Becoming a Reflective Practitioner:

A classroom-based research on mentor work with a novice teacher in Tuzla Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dijana Markovic   **August, 2007**

Abstract:

The small post-war former socialist country of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been under constant reform in each area of its existence for the last ten years now. The reforms concerning the education system have been of the greatest interest for me, an educator who truly believes the future of every country depends on tolerance, open-mindedness and the absence of prejudice. These three basic principles of a successful democratic society are best acquired through competent teaching in the classroom. Sharing my teaching experience and helping novice teachers develop their own knowledge, awareness, skills and attitudes has not only helped the growth of my new colleagues coming into the profession but has also enriched my own teaching repertoire as well as my personality. Working as a mentor and teacher educator in circumstances which, for most people, are far from satisfying made me realize how little is needed to start making a significant change in the world I live in. The research described in this paper has the purpose of showing my colleagues what we as working professionals can do to help the education reform in our country. It is research on mentor work with a novice teacher based on a reflective approach to teaching, with the goal of developing a 'reflective practitioner' with a positive attitude to learning and an awareness of the constant need for further professional improvement.

Contents:

1. Introduction

1.1. A journey of a Bosnian teacher

> 'Teaching and learning are critical to our individual and collective survival and to the quality of our lives.' (Palmer: 1998)

I have decided to start this work with the above quotation because I believe that the successful development of a country mirrors the quality of its education system. Being a teacher in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) for the last seven years and living this noble profession encourages me to speak out for all of us, the BH teachers, who are facing a great number of challenges every day. In order to help our country's democratization we are constantly asked to organize an interactive, student-centered classroom where team spirit is shared, a healthy community is formed, and where the teacher has the role of a facilitator and an advisor. But how can we accomplish that?

Coming into the profession fresh from the university with the diploma of a teacher in our hands means anything but the end of our learning. It is just the beginning of this lifelong experience. Going through pre-service teacher training gives us only the foundation of our further teacher development. Entering the institution we are going to teach in and stepping into the classroom, we hope to see a friendly face of an experienced colleague whose role of a mentor is to introduce us to the most important secrets of teaching. However, in most cases we get no support or we get one of a colleague who takes his/her role of an authority figure so seriously that we have our whole being constantly insulted during a legally required nine-month-long period of supervised teaching. In the end, the crown we earn is a teaching certificate, given after we have our teaching performance and competence assessed by the board presented by

the ministry of education. The conclusion that can be drawn from the above mentioned is that our authorities are still nurturing the former country's philosophy stating that the product is more important than the process itself. I wonder if the certificate should serve as the proof to BH teachers that they are competent professionals or that they are at the starting point of their life long learning.

Under the big umbrella of democracy that has been spread all over BH there is a number of internationally supervised reforms happening at the moment. One of the major ones is the education reform, which is concerned more with restructuring schools, rewriting curricula and renewing textbooks than with 'the human resource called the teacher on whom so much depends' (Palmer:1998). Facing this reality as a professional who believes that the process is at least as important as the product, I have tried to make a difference in novice teacher development by focusing on the way that observation influences the teachers' growth or, more exactly, the process of having them develop the skills of self-reflection under the influence of observation. My contribution to the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in the research I, as a mentor to a colleague, have performed in belief that its results are going to become a part of the professional suitcase we all as teachers take on this challenging journey. The rationale behind this work is that each individual can make a contribution to any reform if they believe in the power of what they are doing.

1.2. Educational reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been under reform for the past decade, which represents the post-war and post-socialist period in the development of this new country. The reform itself has been done under the supervision, guidance,

influence and constant advice of a wide range of different organizations coming mostly from the European Union and the United States of America. On the one hand, there are ones, such as the Open Society Institute (OSI) and the School for International Training (SIT), whose mission is to promote the principles of a democratic learning-centered classroom by supporting the teachers directly and equipping them with knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness they need for developing their own BH support network. On the other hand, there are those, such as UNICEF, the European Council or OSCE (Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe), which are using more an abstract approach towards the reform, such as the improvement on the level of legislation.

In their wish to encourage the growth of this country, they have been trying their best to help us understand the importance and usefulness of their own ideas about a healthy education system, no matter how applicable it is to our Bosnian culture. Numerous seminars and workshops have been organized, ranging from those showing what a democratic classroom should look like, to the ones presenting teaching methods with no clear objectives and with ambiguously stated principles or beliefs which, if misunderstood, could lead to the loss of a teacher's authority or even to ridicule of the approach presented. I wonder if Silent Way or Community Language Learning principles of relying on the students' background knowledge and their belief that students are not empty vessels would be seen as absurd, since the curriculum that is to be presented already exists. However, it is important to emphasize that all of these advisory organizations, regardless of their size or origin, have focused their attention on showing us, the BH educators, the essence of each educational system – that everything that happens in the classroom is to serve the student itself or, more exactly, should contribute to a successful learning process.

Furthermore, the BH government and the official educational structures have been too busy defending the positions and beliefs of their political parties. While the experienced educators from developed western countries have been engaging themselves in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to share their knowledge and show us the norms and characteristics of an efficient and democratic educational system, the politics of segregation based on ethnicity have become deeply entrenched in our classrooms. The organization of the country has not been helpful either, since there are ten cantons and two entities with their own governments and ministries of education. Because politics have dominated the education scene in BH, the quality and standards of education have suffered. Curricula and textbooks differ from region to region, depending primarily on ethnicity. Teachers have not been trained in up-to-date pedagogical methods. Fresh graduates are not equipped with the necessary skills to tackle real-world challenges.

In November 2002, BH authorities presented the Education Reform Strategy to Peace Implementation Council in Brussels. It is a document developed by local education experts, authorities, parents, teachers, students and international organizations, listing goals for the reform and the actions needed to achieve them. Its overriding objective is to develop a modern, de-politicized education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of the Strategy's major goals, or pledges, as the document says, is to ensure high quality teacher training in leading methodologies for all subjects, focusing on both experienced and novice in-service teachers.

> 'Pledge 2: Ensuring that the quality of teaching reaches, and remains at, acceptable standards throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.
> Ensure all teachers receive training in modern teaching methodologies within four years (2003-2006).
>
> Develop standards and procedures for licensing and certifying pre-school and primary school teachers (2004) and secondary schoolteachers (2007)…'
> (http://www.oscebih.org/documents/26-eng.pdf;p.9)

Bearing in mind there are five of these pledges, delivering all of them has not been easy, due to both the short period of time and the government's decision on prioritizing. Though the first three are focused on the student and the teacher, and the forth and fifth are about developing both legal and financial frameworks supporting the system acceptable in the European Union, once again the two most important components of the successful education system, the actors of the teaching process itself, have been relegated to the position of secondary importance. Furthermore, the work on the legal framework which has lasted for the last three years has not shown any effort in developing standards and procedures for getting a teaching certificate or license. The results, seen through the eyes of a teacher, are not very encouraging, but they should alarm and awaken us to start taking responsibility for the reform happening in our classrooms as well as for sharing the experience we all possess. The strength lies in a bottom-up approach, where teachers are the instigators of change, seen through a constant process of reflection.

1.3. The education law in Tuzla Canton and its effectiveness

As has already been mentioned while describing the current organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are ten cantons and two entities, which have their own governments and ministries of education. I live and work in Tuzla, the city in Tuzla Canton, so the school I work in is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Tuzla Canton and its laws. Thus, my research is based on both pre-service and in-service teacher training as well as on the education law existing there.

Graduates start working in schools equipped with the knowledge they bring from their methodology classes at university. In certain cases, those classes do not even

have a practical component, or the practice was organized through observing, with no clear guidance from a mentor teacher.

According to the cantonal law these novice teachers have to go through a nine-month period of training with their mentors. Teachers who can perform the role of the mentor are those who either have the official title of mentor due to their long teaching experience or those who have no such title but have been known to the ministry through their exceptional work in the classroom. The mentor is assigned by the school a novice starts working in or, if there is no one in that school who could do that work, the mentor comes from another school. The law on education says that during those nine months the mentee is to observe 10 of the mentor's classes and s/he is to be observed for 10 classes by the mentor. In addition to doing the observations they need to organize the work on up-to-date methodology, school administration and the legal regulations as well. The mentor is obliged to write the plan and the assessment of the mentee's work. In the end, after the mentor/mentee work, the mentee has to pass an exam in order to get their certificate. The exam itself consists of three parts:

1. conducting the class based on a lesson plan written by a mentee who teaches it,
2. an oral exam on methodology, pedagogy and psychology, and
3. an exam on knowledge of legal regulations

The decision whether or not a teacher passes the exam and gets the certificate is made by the committee assigned by the cantonal ministry.

The law regulations described above are so general that the effectiveness of the law itself is brought in question. First of all, neither the mentor nor the mentee get any guidelines for planning and performing such a work so that they both can be as successful as possible. Observation itself is an area of teacher training with clearly formulated roles and objectives. A person who has no previous experience or training in observation needs assistance in order to become a successful observer, and be able to

help a novice teacher develop his/her own teaching principles and beliefs. Moreover, the criteria for the mentor's assessment of the mentee's work are not stated at all. Thus, we have a situation where two people who are supposed to develop a fruitful relationship have no stepping stone to start from.

The result of this confusion and lack of clarity is either the absence of any mentor/mentee work or work whose leitmotif is judgment, making the relationship one of superior to inferior.

The research that I did with my colleagues, who are teaching in four different high schools here in Tuzla, has been based on the questions I asked about their work with the mentor. The questions were formulated around the way observation and feedback sessions following it were done, its strengths and its weaknesses, if any, and what can be done to improve the mentor work (Appendix A).The rough results of investigation are: there are 10% of teachers who were satisfied with the mentor's work, 15% of those who would have liked it to have been done differently, and 75% of those who did not have any cooperation with their mentors whatsoever. For me personally, these figures, although discouraging, are actually to be expected, considering everything I have already talked about.

Thus, it really is high time for all of us to understand that the first step needs to be made so that the huge work on developing the knowledge, awareness, skills and attitudes of all teachers, novice or experienced, could start. If the government does not see the importance of giving the priority to the already cited Pledge 2 of the Education Reform Strategy, the teachers of Tuzla Canton should think of the way to help improve the teaching process. I, as one of them who has been working both as a teacher and a teacher trainer, am starting with this work through improving my own mentorship, reflecting on the observations and feedback sessions my mentee and I perform and,

hopefully, sharing this experience with everyone who gets interested in it. I believe my reflection will teach me a lot in my intention to put a different perspective on the way mentorship has been done so far. The following paper covers two segments of teacher observation. The first one aims at presenting the wisdom of the great masters in teacher education or more precisely in the reflective approach. The second is the description and interpretation of the research itself with reference to David Hawkins's 'I, thou, it' triangle under the influence of the context of the education reform strategy and the current education law in Tuzla Canton and in Bosnia and Herzegovina

2. Models of teacher education

2.1. Overview

In a world turning into a 'global village' founded on democratic principles, where fruitful communication is essential for our wellbeing, teaching in general and language teaching in particular is becoming increasingly important. There is a belief that knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness needed for successful cooperation of the world communities are mostly developed in the classroom, since that is the place that should represent a replica of our everyday life. It is our responsibility as teachers to create such an effective teaching environment.

In order to come to the point where we can say that we are successful professionals, it is necessary for us to understand that our education does not stop with any kind of pre-service or in-service training we go through. It is the departure place of our lifelong journey through the areas of our professional growth. In other words, the balance between theory and practice needs to be present. It is necessary for all teachers and teacher trainers to be pre-equipped with the theoretical knowledge we can rely on when developing our skills through practical teaching.

In my desire to become a successful teacher trainer and mentor I have based my work on the wisdom of the great minds in the domain of teacher education and development with a special emphasis on teacher observation and reflection. The following chapter covers some of the many existing theories about this very topic.

2.2. Three models of teacher education

There are three models of teacher education appearing chronologically through history:

1.   the craft model

2.   the applied science model

3.   the reflective model

The craft model is the one where all the expertise resides in a professional practitioner. Thus, the experienced teacher is the expert in the 'craft' of teaching. Observing the expert's class leads to imitating it. What happens during the training period depends entirely on the trainer who instructs and advises the trainee to imitate the techniques of an expert in order to develop teaching routine. This model resembles the principles of behaviorism and it is highly static. The trainee is completely disregarded as a person with background knowledge acquired during the period of the pre-service university teacher education program, in-service teacher training program or mere experience of being a learner and participant in any type of a learning experience.

Furthermore, this model is difficult to sustain in an educational context of new methodologies where a novice teacher may be better informed than the experienced teacher. Let us take the context of my country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as an example. The most usual case of a professional with the mentor role is a teacher of more than 20 years of teaching experienced either in our ex-communist country where the grammar translation approach was highly appreciated or during the civil war when all of us were only concerned about mere survival. On the other hand, there is a novice teacher with a recently received university diploma in teaching after participating in a two-semester-long pre-service teacher training program where s/he was exposed to many different up-

to-date methodologies. I believe in this situation the mentor's authority fades away and the training itself is performed only for the purpose of getting the final product – the teaching certificate. So this leads me to wonder what the true goal of the mentor program is.

The applied science model is the traditional and probably the most present model underlying most teacher education and training programs. It is based on the achievements of empirical science in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The followers of this model, such as Stones and Morris (Stones, E. & Morris, S., 1972), believe that all teaching problems can be solved by applying empirical science to the desired objectives. In other words, the changes that can happen in practice are those brought by the experts in the knowledge and not by the 'practitioners' themselves. The question that arises is how a person who is, in most cases, removed from the day-to-day working scene knows what the best solution for the classroom problem is. I agree that theory is extremely important but its value is overestimated if the practical component of teaching is absent. At the same time, this model completely ignores the roles students and teachers have in the teaching process and their learning styles. As a trainer I wonder what the role of observation in this case is. I am aware it is not imitation, but it also should not be to supply the trainee with readymade theory-based solutions which, according to applied science, always work although overlooking the peculiarities each class brings.

Whereas both the craft model and the applied science model create a huge gap between the importance of theory and practice in teacher education, **the reflective model** establishes a qualitative balance between the two. Schön (Schön, D.A., 1983) points out that there are two different types of 'professional knowledge'- *'received knowledge'* and *'experiential knowledge'*. If we look at this model through the

metaphor of a mobile, on one side there is *'received knowledge'*. It echoes the phrase 'received wisdom' meaning that it is accepted without proof of questions. (Wallace, M.J., 1991) In other words 'received knowledge' lays its foundations on facts, theories and data often connected to certain research which is often 'received' but not 'experienced' by a trainee. On the other side of the same mobile there is *'experiential knowledge'* creating a perfect harmony with the 'received' one. It consists of two other components of equal importance which Schön describes as **'knowing-in-action'** and **'reflection'**. Schön describes 'knowing-in-action' as

> …the workaday life of a professional depends upon tacit knowing-in-action… In his day-to-day practice he makes innumerable judgments of quality for which he cannot state adequate criteria, and he displays skills for which he cannot state the rules and procedures. Even when he makes conscious use of the research-based theories and techniques, he is dependent on tacit recognitions. Judgments are skilful performances (Schön, 1983: 49-50).

This clearly refers to practicing teachers and it implies that the decisions they make are not based on a direct application of 'received knowledge' but rather on feelings. These decisions, however, may be left unexplored or they may be explained through further reflection. The role of reflection is to shed light upon our unconsciously made classroom decisions, thus leading us to conscious development of insights into 'knowing-in-action'.

This third model, which is also the leading one in today's teacher education and development, emphasizes that observation needs to be organized around that structured reflection which the trainee best benefits from. As a matter of fact, the trainee learns about theories, research findings and skills which are a necessary part of the profession and develops knowing-in-action through practice that is reflected upon. The final outcome of the training period is that s/he becomes an autonomous reflective

practitioner capable of constant self-reflection leading to a constant process of professional self-development.

2.3. The establishment of theory – practice equilibrium

Wallace (Wallace, M.J., 1991) divides the process of professional development into two stages:

Stage 1 – the pre-training stage, i.e. the trainee is at the very beginning of the professional development process.
Stage 2 - the stage of professional education and development

The goal of both stages – increased professional competence

Stage 1, as the pre-training stage, highlights what the trainees bring into the training process. It is important to remember that trainees who start the training process possess their own 'conceptual schemata' (Wallace, M.J., 1991) which is created either through professional reading materials and university teaching programs or previous teaching experience. This schema is actually a cluster of ideas, beliefs, attitudes and the like which shape the trainees' work in various typical or consistent ways. Furthermore, at this stage every trainer ought to be aware of not only the place the trainees are coming from professionally but what place they are at when the process itself starts. No training or supervisory procedures can function effectively without all this information.

Stage 2, the stage of professional education and development, is based on two key elements of the reflective model: received knowledge and experiential knowledge. (Wallace, M.J., 1991)

Received knowledge consists of facts, data and theories about the profession that should directly inform experiential knowledge and also be directly informed by it. In fact, the relationship between received and experiential knowledge needs to be

reciprocal, not one way; trainee teachers should learn how to apply received knowledge to practice as well as have practice guide their further theory research.

According to Wallace (*ibid*), experiential knowledge is the core of the reflective model. It is basically the practical experience each teacher, whether a trainee or not, has in her/his classroom. However, that experience has no value for the teacher's professional competence development if it is not reflected upon and evaluated so that s/he is able to decide whether or not changing their teaching is necessary. Development implies change, and fruitful change is extremely difficult without reflection. A teacher needs to think through and understand the rationale of the method or technique before applying it in a particular context. Improving the quality of reflection needs to be the major aim of the reflective model training program.

The most common way of applying received knowledge to the experiential one and vice versa, with the aim of helping a trainee become a successful reflective practitioner, is the use of the reflective cycle model or Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (see Figure 1). This is a model used for supporting the continuing process of reflection which can take place before, after or during the event (reflection-in-action) in the context of professional action. It consists of four stages:

1. *concrete experience*, i.e. teaching a class,
2. *reflective observation*, i.e. reflecting on and describing what happened in the classroom,
3. *abstract conceptualization*, i.e. going back to 'received knowledge' to look for the explanation of the experience and possible solutions to it, and
4. *active experimentation*, i.e. teaching the class with the changes based on 'received knowledge' theories
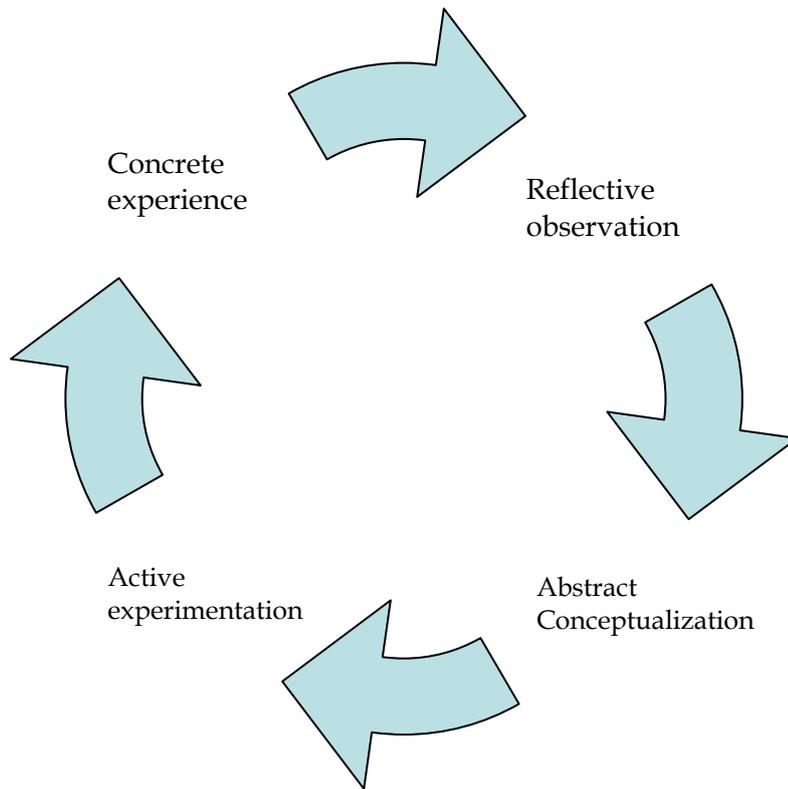
Figure 1(after Wallace:1991)

Nevertheless, any experience we all have, either professional or personal, is private and we cherish it as the item of the highest value to us. So the question that arises is whether it is possible to have an objective reflection. The teacher training based on developing and strengthening the skills of reflection through observation of teaching practice and the discussion following it is perceived as an attack on the teacher's authority if the potential focus in discussion is absent or if there is a lack of structure in the mode of articulating reflection. A reflective dialogue between a mentor and a trainee is the most effective if it is supported by active listening. A successful trainer with the ability to listen actively to her/his trainee by not just asking questions which might be misunderstood and perceived as offensive, but with the skill to recast, objectively reformulate and clarify what a trainee is saying is the trainer who assists the sound growth of the reflective practitioner capable of self-reflection and further self-development.

The goal of each training period is increased professional competence of a trainee. There are two senses of professional competence:

1)   initial competence – a certificate gained at the end of a teacher education course, and
2)   competence as 'a moving target or a horizon towards which professionals travel all their professional life but which is never finally attained' (Wallace, M.J., 1991).

Thus, it is essential for teachers to understand that professional certification is not a final point in teacher education. Any teacher training program should equip the trainees with the techniques that are going to sustain their further professional competence development, bearing in mind the constant research done in the area of teaching. Teacher training or education is mostly presented and managed by more experienced teachers or qualified teacher trainers who unselfishly share their knowledge of both theory and practice with their colleagues. Teacher development, on the other hand, is something that is done only by and for oneself.

2.4. Classroom observation and its key parameters

There are many different ways of providing the shared experience with data that can be used for reflective dialogue such as microteaching, transcripts of lessons, videotaping the lesson, reflective journals, observed teaching practice and so forth. All of them are procedures helping both trainees and trainers develop deeper understanding of teaching. Classroom observation is the subject that I find the most fascinating and it can be done in three different ways - by a student teacher observing an experienced colleague, a teacher trainer observing a trainee or a colleague observing another colleague, i.e. peer observation. The goal of any of these types of observation is advancing professional competence. Collecting data through the observation of teaching practice and conducting the reflective dialogue in the appropriate way for me presents a

process of creating a special bond between two professionals regardless of the fact that one could have an authority role in their relationship originating from a mentor/mentee or superior/inferior training context.

There are four key parameters insuring successful observation (*Figure 2*):

1. primary data
2. the medium
3. the interpreter
4. interpretation
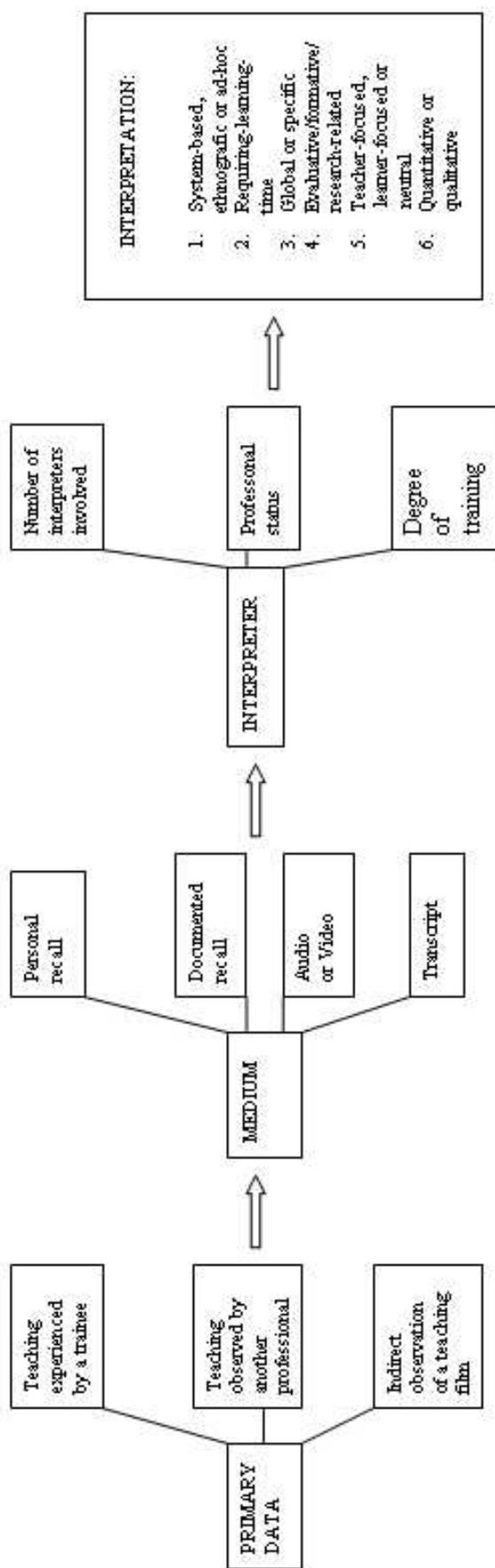
Figure 2: The four parameters (after Wallace, M.J. 1991)

PRIMARY DATA

- Teaching experienced by a trainee
- Teaching observed by another professional
- Indirect observation of a teaching film

MEDIUM

- Personal recall
- Documented recall
- Audio or Video
- Transcript

INTERPRETER

- Number of interpreters involved
- Professional status
- Degree of training

INTERPRETATION:

1. System-based, ethnografic or ad-hoc
2. Requiring-learning time
3. Global or specific
4. Evaluative/formative/research-related
5. Teacher-focused, learner-focused or neutral
6. Quantitative or qualitative

Primary data. Deciding on what really happened during a professional action is a challenge on its own. Primary data consists of actual events that happen during a lesson. In order to have a fruitful reflective dialogue between a supervisor and a trainee both parties need to agree on what happened.

According to Wallace, there are three sources of primary data:

a) Teaching to be analyzed has been done by a trainee – a novice teacher or an in-service teacher.

b) Teaching is observed by someone who was present in the classroom. This source is extremely valuable because certain aspects of the lesson can be clear only to the observer if s/he approaches it objectively.

c) Indirect observation is done by watching a teaching film. However, in this case there is no communication with the teacher or the students on the video, so certain questions can stay unanswered. (ibid)

However, a fourth possibility may be added to this list. It is the "unobserved observation" in which there is no observer, but the teacher knows exactly which lesson will be the focus of a follow up discussion with a supervisor. It is low-anxiety because there is no actual observer, and the teacher remains the expert on what happened. It is the supervisor's job to get the teacher to reflect carefully.

The Medium. A lesson can be observed through more than one medium:

a) personal recall – teacher and/or observers try to recall what happened during the class, which can be highly efficient if they are able to describe the classroom situation before initiating its interpretation,

b) documented recall – there is a certain documented trace of the observation, which can be in the form of field notes, an audio or video recording, or a transcript of an audio or video recorded lesson.

The Interpreter. Once the lesson is observed and the data collected the question that arises is that of who has the responsibility to interpret those data:

a) Number of interpreters. An interpretation of the lesson is often done by the teacher him/herself. However, there is a possibility of having a reflective dialogue with someone else, i.e. a colleague or even with a number of observers, i.e. a supervisor and peers from a team teaching group.

b) Professional status. A reflective dialogue may be performed with a fellow trainee who observed the lesson or with a supervisor or a student in the class. These reflections can be very different, depending on the observer.

c) Degree of training. This could be related to professional status in the sense that reflection done with a highly skilled observer who has observed hundreds of classes differs from one done with a student visiting the class.

Interpretation. The interpretation of the professional action may vary in structure depending on who has done the observation. Thus, it can completely lack structure or, on the other hand, be extremely well organized.

Wallace (Wallace, M.J., 1991) emphasizes six different approaches to interpretation:

1) System-based, ethnographic or ad hoc.

System-based observation is based on the system of fixed observation categories i.e. Bellack, et al (1966) – audio recording, transcripts, or Flanders (1970): FIAC – a pencil and paper technique for recording the interaction.

The ethnographic approach is based on the participation in people's everyday lives for an extended period of time. In this case, the observer first identifies the areas of concern and then decides what kind of data collection is appropriate.

The ad hoc approach is devised for a specific purpose. It is a guided 'discovery' approach in which the trainers devise their own system of observation.

2) Requiring-learning-time.

There is a question how much learning time is required for mastering the system of observation that is picked up or for designing and mastering a trainer's own system. We must have in mind that this process may be extremely time consuming, and therefore unlikely to be used by practicing teachers.

3) Global or specific.

The trainer may be interested in looking at the teaching *globally* (all aspects of teaching or a wide range of aspects), or in *specific* areas of the teacher development.

4) Evaluative, formative or research-related.

The observer's goal is assessing the classroom events (*the evaluative approach*), or the training aspects of the process itself (*the formative approach*), or gathering the classroom data for research purposes (*the research-related approach*).

5) Teacher-focused, learner-focused or neutral in focus.

The focus of a training process can be on *the teacher*, or *the learner*, or it can be on some balance found between the two thus making it *focus-neutral*.

6) Quantitative or qualitative.

Quantitative. The observer is interested in the amount of data acquired during the process of observation (e.g. through already mentioned audio recording technique, transcripts, or FIAC – a pencil and paper technique for recording the interaction).

Qualitative. The observer is interested in the data that is appropriate for the identified areas of concern (e.g. ethnographic approach).

C. Rodgers (Rodgers, C., 2002) says that teachers need to see in more than one color. What she actually means is that teachers need to be capable of discerning, differentiating, describing and analyzing the elements of students learning with the goal of responding intelligently to it.

It is through reflection on a professional action that professional expertise is developed. The trainer can encourage the trainees to identify their own problem areas and create their own observation plan so they can focus on their own reflection.

2.5. Supervision: Types and approaches

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2005) defines 'to supervise' as '*to be in charge of an activity or a person, and make sure that things are done in the correct way (*p.1667)'. According to Wallace, a supervisor, in a very broad sense, is anyone who has the duty of monitoring and improving the quality of teaching done by other colleagues in a given educational situation. (Wallace, M.J.,1991)

Looking at the pure denotation of the words used for the description of *'a supervisor'* and *'to supervise',* the participants in the supervision might misconceive the purpose of the process itself. If a trainee and especially a trainer do not possess enough knowledge of teacher education theories, and their skills, attitudes and awareness are not developed, the outcomes of the supervision are usually defeating and the relationship barely functions. In order to have both parties participating in the training process understand the basic principles of effective supervision, they need to become informed about its different types and approaches to it.

Sergiovanni and Starratt (Sergiovanni, T.J. & Starratt, R.J., 1983) make a distinction between *general* and *clinical* supervision. General supervision refers to what can be called the 'administrative' aspects of supervision or 'out of class' supervision – issues of curriculum, syllabus and the management structure of education.

Clinical supervision is concerned with what goes on inside the classroom or 'refers to contact with teachers with the intent of improving instruction and increasing growth' (*ibid*, 1983).

Wallace emphasizes that the term '*clinical*' can be misleading in the sense that it might be closely connected to the 'applied science' model where the expert is the owner of the ultimate truth that could offer the solution for a possibly challenging classroom situation. However, clinical supervision accepts the 'reflective' model rather than the 'applied science' one. It should be seen as a mode of training which promotes face to face interaction between a supervisor and a supervisee or a group of teachers analyzing a previously observed classroom teaching in order to professionally develop the teacher or teachers in question.

Clinical supervision can be applied in various ways. Freeman (Freeman, D., 1982) differentiates between the supervisory approach, the alternative approach and the non-directive approach. The supervisory approach is an approach which gives an observer the role of authority and arbitrator who is to direct good model teaching and finally evaluate. In the case of the alternative approach, an observer is there to offer alternative perspectives and in the non-directive approach an observer has the role of a non-judgmental understander. Gebhard (Gebhard, J.C., 1984), on the other hand, adds up two more approaches, collaborative supervision and creative supervision. Collaborative supervision is the type of supervision where a supervisor and a teacher make any decisions together, thus establishing a sharing relationship. Finally, creative supervision is actually the combination of all those four approaches mentioned.

Furthermore, all these approaches to supervision are actually a series of possible supervisory behaviors which can be gathered into two basic ones (*see Figure 3*):

Classic prescriptive approach	Classic collaborative approach
• Supervisor as authority figure • Supervisor as only source of expertise • Supervisor judges • Supervisor applies a 'blueprint' of how lesson ought to be taught • Supervisor talks; trainee listens • Supervisor attempts to preserve authority and mystique	• Supervisor as a colleague • Supervisor and trainee or teacher co-sharers of expertise • Supervisor understands • Supervisor has no blueprint: accepts lesson in terms of what trainee or teacher is attempting to do • Supervisor considers listening as important as talking • Supervisor attempts to help trainee or teacher develop autonomy, through practice in reflection and self-evaluation

Figure 3 (Wallace, M.J., 1991: 110)
(after Sergiovanni, 1977)

The goal of supervision should be increased collaboration. A more collaborative approach in most cases improves the relationship between a supervisor and a trainee and it also promotes the conditions for reflective practice and longer-term professional development of the trainee.

However, this approach to supervision is a demanding and time-consuming process. Cogan (Cogan, M.L., 1973) offers the eight-phase cycle of collaboration implementation:

1. teacher and supervisor establish a relationship of mutual trust and support,

2. teacher and supervisor plan the lesson, or the series of lessons together,

3. teacher and supervisor agree on what and how much will be observed,

4. the observation,

5. teacher and supervisor analyze the events of the lesson, either together or separately first and then together,

6. teacher and supervisor plan how, when and where the supervisory conference will be conducted,

7. the supervisory conference, and

8. resumption of planning (cycle begins again).

Point eight mainly refers to a context where the existence of a really close trainer/trainee relationship is possible. In other, more usual contexts, a two-phase cycle is more appropriate:

1. the observation, and

2. the supervision conference.

In order to have a successful supervision conference or, more exactly, the reflective dialogue following the observation, Schön (Schön, D.A., 1983) emphasizes that a trainer and a trainee should share the understandings of first what teaching in general, and language teaching in particular, is all about and then what is important and

what is not, what is successful and what is not. However, bearing in mind the possible existence of age difference, experience, background knowledge and education, these issues evidently need to be explored between the two. Finally, the rules of the game should be made clear and explicit. To these constants Wallace (Wallace, M.J., 1991) adds one more, the need for focus, considering how complex teaching really is. The data collected during supervision have to be focused and limited so that they are effectively handled.

To sum up, supervision in general and clinical supervision in particular is a demanding and time consuming process which should be informative for both a trainee and a trainer. It is a set of principles and beliefs creating a path towards a successful professional development. The relationship, either prescriptive or collaborative, that a supervisor and a teacher develop and the cooperation they create influences the choice of the decisions they both make in this process.

3. Reflective teaching in Tuzla's classrooms – the research

3.1. Overview

According to the Education Reform Strategy that BH authorities presented in November 2002 or, more exactly, according to its Pledge 2 *(described in the introduction of this work)* the quality of teaching needs to be improved. In other words, it is necessary for the education system to reach and remain at acceptable standards throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to become efficient and up-to-date, as the country's citizens deserve it. Improvement can only be achieved by training teachers in modern teaching methodologies as well as developing standards for their licensing and certification. However, in the last three years little has been done on this field. The teachers are still receiving most of their training through their university methodology courses in the pre-service stage of their professional development. At the beginning of their careers in schools they get a mentor to work with. Mentors mostly do not do any work with the novice teacher, or they do the mentor work poorly because the standards that would describe and explain it do not exist. The explanation for the existing situation that we, the teachers, have been given is the lack of money. Thus, instead of sitting and waiting for the Ministry of Education to find the resources and start doing what they have pledged to, I have decided to do the research whose results are hopefully going to serve as a kind of help for all of my colleagues entangled in the mentorship web. The objective of the research is to examine the way classroom observation influences the development of a trainee teacher and their understanding what the notions of the reflection and the reflective practitioner mean. The mentoring and the research itself were performed with Alisa Joguncic, an English teacher at the Vocational High School in Tuzla. Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training period started in September 2005 and it lasted till May 2006. The first portion of 10 classroom observations was conducted

during the winter semester (September-December 2005) in the premises of Catholic School Center High School, the school I, as Alisa's mentor, teach in, and the second half was held during the spring (February-May 2006) at the premises of Alisa's school.

3.2. The Educational System of Bosnia-Herzegovina:

David Hawkins's 'I, Thou, It' Triangle

> 'The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require.'(Palmer, P:1998)

Applying the knowledge received as the part of a teacher training program depends on the context a trainee teaches in. It is of crucial importance. The teaching and learning experience should reflect, in an appropriate way, the teaching and learning experience of the schools that the trainees are going to teach in or, in the case I am going to describe, the school the trainee (Alisa) has already been teaching in. Then, the approach to teaching demanded by the institution ought to be somehow experienced as a reality by the trainees. If the trainees are going to be encouraged to teach in an autonomous and self-directed way, then autonomy and self-direction should be a part of their training. The trainers themselves need to have this experience as well. Finally, there are legal and administrative issues posed by the Ministry of Education that need to be abided by so that the certification of the trainee can take place. Thus, the in-service training process organized for the professional development of Alisa, her transformation into a reflective practitioner and her final certification seen through Hawkins's triangle can be presented as the following diagram (*Figure 3*):
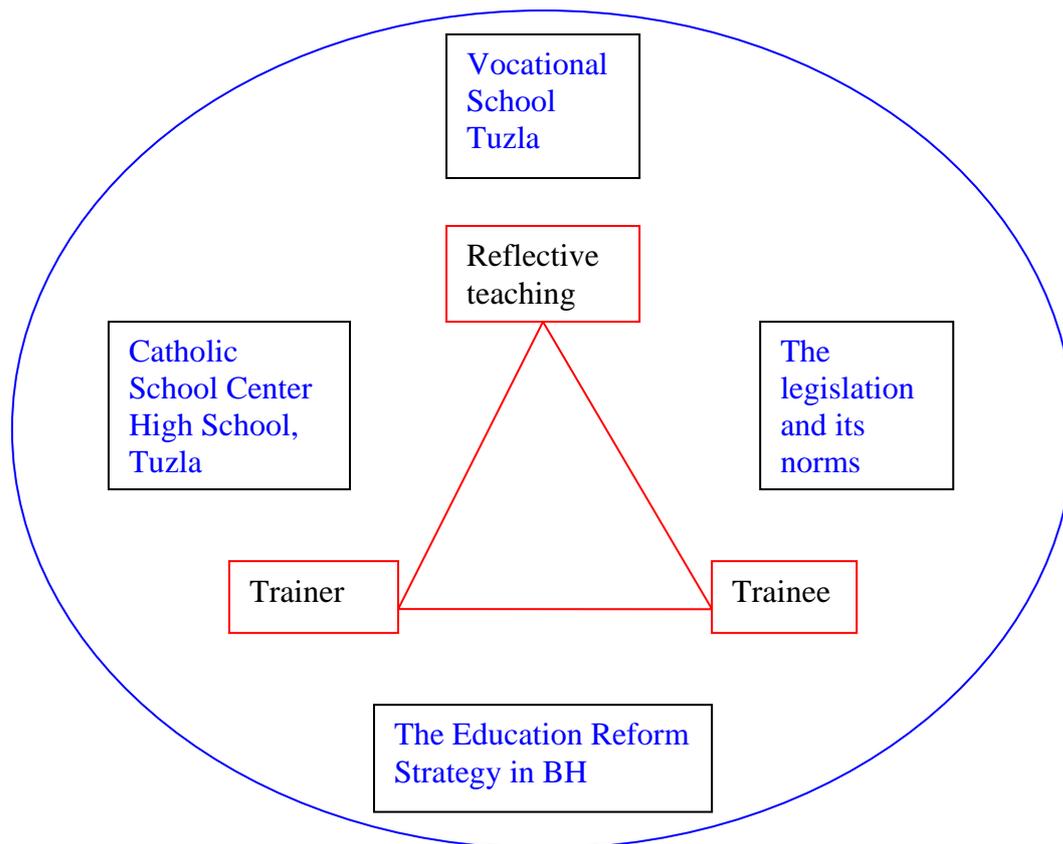
Figure 3: David Hawkins's Triangle within the educational context in BH

The illustration shows that the relationship between the trainee (Alisa), the trainer (me) and the subject matter (reflective teaching) should be harmonized within the context of the educational system in BH undergoing the education reform, the institution she teaches in and the trainer's institution. To be more precise, the context of Alisa's professional development consists of Vocational School Tuzla, where one portion of her training is taking place, and Catholic School Centre High School, where another portion is being done. Both schools are under the jurisdiction of Tuzla Canton Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport whose main concern is the establishment of the successful education system as described in the Education Reform Strategy.

3.3. Context description

The Education System in Tuzla Canton: the legislation and its norms. The cantonal education law, more precisely the law of the secondary school organization, describes the procedure of novice teacher nine-month-long training leading to the teacher certificate. Article no. 127 says each novice teacher at the start of his/her career needs to work under the supervision of the mentor assigned by the school for nine months. This work is teacher training covering two different yet connected training aspects:

1. the classroom observation period (developing teacher's knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness) – firstly a mentee observes 10 of the mentor's classes, then a mentor observes 10 of the mentee's classes;

2. learning about school administration and school legislation and norms.

Furthermore, the crown of this process is the teaching certificate given by the Cantonal Ministry after being assessed by the official body of the ministry's professionals. The exam has two components:

1. the practical component – teaching a class in one of the schools in Tuzla, and

2. the theoretical component – an oral exam organized to check the trainee's understanding of school legislation and norms.

The assessment is done according to the trainee's performance shown in both of these fields and mostly by the people who enter the classroom only on these occasions. Thus, the emphasis is given to the final product rather than to the training process itself.

However, the law does not say anything about the way the work is to be conducted and it does not offer any ground rules for the observation activity period either. As a result, there are mentors who usually have to improvise and there are mentees who are waiting for the nine-month training period to expire so that they could get the teaching certificate. Thus, the product is more important than the process.

The Education Reform Strategy. The Education Reform Strategy presented to the Peace Implementation Council in Brussels by BH authorities in November 2002 is a document developed by local education experts, authorities, parents, teachers, students and the international organizations. It lists the reform goals or pledges, as the document labels them, as well as the actions needed to achieve them in order to develop a modern, de-politicized education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The one I as a mentor and a teacher trainer am interested in the most is the so called Pledge 2, which is to ensure high quality teacher training in contemporary methodologies for all subjects focusing on both experienced and novice in-service teachers. Furthermore, according to this pledge, reaching the quality of teaching through the organization of suitable trainings will serve its purpose only if it remains at acceptable standards throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another important aspect of this goal is developing standards and procedures for licensing and certifying pre-school, primary school teachers and secondary school teachers, which we who are in the teaching and teacher training profession so greatly need.

The Vocational School Tuzla. All the students possess the whole range of their individual differences (e.g. previous knowledge, intellectual skills, learning styles, types and levels of motivation, interests, level of anxiety, and expectation about what is going to be learned) which influences the classroom and the learning process taking place in it. The teacher needs to be aware of all those context aspects in order to organize a successful learning environment.

Alisa Joguncic is a novice teacher in Vocational School Tuzla. She teaches English twice a week according to the curriculum. Each class lasts 45 minutes and the syllabus as well as the text book she uses is the one prescribed by the Ministry of Education. The number of students in the class is between 25 and 30.

The school population is mainly male-dominated. Their goal is mostly getting the training necessary for different types of handy work and developing the skills of future mechanics, electricians and the like. The motivation for studying subjects which have no clear-cut connection to the practical training is extremely low and the students perceive them as low stakes ones. English is one of those school programs. The students are aware of the fact that it is the official language of the European Union and that our country eagerly wants to become the part of it, yet they show lack of interest in learning it.

The classes Alisa teaches are highly multi-leveled. The students come from different elementary schools from all around Tuzla Canton and they are mostly students whose elementary school results are not so satisfying. More precisely, the excellent students (equal to A students in the American school system) mainly go to general high schools where they prepare for university, while the rest go to vocational schools in order to be trained for specific jobs. Furthermore, the situation with having qualified English teachers in elementary schools is alarming because the number of qualified professionals in the Canton is extremely low. As a result, English is taught by anyone who says s/he speaks the language or has any sort of a certificate issued by any language school showing the level of their English knowledge. In most cases, these teachers have no teacher training of any kind and their language performance is extremely low. As a consequence students coming from these different settings acquire varying amounts of English.

Finally, even though the reform specific for the vocational schools emphasizes the practical training process for specific job types, the school administration recognizes the importance of English in today's world and gives enormous support to English teachers and the language learning process.

Alisa has her own classroom with a traditional sitting arrangement with the desks and chairs in three rows and two students at each desk *(see Figure 4).*
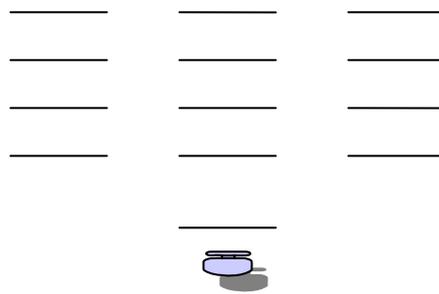
Figure 4: Vocational School Tuzla:
Classroom arrangement

Almost all the resources she needs for successful teaching such as dictionaries, additional resource books, the tape recorder, CD player, photocopier and the like are at her disposal.

Catholic School Center High School, Tuzla. According to the Law and regulations previously mentioned, a part of classroom observation is done in the school and/or the classroom the mentor teaches in. In this project that classroom is a part of the Catholic School Center High School in Tuzla where I, as Alisa's mentor, teach. The context of my school is completely different from Vocational School Tuzla, which actually makes sense if we bear in mind the individuality of the students in general we have already talked about: the number of students is smaller, the motivation is high since high school is perceived as the stepping stone for further university education, and the students' English background knowledge is rather rich.

I teach English three times a week according to the curriculum. Each class lasts 45 minutes and the syllabus as well as the textbook I use is the one prescribed by the Ministry of Education as well. The average number of students in one class is 30.

The school is smaller with around 350 students and there are more female than male students, as opposed to the 'male dominated' situation described above. The classes are not that multi-level since the students who start high school are mostly excellent (A students), wishing to gain more general knowledge which is going to be more helpful when entering the university. Moreover, the motivation for studying all the subjects is much stronger because their formal education does not stop with finishing high school, but is continued in different types of undergraduate studies.

There is no subject that is considered a low stakes one either, especially not English, which is even seen as essential for their future careers. Even though these students come from the same elementary schools where having a good English teacher is almost impossible, as previously described, their background knowledge of the language is quite good due to private tutoring, attending private language schools, or just talent.

Finally, the classroom where I teach is equipped with modern stereo, TV set, DVD player, books for students' further readings, teacher resource books, dictionaries and a horseshoe-like sitting arrangement and six desks in the middle with two students at each desk (*see figure 5*).
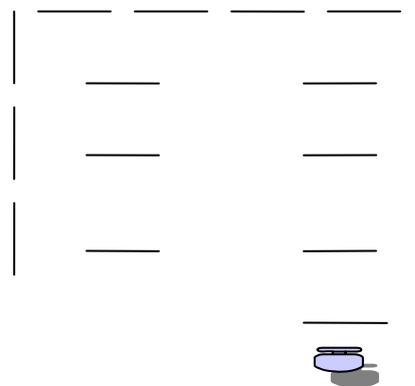
Figure 5: Catholic School Center High School, Tuzla:
classroom Sitting arrangement

3.4. Collaborative approach to supervision: 'I, Thou, It' triangle

Any supervision and particularly a clinical one (Sergiovani, T.J.& Starratt, R.J., 1983) is a process demanding time but also ensuring both the trainer and the trainee's professional growth. The relationship that is developed between the two and the subject matter is of essential importance for the success of the training process, especially if it is nurtured within such a complex context as I have already described. Therefore, 'I, Alisa, Reflective teaching' triangle collaboration is based on three phases:

1. establishing a sharing relationship of mutual trust, support, understanding and respect,
2. non-threatening classroom observation, and
3. reflective dialogue following the observation.

Establishing a sharing relationship. The success of the training process depends on the interpersonal climate a mentor and a mentee form. The more informal the climate is, the more 'equality' between the two is perceived. In this case it is much easier for the mentor to provide support in a non-threatening way (Randall, M. & Thornton, B., 2001). However, establishing such a climate is quite challenging since it is connected with the country's mentoring framework.

In Tuzla Canton, Bosnia-Herzegovina, a mentor entering the classroom of a mentee comes with two different tasks: to develop the mentee's teaching skills and to assess his/her performance. The mentor is to provide a report at the end of the training period which is essential for the teacher's certification. Consequently, any mentee is in danger of seeing the mentor's role as judgmental no matter how supportive s/he is. In order to avoid this kind of a situation, I decided to make my first meeting with Alisa as informal as possible. The purpose of arranging such a meeting was to explain the objectives of the training process and to present myself as a colleague whose role is not only to teach but to be taught as well.

We got introduced to each other in early September 2005 over a cup of coffee in one of Tuzla's coffee shops. The meeting was semi-formal bearing in mind that both of us came with two completely different preconceptions of what mentoring to a novice teacher is: Alisa seeing me as a superior educator who is there to impose the final truth on her; I came with the enthusiasm of a colleague ready for mutual sharing and growth.

"You may not be in an ideal place to start the journey, but you can only start from where you are" (Malderez, A. & Bodoczky, C., 1999). Believing in these words and the fact that no person is an empty vessel, we talked about our university education experiences. When I mentioned traditional old-fashioned methodology classes I attended, she was proud to share her experience with the real enthusiasm she had for me as a teacher and a pre-service trainer. At that moment I learned that she had been introduced to reflective dialogue since she experienced it with her teacher after the first class she ever taught and which was the practical component of her methodology course.

Knowing that she had already done a reflective dialogue and that she understood the meaning of the term of reflection in general, it was much easier to talk with her about her teaching strengths and weaknesses as well as about her expectations from our work. Alisa felt strongly about her teaching of the receptive skills of reading and listening in contrast to the productive ones of speaking and writing. The explanation she gave is that reading and listening are less threatening to her students because they have no fear of losing face during those classes. Also, she believes the structure of those classes ensures successful cooperation between the teacher and those being taught. Writing and speaking, on the other hand, represent a challenge; the students feel reluctant to talk and write and Alisa lacks confidence in teaching them. This situation shows the absence of process vs. product thesis understanding; all the participants in the

learning/teaching relationship, the students and the teacher had been seeing those two skills as the product. Then, Alisa talked about her not being really confident when doing group work as her students seemed to see it as the opportunity to talk and do nothing. The issue of giving instructions also appeared: "No matter how I give instructions, the students have a problem understanding them, " she said. Finally, she mentioned the connection between teaching grammar and the use of her students' L1. She finds it more useful for her students to teach grammar in their L1 because they seem not to understand it if it is done in English.

In order to successfully formulate the objectives for our work Alisa shared her expectations with me as well. It all led to the establishment of two different but extremely connected roles both the trainee and the trainer usually take in every observation context: the roles of two colleagues exchanging experiences and coming to joint solutions to any classroom challenge, and the roles of a trainer supplying the solution to a trainee if s/he hits the wall (the mentor is the holder of the ultimate truth about teaching). Thus, my trainer role was going to change depending on Alisa's needs.

In the end, we agreed upon two objectives we wanted to reach:

1.   developing the skills of a 'reflective practitioner', and
2.   broadening each other's repertoire of teaching techniques.

However, articulating the objectives this way was challenging since the phrases such as 'we need to agree', 'we want to reach' and 'broadening each other's repertoire' are absent from contemporary mentor/mentee jargon present in Tuzla Canton schools where the phrases 'I want you to…', 'I do it this way...', 'You must…', 'That is not very good', 'You should do it this way…' have been the stepping stones of every teacher training context so far. So, assuring the mutual trusting cooperation, I presented Alisa with the plan of mentoring rationalizing it at the same time:

1.   Classroom observation:

- the first portion of observation (10 classes) - Alisa observing my classes;

- the second portion of observation (10 classes) – me, the trainer, observing her, the trainee;

Rationale: the cantonal law on education sets this observation framework the trainer and the trainee need to follow;

- there would be certain observation tasks to be completed focusing on different aspects of teaching; the tasks were agreed upon with Alisa or decided upon by the mentor;

Rationale: the cantonal law gives no guidelines for the organization of actual training process and observation, so the observation tasks agreed upon are set to have both the trainee and the trainer develop their 'reflective practitioner' skills;

2.   Reflection through feedback sessions:

- performed after each observation;

Rationale: the best reflection is done when the information is fresh in our mind;

- all feedback sessions will be done in English

Rationale: the use of English outside the classroom is in the English as a foreign language context; there is a lack of certain EFL teaching terminology in the Bosnian language;

3.   Training course evaluation (process vs. content evaluation):

- Alisa's professional growth

- My professional growth as a teacher trainer

Classroom observation. According to Wallace (1991:33,34), there are four key aspects of the academic process representing the basis of a successful training process:

1.   Acquisition – knowledge can be acquired from books, lectures, handouts, but it can also be created through discussion, brainstorming,

and elicitation by question and answer, and so on.

2.   Reflection – *deep processing:* the trainee develops an understanding of the essential underlying meaning of the new knowledge; *active processing*: the trainee relates the new knowledge to her previous knowledge and experience;

3.   Application of the new knowledge to the solution of the problem

4.   Evaluation – *trainee evaluation of content and process* – feedback on the course itself; *assessment* – checking if the objectives are achieved by each individual trainee;

Applying this theory to Alisa's pre-service and in-service teacher training, the following diagram shows what the process looked like (*Figure 6*):

Acquisition

Pre-service: university methodology course

In-service: Observation 1 – Alisa as an observer of the mentor's classes

Reflection: Observation 1 – Trainer's classes

Deep processing: understanding of what is done in the class

Active processing: Alisa makes a conection between the observed classes and her own

Application: Observation 2 – Alisa's Classes

Course evaluation (conten trs. process)

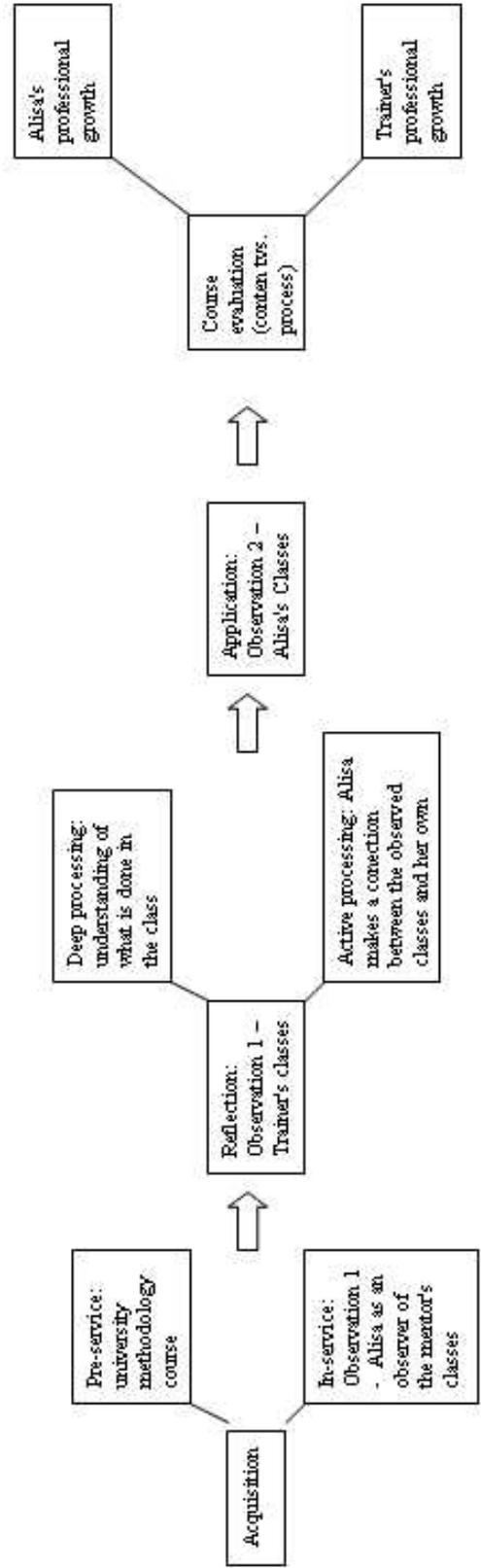Alisa's professional growth

Trainer's professional growth

Figure 6: The key aspects of Alisa's training process (after Wallas 1991)

Acquisition.

Each teacher starting a career goes through two phases of training: pre-service and in-service. Alisa started her pre-service training process as a student at the university through the attendance of the English language teaching (ELT) methodology course. The course was given by Louisa Buckingham, a professional sent to Tuzla University by OSI New York as a part of their professional program for developing English language teaching in Eastern Europe. This course equipped Alisa with necessary knowledge about ELT through both theory and practice. She gained an understanding of the theoretical part from lectures, workshops and books providing the information about current trends in this field. For the practical part of the course she was obliged to observe five English classes in Tuzla's schools and to complete different observation tasks such as eliciting, error correction, and so forth. At the end of the course she had to pass an exam covering both of its parts: a written exam covering the theory, and teaching a class applying both the theoretical and practical knowledge she had acquired. The reflective dialogue she performed with her teacher after the class taught in one of the schools was of great importance, having in mind that reflection itself plays an important role in the work of a future professional whose goal is to continually improve her/himself.

The in-service training each teacher in BH goes through starts at the beginning of his/her career. As a novice teacher in Vocational School in Tuzla, Alisa got me as her trainer and mentor. Following the Cantonal law on high/secondary school education, the first observation portion, which took place in the fall of 2005 (September – December), was done in Catholic School Center High School, the institution I teach in. Alisa had to observe 10 of my classes organized to achieve the goals of the course: broadening each other's repertoire of teaching techniques and developing the skills of a 'reflective

practitioner'. In order to collect as much information as possible from the classes observed, she had observation tasks. The tasks had been created with the help of Ruth Wajnryb's *Classroom Observation Tasks* (1992) so that the focus on specific areas of teaching heading towards its global understanding had been provided (*Appendix B*). The primary data which was to be analyzed by the trainee through the combination of both personal and documented recall was recorded with the use of a pencil and paper technique or so called FIAC – Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (Flanders: 1970).

Reflection.

The second phase of Alisa's training period was the interpretation of the observed classes and of the data she collected. However, the interpretation was done not only by Alisa and through her reflection on the class but also through the reflective dialogue she engaged in with me, her mentor. To understand what she observed, she needed to process each class both deeply and actively.

Wallace emphasizes that in the *deep processing* the trainee develops an understanding of the essential underlying meaning of the new knowledge while in the *active processing* the trainee relates the new knowledge to her previous knowledge and experience. The reflection and the dialogue we engaged in led Alisa to her own comprehension of what happened in the class, why it happened and finally to her rationalizing the application of these insights to her previous knowledge as well as to her future classroom experience. Even though each dialogue lasted not more than ten minutes, because that was the time we had, I must say they were significant for Alisa's development since we really focused on specific aspects of each class. The following example illustrates how she realized that using the reading text in teaching grammar introduces a meaningful context that helps students understand it better (the what and

why). This situation she connects to the inductive way of teaching grammar (previous knowledge) and using it in her own coming class with the simpler text (the future classroom experience).

Example 1: Alisa is observing the reading class whose objective is the revision of relative clauses. Alisa's task was to note down the lesson structure. The students are at upper-intermediate level.

> *Dijana:* '…What did you like in the lesson?'
> *Alisa:* '…I really liked it a lot especially because it looked like a reading   lesson in the beginning, but it turned out to be the grammar revision. So I liked it a lot…I'm gonna try to do something like this… incorporating grammar into reading'
> *Dijana:* 'How will you do that? I mean incorporating the grammar into reading text?'
> *Alisa:* 'Well… I don't know. Maybe, adapting the text. My students are not at that level so I couldn't use this text definitely because they are lower level. Maybe I'll choose something that is not… that is simple, although I haven't tried it before… In short time I am having a similar lesson, also a text after which I need to deal with relative clauses…so they (the students) are at lower level and they deal only with *who*, *which* and *where,* …it (the lesson) doesn't cover *whose* … and it's simple…'
> *Dijana:* 'What's good about introducing grammar through reading or listening…? What's the point in doing it?'
> *Alisa:* 'First of all it's interesting…I think it's…ummm … if you do reading first you already have the context, you already have the opportunity to do the grammar inductively, to make them think…I usually do grammar deductively with younger students who are the first grade and I usually do it inductively with older students…'
> *Dijana:* 'Why?'
> *Alisa:* 'The younger ones come with poor pre-knowledge from elementary schools so they have difficulty understanding even me speaking in English so I need to use a lot of Bosnian…But I need to try to do it inductively with them as well…maybe they'll manage to understand it better…'

Example 2: The objective of the class Alisa is observing is giving instructions. Alisa's task is to listen to different ways of giving the instructions to students, to note them down and to write down any comments she had. The level of the students is pre-intermediate.

> *Dijana:* How did I give the instructions, how did I check the instructions and why?
> *Alisa:* (she gets 5 minutes to reflect on the class following these three questions)…First, you showed them in the books…what they had to do, and then you explained what the task was and then you asked a question. It was like… for example the task was for them to find three more irregular verbs and then you asked: 'How many?' to check if they understood the task…'
> *Dijana:* 'What's my belief behind checking? What do I believe in if I check what I said?'
> *Alisa:* 'Well…I don't know…You just want to check…You want to make sure they know what the thing you want them to do is…'
> *Dijana:* 'So I don't want to make any assumptions, right?'
> *Alisa*: 'Yes.'
> *Dijana:* 'And was there any peer teaching in the sense of explaining of the instructions if someone didn't understand them?'
> *Alisa:* 'Yes, in one case, with that guy over there (showing the place where one of the students is sitting)…he thought they were to do another exercise, so you asked one of the students to tell him which one they were doing…'
> *Dijana:* Ok. And when the instructions are being given, they are shown in the book, they are read out loud, they are checked…why is it done in that way? What is it taken care of concerning the students?'
> *Alisa:* 'I guess they listen, I don't know…'
> *Dijana:* 'What about their learning style?'
> *Alisa*: 'Learning styles?...'

> *Dijana:*. 'Remember…I take the book, I show, I read, I repeat, I asked them….?'
> *Alisa:* (silence) '…I don't know…'
> *Dijana:* 'so, when you show you have a visual, so they can see…then you have auditory…'
> *Alisa:* 'they can hear, and you also touch with your finger the activity in the book….the kinesthetic…so combine all of them…'
> *Dijana:* 'Right.'

Here, Alisa also comes to the conclusions on her own through reflection. However, the why part is partially provided by the trainer in a non-threatening way through a number of rhetorical questions asked. The replies Alisa presents emerge from her previous knowledge. We as human beings often take our personal and professional beliefs for granted. Articulating those beliefs aloud enables us become aware of them once again.

In the third example we can see Alisa gaining a completely new perspective on teaching writing and her enthusiasm and determination to use it in her own class. She also gets some new food for thought about the use of authentic language and bringing a piece of her own life into the classroom with the goal of building a better class community. Even though that was not the part of my observation objective, doing more with less is what we all as professionals need to strive for.

Example 3: The class objective was writing the informal letter. The mentor's objective was to show how to teach writing through integration of all four skills. Alisa's task was to watch the class structure with the focus on the four language skills used.

> *Dijana:* 'Could you describe the class step by step concerning skills, please? Skill by skill from the very beginning?'
> *Alisa:* 'Well…first, there was listening – formal vs. informal letter …Then there was a bit of writing, then reading, then free writing as a prep work for writing a personal letter…speaking…in the end – writing a personal letter for homework.'
> *Dijana:* 'What did you like about the writing class organized like this?'
> *Alisa:* '…I like it a lot. I think this organization is very useful because they practice all four skills at the same time and it makes a writing task more interesting.'
> *Dijana:* 'Just more interesting?'
> *Alisa:* 'mmm…it's also good prep work for the writing task they got for homework… they have the organization of the letter…how to write it appropriately… they have the notes they made in the class that are helpful for homework…it's easier to write when you have all that… I will definitely use it in my class because my students don't really like writing and I think it is going to be easier and more interesting to do it this way.'
> *Dijana:* 'Anything else you liked in the class?'
> *Alisa:* '….Yes. You used your own letters for reading and listening. It's interesting…you read them to the students and I liked it because they were not listening to the class tape but to you reading them…it's refreshing and different…'
> *Dijana:* 'Why did I do that? What do you think?'
> *Alisa:* '...It's different, …refreshing…(silence) I don't know. Why?'
> *Dijana:* 'You are right. It is refreshing and different, but it is also a way of introducing the real language in the classroom. It is more authentic than the tape language. And also it is a

good way of building the class community…you are not just the teacher and the know-it-all…you are a human being with a life similar to theirs… sometimes the students forget that. Have you ever tried that? To bring the piece of you into the classroom?'
Alisa: '…not really…I sometimes bring songs to so they listen and have different tasks to do …?'
Dijana: 'Songs you like?'
Alisa: 'Yes.'
Dijana: 'There you go! A piece of you!
Alisa smiles.

Finally in the forth example, Alisa gets the opportunity to try to overcome the fear she has when she does any kind of group work. So, the *what* is the group work and role assigning, the *why* is efficiency and giving every student the opportunity or the obligation to participate and the will to try it out in her own class. Through observation of this class, she notices the small amount of teacher talking time, the goal of which is to put more responsibility on the students. However, during the feedback session, I had more of a role of a supervisor telling her what to do and how to do it even though I did not act as a know-it-all completely. I tried to create a balance as much as possible so that she would not feel threatened. I managed to do it partially as seen through the following transcript.

Example 4: Alisa is observing a speaking class and her task is to notice the way group work is organized and also to observe the class interaction.

Dijana: What did you like about the lesson?
Alisa: I liked the way the lesson was organized …I mean I like that you gave the time for them to prepare for the speaking activity…I think that was the reason why this lesson was so successful…the students were really speaking in the end…'
Dijana: 'So, giving the preparation time is what insures the success of the speaking activity…. '
Alisa: 'Yes.'….
Dijana: ' Anything else maybe…anything that helped it be successful?'
Alisa: '…well…I liked your groupings…I wish I could do it like that!...
Dijana: 'Why do you think you can't do it?! Let's see…what was so special about the grouping? Why was the grouping so successful??
Alisa:'...they (the students) are so good…their English is so good…I wish my students were a half of what they are…'
Dijana: 'I'm sure they are fine…why do you think they are not good?'
Alisa: '…they come with poor background knowledge form their elementary school…and there are discipline problems. When I give them some group work, they talk about things that have nothing to do with English. They are not motivated to learn English…'
Dijana: 'Sometimes my students also talk about things that are not connected to English when I put them in groups. So let's see…why was this group work a success? How was the work organized?'
Alisa:'…you gave them numbers, and then they had to sit according to their numbers… the same numbers in one group…'
Dijana: 'Anything else? Did they all know what to do?'

Alisa: '…they had different tasks…each member had to do something specific like take care of the time…make notes…read the questions and be the leader of the discussion…and one member had to present the conclusions they all came to…'

Dijana: '…they all had roles…when they have a specific role, the success of the group work depends on each one of them….and they are all busy…this also helps them develop responsibility for each other'

Alisa: 'Yes…but I think my students still won't do it…they are so hyperactive…'

Dijana: 'well…don't you think you could try and see what happens…we should be ready to experiment in our teaching…sometimes it will be successful, sometimes not…but we still need to continue doing our best…

Alisa: 'Yes…I guess you are right…I'll try it and I'll see what will happen…'

Dijana: 'Any other observations you had?'

Alisa: 'I liked you not talking to much…you were more an organizer and the monitor than the teacher…they did everything they needed on their own…'

Application.

The third phase of the training process was organized in order to have Alisa become a teacher who would constantly examine her own teaching and thus have her students learn English in a more productive way than was done in the context of her own Vocational school classroom in the spring 2006 (February – April). The knowledge she gained through university, and the insights she came to through observing her mentor's class and her own classroom practice, were to be applied and further reflected upon. In this situation her role as an observer was changed into that of the observee and I as her mentor continued to help her develop the skills of a reflective practitioner in as indirect and non-threatening a way as possible, although we had only ten minutes after each class to reflect.

We all as teachers in most cases feel we have ownership over our classes, especially when it comes to their preparation and planning. The classes I went to observe were prepared exclusively by Alisa and I did not take part in their preparation. Moreover, it is said that we as educators should practice what we preach. I believe learning styles are of crucial importance for the success of the learning process. When asked if she wanted me to help her plan and prepare the classes, Alisa told me, shyly, that she learns best if she works on her own mistakes. Having a relationship based on trust and respect, this wish of hers was more than sacred to me.

It was difficult for me to focus my observation in these circumstances, so I decided to make a full record of her classroom interactions by taking notes and making comments about the classroom application of her new insights about group work, the four skills, classroom interaction and the like; those are the insights Alisa came to through observation and reflection of my classes as well as the reflection on her previous teaching practice.

The presence of an observer in the classroom, no matter how fruitful the relationship between the two is created, is not an enjoyable experience, especially in the very beginning of the observation period. Furthermore, the fact that I represented the authority figure of a mentor caused the appearance of anxiety and nervousness in Alisa's behavior. Even though I believe that making assumptions might be misleading in one relationship, my own experience of working with a supervisor warned me that there is the possibility of having a rather tense first reflective dialogue with my mentee:

Example 5: Alisa teaches a pre-intermediate reading class. The objective is that at the end of the class students will be able to talk about different jobs.

> *Dijana*: How do you feel?
> *Alisa:* I feel awful. It didn't go the way I wanted it to go.
> *Dijana:* What did you like?
> *Alisa:* ….mmmmmm…almost nothing. In the first part they didn't get the jobs. They didn't get the meaning of the words. I had to translate.

Although I asked a positive question, Alisa continued talking about her negative impressions of the class. She needed encouragement. And I needed to make that twist towards learnable positivism.

> *Dijana:* Why did you have to translate?
> *Alisa*: …they couldn't get the meanings of all the job words…
> *Dijana:* What job words? What did you do to have them understand?
> *Alisa:* …CURATOR and EXHIBITION…I used the context of the museum. I described them…and they still couldn't get them…I had to translate.
> *Dijana:* I am going to ask you a little bit odd question. You know your students, right? What do you think…How many of them have known the meanings those words in Bosnian before you gave them the translation? Or more exactly how many of them have ever been in the museum or on the exhibition … how many of them have ever had the opportunity to talk to a curator?
> *Alisa:* …mmmm…probably none of them…they did ask me what KUSTOS (*Eng.* CURATOR) does…

Dijana: Yes…some of them were whispering to each other: 'Kustos…Sta je to? (*Eng.* CURATOR…What's that???) It seemed to me you did everything you could.
Now, what did you like in the class?
Alisa: I had problems with timing.
Dijana: It seemed to me you acted on your feet just fine. You added time and you cut it where ever and when ever you could. And I do believe there were parts of the lesson which you liked!
Alisa: Well I liked the middle part…when they were reading and doing the tasks connected to reading like filling that grid… Almost all of them participated… but I didn't like the pair work!
Dijana: Why did they participate?
Alisa: They had the book, they looked in their grids… it wasn't so abstract.
Dijana: It seems to me they like the hands-on activities! So what would you change?
Alisa: the first part…with the jobs…use of pictures, demonstrations, maybe have them describe the jobs of their parents…to make it more close to them and their lives…
Dijana: What a great idea!
Alisa: …and the pair work…I would give each member of the pair a different job to describe…and then have them exchange their thoughts…and maybe give them more time to think…
Dijana: I agree…think-pair-share is great for a successful pair work. And one more question for you connected to the idea of giving them more time to think….What was the class interaction like? How much did you talk during the class?
Alisa: (smile)….ooooh, I talked a lot….God, I was so nervous…

At this point I decided to stop the dialogue. I could have explored the issue of interaction more with Alisa but I believe sometimes it is enough for the teacher to acknowledge the challenge s/he is facing, especially in the situation when s/he feels down about the class s/he taught.

To show that there were so many productive aspects in her teaching and to give a boost to her teaching, we finished every reflection with my positive comments concerning each class:

Example 1 – Dijana's comments: 'I was pleased with the lesson and the class structure. You've organized it following the PRE, DURING, POST reading philosophy. I loved the way you use the gestures. You also use comprehension checks when giving instructions. You exploit the textbook nicely and use the visuals offered in it to get the students interested in the text. You are using the PW and trying to have Ss-Ss interaction as much as you can and I believe you'll continue improving it. You are trying to connect the topic to their lives and background knowledge and that is what makes learning memorable and enjoyable.'

Vulnerability is one of the characteristics of human beings in general and I believe that today's teachers are extremely vulnerable, a lot more than in the past. We are constantly being judged by our students, their parents, the school administration, the ministry, our mentors and supervisors: more exactly, by the whole community we all live

in. This kind of situation is especially present in countries under different types of reform such as BH. Everybody looks at us through the prism of our students and their learning, and sometimes the judgments they make are extremely harsh. On the one hand, if we want to be successful professionals we need to learn to cope with our vulnerability and the community judgments. On the other one, the community has to be more open-minded and learn objectivity.

Alisa taught a reading class where almost everything went wrong: there were a lot of discipline problems, the majority of the students did not participate in the class activities, the interaction was mainly between her and one quite hyperactive student, eventually the objective was not achieved and on top of that there was me, her mentor, observing the class. The reflective dialogue following the very first class was one of the most important teachable moments for both of us. Her body language, with her arms and legs crossed, her facial expression constantly frowning, and her resistance towards having a dialogue with me, showed me that, at that moment, I was no longer a mentor and a colleague to her but the supervisor who is there to evaluate and judge. Our conversation went like this:

> *Dijana:* How do you feel after the class?
> *Alisa*: Not so good. I was shouting too much.
> *Dijana:* Why were you shouting?
> *Alisa:* Because they were talking so much, and… I don't know…
> *Dijana:* Why were they talking so much?
> *Alisa:* Because they sometimes just do …
> *Dijana:* Do you think that's the only reason?
> *Alisa:* Well, I think it is.
> *Dijana:* Ok. So basically if you think about the class as the whole, what did you like about it?
> *Alisa:* I don't know. Nothing…
> *Dijana:* What would you change in the class?
> *Alisa:* Everything.
> *Dijana:* How?
> *Alisa:* I'm not sure. I'll have to think about it…they didn't get it.
> *Dijana:* Let's start with the class introduction. Can you tell me what happened? What did you do? What did the students do?
> *Alisa:* …I don't know. I don't remember. I can't think about it now….

At this moment I made a conscious decision not to continue with the dialogue. She needed a break and appreciation of her feelings and herself as a human being. Instead of

doing the dialogue I told her to do the reflection at home in writing and bring it next time so we could talk about it. I gave her the guidelines:

a) describe what happened in the class,

b) what did you like and why,

c) what was the class interaction like,

d) what didn't you like,

e) what would you change and how.

I never got the opportunity to discuss her reflection the next time we met. Her only wish was to do the class she planned for that day so that she could show me what she learned. My decision to respect her wish and her feelings proved to be a wise one since it was the turning point in Alisa's learning. From that class on, her learning curve was going straight up.

According to Ebbinghaus, the German nineteenth-century psychologist, there is a close relationship between experience and efficiency; the greater the experience at doing a certain task, the greater the efficiency in doing that task. This is the basis for the learning curve effect which states that "the more times the task has been performed, the less time will be required on each subsequent iteration" (Learning curve - taken from *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_curve*) The objectives of Alisa's novice-teacher training, as stated at the very beginning, were to help Alisa develop the skills of a reflective practitioner and to share teaching ideas and techniques. The structured reflection done repeatedly assisted us on our way towards the achievement of our objectives.

I believe we all reflect on our teaching one way or another. However, to make it a tangible part of our professional practice, we need to learn and understand the structure of the reflection. The backbone of our every feedback session was the four questions: How do you feel?; What did you like and why?; What would you change and why?; and Was

the objective achieved?. Each dialogue we had took Alisa towards autonomous reflection.

In the very beginning, we had one question – one answer (usually short one) dialogue:

Example 6: Elementary culture/reading class. Alisa is teaching about Halloween. There are a lot of realia in the classroom such as Jack-o-lantern, the witch, pumpkin. The objective is that students will understand the meaning of this holiday as well as learn and understand the Halloween words.

Dijana: How do you feel?
Alisa: I feel great! I'm quite satisfied.
Dijana: What do you think about the class?
Alisa: I think it was quite good. It was the way I planned it.
Dijana: What did you like?
Alisa: Almost everything, although they were noisy so I had to shout a couple of times.
Dijana: Any particular class that you liked?
Alisa: Maybe the last part with the vocabulary bingo game.
Dijana: Why?
Alisa: …well they all participated,…they used the vocabulary from the lesson…they learned the words…

Then, our dialogue started getting the contours of a real non-burdening, non-judgmental and open-hearted conversation. I had the role of an active listener.

Example 7: Pre-intermediate writing class. The objective is learning to write an article.

Dijana: So, I believe you know the procedure.
Alisa: Yes. What do I think about the class? I think it wasn't so bad. It was a writing lesson and it was not so interesting but I tried to help them, to lead them to write an article in the end. …they didn't finish it…they finished the first paragraph. You'll probably ask why? (smile)…
Dijana: Yes! (smile)
Alisa:…I should have done it in double class. They could have finished it if they hadn't lost the time in the exercise when they had to finish the sentences. I would do it differently…

Finally, I introduced written reflection through which Alisa started doing her reflection autonomously, showing her real understanding of the process. From this point on, we started each feedback with her own written thoughts:

Example 8: Pre-intermediate four-skill integration class. The objective is the use of the body parts and injuries vocabulary.

Alisa writes her class reflection on a piece of paper:
So, what I feel about the class. It was more or less ok. I think it's ok.
What I liked is when they were connecting the numbers on the picture with the words. That was the part when most of them were working…a hands–on activity… Also the part when they were dividing the words into four groups because all of them were working…they had the roles.
What worked? Well, these two things worked. Maybe just the end didn't work the way I thought it would. I should have put the listening text in the beginning, maybe just to get their attention.

What I would change? So I would put that listening in the beginning and maybe I wouldn't do that modeling part. I would have some of them (the students) do it…to make them more involved…

I think with eliciting… I had to do a lot of showing in order to get the words and I didn't get all the words in the end….Dijana says I ask wonderful questions…Maybe I should have written those questions on the board and give them time to think and then elicit the words…
About objective. Again it's partially achieved. They learned some of the words… they didn't learn much about the injuries. They are sure what *to break* means, but they are maybe not so sure what to *sprain* and *twist* mean….the meanings of those words are left somewhere in the air.

Of course, the questions I wanted to discuss with Alisa continued to emerge and the answers she provided me were the ones which showed me her growth into a reflective practitioner:

Dijana: I loved the bingo game with the words they learned in the class. They enjoyed it and participated. It seems they like to compete. I've noticed you've given Muamer (a very hyperactive student) the role of taking the words out of the hat. Why did you do that? I remember you had problems with keeping him disciplined on previous classes.
Alisa: … I think it was a good idea to have him make the others work and at the same time to put him in the center of attention which he liked…and he worked on his pronunciation since he had to say all those words he pulled out of the hat…

Or

Dijana: I loved the pumpkin lotto. You went through the words with them; you pronounced them and gave the explanations.
Alisa: Yes. In the first class I did this topic, while they were playing and Armin pronounced the words I simultaneously put them on the board. Most of them didn't look at the words on the board…and some didn't understand Armin…and Armin didn't pronounce all the words correctly…the others were preoccupied with the game… so we had quite a mess because of all of this…Now in this class I decided to first put all the words on the board…I went through meaning and pronunciation of all of them with the students…and when Damir pronounced each word I ticked it so they could clearly see them
Dijana: yes…I loved it…they could always refer to the board if they needed it…

The second objective of our training was the improvement of each other's teaching repertoire with different teaching techniques and I believe these were the situations when a real colleague-to-colleague relationship was developed between Alisa and me. In addition to the appreciation of Alisa's whole being, the acknowledgment of her teaching experience and background knowledge was what proved to her that the phrase 'I practice what I preach' had not been just a phrase to me but my deepest belief. During our informal meeting before we started the actual training process, I said I believed there would be moments when I would learn some techniques from her. The first situation like

that one was when I expressed the wish to use the previously mentioned pumpkin lotto activity in my class. I asked Alisa to explain that activity step-by-step once again so I could check if the notes I took were correct.

> *Dijana:* I looooved your last activity… the pumpkin lotto you called it in your lesson plan.
> *Alisa smiled.*
> *Dijana:* That is something I'll definitely try in my own classroom. I took some notes, but could you please repeat what you've done, step-by-step? I need to check it if they are right…
> *Alisa:* Ok. So I put the words form the lesson on the board. We work on them – revision of pronunciation - meaning…to make sure they got them. There are 30 words on the board.
> *Dijana:* Thirty?
> *Alisa:*Yes…Then I make the groups of four and gives them a number…Each group gets a handout like this one …she *shows one to me...*it's a grid with 25 empty squares. The group members choose 25 words out of 30 from the board to fill their grid…Each member chooses one word and they go in circle again…
> *Dijana:*...Right…I forgot that …
> *Alisa:* …then you choose one student to take the slips of paper with the words on them from the hat…I chose a hyperactive student…he or she takes the word…pronounces it and the groups look if they have it on their handout…if they have 5 words in a row horizontally or vertically they call out a 'Pumpkin' and a group gets a point…
> *Dijana:* …and you tick each word on the board list?
> *Alisa*: Yes. So they could see the words if they need…
> *Dijana*: Ok. Thanks.

This moment, which was one of the most awakening in our relationship, directed us towards the dialogues where asking for suggestions concerning certain activities was done without the feeling of unease or embarrassment.

> Example 9: Pre-intermediate culture reading class – Halloween.

> *Alisa:* I didn't like the last activity. It didn't work the way I wanted it. I wanted them to tell the three things they liked about Halloween. They just said 'We didn't like it' How would you have organized this activity?
> *Dijana:* You can just ask them: 'If you liked Halloween write 3 things you liked and say why?' / If you didn't like it write 3 things you didn't and say why?' And I would put those 2 questions on the board so they could refer to them. In this case you would avoid the answer like 'we didn't like it'.
> *Alisa:* Yes! That's a great idea!

As a matter of fact, being perceived as a colleague rather than a supervisor in the context where the supervisor is the know-it-all is a prize nobody can be indifferent to.

> *Evaluation.*

The success of the nine-month long novice-teacher training process Alisa and I went through together was looked at through the lenses of both the mentee and the mentor. The course evaluation itself was focusing on two aspects: content and process.

And finally, the question whether or not the course objectives were achieved was not the only one that needed to be answered. The response to how much both the mentee and the mentor professionally grew through their relationship is what is of essential importance for any future mentor work either Alisa or I will perform during our separate professional lives.

Alisa's professional growth. In the spirit of a reflective practitioner Alisa got the task to reflect on the training period through answering the questions in the questionnaire I created for that purpose. The questions I asked were all open-ended (see Appendix).

Firstly, Alisa shared that her initial expectations were met even more than she thought they would be. Due to the information she as a novice teacher got from her colleagues from other schools, she had the usual image of the mentor work they all have in their mind; that is the one of superior/inferior relationship where the mentor is the holder of the ultimate truth about teaching and the mentee is an empty vessel with no background knowledge at all. Even the informal meeting that was held at the very beginning of our work when the forthcoming course was described and the objectives were agreed upon could not convince Alisa that the training process would take more of the form of a cooperative colleague-to-colleague relationship. However, thinking about the training she went through, her teaching and reflection in general, this is what she said:

> 'I generally feel much better now, after working with a mentor. I feel more secure and confident. I believe that this helped me become a better teacher.
> My relationship with my mentor was great, there were no problems, I learned a lot. I think we worked in a very relaxed way, which was very helpful, because I wasn't tense and I felt very good. Even in the situations when I felt nervous and tense or stupid, I felt Dijana's respect and understanding.
> I expected that I would improve some of the teaching techniques, especially in the area of grammar, writing, giving instructions and grouping. And I did. Going to my mentor's classes, and later on all the suggestions and dialogues were very useful, because I applied most of the things we talked about in class and they really worked.

Everything in our work was OK, classes, feedback, etc. and I don't think I would like it so much if it was done in a different way. I just wish we had more time for our feedbacks and reflection.

I liked the class reflection and the way in which it was done, through conversation and discussion about what was good, what wasn't, what could have been done in a different way. I now feel that I always think about what I did, if it was successful, how to change it...and sometimes I make the immediate changes in the class or in the following one.'

These words show that the course objectives have been achieved. Alisa offered her explanation of how she improved and she pinpointed the areas she especially profited from considering the teaching techniques. Furthermore, she took the plunge into the waters of class and teaching reflection and all she needs to do now is continue swimming. The understanding of the concept of reflection she showed took her to the place each one of us needs to be not only at the beginning of our teaching careers but through our entire professional lives: at the shallow spot of the endless sea of knowledge; as long as we are aware of the skill we need to possess in order to manipulate that knowledge, and in addition to that we develop the positive attitude towards it, we are going to stay on the surface. Alisa managed to develop the skill of reflection and she has become aware of its importance for successful teaching. As a reflective practitioner she is only going to further self-improve and professionally grow.

Mentor's professional growth. The relationship and the joint work Alisa and I experienced have had an enormous impact not only on her but also on me both professionally and personally. The aspects of our mentor – mentee cooperation that I find most rewarding for my future mentoring are:

1) The fellow teacher approach to mentorship. There is no greater gift than the respect you get from another human being. My approach towards Alisa as a colleague with the background knowledge of her own and not as a novice teacher who has no clue about teaching and classroom practice set the fertile ground for our fruitful cooperation, trust, respect, and understanding.

2) Mentor as an active listener. In addition to presenting myself as a fellow teacher one of my most important roles was the one of a listener. During our feedback sessions my task was to let Alisa talk as much as possible. Through listening to her actively I managed to ask the right questions which had her think deeply about the decisions she made and the rationale behind each one. However, active listening is an art on its own so asking the right objective and non-judgmental questions was not always easy. I realized that I did not rephrase Alisa's words enough, in order to soften the pressure constantly present in the classroom visited by the supervisor.   The questions I asked were in certain moments quite direct instead of making them as non-judgmental as possible (*see Figure no.7*):

Direct judgmental questions	Indirect non-judgmental questions
• Were you completely satisfied with the group work? • Why didn't you give them time to elicit the words in their notebooks since that was your initial plan?	• Have you noticed that during the group work some students were more engaged than the others? I wonder if you could have organized it differently. • So your initial plan was to have them elicit the words in their notebooks and then share it with the class. If I understand it well, you've decided to do it as a class immediately because notebook brainstorming is something they are not used to doing so you believed they would not be so successful. I wonder what you could have done to make it easier for them to elicit.

Figure 7: direct vs. indirect questions

3) The organization of well-structured reflection. The class reflections centered around four questions of how Alisa felt after the class, what she liked, what she did not like and what she would change, constantly after every observation were quite

successful for it helped her develop the skills of a reflective practitioner even though our meetings were limited by time. Nevertheless, I believe Alisa's learning would have been maximized if I had asked her to write at least one reflection on the class of her own choice at home.

To sum up, the mentoring course was rewarding for both Alisa and me. We both grew through the process, and the reflective teaching and learning reassured us into believing that learning never ceases to exist in the life of a professional.

4. Concluding remarks

The only concern the recently graduated teachers in Bosnia-Herzegovina have when coming into the teaching profession is getting a mentor, going through the nine-month long training as painlessly as possible and finally getting the teaching certificate, regardless of whether they have really earned it or not. What matters is that the certificate ensures a teaching position in any school in the country, assuming there is any opening. On the other hand, the mentors reluctantly accept to do the mentoring mainly because the organization of a beneficial training period without any straightforward guidelines is quite challenging. The results of such a situation are that the mentors, who feel forced to train a novice teacher, either do nothing or the frustration they might feel is not conducive to well-organized and productive work. Even though the final outcome, i.e. the teaching certificate, is of great importance, it certainly cannot diminish the significance of the process that led to it.

How successful one course has been depends on how successfully it has been organized and delivered. The mentoring I, as a mentor, organized for Alisa Joguncic, a novice teacher in Vocational School in Tuzla, was the product of a planned collaboration between the two of us. The experience and the background knowledge we both possessed shaped our joint work within the boundaries of Tuzla Canton legislation norms and the Education Reform Strategy currently present in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

According to Wallace (Wallace, M.J.:1991), any course on teacher education should cover two functions. First, it is to inform and teach the trainee in terms of received and experiential knowledge and the second one is to provide the observation of good teaching practice. The reflective approach is the approach both Alisa and I have constantly been introduced to - Alisa since her university methodology course, and I

since my CELTA/TESOL teacher training. We agreed to 'a teacher as a reflective practitioner' practice because we both believe that it is important to have teachers empowered with the ability to manage their own professional development. The observation of good teaching practice followed the legal norm which stipulates that the mentee is to observe 10 of the mentor's classes first and then, the mentor is the one who enters the mentee's classroom in order to mold her/his learning when necessary. There is no place for the assumption that the process of reflection will develop simply by doing the job, but it must be facilitated through the training process.

The Education Reform Strategy that is being implemented in BH covers two areas in education – creating the functional law on education, and the teacher training program. Since the Ministry of Education is mostly concerned with the first area, little has been done in terms of teacher education so far. Thus, there are still no clear guidelines for organizing the nine-month period of mentoring except for the number of classes both the mentee and the mentor have to observe. The decision to organize, deliver and describe this kind of mentoring program was based on two reasons; firstly, I hoped that Alisa and I would grow both as individuals and professionals, and secondly I wished to share my experience with all the colleagues who would be interested in mentorship, so that we could contribute to reform in the place where it should be happening – in the classroom.

Alisa received her teaching certificate in October 2006. She was evaluated for her teaching performance, her knowledge on methodology, pedagogy and psychology as well as for her knowledge of legal regulations by the commission appointed by the Ministry of Education of Tuzla Canton. The concrete evidence on how the assessment was done we never received. It is constantly being emphasized by methodologists and educators that the learners must be acquainted with the assessment criteria their teachers

use. However, the people who assessed Alisa's teaching are not teachers, at least not practicing ones. It is to be hoped that this enigma will be addressed in future research. What matters now is that there are two more teaching enthusiasts added to a very short but valuable list of reflective practitioners in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

'Practice what you preach'

As human beings we continually go through the process of our intellectual development experiencing different ways of learning. Our personal knowledge base keeps being enriched through all our senses and different life situations. Furthermore, the attitude towards learning we all possess is constantly being influenced both by cultural and personal factors. The world and the society we live in changes with every second, making it difficult for us to understand and accept all of these modifications without fear of losing our cultural individuality in the growing globalization. We expect our leaders to show us 'the right way' even though we may not agree with it.

Being educated in a country such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the teacher still has a dominating role in the classroom, challenges the young teaching professionals in their own attempt to change the current classroom situation. The gap that exists between the young and the older educators in our traditional country occasionally seems unbridgeable because the administration itself makes no effort to acknowledge those who come with fresh ideas concerning a modern approach to teaching. The belief that the diploma and the teaching certificate are the only solid and thus acceptable proof of one's qualification is going to remain dominant on the BH teaching scene unless we, as the new generation of teachers, take the responsibility for developing the educational system that functions in every classroom, school, canton, entity and finally in the whole

country. Our teaching minds should not be entrapped within the walls of the non-teaching bureaucracy. Moreover, there is no excuse for saying that the administrative aspect of education is what causes de-humanization of any learning process, including the process of mentoring. We are the ones who should serve the needs of our community. The change is going to appear only if we all initiate it in our own classrooms first, either as teachers or as teacher trainers who practice what they preach.

APPENDIX A

MENTORSHIP QUESTIONAIRE

Name:
School:

PLEASE, READ THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS CAREFULLY AND TRY TO GIVE AS DETAILED AND SPECIFIC ANSWERS AS POSSIBLE:	
As a novice teacher, when were you assigned a mentor?	

How do you generally feel about your work with the mentor during your first year of teaching?

What did your relationship with the mentor look like? (e.g. teacher to a student; superior to an inferior; colleague to colleague, etc.)

What were your initial expectations concerning the work itself?

How many classes have you been observed by your mentor?	
How many of your mentor's classes have you observed?	

Have you had any observation tasks to do during the observation? If yes, please explain and give examples.

Have any feedback sessions been organized after the observations? If yes, please explain.

What have you found useful during the program and why have you found it useful?

What could have been done differently?

What could be done in Tuzla Canton in order to improve the work of mentors with their mentees?

LESSON PLAN

TEACHER:
LEVEL:
NUMBER OF STUDENTS:
DATE:
OBJECTIVE (By the end of the class Ss will be able to):

ASSUMPTIONS (I expect my Ss are familiar with):

CHALLENGES (I expect my Ss will have problems with):

SOLUTIONS/REMEDY(In order to remedy these problems I have planned to...):

Understanding lesson structure

Task objective: learning from other peoples experience, analyzing it and adapting to one's own classroom

Time	Activity	Procedure	Comment

Giving instructions

Task objective: getting aquainted with various forms of instructions giving

What does the teacher say?	What does the teacher use to help the understanding of the instruction?	Do the students understand the instruction? +/-	What does the teacher do if the students don't understand the instruction?	Comment

Integration of four skills

Task objective: the effectiveness of four skills integration and its necessity for successful language learning

Time	Activity	Skill	Purpose

The learner as a doer

Task objective: becoming sensiteve to the fact 'learning by doing' includes large number of activities that need to be analized

What learners do	What this involves	Teacher's purpose	Comment

(taken from R. Wajnryb's 'Classroom Observation Tasks', 1992)

Managing group and pair work

Task objective: focusing on organizational skills

Moving into an activity		
Sub-skill	Observation	Comment
a) Organizing groups, seating, etc.		
b) Instructions		
c) Appointing , briefing leaders		

Monitoring pair/group work		
Sub-skill	Observation	Comment
a) Monitoring		
b) Verbal contact		
c) Teacher's voice, position, etc.		

Moving out of the activity		
Sub-skill	Observation	Comment
a) Winding down		
b) Signalling		
c) Re-orienting		
d) Reporting back		

(taken from R. Wajnryb's 'Classroom Observation Tasks', 1992)

Error management

Task objective: helping the teacher become more aware of the issues involved in error management

Learner error	Teacher response	Lesson phase	A/F (accuracy or fluency)	Comment

(adaped from R. Wajnryb's 'Classroom Observation Tasks', 1992)

Guiding questions for written reflection

Task objective: developing the skill of reflection through writing

f) describe what happened in the class,

g) what did you like and why,

h) what was the class interaction like,

i) what didn't you like,

j) what would you change and how.

Bibliography

Bellack, A.A., Kliebard, H.M., Hyman, R.T. & Smith, F.L. (1966). *The Language of the Classroom.* New York: Teachers Colleague Press, Colombia University.

Cogan, M.L. (1973). *Clinical Supervision.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Flanders, N.A. (1970). *Analyzing Teacher Behavior.* Reading, Massachusettes: Addison-Wesley.

Freeman, D.(1982). Observing teachers: three approaches to in-service training and development. *TESOL Quarterly,* 16,1,21-28.

Gebhard, J.C. (1984). Models of supervision: choices. *TESOL Quarterly,* 18, 3, 501-14.

Malderez, A. & Bodoczky, C. (1999). *Mentor Courses: A resource book for teacher-trainers.* Cambridge, CUP

Palmer, P. (1998). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life.* San Francisco. Jossey-Bass Publishing.

Randall, M. & Thornton, B. (2001). *Advising and Supporting Teachers.* Cambridge: CUP

Rodgers, C. (2002). Seeing student learning: Teacher change and the role of reflection. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(2), 230-253.

Schön, D.A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action.* London: Temple Smith.

Sergiovanni, T.J. & Starratt, R.J. (1983). *Supervision: Human Perspectives.* (3rd ed.). New York: Mc Graw-Hill.

Stones, E. & Morris, S. (1972). *Teaching Practice: Problems and Perspectives*. London: Methuen.

Wajnryb, R. (1992). *Classroom Observation Tasks.* Cambridge: CUP

Wallace, M.J.(1991). *Training Foreign Language Teachers: A Reflective Approach.* Cambridge: CUP.

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2005). Harlow, UK: Person Education Limited.