have time to participate in the interview; it was a period of midterm exams and the majority were proctoring and correcting exams. In addition, some of the faculty members in the English department were available on

campus for only two working days as they are hired as part timers; moreover, faculty members in the department have different schedules.

Future research.

This section is directed to all researchers who may conduct research in reflective practice and teaching. Some questions were raised in this study and should be considered for further research. For example, how the quality of reflecting skills can be measured? How can teachers' reflective skills be enhanced and how can reflective practitioners be cultivated? In addition, the following areas may be interesting to investigate: the training of teacher programs and how they prepare teachers to become reflective thinkers, to investigate the perceptions of teachers in any region in Egypt about reflective skills and teaching, as well as how their perceptions affect teaching and learning. This would be essential as it would provide a more expanded view of teachers' perception on reflective thinking skills.

Further, researchers in future studies could look into various ways to implement and apply the Experiential Theory of Kolb of reflection in teachers in undergraduate education. They might take into consideration developing a self-assessment instrument for faculty members by applying each of the four elements of Kolb's learning cycle. Application of the four elements in the teachers will enhance the instructors and carry out studies of teaching practices and faculty development. However, limitation should be regarded while looking in enhancing this research. Accordingly, researchers should put theory to practice for the development to be successful and I recommend considering the different suggestions requested by the instructors from both universities.

Overall, the researcher found that focusing on reflective thinking of teachers is imperative for the improvement of their instructional methodology. Stakeholders should

consider the inclusion of reflection in higher education institutions of pre service teachers in Egypt for promising outcomes regarding teachers' professional development.

After considerable prolonged studies and researches, the significance of reflection in terms of its contribution to effective teaching and its impact on developing teacher's instructional methods is quite noticeable. By gaining a high-level self-awareness and a better comprehension of their own individual teaching styles through reflective practice, teachers can enhance their effectiveness and improve their adequacy. In addition, the reflective process empowers teachers to share their issues and experiences. This can thusly build the opportunities for cooperating among them. Subsequently, educators who do not think and reflect about their practices may be insufficient in light of the fact that they may not know why they do what they have been doing.

The findings of the research revealed that instructors at both AUC and MIU are familiar with the importance of reflective practice. Moreover, they appeared to be significantly aware of the value of student's feedback and peers. Furthermore, In order to improve their performance, instructors were self-reflecting on the methodology they utilize in their classrooms.

In conclusion, this study proposed some major valuable recommendations. Reflection should be considered in the agenda of the ministry of education in Egypt. In addition, reflection should be included in pre-services and in-services teacher education courses and programmes at all levels. This can be fulfilled through either diffusing reflection and reflective teaching applications in to the programme's courses or putting a separate course on reflection and reflective teaching in order to improve practicing teachers' and student teachers' reflective practices and skills. This is so critical for creating professional teachers as student teachers expect teacher educators to share ideas with them, to offer constructive criticism and to provide

such support and opportunities that they can examine and improve teaching strategies and procedures on their own initiative.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

The following Interview Questions are adopted from the research titled Measuring Teachers' Reflective Thinking Skills conducted by Mirzaei, Phang, & Kashefi, (Interview Questions, 2014).

Part 1: Observation Skill

1. Do you use any observation tools in your class except video and audio recording, writing and drawing? Please explain your response.
2. Please explain, how you assess your teaching to check the relevance of your teaching methods?
3. How do you use the results obtained from these assessments to improve your teaching?

Part 2: Communication Skill

4. Do you think having communication with other English teachers and students contributes to your teaching? If yes, please explain in what ways.

Part 3: Team working Skill

5. Do you think team working and peer coaching can support your teaching? What benefits do you see for both?
6. Do you have any co-teaching with other English teachers? If yes, please explain. What benefits do you see for co-teaching?

Part 4: Judgment Skill

7. Could you describe the strengths and the weaknesses of your teaching methods? What are your suggestions to improve the weakness?

8. Do you think evaluating your teaching method by your students and other teachers can help you to improve your teaching method? If yes, please explain how.

Part 5: Decision making Skill

9. In which way can the weakness and strengths of you teaching help you to make decisions for future actions?

Appendix B

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

CASE #2017-2018-109



To: Samar Wahba
Cc: Dena Riad & Salma Serry
From: Atta Gebril, Chair of the IRB
Date: March 3, 2018
Re: Approval of study

This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled "Teachers' Perceptions on Reflective Skills in the Context of Private Higher Education Institutions" and determined that it required consultation with the IRB under the "expedited" category. As you are aware, the members of the IRB suggested certain revisions to the original proposal, but your new version addresses these concerns successfully. The revised proposal used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the participants.

This approval letter was issued under the assumption that you have not started data collection for your research project. Any data collected before receiving this letter could not be used since this is a violation of the IRB policy.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counsellor, Dr. Ashraf Hatem. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Atta Gebril'.

Dr. Atta Gebril
IRB chair, The American University in Cairo
2046 HUSS Building
T: 02-26151919
Email: agebril@aucegypt.edu



Institutional Review Board
The American University in Cairo
AUC Avenue, P.O. Box 74
New Cairo 11835, Egypt.
tel 20.2.2615.1000
fax 20.2.27957565
Email: aucirb@aucegypt.edu

Appendix C

CAPMAS Approval

جمهورية مصر العربية



الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء

قرار رئيس الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء
بالتفويض
رقم (١٩٩٠) لسنة ٢٠١٨

في شأن قيام الباحثة / سمر محمد عزت عبد الغنى السعيد وهبه - المسجلة لدرجة الماجستير كلية التربية للدراسات العليا / الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة - بإجراء دراسة ميدانية بعنوان: (أراء المدرسين حول المهارات الانعكاسية في مؤسسات التعليم الخاصة).

رئيس الجهاز

- بعد الإطلاع على القرار الجمهوري رقم (٢٩١٥) لسنة ١٩٦٤ بشأن إنشاء وتنظيم الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء
- وعلى قرار رئيس الجهاز رقم (٢٣١) لسنة ١٩٦٨ في شأن إجراء الإحصاءات والتعدادات والاستفتاءات والاستقصاءات.
- وعلى قرار رئيس الجهاز رقم (١٣١٤) لسنة ٢٠٠٧ بشأن التفويض في بعض الاختصاصات.
- وعلى كتاب الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة - الوارد للجهاز في ٢٠١٨/٢/١٥.

قـرـر

مادة ١: تقوم الباحثة / سمر محمد عزت عبد الغنى السعيد وهبه - المسجلة لدرجة الماجستير كلية التربية للدراسات العليا / الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة - بإجراء الدراسة الميدانية المشار إليها عاليه.

مادة ٢: تجري الدراسة على عينة حجمها (٨٠) ثمانون مفردة من المحاضرين (أعضاء هيئة التدريس) وذلك بجامعتي (الجامعة الأمريكية - جامعة مصر الدولية).

مادة ٣: تجمع البيانات اللازمة لهذه الدراسة بموجب الأستمارة المعدة لذلك وعدد صفحاتها (صفحة واحدة) والمعتمدة بخاتم الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء.

مادة ٤: تقوم الجامعتين المستهدفين وتحت اشراف السيد / أمين عام كل منهما - بتيسير إجراء هذه الدراسة الميدانية - مع مراعاة الضوابط الخاصة بتقييم درجة سرية البيانات والمعلومات المتداولة مسبقا بمعرفة كل جهة طبقا لما جاء بخطة الأمن بها.

مادة ٥: يراعى موافقة مفردات العينة - مع مراعاة سرية البيانات الفردية طبقا لإحكام قانون الجهاز رقم (٣٥) لسنة ١٩٦٠ والمعدل بالقانون رقم (٢٨) لسنة ١٩٨٢ وعدم استخدام البيانات التي يتم جمعها لأغراض أخرى غير أغراض هذه الدراسة.

مادة ٦: يجري العمل الميداني خلال ثلاثة اشهر من تاريخ صدور هذا القرار.

مادة ٧: يوافي الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء بنسخة من النتائج النهائية لهذه الدراسة.

مادة ٨: ينفذ هذا القرار من تاريخ صدوره.

صدر في: ٢٠١٨ / ٢ / ١٨.


محمد مملوح محمد
مدير عام الإدارة العامة للأمن





الجهاز المركزي للتعينة العامة والإحصاء

الموضوع:

المرفقات:

القيود: ٨١٠

التاريخ: ٢٠١٨ / ٤ / ٢٠ م

السيد الاستاذ الدكتور / مستشار الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة

تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

بالإشارة لكتاب سيادتكم الوارد للجهاز في ٢٠١٨/٢/١٥ بشأن طلب الموافقة على قيام الباحثة / سمر محمد عزت عبد الغنى السعيد وهبه - المسجلة لدرجة الماجستير كلية التربية للدراسات العليا / الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة - بإجراء دراسة ميدانية بعنوان: (أراء المدرسين حول المهارات الانعكاسية في مؤسسات التعليم الخاصة). وذلك وفقا للإطار المعد لهذا الغرض.

يرجى التكرم بالإحاطة بأن الجهاز المركزي للتعينة العامة والإحصاء يوافق على قيام الباحثة / سمر محمد عزت عبد الغنى السعيد وهبه - بإجراء الدراسة الميدانية المشار إليها بعالية وفقا للقرار رقم (١٢٥٠) لسنة ٢٠١٨ اللزوم في هذا الشأن وعلي أن يوافي الجهاز بنسخة من النتائج النهائية كاملة فور الانتهاء من إعدادها طبقا للمادة رقم (٧) من القرار.

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام ،،،


 محمد ممدوح محمد
 مدير عام الإدارة العامة للأمن

Appendix D

Consent Form



Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: Teachers' Perceptions on Reflective Skills in the Context of Private Higher Education Institutions

Principal Investigator: Samar Wahba

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is *to investigate the views of teachers on reflective thinking abilities in teaching at private institutions. The researcher will examine the application of reflective thinking competency in teaching in the English language Program in AUC and MIU, and the findings may be published and presented.* The expected duration of your participation is *six months.*

The procedures of the research will be as follows: A sample of teachers' informants will be selected randomly (age, gender and ethnicity) to conduct this study. For utilizing the data, an approval will be given to the interviewer while a consent contract of Institutional Review Board (IRB) will be conveyed to the participants. Before the procedures take place, permission will be issued by the administrators. Each institution will contact teachers who will be filtered later after making sure that they are suitable to be part of this investigation. The researcher will narrow down the number of teachers from 10---15. In order to be furnished with in depth data in regards to the study, the participants will be reached for the first time through messages via email. Through the in-depth interview, the researcher will contact the participants individually.

The researcher will *incorporate semi-structured interviews for teachers' questions focusing on their perception on their reflective thinking skills and their impact on their teaching development which will be included in the data collection. Prior to collecting any data, administrators consent will be required. The interviewer will inform the participating teachers of their role in the research and the purpose of data collection. Individual interviews with the participants will be arranged by the researcher. Research will be taken place both in AUC and MIU by using individual interviews. Approximately one hour will be needed from each participant to complete the interview. All interviews will be audio recorded then transcribed, notes will be taken manually in a notebook in case the participant feels more comfortable talking without being recorded.*

There *will not be* certain risks or discomforts associated with this research.

There *will be* benefits to you from this research. *The researcher will benefit as a teacher from conducting this study in developing the strategies of reflecting thinking skills that will help in improving the instruction and teaching.*

The information you provide for purposes of this research *is confidential.*

Questions about the research, my rights, or research - related injuries should be directed to *Samar Wahba at 01025400505*

Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____

Appendix E

Instructor Interview Email

Dear instructors,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Samar Wahba. I was a graduate of Ain Shams University and a former English instructor. I am currently on my last semester of my Masters of Arts in International and Comparative Education with concentration in Educational Leadership in the American University in Cairo. I would like to ask you to be part of my thesis study as it will help me in analyzing the mainstream of this research.

Below is the abstract of my thesis, as I am focusing on AUC and MIU.

This study intends to examine the perceptions of teachers about their reflective thinking skills in private higher education institutions. The aim of the study is to establish how teachers' perceptions may impact their teaching. The research will be conducted in private institutions utilizing the qualitative research method. Interview guides will be used for the purpose of data collection. The research will investigate the views of teachers on their reflective thinking aptitudes and examine the teachers' approaches in applying such skills in teaching to establish whether teachers' reflective skills are important and to what extent they benefit the teacher. This paper will focus on the English departments within the context of private institutions: The American University in Cairo (AUC) and Misr International University (MIU).

Please let me know if you are interested in being part of this research. Please also provide me with a day and time that works best for you. The interview will take place at the university based on your own convenience. It will take almost 45 minutes. This is totally voluntary and there will be no consequences whether you choose to participate or not.

Appendix F: Sample Table

Coding	University	Standing	Level of Education	Major	Gender	Overall Years of Experience
I1-AUC	AUC	Instructor	MA degree in TEFL	English	Female	30 years
I2-AUC	AUC	Instructor	MA degree in Linguistics	English	Female	24 years
I3-AUC	AUC	Instructor	MA degree in Linguistics	English	Female	40 years
I4-AUC	AUC	Instructor	MA degree in TEFL	English	Female	20 years
I5-AUC	AUC	Senior Instructor	MA degree in TEFL	English	Female	10 years

Coding	University	Standing	Level of Education	Major	Gender	Overall Years of Experience
I 1-MIU	MIU	Instructor	License degree in Literature	English	Female	15 years
I 2-MIU	MIU	Senior Instructor	MA degree in Bussiness Administration	English	Female	30 years
I 3-MIU	MIU	Instructor	License degree in Literature	English	Female	25 years
I 4-MIU	MIU	Instructor	License degree in Literature	English	Female	17 years
I 5-MIU	MIU	Instructor	License degree in Literature	English	Female	15 years