



The use of video reflection to enhance EFL pre-service teachers' teaching practice during practicum

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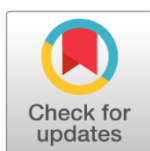
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Abstract: This paper reports on the use of video reflection to enhance EFL pre-service teachers' teaching practice during their practicum period. This study also reports on the participants' experiences, reactions, and perceptions towards the use of video recordings of their teaching practice. Eighty-four EFL pre-service teachers participated in the study with written reflections on the videos of their own teaching comprising the data analyzed in the study. The results revealed that using video reflection helped the participants improve their teaching. Furthermore, the participants expressed a strong belief in the value and effectiveness of viewing videos of their own and peer teaching lessons and receiving feedback from the supervisor monthly as to reach realizations and changes about their teaching practice in the practicum. The implication of the study suggests ways to better connect university courses with the actual classroom practices to provide EFL pre-service teachers the maximum support to practicalize their knowledge during the practicum.

Keywords: Video reflection, Reflective teaching, Teaching practice

Introduction

Reflective teaching can be described as observing and reflecting on teaching and using observation and reflection as a way of bringing about change. Many different approaches can be employed if one wishes to become a critically reflective teacher, including observation of oneself and others, team teaching, and exploring one's view of teaching through writing. Reflective teaching consists of three stages: stage one is an actual teaching episode, such as a lesson or other instructional event which focus on reflection on the teacher's own teaching and observation of another person's teaching; stage two in

volves recollection— several different procedures are used during this stage, including written descriptions of an event, a video or audio recording of an event, or the use of checklists or coding systems to capture details of the event; and stage three is review and response to the event, — focus on objective description of the event, the participant returns to the event and reviews it (Richards, 1991).

Teachers who engage in reflective practice can develop deeper understanding of their teaching, decision making skills, assess their professional growth, and then become proactive and confident in their teaching. More importantly, reflective teaching help teachers

change attitudes and awareness which they believe can benefit their professional growth as teachers, as well as improve the kind of support they provide their students. Experience alone is insufficient for professional growth, but that experience coupled with reflection can be a powerful impetus for teacher development (Farrell, 2015; Richards, 1991). Reflective practice takes place at any opportunity. Some contexts may make it impossible for teachers to organize together to reflect on their practices and individual teachers may only be able to reflect on their own individual practices (Farrell, 2015).

Many different approaches can be employed if one wishes to become a critically reflective teacher, including observation of oneself and others, and exploring one's view of teaching through writing. For many aspects of teaching, audio or video recording of lessons can provide a basis for reflection. While there are many useful insights to be gained from diaries and self-reports, they cannot capture the moment to moment processes of teaching. An audio or video of the lessons being taught can provide insight into some aspects of teaching performance that the teachers may be unaware of. A 30-minute recording usually provides more than sufficient data for analysis (Richards & Farrell, 2011; Richards & Lockhart, 2011).

Digital video has several advantages such as ease of video capture, ability to edit video, ease of sharing and ease of interaction. These attributes support teachers as they use digital video to reflect on practice to expand and transform their understanding about pedagogy (Niess & Gillow-Wiles, 2015). Video can be used to engage pre-service teachers in reflecting on their own teaching, to deepen understanding of the challenges of their practices, as well as to foster expertise in analyzing their teaching. Research points to the value of using videos for both synchronous and asynchronous recordings of whole-class teaching incidents, particularly asynchronously

can extend the quantity and quality of classroom observation experience which supports the development of observation, analysis and reflection in viewers (Marsh & Mitchell, 2014). There has been a shift to use video cases in combination with classroom practicum experiences. This shift follows a change in thinking about learning to teach toward a more practice-based, apprenticeship model of teacher preparation with an emphasis on experience and reflection (Grossman & McDonald, 2008).

Previous studies also reported that pre-service teachers increased effective teaching behaviors as a result of video reflections. Hamel and Viau-Guay (2019) analyzed 89 articles and found that video-based training mechanisms helped the participants meet their pedagogical goals. Fadde and Sullivan (2013) investigated the use of interactive video in teacher education as a way of laying the cognitive groundwork for developing teacher self-reflection. Two interactive video approaches were designed to help early pre-service teachers align what they observed in classroom teaching videos of other pre-service teachers with what experienced teacher-educators observed in the same videos. Deeney and Dzier (2015) constructed successful video reflection experiences in practicum settings. The research showed three essential aspects of successful video reflection experiences including developing a culture of video sharing as learning, engaging with collegial feedback, and scaffolding teachers' individual reflections. In Synder's (2010) study, music pre-service teachers reflected on their teaching videos to complete their required clinical hours with students at both the middle school and high school levels. The findings of reflections included lack of enthusiasm from the student musicians being taught, high incidences of self-criticism, and very few comments concerning the student musicians' playing. Moreover, the findings of the earlier research confirmed that video recordings helped foster the reflective practice

of pre-service teachers particularly about the classroom language, problems of their L2 use, time management, choice, conduct of activities, the unfamiliarity between themselves and the students, and the effect of their moods on the day of teaching (Susoy, 2015; Karakaş&Yükselir, 2021).

The teaching practicum is one of the most important components of teacher education; however, it is also believed that it is one of the most frustrating, stressful, and challenging experiences of pre-service teachers' professional preparation. The teaching practicum is a psychologically demanding period of professional preparation since pre-service teachers must juggle demands from students, mentors, school administrators and university supervisors in a compressed time frame all in what is typically a new environment (Cakmak&Gunduz, 2018). The main purpose of a practicum is to connect theory and practice. In a social constructivist view, for learning to take place, it must be situated in an authentic social space. A practicum becomes that space in which pre-service teachers make sense of the content in their programs and transform their identities (Cirocki, Madyarov&Baecher, 2019). Identity construction facilitates pre-service teachers' understanding of how their practicum experiences inform teaching (Gebhard, 2009). Thus, pre-service teachers need to be in touch with a real teaching context in order to build up a realistic view that allows them to understand, reflect, and work in order to improve their teaching practice.

The focus of this paper is self-reflection on teaching using video. The excerpts that are used in this paper are taken from the written reflection which EFL of pre-service teachers loaded onto a web board. The aim of this study is to help EFL pre-service teachers become conscious, rational, and analytical about their own strengths and weaknesses in teaching aided by the inclusion of video self-analysis into their practicum. The questions to

be answered in this study were: What is pre-service teachers' experience of using video reflection? Does the reflection made by pre-service teachers and feedback from the supervisor impact their teaching?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 84 EFL pre-service teachers enrolled in practicum courses. Ages ranged from 21-23 with seventy-eight being female and six being male. All of them were placed in their cooperating schools to complete their practicum in the final year of their program. They were all English Education students at the Faculty of Education at a university in Thailand.

2.2 Data collection and analysis

To collect data, all participants were asked to develop one lesson plan every month for ten months for the purposes of the study. Then they had to implement the lesson plans they developed and record their own teaching. As a result, each EFL pre-service teacher had ten videos accompanied by ten lesson plans. The participants were required to submit videos and lesson plans by uploading them to a class web board every month so that the participants could view videos of classmates and feedback from the supervisor. The supervisor gave feedback to all videos and lesson plans. The participants were asked to view videos of their own teaching and write reflections on the lessons at the end of each month in Thai then upload them to the web board. Then the participants brought the results of reflection and feedback from the supervisor to plan the next lesson. Therefore, the participants had to teach, receive feedback, reflect, and teach again for a total of ten cycles. They were also asked to reflect on the experience of being video recorded. The goal was to record what these pre-service teachers

noticed about their own teaching with the hope that it would give insight into what is important for them and their growth as a teacher. The written reflection was coded by the researcher. This coding aimed at breaking the data into categories. The researcher then generated the categories based on emerging themes and then translated the reflections into English.

3. Findings and Discussion

The data were analyzed based on two questions: What is pre-service teachers' experience of using video reflection? Does the reflection made by pre-service teachers and feedback from the supervisor impact their teaching? The following two main themes emerged from analyzing the data.

3.1 Experience of using video reflection

Twelve of the eighty-four participants mentioned that although initially anxious about performing, the EFL pre-service teachers felt that the use of video allowed them to notice a great deal more about their classroom practice. They found that the video was to be viewed as an objective record of a specific episode which enabled them to see both positive and negative events in the classroom and be able to improve on each subsequent lesson. The videotaping of lessons provided a mechanism for them to re-experience the moments and rethink their teaching techniques:

"I noticed that I am not leaving enough time for students to think and answer questions. Next lesson I teach I'm going to increase the wait time after asking a question."

"I didn't realize how much talking I had done until watching the video. While this was an interactive activity, I felt like my voice hindered the kids from exploring the materials and developing their own ideas. I prompted them a lot instead of allowing them to explain their thoughts in their own words."

"I thought I had explained something poorly but when I watch the video and actually, I feel like it wasn't as bad as I had thought."

"From watching the first month of my teaching video I think the strength that I can find in my first lesson is the voice projection which is loud enough to be heard by the whole class. However, I think I need to improve eye contact which is especially important as it shows that the teacher is talking to particular students and to the whole class."

"The first two months I felt uncomfortable being on video whenever someone would turn the camera lens my way, I would immediately feel hyper-aware of everything that was wrong about me. Finally, I overcame it by concentrating on students learning instead of performing perfectly."

"I noticed that the students were bored when I let them watch a video during the warm-up activity, so I changed to let them sing and dance and it worked."

Twenty-two of the eighty-four students reflected that videos afford the opportunity to view and reflect the lesson multiple times so patterns of practice can emerge. They also mentioned that the videos supported them in analyzing their teaching practice and helped them develop skills in making sense of teaching:

"The Video allowed me to go back and analyze how I taught my lesson and how the students were responding. In addition, in the calmer environment of home, I could stop and pause on parts of the lessons and reflect."

"Taking the time to watch the video provided a space for reflection before planning the next lesson taught me the process of undertaking the analysis and then putting into action."

"Teaching, reflecting and then changing activities, doing like this again, and again, ten loops are quite boring. However, I must do. It is my duty."

Fifteen of EFL pre-service teachers in this study noticed that some of the students had negative feelings about being video recorded. They felt awkward and pressured of having to be videorecorded:

"Some of my students didn't want me to videotape them because they are afraid that I would ask them the question. When I panned the camera at them, they bowed their faces."

"I noticed that some students are not comfortable with videotaping. They are shy and afraid that they would not be able to answer my question."

"The weak students don't like being videotaped. One of the students told me that they are afraid that I would ask them to speak out as they think they are not good at speaking. They were scared to be laughed at by their classmates if they made a silly mistake."

Video editing is one of the most demanding tasks to execute on a computer. A modern video editing program requires high performance from the processor, RAM memory, GPU (if using GPU acceleration), as well as storage drives. Twenty-five EFL pre-service teachers in this study mentioned that they encountered the problem of editing video because of the low capacity of their computers:

"My laptop is old and slow, doesn't work together with the editing program."

"My computer laptop is slow when uploading the video to Youtube, I need to upgrade it or buy a new one, but now I can't afford it."

"I can't upload the video because the clip is too large, I have to separate into smaller files."

Thirty-two EFL pre-service teachers in this study agreed that receiving feedback about their teaching from the supervisor and viewing teaching videos of their classmates helped to improve their teaching:

"Videosharing feedback has improved the delivery of my lessons."

"I have a better understanding of how to teach from viewing the video clips."

"Videosharing has enabled classmates to learn a lot from one another."

"I learn more about teaching by viewing my classmates' video clips plus reading comments from my supervisor."

"I learn more from viewing my own video clips."

"I prefer videosharing feedback from my supervisor."

"I enjoyed reading the feedback from my supervisor, I usually used the feedback to fix my lessons, and I really appreciated the comments on the lessons."

Twenty-eight of the EFL pre-service teachers in this study mentioned that using video classroom observation is convenient and flexible. From their perspective, the benefits of the digital format and flexible access to feedback were instrumental to their growth:

"I like electronic feedback. It allowed me the convenience of looking at it and responding to it when I had time, and I could go back and read it again."

"I enjoyed reading the feedback. I usually used the feedback to fix my lessons, and I really appreciated the comments on the lessons."

"I preferred video feedback compared to verbal feedback. The verbal feedback without video inclusion is tended to be general and did not address concerns based on actual information. In contrast the video feedback was more focused because it related to specific moments that could be easily identified. And the feedback was most useful when it was given promptly."

Twelve of EFL pre-service teachers in this study expressed remote observation using video provided a sense of comfort. They wrote that when they were not being directly observed or recorded, they naturally felt a

greater sense of freedom to explore their own teaching style and personality:

“Video observation made me feel more comfortable.”

“Remote observation made me feel free and comfortable. The camera was there, and I knew someone was watching but it gave me a sense of disconnection. I like that I am doing the whole thing on my own, someone is not really there supervising me.”

3.2 Pedagogical practice

Thirty- two EFL pre-service teachers in his study expressed the difficulties of using L2 (English) in the classroom. They wrote that they could not use English to communicate with their students the whole time. They expressed that most of their students did not want them to speak in English because of the students' lack of motivation to study the foreign language. They claimed that most EFL teachers in schools do not use English as a medium in the classroom, and consequently, the students were not familiar with English:

“The first month, I used L2 in the classroom twenty percent of the time except for the day that I recorded the video, I must use L2 all the time otherwise my supervisor would ask me to record again. We are not allowed to use L1 in the classroom. I found that when I used L2 all the time, only two or three students understood. To deal with the problem, I used body language to help them understand, especially when I introduced new vocabulary.”

“It was totally different from a microteaching course. When we taught our classmates, they responded actively, but for the real classroom, my students did not respond to the questions. They told me, “We understand your question, but we just don’t know how to answer in English.”

“My mentor asked me not to talk to the students in English all the time because they

wouldn't understand. He suggested me to use more Thai in class.”

“My students never have had a chance to hear English before I came here. They were not familiar with English because they were not exposed to it.”

“For the first time, when I spoke in English some students started to make confused faces, which I think means they did not understand. Similarly, students laughing at their peers who used English lowered their motivation which discouraged them from using English. Students felt fear that their peers might laugh at them because of their pronunciation. I helped them to gain more confidence in using English by bringing a lot of games to the classroom to make it fun. Incorporating games helped them improve their English and gain more self-confidence.”

“It seemed my students rejected English even though many times they understood what was said, they pretended not to understand or were lazy to make an effort to comprehend or use the language.”

“I found that I spoke quickly and used terms which were too difficult for my students to understand. So, the next month I gave them more examples that they were familiar with from other parts of their life to help them understand and remember the language from its familiar context so that my students could easily cope with even if the language is a little complicated. I also used more pictures and videos to explain the meaning of vocabulary, grammar, and text. I spoke slowly and stopped after each sentence and allowed my students to ask questions to check their comprehension.”

Teacher talking time (TTT) is the time that teachers spend talking in class, rather than learners. It can be compared with student-talking time (STT). One key element of many modern approaches is to reduce the amount of TTT as much as possible, to allow learners opportunities to speak, and learn from speaking. Overall, however, the teacher should roughly limit his speaking to 20-30% of the

class time, with the remainder devoted to speaking/use of the language by the students. On the other hand, STT should be around 80% during the execution of the lesson. In this study, twenty-one EFL teachers mentioned that they spoke much more during the lessons than did their students and left too little time for students to think, talk, and act:

"I spent a lot of time explaining grammar during presentation steps instead of giving students more time for students to practice during communicative practice steps. After I had received feedback from my supervisor, I tried to minimize my talking and provided more time for my students to practice."

"I spent a lot of time on the presentation step, at the end of the class I left only ten minutes for students to complete the task. I should have cut down presentation time and therefore allowed my students more time to do the task. I should have been careful about time management; I couldn't finish the lesson in time."

"I noticed that I always had my students do the exercises individually. I should have asked them to work in pairs or small groups to provide them more time to practice speaking. I should have provided my students with sufficient wait time to respond to the questions also."

The use of the eyes to convey messages is one aspect of non-verbal communication. The eyes are a powerful tool for the teacher in classroom time. The main uses of eye contact in the classroom are to check that everyone is concentrating and to hold the attention of students and encourage them to listen to those doing the talking and to maintain attention. Twenty-two EFL pre-service teachers in this study addressed the challenge of using eye contact in the classroom:

"I know that it is very important to make eye contact with each student in the class, but I often forgot to do it."

"My supervisor suggested that I use eye contact to control the classroom during teacher talking time. I tried to practice using eye contact,

however, I noticed that I was staring at the same student instead of darting from learner to learner around the room. I think I have to practice more and more and learn how to use good eye contact."

"During the lesson, I noticed that most of my classroom time is spent with an eye firmly fixed on the computer, overhead projector rather than looking at students to check that everyone is concentrating."

Teacher scaffolding has been claimed to positively enhance language learning. Thus, EFL teacher education emphasizes developing pre-service teachers' ability to scaffold EFL learning. The teaching practicum is an important opportunity for pre-service teachers to apply scaffolding techniques into the classroom. Nineteen of the EFL pre-service teachers in this study mentioned scaffolding strategies that they used in supporting their students:

"After watching and analyzing my first recorded lesson, I found that my students struggled in content areas and their lack of confidence in using English. Since vocabulary has long been considered central to second language learning, I focused on using a variety of activities to teach vocabulary to help my students to increase reading comprehension. I usually demonstrated the meaning of the vocabulary with a piece of video clip or photo that explains the context of the word. I also used mnemonic techniques to help my students recall the vocabulary."

"I noticed that my second-grade class could not read in the first month. I decided to use the phonics teaching method. I found that in only two months using this method, all of my students can read the regular second-grade books."

"As I observed, I saw that my students had less motivation in learning English. They did not show interest to take part in the classroom activities. The students also lacked confidence in their speaking ability and felt that they have insufficient language skills to express exactly

what they want to say. Some of the students got bored in the English classes and they wanted to have various activities in the class such as songs, videos, or movies to keep their motivation in learning English, especially in speaking. My students like to record anything around them. Many of them got to use their cellphones for fun. They like to watch it even more, and if those videos are produced themselves. So, I asked them to create a video project. Students worked in groups; each group chose their own topic. They had to follow the steps of producing a video including outline, script, storyboard, filming, editing, and publishing."

Effective classroom behavior management is essential to ensure student academic and social success. Classroom behavior management is still a thorny issue for beginning teachers. Twenty-three EFL pre-service teachers in this study wrote that they encountered difficulties in classroom behavior management:

"I noticed that some students wandered around the classroom; some played on mobile phones; some went to sleep; and some of the students at the back were very reserved and silent. Maybe the activity was too difficult for them as their standard of English is extremely low. I need to simplify the activities with this class next time."

"The classroom was too small. There was not enough space for forty grade two students to play a game."

"Some of my students were not even able to read English, which dramatically affects the classroom behavior management. Those students never actively attend the class for an entire period of thirty minutes."

"From watching my teaching video, I would say that only half of the class time is allocated to teaching and learning activities and the other is spent on classroom behavior management."

"The only difficulty I encountered was trying to make weak students attend the same

lesson with other students. While the weak students were trying to read, write, or trying to understand what was being spoken, the other students were moving in accordance with the lesson, meanwhile, the weak students were bored and showed misbehaviors."

Group work is a teaching strategy that promotes academic achievement and socialization. Group work gives students more chances to interact and use the target language more freely. Instead of just having a few seconds to talk in a teacher-centered class, students can participate longer in a small group and feel more confident to give their opinions and even make mistakes when just three or four classmates are looking at them. Fifteen EFL pre-service teachers faced challenges trying to implement group work:

"I observed from the video that the students used Thai rather than English during group work. I had to circulate and encouraged them to speak English."

"What I saw in the video was that I could not help all ten groups. There were forty-students in this class. Because of the large class, I could not circulate around the class to clarify doubts and to monitor what students were doing."

"I saw myself struggle to manage many students in the class, especially, when I used group work. The number of students should be limited to get ideal classes and to easily place the students in groups. It was difficult for me to manage discipline during group work."

"I decided to use group work because I noticed from the video that group work kept the students busy. However, I had to encourage and supervise them to take an active part in the group work and not play around or disturb other groups."

4. Conclusion

The results of the present study suggest that it was helpful to provide EFL pre-service teachers opportunities to teach, receive

feedback, reflect, and teach again a total of ten cycles in a real context. Darling-Hammond(2010) pointed out that a crucial part of learning to teach is having opportunities to teach, receive feedback, reflect, and teach again in an authentic classroom setting. This cycle of instruction creates opportunities for pre-service teachers to connect theory to practice and improve their instructional effectiveness.

Many EFL pre-service teachers in this study reflected on the difficulties of using L2 in the classroom because the students were not familiar with English. The finding in this study needs consideration to understand what can limit or support EFL pre-service teachers' attempts to speak in English during EFL lessons. According to Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis learners facilitate SLA by getting the maximum amount of L2 input. If teachers use L1 in the L2 classroom, the quantity of L2 input would decrease. In addition, those who have been using the communicative language teaching approach would agree to say that the use of L2 should be maximized, and then the use of L1 should be minimized or even prohibited. The students are expected to get as much exposure to the target language. Maybe, the method of "English only" can be a constraint for teachers teaching in EFL classrooms. However, in this study, EFL pre-service teachers' conception of the language as a means for real communication and their perception of limitations as obstacles they needed to overcome led them to seek specific means to achieve oral interaction in English with their students. They used nonverbal language, created meaningful contexts for students to make the language more understandable. Moreover, they tried to help involve students in a friendly English-speaking environment inside the classroom. Findings from this study suggests that university preparatory programs need to integrate strategies that help EFL pre-service teachers to become aware of which and how particular factors can affect their decisions as to use or not use the foreign language in the classroom. In addition, mentors and

instructors, as people who greatly affect pre-service teachers' pedagogical ideas, need to provide pre-service teachers with valuable professional support which enriches perspectives.

Many EFL pre-service teachers reflected on the benefits of digital observations. They claimed that using video classroom observation is convenient and flexible. Besides, remote observation using video provided a sense of comfort. They wrote that when they were not being directly observed or recorded, they naturally felt a greater sense of freedom to explore their own teaching style and personality. The finding is in line with the study of Petty, Heafner and Hartshorne (2013). They found that the benefits of flexible access to feedback as well as the ability to revisit feedback were seen as beneficial by many graduate interns. The finding is also in line with Tobin (2018) who conducted a study to determine the use of video as a tool for reflection with pre-service teachers. To collect data, the twenty-three pre-service teachers were asked to take videos of themselves teaching during internship, then watch themselves on the videos. The results showed that revisiting a lesson through video can bring a pre-service teacher back into specific moments and actions that allow for more anchored reflection. Video-based reflection was also more conducive to a type of reflection that is forward-looking. Thus, an implication of the finding from this study is that video should be integrated throughout the programs, and not just introduced during practicum. More research is needed to help determine the most effective way for instructors and program planners to help students draw out the benefit from the use of video as a tool for reflection.

EFL pre-service teachers in this study considered teacher talking time, the use of eye contact, teacher scaffolding, classroom behavior management, and group work management as the chief problems in practicum teaching. In a review of the perceived problems of beginning

teachers, Hammerness (2011) indicated that even though classroom management courses are provided in most of the faculties of education, it has been a difficult issue for the novice teachers to handle the classroom management problems in practice. Goodwin (2012) also pointed out that the biggest challenge for new teachers is classroom management. A survey of 500 teachers with three years or fewer on the job found that 85% of teachers believed that new teachers are particularly unprepared for dealing with behavior problems in their classrooms. When interviewed many beginning teachers say their pre-service program did little to prepare them for the realities of classrooms including dealing with disruptive students. Also, other studies related to identifying the problems of student teachers agree on the fact that classroom management is the largest concern to beginning teachers (Melnick & Meister, 2008; Mohammad, 2016). Thus, improved teacher preparation and professional development in classroom management are critical parts of the solution. To improve classroom management, Siebert (2005) suggested that embedding attention to classroom management issues in field-based experiences may be an optimal time to address pre-service teachers' perceived needs in this area of learning to teach.

Changes cannot possibly happen if pre-service teachers are not immersed in the real context where they can share their experiences and challenges encountered in a supported environment. The findings of the current study suggest that, by being given the opportunity and guidance, EFL pre-service teachers could adopt reflection as part of their teaching practice. If teachers are actively involved in reflecting on what is happening in their own classrooms, they are in a position to discover whether there is a gap between what they teach and what their learners learn (Richards & Lockhart, 2011, p.4). It is hoped that reflective practices can guide future teachers in exploring their beliefs about language, identifying how

these conceptions originated and how they influence their teaching.

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