

The role of the educational inspector in activating the teaching competencies of the middle school teacher

Dr. Nassiha Boutebicha¹, Dr. Souaad Bouizar²

¹University of Jijel (Algeria), Algeria

²University of Batna 1, Algeria

Emails: nassiha.boutebicha@univ-jijel¹, souad.bouizar@univ-batna.dz²

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to shed light on the role which educational inspector should play to activate teaching competencies in the middle school, by identifying the most important teaching competencies that the professor should have at this stage, then identifying the role of the educational inspector in activating these competencies.

This study achieve to know the hole activities that fall in the inspector's tasks, and in turn contribute to achieving this goal, among them, but not limited to: enlightening the teacher about the principles rules of teaching planning, and helping him to design educational activities appropriate to the lessons, with an explanation of how to organize them, and setting the goals of them, and presenting effective teaching methods which should be convenable with chronological and mental age of the middle school learner, agreement with the professor to apply it, then visit the teachers to see how well they implement the lessons, discuss their application's difficulties, and informing them of principles evaluation process, observing the professor's skills in class managing, then provide him some skills that help him by clarifying effective methods of class management, and encouraging cooperation between colleagues and parents, and with specialists from the local community.

Keywords: the role, educational supervision, teaching competencies, intermediate education.

INTRODUCTION

The educational process generally aims to foster the comprehensive development of the individual, which requires the concerted efforts of multiple parties collaborating as an integrated team to achieve this goal. These parties include the teacher, the learner, the school administration, and the educational inspector.

In this context, achieving the objectives of the educational process primarily depends on the teacher, given the significant role they play in ensuring high-quality educational outcomes. For the teacher to perform their role effectively, they must possess a set of essential competencies and skills required for the teaching profession, including the following core competencies: lesson planning, teaching implementation, assessment, classroom management, and interpersonal relationships. These competencies are reflected in the teacher's personal and cognitive abilities, the methods they use to prepare and deliver lessons effectively in the classroom, the educational curricula developed by specialized educational authorities, the precise use of teaching tools, their skill in selecting the most appropriate methods and tools to assess learners, their ability to communicate with learners, and their attention to both classroom and non-classroom human relations.

From this perspective, activating the teaching competencies of teachers has become an urgent necessity and a crucial priority that must not be overlooked. This requires diligence on the part of entities directly involved in the implementation of this process, most notably the educational inspector, who serves as the primary guide and mentor for the teacher. Regardless of the teacher's level of experience, they remain in need of guidance due to the continuous evolution of educational theories and ideas. This underscores the vital importance of educational inspection within the school system across various educational stages, particularly in middle schools. The educational inspector plays a key role in diagnosing problems and errors, identifying strengths and weaknesses in teachers' performance, and working to address them.

Based on the above, the current study can be conceptualized through the following research question:

What are the necessary teaching competencies for middle school teachers, and what role should the educational inspector play in activating these competencies?

The study aims to highlight the role the educational inspector should play in activating the teaching competencies of middle school teachers. This includes identifying the key teaching competencies that middle school teachers must possess and exploring how the educational inspector contributes to the activation of these competencies.

The study also draws on the theory of social roles, which asserts that roles constitute one of the elements of social interaction. A role is defined as a set of actions or behavioral frameworks performed by an individual to meet the expectations of a specific situation. This highlights the prominent role that the educational inspector must play in activating the various teaching competencies required by middle school teachers. (Atwi, 2004, p. 74)

1- STUDY CONCEPTS:

Every scientific study, whether theoretical or applied, relies on fundamental concepts that need to be clearly defined. Based on this, the main concepts of the research are defined as follows:

1.1 Concept of Role:

The role is defined as: “A set of activities or behavioral frameworks performed by the leader to achieve what is expected of them in specific situations. Roles allow for predicting an individual’s behavior in various situations and are determined for employees through descriptions of the tasks and duties they are expected to perform. The role of the educational leader depends on the expectations and requirements imposed by the surrounding environment, circumstances, and internal regulations.” (Atwi, 2004, p. 74).

Murad Zaimi defines the role in his book *Socialization Institutions* by stating: “The social environment to which a person belongs, represented by groups of interacting individuals, each with personal, social, and cognitive experiences different from others, as well as the customs, traditions, and systems it contains, all require this person to perform tasks, assume responsibilities, and fulfill duties to continue within the institution and benefit from its services. This is what scientists mean by the concept of role.” (Zaimi, 2007, p. 45).

From these definitions, it can be said that the role of the educational inspector refers to the set of tasks, activities, practices, and responsibilities expected of the middle school inspector in developing teachers’ teaching competencies. These include planning, implementation, evaluation, classroom management, and interpersonal relationships to enhance the quality of the educational process in middle schools.

1.2 Concept of Educational Inspection:

Several definitions pertain to educational inspection, including the following:

Kimball Wiles defines educational inspection, in the sense of supervision, as: “A reciprocal relationship process that leads to the success and advancement of educational experiences for boys and girls.”

Wiles later updates the purpose of educational inspection as follows: “It is an activity aimed at serving teachers and helping them solve the problems they face to perform their duties in the best possible manner.” (Al-Maayta, 2007, p. 227).

Educational inspection (School Inspection) is also defined as: “The monitoring carried out by educational inspectors over educational institutions to ensure the proper functioning of the studies conducted within them. Inspectors are assigned to specific types of subjects.” (Hamdan, 2006, p. 125).

From the above, educational inspection can be described as the various organized activities performed by middle school inspectors to guide and lead teachers, with the goal of promoting and enhancing their teaching skills to improve the educational process.

1.3 Concept of the Educational Inspector:

Sergiovanni and Starratt define the educational inspector as: “An official whose work is connected with all or most aspects of the school. The educational inspector is an important source of ideas, a leader of new proposals, and a designer of plans that help the teacher and principal understand the course of the educational process accurately.” (Al-Zaidi, 2002, p. 23).

This definition considers educational inspection in its comprehensive sense, encompassing administration, teachers, curricula, and more. Despite the general nature of this definition, it can be concluded that the educational inspector is the individual responsible for guiding middle school teachers in lesson planning, implementation, and student evaluation to activate various teaching competencies among these teachers.

1.4 Concept of Teaching Competencies:

Teaching competencies are defined as: “The skills and abilities that a teacher must possess to effectively and efficiently carry out the teaching process at a certain level of performance, with minimal effort, time, and cost.” (Salama, 2009, p. 89).

Teaching competencies are also defined as: “A set of abilities and associated skills that a teacher is expected to possess to effectively perform their tasks, roles, and responsibilities, positively impacting the educational process. This particularly reflects the teacher’s success and ability to transfer knowledge to their students. The teacher achieves this through planning and preparing lessons and other daily and practical activities, as evidenced by their actual behavior and preparation within and outside the classroom.” (Al-Rubaie, 2013).

Fredrik defines teaching competencies as: “The ability to perform, which consists of three components: the first is cognitive, comprising a set of cognitive processes; the second is behavioral (performance-related); and the third is affective (emotional). Competence is linked to the quality standards of teacher performance, which can be observed and evaluated through the teacher’s roles, responsibilities, and ability to work and achieve.” (Al-Fatlawi, 2008, p. 319).

Patricia defines teaching competencies as: “Precisely defined behavioral objectives that describe all the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for practicing the teaching profession.” (Al-Safasfa, 2005, p. 28).

Teaching competencies (Teaching Competencies) are defined as: “The acceptable level of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and ethical principles that enable the teacher to carry out their teaching tasks proficiently and effectively. Teaching competencies are categorized into three main competencies: planning, implementation, and evaluation.” (Samara and Al-Adili, 2008, p. 136).

From the above definitions, teaching competencies represent the abilities and skills possessed by a middle school teacher in areas such as planning and implementing lessons, managing and controlling the classroom, personal qualities, and behavioral patterns demonstrated by the teacher. They also include the evaluation competencies necessary for the teacher to efficiently practice teaching.

1.5 Concept of the Middle School Stage:

Abdelkader Karaja defines the middle school stage as follows: “The middle school stage begins immediately after completing the elementary stage. It serves as a complementary stage to the one before it and a preparatory stage for the one that follows (the secondary education stage). What distinguishes learners at this stage is the emergence of new capabilities and readiness in terms of their cognitive and various other abilities. This makes the stage unique in its psychological and educational energy and its potential to achieve the highest possible educational performance, provided that appropriate educational conditions are in place.” (Karaja, 1997, p. 41).

2. Evolution of the Concept of Educational Inspection:

Educational inspection has gone through several stages, each with its unique characteristics. These stages can be summarized as follows:

2.1 Stage of Inspection:

During this stage, classroom visits were the primary method employed by inspectors to monitor and evaluate teachers’ work. The main tool and approach used was unannounced visits to assess the state of the school, attend classes, listen to the teacher’s explanations and delivery, identify teacher shortcomings, record errors, and formally report them. This approach resulted in negative attitudes towards inspection and inspectors among teachers. (Nasser Ali, 2006, p. 102).

2.2 Stage of Training and Guidance:

Educational inspection entered another phase that acknowledged the necessity of training, guidance, and counseling. This stage was characterized by recognition of the essential needs of teachers, particularly their basic needs, to fulfill educational programs. However, concepts such as self-growth, teacher participation in leadership, and training in leadership were not given sufficient attention. As a result, this stage fell short of achieving the desired positive impacts on improving the teaching and learning processes. (Nasser Ali, 2006, p. 102).

2.3 Stage of Inspection as a Comprehensive Democratic Process:

Educational inspection evolved into a collaborative, democratic process involving both the inspector and the teacher. The goal became to discover and understand educational objectives, help teachers accept these objectives, and work towards achieving them. Within this framework, the inspector is viewed as an educational leader who focuses on the teacher’s growth and development and assists them in solving their problems.

This concept of educational inspection is distinguished by its emphasis on collaboration between the educational inspector and the teacher. It rejects authoritarianism, respects differing opinions, and acknowledges the real value of every effort made.

Comprehensive educational inspection aims to improve the educational process by addressing all elements of teaching and learning, including teachers, students, and curricula. (Nasser Ali, 2006, p. 104).

From the last stage, it is evident that the inspection process is a positive interaction between the inspector and the middle school teacher. This interaction instills confidence and reassurance in the teacher, helping them adjust their teaching behavior and attitudes towards educational inspection, a key aspect lacking in previous stages.

This study emphasizes the importance of making the primary goal of the inspection process the improvement and activation of teachers' competencies. Such improvements will reflect positively on their performance and the educational process as a whole. Achieving this must occur within a democratic atmosphere that fulfills the needs of the teacher.

3. Educational Inspection in the Middle School Stage:

The inspection process in middle schools is conducted as follows:

The middle school inspector selects a school within a district to establish an office with the approval of the Directorate of Education. The district encompasses several middle schools, and each district is overseen by an inspector. The inspector must hold a graduation certificate from the Educational Personnel Training Center and operates under the authority of the Director of Education. They are officially installed in their position through an installation document issued by the Directorate of Education. The inspector is supported administratively by a clerical assistant appointed by the Director of Education from the staff of the Directorate, as the inspector is considered an affiliate of the external services of the Directorate of Education. (Kadri, 2013, p. 68).

The middle school inspector performs their duties in two specializations: subject specialization and middle school administration specialization. In these capacities, the inspector is responsible for overseeing the proper functioning of educational institutions, implementing official instructions, programs, and timetables, and ensuring the use of information and communication technologies in compliance with the legislative and regulatory frameworks governing the educational system.

The inspector is also tasked with training educational, administrative, and educational staff, inspecting their performance, monitoring their activities, evaluating them, and supervising administrative management in middle schools.

Additionally, the inspector participates in research activities related to their field of specialization and may be assigned investigative tasks. Their activities are carried out within the middle schools of the district they oversee. (Didane, 2009, p. 118).

4. The Role of the Educational Inspector in Activating Teaching Competencies of Middle School Teachers:

In light of the previously defined concepts of educational inspection, the middle school stage, and the various tasks assigned to the inspector at this level, this section addresses the critical teaching competencies that middle school teachers should possess. It also highlights the role the educational inspector should play in activating these competencies through the following elements:

4.1 Activating Lesson Planning Competencies:

A lesson plan is defined as "the process through which the educational objectives included in the lesson are translated into learning outcomes that can be achieved in a single session. The teacher selects the methods, activities, and evaluation approaches for this session or educational situation." (Lakhali and Farhaoui, 2009, p. 2007).

Thus, the competency of lesson planning and its objectives includes the middle school teacher's ability to identify the educational objectives specific to the subject they teach, its content, the activities conducted during the lesson, and the necessary resources for these activities. (Melhem, 2001, p. 282).

Al-Khalidi emphasizes that one of the responsibilities of the educational inspector is to highlight to middle school teachers the importance of lesson planning and to teach them the principles of lesson planning. The inspector should help teachers develop the necessary skills for planning, guide them on what needs to be done and how to do it, assist them in designing suitable activities and applications for the lessons, and explain how to organize these activities and determine their objectives. Furthermore, the inspector should encourage teachers to seek diverse sources of knowledge to enrich learners' experiences and direct them to think ahead about how to allocate lesson elements within the allocated class time appropriately. Teachers should also be encouraged to adopt a flexible teaching plan that can be adjusted as needed based on the educational situation.

The inspector ensures these aspects in the field by reviewing the teacher's clarity in defining both term and daily lesson plans. This includes ensuring that the educational objectives to be achieved are clearly identified, that these objectives are linked to the lesson content and assessment, and that the teacher's activities align with the plan and are revised as necessary. Additionally, the inspector ensures that the teacher follows the curriculum according to an agreed-upon timeline. (Al-Khalidi, 2008, p. 300).

4.2 Activating Lesson Implementation Competencies:

Lesson implementation, or "Implementing Teaching," is defined as: "A set of procedures carried out inside the classroom to translate the teaching plan into tangible reality. These procedures include presenting the lesson, assessing prior knowledge, determining teaching strategies, reinforcing and guiding learning, summarizing the lesson, and finally managing assessment methods." (Al-Kasbani, 2010, p. 111).

Thus, the competencies related to lesson implementation encompass organizing the educational experiences and accompanying activities by the middle school teacher and effectively utilizing them within the teaching-learning process. (Melhem, 2001, p. 382).

To clarify the role of the educational inspector in activating this competency, Abu Ghreibah emphasizes that inspectors are tasked with highlighting the importance of the teacher's ability to appropriately present and execute lessons. Inspectors should assist teachers in employing effective teaching methods and strategies that align with the chronological and cognitive age of middle school learners. Additionally, inspectors are encouraged to motivate and inspire teachers to diversify, innovate, and renew their approaches to teaching based on the educational context.

The inspector's role includes:

- Agreeing with teachers on applying these strategies in teaching.
- Visiting teachers in middle schools to assess how well they execute lessons and apply these methods.
- Providing guidance to teachers, discussing the challenges they faced during implementation, and working on addressing these issues.
- Evaluating the work completed and preparing reports for future reference. (Abu Ghreibah, 2010, p. 219).

Some educational theorists argue that all elements in the educational curriculum should be discussed and explored collaboratively by all stakeholders in the educational process, including teachers and inspectors. There should be an agreement among these parties to focus lesson delivery on a variety of linguistic, scientific, and skill-based activities that enhance learners' abilities. These activities should not be delivered randomly but should be organized, planned, and purpose-driven by both the teacher and learners. The teacher should not monopolize the work and direction in the form of lecture-style teaching. Instead, lesson delivery should be a collaborative effort between the teacher and learners. (Asasous, 2016, p. 138).

4.3 Activating Assessment Competencies:

Assessment is defined as: "A continuous and systematic process aimed at evaluating the learning trajectory to identify strengths for reinforcement or weaknesses and learning difficulties for remediation by issuing appropriate judgments and making pedagogical decisions for reinforcement, correction, or treatment." (Lasab, 2017, p. 229).

Others view assessment as: "A process of diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. It is an organized process to determine the extent to which educational objectives are achieved." (Ibrahim Bashir et al., 2014, p. 298).

Gerald Scallon defines assessment as: "Issuing a judgment about the learner's progress toward expected behaviors at each stage of the learning process. This judgment is made according to diagnostic and monitoring criteria to understand the causes of delay and address the problems posed by the process." (Mokaddem, 2013, p. 138).

Thus, assessment involves the procedures employed by the middle school teacher; they aim to determine the progress of learners' education and the extent to which the required level of performance is achieved. Through it, the teacher can identify learners' levels, analyze their errors, and develop appropriate remedies for them. Assessment competencies include the teacher's preparation of suitable measurement tools for the subject they teach. (Melhem, 2001, p. 382).

Al-Khalidi indicates that the educational inspector activates assessment competencies in middle school teachers by introducing and enlightening them about the principles of the assessment process, modern assessment methods, and the achievement level that students should reach, emphasizing the following:

- The teacher plans to use assessment methods and employs various evaluation techniques (Al-Khalidi, 2008, p. 301). This, of course, happens after understanding the methods for using diverse assessment tools, such as observation and interviews, and learning how to grade tests, assignments, and other school activities. The educational inspector should clarify this through practical demonstrations of assessing students' learning, using supervisory methods like illustrative lessons.
- The teacher prepares oral and written exams (Al-Khalidi, 2008, p. 301). This begins at the start of the school year as part of diagnostic assessment to evaluate all students' levels, identify those who are behind, and determine their proficiency levels.

- The teacher analyzes student results to help them improve their performance, records their results in official registers, and keeps a record of exam results (Al-Khalidi, 2008, p. 301). Through this procedure, the inspector helps the teacher develop the ability to assess students' performance accurately and objectively, by ensuring continuous written monitoring of students' achievement in school records, such as the assessment and follow-up logs. Additionally, the inspector should explain how to use these records, especially for new teachers who are unfamiliar with them.
- The teacher uses the results to improve teaching methods and strategies, relying on the analysis of students' performance and results to address learning problems (Al-Khalidi, 2008, p. 301). Through this, the inspector enables the middle school teacher to use assessment results effectively in the teaching process.

4.4 Activating Classroom Management Competencies:

Classroom management is defined as: "An organizational process carried out by the teacher within the classroom during the lesson to maintain order and create a conducive environment that enables middle school learners to pay attention to the explanation and understand its content." (Girgis, 2005, p. 45).

A teacher who possesses this competency is capable of acting wisely in critical situations, organizing learners in a way that allows for continuous monitoring, managing the classroom amicably, and distributing their attention to all learners. (Al-Farah and Dababneh, 2006, pp. 74–76).

The educational inspector contributes to activating classroom management skills for middle school teachers through the following:

- The inspector focuses on observing the teacher's skills in maintaining classroom discipline and order, then works to equip the teacher with techniques to help them overcome challenges during classroom management and teaching by clarifying effective methods for classroom management. (Hussein and Awadallah, 2002, p. 32).
- The educational inspector enables the teacher to stimulate learners' motivation for learning and encourage their engagement by urging the teacher to provide clear instructions and explanations, ensure that questions posed are learning-oriented, value learners' perspectives, and use incentives to encourage the learning process.
- The inspector guides and educates the teacher on how to apply learning and teaching theories in various classroom situations. (Al-Khalidi, 2008, p. 301).

This study indicates that there are important elements in classroom management that the educational inspector should highlight to teachers at this stage. These elements include the following:

- The educational inspector should enlighten the teacher about the importance of modifying learners' behavior and guide them on how to deal with undesirable behaviors, as this is one of the primary goals of modern education.
- The educational inspector should encourage the teacher to pay attention to the cleanliness and organization of learners' books, notebooks, and tools.
- The educational inspector should motivate the teacher to foster a spirit of positive competition among learners, as this helps enhance learners' discipline within the classroom.

4.5 Activating Human Relations Competencies:

This competency highlights the necessity of establishing positive human relationships between the teacher and the learners themselves within the teaching-learning process, as well as between the teacher and the professional environment. (Melhem, 2001, p. 382). Thus, a middle school teacher possessing human relations competencies reflects their ability to engage in positive interactions with learners, parents, fellow teachers, the school principal, and the educational inspector. This competency aims to create an atmosphere of harmony, affection, cooperation, and mutual trust.

In the field of human relations, the educational inspector encourages middle school teachers to:

- Collaborate with colleagues, parents, and specialists from the local community. For example, the teacher can prepare clear reports for parents.
- Know their learners well and consistently work on improving their effective communication skills with them.
- Employ strategies to improve classroom behavior among learners. (Al-Khalidi, 2008, p. 301).

Al-Asadi also points out that the educational inspector plays several roles in this area, the most important of which are:

- Inspiring enthusiasm among teachers and boosting their morale. It is their duty to create a sense of security and reassurance among teachers, avoiding actions that undermine their confidence or their professional abilities. (Al-Asadi, 2006, p. 85).
- Regularly and consistently working to strengthen professional and social bonds among those working in the teaching profession, enhancing and elevating these ties. The inspector should also assist middle school teachers, especially beginners and newcomers, in adapting to the school environment, becoming familiar with its prevailing atmosphere, and feeling comfortable within it. (Al-Asadi, 2006, p. 50).

CONCLUSION

Educational inspection, carried out by highly experienced and competent inspectors, enhances the educational practices of middle school teachers and activates their various teaching competencies. These competencies include the teacher's knowledge of learner characteristics, mastery of information and concepts related to their subject, ability to plan lessons, use the best teaching methods and strategies during lesson implementation, design and analyze achievement tests, manage the classroom effectively, and engage positively with learners, colleagues, parents, and the entire educational team within the school. These skills enable teachers to perform their duties to the fullest in middle schools, thereby improving learners' academic achievement and excellence.

On this basis, the educational inspector is called upon to continuously improve and develop these competencies in middle school teachers, working alongside them to achieve a clear goal: improving the quality of education and its outcomes.

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