

A Framework of Reference for Teaching English as a Foreign Language at the Threshold of I.R. of Iran

Sajjad Askari Matin

PhD candidate, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Gholamreza Kiany¹

Associate Professor, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Reza Ghafar Samar

Associate Professor, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

Advancements in theory and practice of *Teacher Evaluation* maintain that effective teaching is the most important factor in realization of success or failure of an education system. Therefore, any attempt to explore the dynamic and complex nature of teachers' performance is considered critical. In the same vein, this paper is an attempt to introduce a Framework of Reference for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (FRTEFL) at the threshold of I.R. of Iran; a local model aligned with global perspectives. To this end, adapting a qualitative meta-synthesis approach, all possible dimensions of teachers' performance criteria reflected in 17 High-stake resources were explored; scrutinizing the twofold mapping of both curriculum and evaluation standards. For the application of meta-synthesis, grounded coding and thematic analysis was carried out by two research assistants also fifteen teacher training experts participated in validation analysis. The output of meta-synthesis resulted in emergence of overall 6293 Grounded Codes, 1655 Themes, and 218 Super-themes. Based on the results, the framework contains 8 Domains, 35 Key Areas, along with their validation measures: Planning and Preparation for General Pedagogy, Planning and Preparation for Language Pedagogy, Planning and Design for Learning, Management of Learning Environment, Effective Instruction, Organizational Responsibility and Professionalism, Socio-cultural Capital and Social Agency, and Spirituality, Morality and Theism. The proposed framework is believed to represent a localized framework of teachers' practice in the context of an *Islamic Education System*, provide considerable implications for enhancement of teachers' professional development, and to be a major step in validation of local and large-scale Teacher Evaluation programs.

Keywords: Professional Development, Qualitative Meta-synthesis, TEFL, Teacher Evaluation

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¹ Corresponding author: rezakiany@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Ensuring quality of teaching (e.g., accountability, effectiveness, competency, etc.) and promoting quality of teachers (e.g., professional learning, professional development, efficiency, growth, etc.) are the most important factors in realization of the effectiveness and productivity of teacher evaluation approaches. Now, it is also the common sense that elevation of an education system is limited to extent of its teachers' quality performance and qualified teachers are essential to equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (CEART, 2015; Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2007; Goodwin, 2017; Hattie, 2002; Haycock, 1998; Nye, Hedges & Konstantopolos, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Respectively, this urge adds to the significance of quality assurance for teacher education programs; Now, teachers' accountability, credibility, effectiveness, innovation, and professionalism (to name a few) are constructs under the attention of policymakers to make informed decisions and adopt effective strategies and methods to improve the overall quality of education systems. With the consensus that students' achievement is the most important factor in realization of success or failure of an education system (Hattie, 2008; Hanushek, 2004; Ingvarson, Schwille, Tatto, & Rowley, 2013; Van Damme & Bellens, 2017), operations to insure quality performance of teachers must be considered critical.

I.R. of Iran education system in line with national and international agencies and institutions is also bringing the quality education into its focal attention. This is well reflected in our national documents; the sixth Program of Five Year Developmental Plan (effective Aug, 2017), Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE, effective Sept, 2011), and the Comprehensive National Curriculum Design (effective 2014). However, despite the high degrees of commitment among officials and policymakers,

quality education still is undermined by several factors among which lack of resources (i.e., teacher deficit & budget deficit) and employment of ineffective strategies for stepwise development of teachers can be enumerated. Given the international agenda for improvement of education quality and the competitive atmosphere of human resource development among countries both at regional and global level, a change in all facets of education infrastructures that are providing low quality results is inevitable. Thinking of change in Iran's teacher training tradition the following gaps are rendered:

a) Lack of systematic standard setting for professional practice

The need for standard setting for an integrated approach is more and more felt as numerous local and international institutions are involved or becoming involved in the process of quality assurance for education. In this regard, policymakers are dealing with the decisions that could affect the lives, careers, and the future of preservice and inservice teachers. Any subjective, nonsystematic approach based on intuitions and individual experiences can lead to violation of teachers' right and would jeopardize the quality of educational system at large.

b) Deficit in professional quality assurance procedures

A number of studies and the status quo of teaching reveals the fact that certification, per se, does not guarantee quality teaching (Gordon, Kane & Staiger, 2006; Lam, 2001). Lack of a comprehensive system of quality assurance for pre and inservice teachers will compromise the effectiveness of teacher training institutions.

c) Lack of systematic and continuous feedback

Systematic and continuous feedback via evaluation of teachers' performance on scientific basis leads to teachers' optimized performance in the short run and stepwise development and professionalism in the long run (Bears, 1989;

Darling-Hammond, 2000, 1998, 1990, 1986; Darling-Hammond, Wise & Pease, 1986; House, 1986; Oliva & Pawlas, 2004). Hence, the systematic and informed feedback provision for policymakers responsible for making large scale decision is significant.

As the first step to address the above mentioned gaps, a Framework of Reference for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (FRTEFL) at the threshold of I.R. of Iran is proposed; this framework will fill the void in the areas of quality assurance for accreditation, certification and professional development of EFL teachers and will be useful for balance, fairness and more importantly validation of national/local assessment and evaluation systems.

2. Teacher Evaluation

The genesis of teacher evaluation can be traced back to the time of Socrates (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995). However, in spite of a long tradition the body of research on teacher evaluation is still struggling to form a consistent and steady paradigm. Technical complications and opposing views and conceptions of 'teachers' and 'teaching' along with the diverse and adversary approaches toward 'evaluation' and 'assessment' has made the field of 'teacher evaluation' one of the most complex and challenging fields of inquiry in education and language teaching in particular.

Taking a chronological view, Shinkfield & Stufflebeam are the only ones who tried to put literature on teacher evaluation in 'neat boxes'; preworld war II, postworld war II, late 1970s-1995, and standards movement that gives legitimacy to teacher evaluation in a scientific manner. Many other attempts also failed to provide an acceptable typology for teacher evaluation due to the multifaceted and multidimensional nature of the subject. After a detailed and careful review of literature, among a host of other factors, *conceptions of*

teachers and *theoretical approaches and developments* are rendered as decisive factors for providing a unifying typology.

2.1 Conceptions of Teachers

When it comes to evaluation of teachers, the very first question rises at the level of epistemology. In fact, the ways of viewing teachers and teaching envisions what lies behind different methods and theories of teacher evaluation (Darling-Hammond et al., 1986). After a comprehensive review of manuscripts that have tried to describe what and who of teachers, the following five conceptions of teachers are revealed; *teacher as workforce, scholar, socio-political agent, artist, and clergy*. Table 1 shows the synopsis of the five visions.

Table 1
Synopsis of Conceptions about Teachers

Teacher as	Teaching as	Description
Workforce	labor	Teacher is responsible for implementing the instructional program in a prescribed way and adhering to specified routines and procedures (Mitchell & Kerchner, 1983).
	craft	Teaching is believed to require a collection of specialized techniques, knowledge and their applications (Darling-Hammond et al., 1986).
	profession	Teaching requires a repertoire of specialized techniques and also requiring the exercise of judgment about when and how of their application (Shavelson & Stern, 1981).
Scholar	Knowledge-base	Teachers are scholars who possess and act upon the specialized knowledge, especially in three areas of Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Shulman, 1986; Ball et al., 2008).
		Teachers are actors in a complex and diverse context of education and by the virtue of their critical thinking and reflection on past experiences are responsible for their own development and improvement (Munby & Russell, 1990).
	Reflective practice	Teachers as actors responsible for improvement of their practice through ongoing systematic inquiry (research) and learning (Hoyle, 1970; Stenhouse, 1975; Hammersly, 1993).
Socio-political agent	Idealistic views Classical view	<i>Idealism (Plato, Kant, Hegel):</i> Teaching is the development of character and moral maxims for individuals that are best served by being subordinated to an 'ideal republic' (Naghizade, 1982).

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		<i>Realism (Aristotle, Avicenna, Ibn Tufail):</i> Teaching is the cultivation of nature, habit and reason in youth to produce good and virtuous citizens for society (Naghibzade, 1982).
	Democratic view	'Democracy' is the ultimate goal of education and in teaching, is the only method of instruction that is helping to reach a community of self-determined individuals with justice, respect and trust as principal values (Dewy, 1916; Rousseau, 1979).
	Critical view	Teachers are agents for change and liberation of the oppressed by means of awareness raising and advocating, and resistance for emancipation and freedom from authoritarian ideologies (Friere, 1970; Giroux, 1988; Shor, 1996).
	Islamic view	Teacher is the main character in individual and societal excellence and sublimation in 'Hayat-e-Tayebah' (i.e., Pure Life) by means of facilitating the revival of 'Islamic norm system' for realization of a unified Muslim community (Al-Kilani, 1998; Motahari, 1961).
	Neo-liberal view	Based on principles of free market, teaching is the main factor in development of modern liberal societies by means of competitiveness, accountability, and creation of materialistic value (Carnoy, 2002, 1995).
Normative views	Progressive-democratic view	In contrast to strict, per ordained delivery of knowledge approach, teaching in its broadest sense is a guide for 'social continuity' of life for individuals through understanding, experiencing, and therefore learning (Kilpatrick, 1951; Dewey, 1916).
	Social reconstruction view	Teaching is viewed as the platform for reconstruction of identities, a reciprocating change from community to individuals and from individuals to community in the socio-political context of education (Bramled, 1956; Counts, 1934).
Artist		Looking at teacher as the creator of novel, exquisite, and exceptional 'learning opportunities' through timely, expressionist, and inspirational learning activities (Gage, 1976).
Clergy		Teachers are the sole instructor, agent, and messenger to man and are responsible for cultivating virtues and values such as divine knowledge and wisdom, altruism, excellence, piety, devotedness, so on (Shahid-e-Sani, 1986).

2.2 Theoretical Approaches and Developments

Countless theories and approaches are found in the tradition of teacher evaluation, however only a few are based on scientific and systemic study of teachers' actual performance. Despite the adversarial nature of some approaches, three broad categories are suggested; *teacher oriented, learning oriented, and teaching oriented* approaches. Table 2 provides an overview of these approaches and methods.

Table 2
Overview of Approaches and Methods of Teacher Evaluation

Approach	Theory	Specification
Teacher oriented approaches	Teacher knowledge	Assessment of teachers' knowledge on broad and prespecified areas of GK, PK, CK, PCK, and TK (Chambless, 2012; Loewenberg et al., 2008).
	Teacher cognition	Conceptualizing teacher work as sole reflection of 'teachers' cognition' in positivistic and situated paradigms related to cognitive learning theories and information processing models (Freeman & Johnson, 1988; Johnson, 2006).
	Teacher competency	Assessment of teachers' 'competency' by utilizing a narrow vision of psychological components of (knowledge, behavior, and commitment) in realization of teachers' practice (Field, 1979; Houston & Brown, 1975).
	Teacher accountability	Characterizing teachers' practice in terms of different areas of accountability to learners, parents, community, Profession, nation, and humanity (Reeves, 2004).
	Teacher effectiveness	Identifying and measuring teachers' practice by investigating possible sources for 'effectiveness' using evidence-based, quantitative approaches such as self, peer, alumni, and administrator ratings and interviews (Campbell et al., 2003, 2012; Schacter & Thum, 2004).
	Teacher quality	Conception of good teaching in terms of 'essential qualities' for teachers that later developed as quality assurance in teacher education programs (Kennedy, 2010; Korthagen, 2004; Kaplan et al., 2000).
	Teacher learning	In contrast to an individualistic view, teacher's practice is viewed as a socially negotiated and mediated process within which 'teacher learning' happens best in the context of 'reconstruction of teaching'; The idea that good teachers are not only teachers, but also learners (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Wallace & Mullholland, 2012).
Learning oriented approaches	Teacher Professionalism	Teaching is viewed as ongoing process of learning and development that underlies 'change' in teacher's practice. This change should be facilitated and controlled by the system of teacher evaluation (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Stodolsky, 1990).
	Value added – gain score model	Interpreting good teaching in terms of its end product that is student progress (e.g., student gain score individually) and providing evidence for student's progress utilizing a range of statistical procedures limited to a certain time span (Braun, 2005).
	Value added –Growth model	Interpreting good teaching in terms of its end product that is student educational progress (e.g., growth rate in comparison to other students) and providing evidence for student's progress taking into account a host of school related variables (background, context, status, etc.) utilizing a range of statistical procedures containing a longitudinal yearly analysis (Braun, 2005, 2007; Lockwood et al.).
	Achievement survey	Defining successful teaching in terms of students' 'achievement and satisfaction' that is monitored and guaranteed via receiving feedback from possible resources (e.g., student, parent, administration, expert, etc.) using mostly survey of opinion (Mahar, 2009; Pounder, 2007; Isor, 2009).
Teaching oriented approaches	Teaching duty	Identifying teachers' best practice on the basis of well described 'duties' using multiple measures and sources to estimate the extent to which they have been done well (Scriven, 1989).
	Teaching standards	Modeling teachers' performance building a comprehensive list of competencies and responsibilities teachers' should be able to do in the practice of their profession (Isor, 2009; Sinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995).

2.3 Toward an Integrated Approach for Local Practice

No doubt that different theories and approaches of teacher evaluation have followed their own ambitions in improvement of teachers' practice, however, all have ended up using rather on an extreme and unrealistic notion of teachers' performance (i.e., effectiveness, quality, accountability, etc.). Although in short run these approaches appeared to be useful, in long run, this has given rise to many concerns regarding practicality, validity, and effectiveness of teacher evaluation programs.

The rationale for integration of approaches came from the fact that local policy makers aligned with international and regional agendas of reform movement in education are making pressing demands on improvement and advancement of teacher education programs. Much in the same way, teacher educators put the pressure on teachers by setting unrealistic and ambitious goals for teachers' learning and development; overlooking the fact that teachers have diverse and different needs for improvement. Notwithstanding that almost all approaches toward assessment of teachers' performance lack extensive and reliable research basis, especially one that successfully links teachers' performance with students' gains and progress. This situation has marked the idea of developing an inquiry based standard framework. An eclectic approach that is all inclusive in terms of theories of good practice, diverse and dynamic in meeting all teachers' needs, is based on observation of the local values and provisions aligned with global policies and perspectives, and more importantly is tailored toward guarantee of students' optimum achievement and progress.

3. Research Questions

1. What are the reliable and valid national and international (policy documents, academic & scientific) resources in teacher education literature?

2. What are the key parameters (general domains, specific key areas, & specific criteria) of a theory-driven, context-based conceptual model for EFL teachers' practice at threshold of I.R. of Iran?

4. Methodology

Following the qualitative paradigm and in line with the nature of our study, Meta-synthesis approach was adapted. To fully serve the purpose of the study a meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988) method was adopted for synthesizing.

4.1 Participants

Based on purposive sampling, participants of the study were; a) Two research assistants: expert in grounded analysis and thematic studies related to language teacher education. b) Group of experts: fifteen teacher education officials active in Iran's language teacher education programs (men & women with minimum of ten years of experience & a related PhD. degree).

4.2 Instrumentation

The instruments used are related to those suitable for meta-synthesis approach. Specifically, a Semantic Differential scale was developed for prioritization of resources to be used in synthesizing, ATLAS.ti software was used for coding and thematic analysis of resources, and a five point Likert scale was used to measure the conceptual validity of criteria in the model.

4.3 Materials

To select the possible sources that best suit the purpose of the study among available literature, a list of forty three reliable, and valid materials in three areas of: academic and research publications, high-stake national documents, and high-stake international documents was developed. Using a *Semantic Differential scale*, a group of experts prioritized the list and finally seventeen documents were selected for study. Table 3 shows the priorities in detail.

Table 3
Priorities of Selected Resources

Priorities	Type of resource	resources
Priority A	High-stakes national documents	A.1 Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE) A.2 Five-year Development Plan (5 th) A.3 20-Year Economic Perspective A.4 The Grand Design (architecture) of Teacher Education Program A.5 National Curriculum A.6 The Bachelor's degree English Language Teaching Curriculum
Priority B	Academic and research documents	B.7 Knowledge growth in teaching (Shulman, 1986) B.8 Teacher evaluation to enhance professional practice (Danielson, 1996,2013) B.9 Focused Teacher Evaluation Elements (Marzano, 2011, 2016) B.10 Qualities of Effective Teachers (Stronge et al., 2007) B.11 Teacher development (Craig, 1998)
Priority C	High-stakes international documents	C.12 The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (CCSSO, 2013) C.13 California Teaching Performance Expectations (CTC, 2013) C.14 Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers in Virginia (VDE,2.12) C.15 Hawaii Teacher Performance Standards (SATEP, 2011) C.16 The New York State Teaching Standards (NYSED, 2011) C.17 North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (SBE, 2013)

4.4 Procedure

Based on Cooper and Hedges (1988, 1994, 2009, & 2017) seminal work on meta-analysis 'qualitative meta-synthesis' procedures were followed. This approach generally serves the purpose when the phenomenon under question requires a cumulative and exhaustive body of knowledge of separate parts to make a whole; when the created whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

More specifically, the focus was on accumulation and aggregation of major body of knowledge on teacher evaluation with the aim of integration, generalization and conflict resolution of existing models and theories; proposing a context based, theory driven, comprehensive framework for teacher evaluation.

4.4.1 Step one, Framing: Identifying research evidence relevant to the formation of teacher evaluation framework. In this step, first, all possible sources for teacher evaluation were gathered forming a database (see table

4.3). Next, the data base documents were evaluated for quality of their content in terms of suitability of their insights, methods, and theories relevant to answering research questions.

4.4.2 Step two, Rating: At this stage, the group of experts, rated each document based on a thirteen item check list specifying the criteria and the relevant parts of the document to be included and pooled for analysis.

4.4.3 Step three, Synthesizing: For this stage (i.e., the main stage of analysis), meta-ethnography (Nobilt & Hare, 1988) approach was adopted. The selected parts of the rated documents were converted into rich text format and pooled into ATLAS.ti software for reliability and facilitation of synthesis procedures. Synthesis took place in three stages;

1- Reciprocal translation analysis: Identifying key concepts /themes in each document separately (with the help of free coding strategy). Then, developing the generated codes into 'descriptive themes'.

2- Refutational synthesis: Generating 'analytical themes' that emerge from descriptive themes related to each document. Then, trying to reconcile contradiction and finding patterns of consolidation emerging from all documents holistically.

3- Interpretive synthesis: Developing a general interpretation of phenomena under study in form of a model, theory or concept that is grounded in the free codes and descriptive and analytic themes of all documents.

4.4.4 Step four, reporting: Reporting the result of synthesis.

5. Results of Meta-Synthesis

In order to maintain a clear trail of procedures, synthesis result are reported in three steps: quantitative results of synthesis, qualitative results of generated framework, and judgment validations.

5.1 Quantitative Results of Synthesis

From grounded analysis of seventeen documents the total of 6293 free codes were retrieved. Table 4 shows the quantity of codes extracted from each document.

Table 4

Quantity of Codes Retrieved From Selected Resources

Doc.	Codes	Doc.	Codes	Doc.	Codes	Doc.	Codes
A1	1560	A6	195	B11	186	C16	153
A2	228	B7	117	C12	267	C17	77
A3	135	B8	354	C13	102		
A4	528	B9	282	C14	183		
A5	1011	B10	213	C15	702		

From the accumulation and analysis of free codes the total 1655 descriptive themes and total of 218 super themes emerged.

5.2 Qualitative Results: A Framework

Based on the results of meta-synthesis, this framework is introduced in eight general domains and thirty five key areas. Table 5 represents the model.

Table 5

Framework of Reference for TEFL (FRTEFL) at the Threshold of I.R. of Iran

A. Planning and preparation for general pedagogy	
A.1	Demonstrating general literacies in Farsi and English languages
A.2	Demonstrating knowledge and skills of general pedagogy
A.3	Demonstrating knowledge and skills of local pedagogy
B. Planning and preparation for language pedagogy	
B.1	Knowledge of language systems
B.2	Knowledge and skills of language and communication
B.3	Knowledge and skills of teaching language system and skills
B.4	Knowledge, awareness, and application of language and language related pedagogy
B.5	Knowledge, awareness, and application of Interdisciplinary knowledge and related sub-fields in teaching
C. Planning and design for learning	
C.1	Demonstrating knowledge of students and learner development
C.2	Setting instructional outcomes and application of content
C.3	Demonstrating knowledge of resources
C.4	Designing coherent instruction
C.5	Planning and designing student assessments
D. Management of learning environment	
D.1	Creating an environment of respect and rapport
D.2	Establishing a culture for learning
D.3	Managing classroom procedures
D.4	Managing student behavior
D.5	Organizing physical space
E. Effective instruction	
E.1	Communicating with students
E.2	Providing and maintaining scaffolding for learning

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- E.3 Using questioning and discussion techniques
- E.4 Engaging students in learning
- E.5 Using assessment in instruction
- E.6 Instructional delivery

F. Organizational responsibility and professionalism

- F.1 Reflecting on teaching
- F.2 Ensure student progress
- F.3 Communicating with families
- F.4 Teacher professional development
- F.5 Participating in the professional community
- F.6 Teachers demonstrate leadership and collaboration

G. Sociocultural capital and social agency

- G.1 Advocacy for national development and progress
- G.2 Advocacy for individual development and progress
- G.3 Development & maintenance of education equality

H. Spirituality, morality and theism

- H.1 Theological and religious accountability
 - H.2 Promotion of spiritual and moral sublimation
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5.3 Conceptual Validity of the Framework

Validity of the proposed framework (FRTEFL) was obtained utilizing experts' judgment. The group of experts rated the validity using a five point Likert scale. Table 6 reveals the details of conceptual validity.

Table 6

Conceptual Validity Means

Domain	Components					
A	A.1	A.2	A.3			
<i>Mean</i>	4.1	3.5	3.3			
B	B.1	B.2	B.3	B.4	B.5	
<i>Mean</i>	4.4	4.8	5.0	3.9	3.6	
C	C.1	C.2	C.3	C.4	C.5	
<i>Mean</i>	4.1	5.0	5.0	4.6	5.0	
D	D.1	D.2	D.3	D.4	D.5	
<i>Mean</i>	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.6	
E	E.1	E.2	E.3	E.4	E.5	E.6
<i>Mean</i>	5.0	3.4	4.0	5.0	4.8	3.7
F	F.1	F.2	F.3	F.4	F.5	F.6
<i>Mean</i>	4.0	5.0	4.1	5.0	4.8	3.6
G	G.1	G.2	G.3			
<i>Mean</i>	3.3	4.6	4.7			
H	H.1	H.2				
<i>Mean</i>	4.2	4.5				

Mean: 0-5

Based on the result of Table 6 all the thirty five key areas passed the threshold of +3.0 and then are validated.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

Following the two great traditions; analytic approach (i.e., standard performance), and holistic approach (i.e., Reflective practice), the framework of reference (FRTEFL) was introduced as an integrative approach toward teacher evaluation. FRTEFL also provides a local model for teachers' practice in line with global standards and policies. Respectively semantic links between FRTEFL and existing standards for teaching can be explored in seven emerging themes:

1- Optimal Learner Development

Learner Development in terms of teachers' performance means the ability of teacher to understand how learners grow and develop, recognize that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and design and implement developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences (FRTEFL, 2017; InTASC, 2013). Furthermore, scholars believe that this quality is a multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary knowledge that requires not only teachers involvement as the main component but also pertains to other roles and functions research, and the design and production of learning materials, as well as involvement in staff development, policy-making and other consultative activities (Gosling, 2008; Hilson, 2011; Rust et al., 2003).

2- Observing Learning Differences

Learning Differences is viewed as one of the most effective strategies for successful learning. It is generally believed to be the teacher's ability to understand individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards (FRTEFL, 2017; InTASC, 2013). Also this quality is believed to be a multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary knowledge that requires not only teachers' involvement as the main component but also requires staff and

educational counselors to constantly monitor and suggest innovative ways to ensure observation of learners' profiles, differentiated instruction, learner and teacher accountability systems, multiple sources of measurement for learning as well as student engagement and parental understanding to enable students to follow their own individual paths to lifelong learning and success (Arends, 2014; Harlen & James, 1997; Jarvis & Prker, 2006; Siegelman et al., 2017).

3- Dynamic Learning Environment

The teachers' ability to work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation are prerequisites of a dynamic learning environment (FRTEFL, 2017; InTASC, 2013). This theme is believed to play a major role in and form the context for scaffolding (Greene & Land, 2000; Simons & Klein, 2007). Basically, the learning environment refers to interactive and diverse context and culture in which learning happens. It also encompasses the culture of educational setting (other than classroom) in which individuals interact and encounter to form a social learning space (Abbott et al., 2017; Tam, 2000; Wilson, 1996).

4- Pure and Specialized Content Knowledge

The teacher ability to understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and to create learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content (FRTEFL, 2017; InTASC, 2013). This theme pertains to teachers' ability to know or express specialized content knowledge in relation to theories, concepts, and methods along with non-specialized content knowledge in relation to effective presentation of content in pedagogically appropriate ways to particular students in particular educational contexts (Nilsson, 2014; Shulman, 1986; Shulman & Sparks, 1992). In its best form, an integration regarding the knowledge of content, students, pedagogy, and educational contexts constitutes the unique professional knowledge of teachers (Ball & Thames, 2008; Thames, 2008).

5- Learning Oriented Assessment

The teacher ability to understand and use multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth and learning, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making (FRTEFL, 2017; InTASC, 2013). In this theme the main focus is on student involvement in assessment so that they develop a better understanding of learning goals and engage more actively in learning process (Carless, 2007; Orsmond et al., 2002; Sadler, 1989). Hence, the aim of assessment is on evaluating student achievement, the learning element, and strengthening the learning aspects of assessment.

6- Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

The teacher ability to engage in ongoing professional learning and using evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, & the community), and to adapt practices to meet the needs of each learner (FRTEFL, 2017; InTASC, 2013). This theme is viewed as a complex process requiring cognitive, affective, and ethical involvement of teachers in terms of willingness to reflection, enactment of appropriate alternatives, and facilitation of change in own/other practice (Basma & Savage, 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Gamrat et al., 2014; Gusky, 2002). Effectiveness of this factor is a key consideration for teacher learning and refinement of pedagogies and educational change.

7- Leadership and Collaboration

The teacher ability to foster appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession (FRTEFL, 2017; InTASC, 2013). This theme generally constitutes what makes a teacher to take a leading role in profession and to help create a culture to support shared leadership and collaboration (Harris, 2003; Wasley, 1992). More specifically,

encouragement of other teachers to engage in collaboration, advocacy for policies and visions, implementing collaboration that impacts student learning and professional practice are among the key factors for successful leadership and collaboration of teachers (Bolman & Deal, 1994; Conyers & Wilson, 2015; Crowther, Ferguson & Han, 2009; Harris, 2003; Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

It can also be concluded that this framework is an advancement in comparison to its precedents in the following areas:

- 1- It is the first teacher evaluation framework embedded in an Islamic education system.
- 2- The framework derives strong associations with teacher education curriculum.
- 3- It also provides a comprehensive reference for validation and development of large-scale assessment of teachers' performance.
- 4- The framework provides a local model for teachers' practice in line with global standards and policies.
- 5- It is developed in compliance to the context of Iran's public education policies and practices; what official documents refer to as 'threshold of Islamic Republic of Iran'.

The advent of this framework is believed to be the first step for quality assurance and accreditation of English language teachers in the context of Iran's teacher education system. The construction of framework also is based on consolidation of local values and policies with fast growing global perspectives about teacher education. Moreover, Iranian EFL teachers can find areas of their strengths or weaknesses referring to this framework. More importantly, teacher evaluation programs can utilize such frameworks for reliability measures, validation processes, and test development. Finally, teacher education programs can benefit from such frameworks for objective standard setting and policy making tailored to teachers' lifelong learning and individualized professional development.

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