

Challenges in Practicum: Views and Perceptions of EFL Pre-service Teachers towards Field Experience Skills in Real Classrooms

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Abstract

The purpose of this classroom action research was to investigate the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers towards the challenges they face in teaching experience during the practicum period. The participants were 35 Saudi EFL female pre-service teachers in the Educational Diploma Program (EDP) attending Teaching Practicum (1) Course in Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. A mixed method, which contains both quantitative and qualitative research design, was used to collect data. Research instruments comprised a perception opinionnaire designed to measure the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers towards the challenges they face in teaching experience during the practicum. The results showed that EFL pre-service teachers considered the observation period during the Teaching Practicum (1) Course between moderately and extremely beneficial. The results of the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers regarding classroom-teaching skills were between highly and moderately to low challenging. Additionally, their skills related to school environment indicated less challenging than skills related to classroom teaching experiences. The results of the open-ended question were divided into three meaningful and thoughtful categories to add much depth and understanding of the research problem. Some recommendations based on the results were derived. For example, EFL pre-service teachers needed further development in teaching experiences and skills related to classrooms and school setting. Furthermore, meetings, workshops, and/or small discussion sessions need to be conducted between all the stakeholders in the practicum to explore problems and anticipate possible solutions.

Keywords: challenges, perceptions, practicum, pre-service teachers, field experience

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