

Exploring Reflective Practice among College EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

During the past decade, there has been increasing interest in the role of reflection in professional development, especially amongst teacher educators in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Engaging in reflective practice means taking an active role in learning and recognizing one's personal responsibility for one's own lifelong learning. Despite its prevalence as an important topic in the educational field and the multidimensional plans that have been implemented to restructure the Saudi education system, there is little to guide EFL educators in Saudi Arabia on how to effectively develop reflective ability in themselves and consequently in their learners. This study intends to explore the perceptions of EFL teachers on reflective teaching as a tool for teacher development and its challenges in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. The study is qualitative in nature, whereby semi-structured interviews were conducted with four EFL college educators in Saudi Arabia. The findings of the study indicate that the participants are aware of the value of reflective practice, and use different models of reflection in order to reflect on their daily practice. However, some participants manifested some uncertainties regarding reflective practice and its multifaceted nature whereas others highlighted the constraints impeding the practice of reflective teaching, namely, fixed curricula and the absence of adequate professional training. Thus, the professional development staff should provide in-service teachers with professional training about reflective practice and work with college administrators to produce a culture of inquiry in their teacher-learners.

Key words: reflective practice, research, teacher training

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Introduction