

Original Paper

Elementary English Language School Teachers Self Evaluation: A Case Study from Real Life Application

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Abstract

Self- evaluation is a central “tool” to express how we know what we do when we teach, and as we make decisions on our own while we teach, self- evaluation has the power to help us link knowledge and theoretical information and to use each area of expertise more professionally. This paper will discuss primary school English Language teacher trainee’s self- evaluation which will be carried out between the instructor (researcher/ mentor) and the student teacher trainees. This study aims to explore the benefits of the process of self-evaluation during the student trainees while teaching English as a foreign language in public elementary schools in the form of the practice classes (Practicum Course). Another purpose of this research will be to find out more about students’ perceptions, problems and difficulties of teaching the target language (English) to young learners in order to find the instrument that will help the teacher trainees to better prepare, monitor and evaluate their own teaching through the self-evaluation and peer evaluation. The chosen instrument for this research will be observation for each individual by the instructor (mentor) and the teacher trainees, followed by a questionnaire distributed among the teacher trainees. The sample will consist of 30 female teacher trainees. Each participant is assigned four classmates to be observed and evaluated; followed by the mentor observation and evaluation for each teacher trainee. The results were not similar between the teacher trainees and the mentor.

Keywords

Self-Evaluation, teacher trainee, peer evaluation, English language teaching, primary stage, practicum course

1. Introduction

One of the productive roles in teacher professional development is teaching experience through self-evaluation (Cowan, 2006). Self-evaluation is a central ‘tool’ to express how we know what we do when we teach, and as teachers make decisions on our own while we teach. Thus, self-evaluation has the power to help teachers link knowledge and theoretical information and use each area of expertise more professionally (Taras, 2010).

Through the practicum course, the teacher trainees can have the chance to associate theory of language acquisition with practice, unsympathetically appraise one’s teaching skills and give the opportunity to discuss different approaches and solutions for specific teaching context with peer classmates. That is, the teacher trainees conduct a lesson in the micro teaching class, and then evaluate it from the theoretical and practical points of view by using individual feedback, as well as face-to-face peer and instructor’s (mentor) feedback.

1.1 Rational

Although the progress of teachers’ personal competencies depends on the quality of education and training which they should be exposed to, their pleasure for teaching a target language (English as a Foreign Language) is in demand (Wallace, 2009). Of course, teachers make decisions on their own while they teach. Since, the teacher’s knowledge, abilities and success plus the outcome of the learners are all results of how these teachers plan, prepare, perform and evaluate their lesson for their learners, therefore, self-evaluation is significant to express how we (teachers) know what we do when we teach. Consequently, for teacher trainees’ resourceful mean of sharing their teaching experiences would be through discussing, sharing and reflecting face to face their feedback with their peer classmates.

Accordingly, to improve the education of teacher trainees’ program at the College of Basic Education, the teacher trainees should possess certain values and criteria as: communication process and intellectual, moral, verbal as well as professional values. For this purpose, in the practicum course, the teacher’s professional development completed by teacher- student and student- student interaction focuses on forming their own views, opinions, and awareness of their own work.

Nevertheless, this research paper aims to explore the benefits of training students for the process of self-evaluation during their teaching the target language (English as a Foreign Language/ EFL) in the form of the practice classes (practicum course). Moreover, with this research paper, it is more important to find out more about teacher trainees’ perceptions, problems and difficulties of teaching the target language to young learners in public elementary schools in order to find the instrument that will help the teacher trainees to better prepare, monitor and evaluate their own teaching through the self-evaluation and peer evaluation.

1.2 Research Questions

(1) In general, what was the teacher trainee teaching performance like compared to the instructor’s observation?

- (2) Based on the teacher trainees peer evaluation, do they enable the learners to absorb the target language?
- (3) Do the teacher trainees tend to overestimate or underestimate themselves compared to the Instructor's (mentor) evaluation?

2. Literature Review

Flint and Johnson considered that teacher trainees engage in deep learning if they are basically evaluated in a fair and transparent process, compared to if it is focused on grades which in return lessen the teacher trainees' effectiveness to judge their own work (2011). Therefore, in the practicum course, usually the instructor (mentor) for the teacher trainees expresses skepticism about the effectiveness of this course because the skills practiced cannot be satisfactorily isolated from a real language learning context (Cohen, 1998). Consequently, when teachers inspire the learners' love and desire for learning the target language, then you know that those teachers are aware of what they are teaching and doing all day in the classrooms.

Hence teacher trainee's evaluation helps them understand the problems they encounter; it is better to understand the successes and difficulties the teacher trainees will face as future teachers. One must enhance the quality of classroom teaching that is carried out by the teacher trainees through self-evaluation, peer evaluation and instructor (mentor) evaluation (Papak, 2015).

2.1 Individual (Self) Evaluation

The individual self-evaluation by the language teacher trainee has a problem in meeting the objective of the lesson to be taught and giving a clear picture of the one's abilities to perform the lesson efficiently. Kyriacou (2001) adds that language teacher trainee does have the theoretical knowledge of language acquisition, but their self-confidence and self-belief in foreign language communication is not developed properly.

Ur (1996) describes that teacher trainees (future class teachers), should advance in professional expertise and knowledge by using own teaching experience and reflection as the main tools for personal progress. In addition, Ur (1996) clarifies that teacher trainee development takes place when teacher trainees or teachers consciously take advantage of such resources to enhance their own teaching skills. Scrivener (1994) also supports the idea of professional development through one's own self-evaluation by asking themselves some related teaching questions.

Although self-confidence and self-belief are the two very important components that are based upon the proper self-evaluation process is true in order to help our teacher trainees to self-evaluate on their teaching practice, then they are empowered by gaining access in decision making, grading and controlling over their own assessment (Papak, 2015).

2.2 Peer Evaluation

Race (2001) define peer evaluation as the use of learners as bases of information in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher. Also, face to

face evaluation helps teacher trainees to obtain/ send valuable information because it offers the teacher trainees opportunities for negotiation of meaning (DiGiovani & Nagaswami, 2001).

The advantage for the peer-evaluation is to help trainees critically examine the target language learning in progress and understand their own learning in a better way. Little (2003, p. 223) mentions that the capacity for private reflection grows out of the practice of the public, interactive reflection, and the capacity for self-evaluation develops partly out of the experience of evaluation and being evaluated by other.

From time to time in peer evaluation, the teacher trainees feel painful to deliver criticism to their classmates because they lack the procedure knowledge for critical comments (Cohen, 1998). Also, Spratt and Leung (2000, p. 224) add that peer evaluation needs respectable preparation, discussion with the learners and strategies by the teachers. However, Rollinson (2005) states that the peer evaluation feedback would be fully appreciated if the micro teaching class is adequately set- up and trained.

Thus, for the foreign language teacher trainees in micro teaching class provides unique ideas among classmates of the same status (Vacilotto & Cummings, 2007). During the short period in the micro teaching class, the teacher trainees are motivated in a useful discussion; as well as, they experience the up to date techniques that might be useful to be used to teach a foreign language (Cirkovic-Miladinovic, 2010). Consequently, the evaluation in the micro teaching class considered to be for the teacher trainees as teachers and learners at the same time due to the fact that these teacher trainees are integrating the theoretical knowledge they gained within their first three academic years of college with practice (Cirkovic-Miladinovic, 2010).

2.3 Mentor (Instructor's) Evaluation

Although to arise a pleasure from learning a target language, it is vigorous to rise the consciousness of teachers to a higher level of thoughts, updating their approaches to planning, performing and evaluating their teaching procedure in the classrooms in order to increase the educational outcomes of the learners (Papak, 2015). This eliminates the unpleasant circle of content focused approach to teaching (Papak, 2015).

Anderson (2009) states that instructors (mentors) involved in training had more effect in classrooms as compared to instructors who had not the pleasure of training students. Huang and Moon add that when instructors (mentors) have mastered the subject content of the target language, then they can achieve the progress in their classrooms (2009). Stronge et al. (2007) assert that instructors (mentors) verbal abilities in explaining, questioning and giving feedback to teacher trainees considered a good quality for teachers.

3. Methodology

This paper was carried out during the Fall semester 2018. The study focused on English language teacher trainees who are carry out their practicum course before their actual teaching practice. The participants in the study were thirty Kuwaiti female English language teacher trainees who were

implementing their practicum within six public elementary schools in Kuwait. Every five English Language Teacher Trainee were assigned the same school. Each participant was assigned four classmates to be observed and evaluated. The instructor (mentor) made sure that each teacher trainee was observed by only four classmates and not more. The observation checklist was based on Checklist (1) (Table 1). The categories for the observation were divided into five and for each question, the teacher trainee evaluate her class mate according to the following scale: (5) very important, to (1) not important, and based on the importance of that category.

Table 1. Teacher Trainee Classmate Checklist (1)

Questions	Category	How important
1 Is the aim of the lesson clear?		
2 Does the teacher write clearly on the board?		
3 Do students participate actively in the lesson?		
4 Does the teacher do variety of activities?		
5 Are the stages of the lesson clear?		
6 Does the teacher have clear pronunciation?		
7 Does the teacher smile often?		
8 Does the teacher use visuals appropriately?		
9 Does the teacher speak naturally?		
10 Does the teacher encourage the students to ask questions?		
11 Does the teacher encourage real use of the Target Language?		
12 Does the teacher seem interested in the lesson?		

Furthermore, each teacher trainee had the chance to video tape herself as she was teaching and then evaluate herself based on the following checklist (2) (Table 2).

Table 2. Teacher Trainee Self-evaluation Checklist (2)

How satisfied are you -----	1	2	3	4	5
1 That the lesson was well planned					
2 That you were presenting language points in clear and interesting ways					
3 That you were employing a range of techniques to teach new vocabulary					
4 With your communication skills: giving instructions, explaining, questioning, developing and discussion					
5 With the use of the board, resources and any other materials					
6 That your teaching methods were suitable					
7 With managing your lesson, class control and discipline					

-
- 8 Employing a variety of activities for developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills
- 9 With giving students enough time to respond to questions
- 10 With implementing your lesson plan as you have prepared it
-

All the teacher trainees were all seniors in the College of Basic Education, a college that graduates teachers only for primary levels and must complete the practicum course before graduating with a degree in teaching English as a Foreign Language from the College of Basic Education. Also, the researcher (mentor) was conducting observations for each teacher trainee as she was performing her lesson teaching plan. The observation was guided by the following checklist (3), and filled out during each 45 minutes observation period for each teacher trainee (Table 3). Questions were marked according to the following scale: 4 Excellent, 3 Above average, 2 Average, 1 Unsatisfactory, N/A Not applicable. The researcher also wrote comments in the spaces provided.

Table 3. Observation Checklist (3)

	4	3	2	1	N/A
Pronunciation					
Vocal Variety					
Fun Factor					
Body Language/ Eye Contact					
Choice of activities					
Organization of lesson					
Interesting					
Teachability					
Adaptation of Instruction					
Material Used					

3.1 Setting

This study took place during the practicum course. Only female teacher trainees at the elementary level teach both genders. The educational policy in Kuwait is to have only female teachers in the public elementary grades, and male teachers are gradually being moved into the middle schools and high schools.

3.2 Time Period of the Study

This study was carried out in Kuwaiti public elementary schools over the fall of 2018. The study started at the beginning of the new Kuwaiti school year (September, 2018) with two weeks of subject content explanation. This was followed by twelve weeks at about the end of the semester (November-December 2018) of self, peer and mentor evaluation.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Descriptive

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
the lesson was well planned	30	1	5	3.83	1.234
you were presenting language points in clear and interesting ways	30	1	5	3.83	1.177
you were employing a range of techniques to teach new vocabulary	30	1	5	3.70	1.236
giving instructions, explaining, questioning, developing and discussion with communication skills	30	1	5	3.57	1.251
with the use of board, resources and any other material	30	1	5	4.40	.932
your teaching method was suitable	30	1	5	4.13	1.074
managing your lesson, class control and discipline	30	1	5	3.97	1.129
employing a variety of activities for developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills	30	2	5	4.17	.986
giving students enough time to respond to questions	30	1	5	4.40	.932
with implementing your lesson plan as you have prepared it	30	1	5	3.53	1.196
Valid N (listwise)	30				

T-Test

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
average graded others	30	3.680	.3925	.0717
average graded by others	30	3.797	.3490	.0637

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
average graded others	51.351	29	.000	3.6800	3.533	3.827
average graded by others	59.593	29	.000	3.7973	3.667	3.928

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
	Upper
average graded others	3.827
average graded by others	3.928

Means Report

	self-evaluation average	average graded others	average graded by others
Mean	3.930	3.680	3.797
N	30	30	30
Std. Deviation	.6742	.3925	.3490

Frequencies

Statistics

	the lesson was well planned	you were presenting language points in clear and interesting ways	you were employing a range of techniques to teach new vocabulary	giving instructions, explaining, questioning, and developing	discussion with communication skills with the use of board, resources and any other material	your teaching method was suitable	managing your lesson, class control and discipline	employing a variety of activities for developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills	giving students enough time to respond to questions	with implementing your lesson plan as you have prepared it
Valid	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Frequency Table

The lesson was well planned

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very concerned about several aspects	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
not satisfied, but had some positive points	2	6.7	6.7	13.3
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	7	23.3	23.3	36.7
quite satisfied	7	23.3	23.3	60.0
very satisfied	12	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

you were presenting language points in clear and interesting ways

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very concerned about several aspects	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
not satisfied, but had some positive points	2	6.7	6.7	13.3
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	5	16.7	16.7	30.0
quite satisfied	11	36.7	36.7	66.7
very satisfied	10	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

you were employing a range of techniques to teach new vocabulary

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very concerned about several aspects	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
not satisfied, but had some positive points	4	13.3	13.3	20.0
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	4	13.3	13.3	33.3
quite satisfied	11	36.7	36.7	70.0
very satisfied	9	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

giving instructions, explaining, questioning, developing and discussion with communication skills

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very concerned about several aspects	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
not satisfied, but had some positive points	6	20.0	20.0	26.7
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	2	6.7	6.7	33.3
quite satisfied	13	43.3	43.3	76.7
very satisfied	7	23.3	23.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

with the use of board, resources and any other material

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very concerned about several aspects	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	3	10.0	10.0	13.3
quite satisfied	8	26.7	26.7	40.0
very satisfied	18	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

your teaching method was suitable

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very concerned about several aspects	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
not satisfied, but had some positive points	2	6.7	6.7	10.0
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	3	10.0	10.0	20.0
quite satisfied	10	33.3	33.3	53.3
very satisfied	14	46.7	46.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

managing your lesson, class control and discipline

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very concerned about several aspects	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	7	23.3	23.3	30.0
quite satisfied	9	30.0	30.0	60.0
very satisfied	12	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

employing a variety of activities for developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
not satisfied, but had some positive points	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	9	30.0	30.0	33.3
quite satisfied	4	13.3	13.3	46.7
very satisfied	16	53.3	53.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

giving students enough time to respond to questions

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very concerned about several aspects	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	3	10.0	10.0	13.3
quite satisfied	8	26.7	26.7	40.0
very satisfied	18	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

with implementing your lesson plan as you have prepared it

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very concerned about several aspects	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
not satisfied, but had some positive points	5	16.7	16.7	23.3
satisfied, but concerned about certain aspects	4	13.3	13.3	36.7
quite satisfied	13	43.3	43.3	80.0
very satisfied	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

4.2 Qualitative Analysis

Results were compared with the marks and the observation notes awarded by the mentor. The following are some notes as a result of the comparison:

1. The teacher trainees have significantly given themselves more grades than they gave their peers.
2. Although the grades the teacher trainees gave are in average higher than what they have given the other classmates, the difference is not significant.
3. The teacher trainees feel most confident in giving students enough time to respond to questions
4. The teacher trainees seem least confident in giving instructions, explaining, questioning, developing and discussion with communication skills.
5. Some teacher trainees didn't conduct evaluation measures at all for none of their classmates.
6. When the teacher trainee applied the vocabulary items within sentences, students were able to define the new vocabulary words by switching into their native language (Arabic).
7. Some teacher trainees seemed to be very shy to speak out. They thought that their classmates would laugh at them if they commit mistakes.

When comparing and evaluating the observation notes by the mentor, the teacher trainees demonstrated an increasing awareness of their own learning and teaching skills in general, However, these are some notes in specific:

1. One of the teacher trainees had two reading passages on the same slide which it was packed with words for grade two students to read,
2. A lot of grammar mistakes were committed by the teacher trainees as they were explaining their vocabulary items, examples are: "this one has four side" and "I give you now two question"
3. Another teacher trainee didn't have her vocabulary words on the board for learners, assuming that the kids memorized them ahead of time.
4. There was little evidence of a consistent to teacher trainees' evaluation for some trainees. This shows that the trainees who did the evaluation for their classmates may not have acquired the skills needed for self-evaluation. As Gardner adds that some teacher trainees feel uncomfortable with the

process of self-evaluation for their peer (2000). This displays that the most important thing for teacher trainees is the grade they get after they finish their practical classes. Teacher trainees believe that they should just pass the exam now and that after they start working in the school, they will learn the things as they go along.

The mentor found out that the teacher trainee likes the idea to find out the correlation between the ways she feels and the cause for that feeling. Very often, the reason for teacher trainee bad performance is not out there but in her. The teacher trainees did not prepare the class properly; they did not think about all the aspects in advance. Every class demands very good preparation and a lot of effort, but because teacher trainees have many different academic subjects to study for, they are not in the position to prepare the classes well. The mentor thinks that the most difficult part is to evaluate their own performance, because teacher trainees do not know the criteria to do that. One teacher trainee has clarified an important aspect with regard to answering the questions from the list means that she faces with her own problems and admit that she is not as proficient as she would like to be.

Very often, teacher trainees just tend to think about the class successfulness in terms of the planned activities, for example, whether they did what they have planned or they missed the activity. But the question is how teacher trainees did something. Teacher trainees, students, find very important, to ask all the questions they have in their written plan for that class and they do not pay attention whether learners understand the question, whether they need to clarify something, etc.

5. Conclusion

Teaching is not merely an intellectual matter. One cannot teach a subject without projecting some kind of an attitude and feeling toward it to the students (Brosh, 1996). In this sense the teacher's personality can be of the greatest importance in determining his or her success or failure (Penner, 1992). Here, teaching is to be considered an art or, as the saying goes, "great teachers are born and not made" (Brosh, 1996). It draws on those experiences and resources that are uniquely defined and exhibited by the teacher's personality, which cannot be easily transferred to, or learned from, others. Thus, a teacher should not imitate the style or personality of another teacher but develop methods and behaviors that fit his/her personality and philosophy of teaching. On the other hand, many teaching techniques and tricks can be imitated and taught consciously (Reynolds, 1995). There is no doubt that practicum course is a well-established and highly appraised teacher education technique that allows experimentation as a means of developing professional action (Andrade & Du, 2007). In our case, practicum course provided a chance for our students to learn from preparing and presenting their own materials and to learn from listening to other peers' presentations. It is good to learn the ways of how to evaluate and assess what teacher trainees have done in the class because that may help them to improve the knowledge to evaluate their teaching in their future practice. Furthermore, teacher trainees as performing their self-evaluation possess greater confidence in their ability to accomplish the target task and more likely to visualize success than failure

By providing teacher trainees a list of questions is something that will help them to know how to evaluate themselves. In that way, they would be ready to listen and accept the evaluation from others...peers, teachers etc. Teacher trainees tend to say that their class was not successful because learners were not cooperative and that the learners did not like the teacher trainees, but the fact is that they did not prepare for the class suitably. Teacher trainees rarely do the self-evaluation of their language classes but it would be very useful. Another item that was discovered was the nervousness. The nervousness teacher trainees feel is their biggest enemy. It blocks them completely sometimes. That will make them aware of their mistakes when they teach language in school.

When teacher trainees are evaluated in using certain activities that seem basically expressive or suitable for young learners to learn a foreign language, the learners are more likely to participate and devote in deep learning (Sambell et al., 2013). However, when we come to traditional evaluation practices, which focuses on grades and individual certification, it can undermine teacher trainees' dimensions to critic their own work (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). Furthermore, teacher trainees often work in isolation and do not always have the opportunities to benefit from the collective expertise of their classmates. One way to avoid this is to build in opportunities for collaborative planning, as when teachers work together in pairs or groups on course planning, materials development, and lesson planning. During the process of planning, potential problems can often be identified and resolved. Through the micro teaching course, a great deal of excellent teaching goes on in the course, but much of it is known only to individual teacher trainees or course instructors. Teacher trainees should be encouraged to report on their positive teaching experiences. For example, they might write short case accounts of a successful course they planned and demonstrated in the micro teaching class and share them with actual classroom teachers or post them on the Internet.

Finally, for self-evaluation to be effective and carried out properly, teacher trainees should first become familiar with the concept of evaluation. This notion brings them on how to evaluate their understanding of the subject content and can provide a better picture of teacher competence than a small number of classroom observations conducted by someone from the ministry (Marzano & Toth, 2013).

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