The second approach involves building school teacher educator partnerships. With a reduced teaching load, and the assistance of teacher educator mentors, novice second language teachers would have time to absorb and reflect on the various challenges they face during their first year as teachers.

## Conclusions

In order to ensure EFL teaching and novice teachers to benefit from more effective structures of teacher professional development, there is a need for the educational environment to be formed consistent with the current trend of more self-directed, collaborative and inquiry-based approach of professional development programmes as well. Besides, the adoption of these alternative structures will address the importance of more individual oriented notion of professionalism as a crucial part of the prevailing forms of teacher professional development programs, which generally pivot around institutionally endorsed and publicly heralded definition of professionalism (Leung, 2009).

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member within an established school discourse community. He employed the procedures of narration and description to shape a story structure framework that can be used as a model for setting complication-resolution. The aim of this attempt was to impose an order on the work of novice teachers and a make sure that they are on the right track (Farrell, 2006). His qualitative analysis revealed that novice teachers grapple with three major concerns during their first year of teaching: learner centered approach to teaching versus the teacher-centered views of schools, the conflict between novice teacher intended curriculum and that of the school and collegial relationships.

## Future Directions

the unpredictability and demanding requirements of the new context (Brock & Grady, 1997) as well as concerns and tensions that novice teachers struggle with during the first year, lead to feeling of incompetency or abandonment

(Kuzmic, 1993). In addition, due to the employment of the traditional definition of teacher professional development, which considers development as something that is done by others for teachers, workshops, seminars, courses and conferences have become the predominant forms of professional development practices in Iran. In contrast, recent trends of teacher professional development in other countries such as the United Kingdom, United States, Australia and Japan, highlight alternative professional development structures that provide teachers with a platform for self-directed, collaborative, inquiry-based learning that is directly relevant to teachers' classrooms and teachers' informal social and professional networks, which constituty as powerful sites for professional learning (Johnson, 2009). These alternative structures include teacher inquiry seminars, peer coaching, cooperative development, teacher study groups, narrative inquiry, lesson study groups, and critical friends groups. Such alternative structures encourage teachers to engage in on-going, in-depth, and reflective examination of their teaching practices and their students' learning by recognizing the critical role that context plays in teacher learning and L2 teaching (Rogers, 2002) while embracing the processes of teacher socialization that occurs in classrooms schools, and the wider teacher professional communities. Two approaches can be suggested in this area: the introduction of specific courses dedicated to first-year teaching and the development of school -teacher educator partnerships. The first approach addresses the issues of transition raised above by making direct linkages to teaching in the first year in teacher preparation courses.

moments of their first year of teaching (Little, 1990). However, recent research also cautions that the no mere solution of a mentor is to guarantee that the novice teacher will be successfully socialized into teaching within the school culture (Farrell, 2003).

## Current Approaches and Practices

Although the process of socialization experiences of novice teachers has been the focus of many studies in general education, very few studies have addressed this issue in the realm of foreign language education (Freeman & Johnson 1998). Regarding the process of socialization, two important studies have considered the professional development of novice English language teachers in their first year of teaching and have provided insights about second language education programs (Farrell 2003, 2006; Richards & Pennington, 1998). According to Richards and Pennington's (1998) study, the main concerns of novice teachers graduated from teacher education programs in Hong Kong were to sustain a rapport with their students and cover the preselected curriculum. An interesting point was that novice teachers completely ignored or gave up many of the principles and procedures that were central to their teacher education programs. They refer to the role of context as a crucial factor for teacher priorities for familiar routines and practices. At the end, Richards and Pennington (1998) suggest that teacher education programs must consider local demands as important components of teacher preparation. In another study, Farrell (2003, 2006) explained a case study in Singapore in which a novice teacher tried to strike balance between teaching and learning to become a

The quality, duration, belief system and theoretical foundations of language teacher education programs as well as mentoring and practicum experiences, all, affect the work of beginner teachers

that educational experiences of being a leaner could enable a novice teacher to easily overcome new challenges and adapt to his/her new career, much of the empirical research in education has shown controversial results. The obtained results show that it is not easy to change the role from student to teacher; instead, teaching is viewed as a demanding and arduous job that exerts its own impacts on the professional maturity of novice teachers (Featherstone, 1993). As the novice start to learn to teach, his/her prior beliefs, values and background presuppositions are challenged and even rejected in some cases (Loughran, Brown, & Doecke, 2001). As a result, it is obligatory for teacher educators to consider the prior knowledge and beliefs as a lens through which the beginner teacher analyzes the process of teaching. If ignored, these assumptions can downplay the importance of new procedures, methods and skills that the novice teachers are acquiring. Regarding the powerful influence of prior experiences and assumptions and the weak role of teacher education instructions on the decisions of novice teachers, Freeman (1994) warned teacher educators as well as novice teachers that the first year experiences might marginalize what has been presented in language teacher education programs. Tarone and Allwright (2005) argue that the content presented by language teacher education programs may not be in harmony with what happens in real classroom settings; they add that inexperienced novice teachers cannot easily resolve the controversies and gaps between the content of academic courses and realities of classrooms. The experience of teaching in the first year is a complex and demanding task for novice teachers (Bruckerhoff & Carlson 1995; Featherstone

1993; Solomon, Worthy & Carter 1993). Previous studies maintain that if different stakeholders do not address novice teachers' challenges and problems, it is probable that they give up their careers after a short time (Varah, Theune& Parker 1986). According to Fuller and Brown (1975), novice teachers face with concerns and challenges during two general stages. The first stage refers to survival and mastery stage while the second is about settling into a state of resistance to change or staying open to adaptation and change of practice. In the former, novice teachers grapple with concerns and challenges to survive as a teacher (Johnson 1992; Tsui 2003). They are concerned about the ideal (ideal classroom before experiencing the real one) which is suddenly replaced by challenges and problems of survival in the real classroom. Class control and content of instruction are the main challenges of novice teachers at this stage. While in the latter, teaching performance becomes the main challenge for novice teachers, which includes awareness of limitations and dynamicity of the teaching context. As Fuller and Brown (1975) argue, at this stage novice teachers are concerned about their students' achievements and the consequences of their instructional strategies on students' learning. Because of various challenges and concerns that novice teachers face in their first year of teaching, it is recommended that they receive full support and assistance to navigate calmly through their experiences (Fuller & Brown, 1975). One way to help novice teachers is through mentoring during which they receive emotional support and feedback formally and informally. It is believed that those novice teachers who have been mentored are more effective in resolving the critical

## Introduction

Beginner teachers are usually those teachers who have completed a teacher training course as well as practicum and have just started their new career in a real context. They are supposed to feel the process of teaching wholeheartedly more than any other time in their professional lives. Doyle (1997) calls this experience as learning about the structure of classroom and orchestrating the procedures consistent with the demands of the new situation. It is believed that three main types of influence can mediate that novice teachers' first year of experience: the first one refers to school experiences of novice teachers as learners; the second is about the quality of teacher training programs from which they have graduated and finally the process of their socialization into the discourse community of educational setting generally and school culture specifically. Novice teachers' schooling experience is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of issues such as all levels of training from the basic and elementary to university, something that Lortie (1975) mentions as knowledge gained through observation. The quality, duration, belief system and theoretical foundations of language teacher education programs as well as mentoring and practicum experiences, all, affect the work of beginner teachers. Bliss and Reck (1991) argue that teacher socialization in the first year is a dynamic stage through which novice teachers become accepted members of the community practices of teachers and includes mentoring feedback as well as collegial support they gain through their membership in different teachers' societies. Beginner teachers face many challenges and obstacles as they struggle to learn to teach in the first year of their career. Fundamentally, novice teachers are reshaping new conceptions of themselves as teachers; they are on the way of forming new identities in new discourse communities consistent with educational, personal and professional demands of the role of a teacher. This review article tries to shed light on the challenges novice teachers grapple with in their first year of teaching

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## Literature Review

According to Johnson (2002), the first year of teaching is a milestone and an unpredictable activity in every teacher's professional life. He adds that this stage is a reality shock in which the beginner teacher tries to make a balance between learning to teach (expanding the professional development and identity formation that began in teacher training centers) and struggling to shape a new discourse based on the needs, wants and demands of the established framework of school discourse. Calderhead (1992) claims that the novice socializes into a new discourse community with shared beliefs, values, goals and standards. He believes that novice teachers have accumulated an array of internalized belief systems, premises and different kinds of assumptions about teaching and learning objectives. Though some experts like Urzua (1999) have long assumed

# EFL Novice Teachers: Concerns and Challenges

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**چکیده**

بســـیاری از اســـاتید، دســـتاندرکاران و حتی خود معلمان بر این باورند که معلمهای تازهکار پس از فارغالتحصیلی قادرند از آموختههای خود در دوران تربیتمعلم، در اولین ســـال تدریس، اســـتفاده کنند. اما تجربه نشـــان میدهد که این باور بســـیار خوشبینانه است. این بدین معناست که برای انتقال تجارب تربیتمعلم به موقعیت جدید، چالشهای جدیدی پیش روی معلمان تازهکار وجود دارد که وین من (١٩٨٤) از آن بهعنوان یک واقعیت شوکآور یاد میکند. اگرچه معلمان تازهکار آرمانهایی را در دوران تربیتمعلم برای خود ترسیم میکنند، اما به دلیل واقعیتهای نانوشتۀ موقعیت جدید، مجبورند اهداف و جهتگیریهای خود را تغییر دهند و یا بازبینی کنند. هدف از مقاله حاضر بررســـی دغدغهها و چالشهای معلمان زبان انگلیسی در اولین سال تدریس میباشد.

**کلیدواژهها** معلمان تازهکار، تجربیات تدریس، چالشهای تدریس

## Abstract

Many teacher trainers, stakeholders and even teachers themselves have had this common belief that after graduation, novice teachers have the potentiality to apply what they have learnt in teacher-preparation programs during their first year of teaching. However, the story has been experienced in a completely different way. It means that in order to transmit the experiences of teacher education programs, to new contexts, first year teachers face different challenges or as Veenman (1984) puts, they experience some sort of a shocking reality. Though beginner teachers set ideals during their teacher education programs, due to social and political unpredictable realities of the context, they may change and reshape their goals and directions. The present article tries to review the concerns and challenges EFL novice teachers face during their first year of teaching.

**Key Words :** novice teachers, teaching experience, teaching practice challenges