Dissertation Title:
Preparing Student Teachers to be Teachers of EFL Reading:
Effectiveness of curriculum development and instructional
delivery of a Revised Teacher Education Methodology Course:
A U.A.E. Case

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Abstract

There is an urgent need to invest in teacher education programmes in the Arab world. Outdated curricula and methodologies, reliance on rote learning and not enough qualified teachers present a threat to the quality of education in the region. Using multiple data tools, this qualitative case study explores the perceived and observed impact of shaping and contextualizing teacher education reading pedagogy upon an evolving system of knowledge, beliefs and reading teaching styles in a UAE context. The findings suggest that by attending to a Vygotskian constructivist-based contextualized EFL model of second language teacher education pedagogy, the potential to enhance the capacity of Emirati female student teachers to teach reading successfully and enact pedagogic change in government schools is increased. However, while all participants aspired to become change agents by distinguishing themselves from past teachers, differences in teaching styles were noted for varying ability groups, moving from eclectic to behaviourist styles.

Theoretical Background of the Research

The key issues of effective language teacher education, the power of previous learning experiences and constructivist teacher education delivery approaches provide an integrated conceptual framework throughout this study at the levels of theoretical principles, methodology, analysis and interpretation. These theoretical concepts are introduced below, to illustrate their appropriateness for researching teacher

education curriculum and delivery and to highlight their complementary contributions in addressing the study's research questions.

Issue 1: Effective Initial Language Teacher Education

Internationally, there is a growing sense that language teacher education programs have failed to prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom (Crandall, 2000; Colby and Atkinson, 2004; Lunenberg et al, 2007). This is magnified in an Arabic context, where student teachers pass through a western style of teacher education and then return to teach in their own culture (Eilam, 2002). The focus has therefore begun to shift from what teachers do, to how and why they do it (Korthagen et al, 2001). It is now recognized that teaching is more than the accumulation of research knowledge about language, assumed to be applicable to any teaching context, because it is evident that giving more knowledge to teachers does not necessarily make them better practitioners (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). However, if teacher education classrooms become practical environments, where practice is theorized and theory is practiced as it questions practice (Segall, 2001), then teacher education may be a "valued-added' endeavor that can be linked to both student teacher learning and school improvement (Cochran-Smith, 2000).

The interests of this study are influenced by the Vygotskian constructivist theory (1978; Wells, 1999; Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002) which aims to increase experiential opportunities for student teachers, engaging them in constructing new knowledge about teaching and learning through hands-on experience. Learning activities are characterized by active engagement, problem-solving, reflection on practice, critical analysis and structured dialogues. In constructivist settings, the teacher educator is a guide, facilitator and co-explorer who encourage student teachers to question, challenge and formulate their own ideas and conclusions. This is recasting conceptions of what language teaching is and how language teachers learn to teach (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). However, despite the documented benefits of constructivist settings for student teachers' academic, affective and social growth, (Kaufman, 1996), it may be unrealistic to expect student teachers in an Arabic context to initiate constructivist settings in

schools if their prior experiences, *including teacher education experiences*, do not include constructivist-based experiences.

Issue 2: The Power of Prior Reading Experiences

Teacher education programs are not the only influence on becoming a teacher of English. As Kennedy (1991, cited in Freeman, 2002, p. 6) states "teachers, like other learners, interpret new content through existing understandings and modify and reinterpret new ideas on the basis of what they already know or believe". Developing an identity as a reading teacher is therefore a long process of socialization, involving school experiences (Lortie, 1975). Based on memories as students, as language learners themselves, their beliefs and reflections about teaching are instrumental in shaping the type of teacher they become (Busher, 2005). This 'apprenticeship of observation' marks teachers' socialization as students throughout their schooling, as a significant influence on their teaching practices (Lortie, 1975). For example, Emirati B.Ed. students enter college with years of exposure to behaviourist reading instruction including a focus on reading comprehension, direct translation and intensive reading skills. The quality of this instruction has a lasting impact on how they define themselves as developing reading teachers (McNally et al, 2002; Clarke et al, 2007).

Teachers' beliefs and past experiences as learners may conflict with the images of teaching promoted in teacher education programs (Freeman and Richards, 1996). These preconceptions may be resistant to change unless an awareness of that prior learning is developed and opportunities for practical experiences and reflection upon those experiences are provided (Freeman and Richards, 1996). Peer-observation, micro-teaching, problem-based learning and reflection on practice can help student teachers move from a philosophy of teaching and learning developed as a learner to a philosophy of teaching, consistent with their emergent understandings of the language learning and teaching processes. This is what Freeman (1994, p.5) refers to as "Interteaching". However, it is well recognized that teachers can espouse particular knowledge and beliefs, yet still employ classroom practices that contradict these (Woods 1979; Cameron, & Baker, 2004). Eilam's (2002) study in Israel shows that external behaviours of Arabic

student teachers are rooted in cultural beliefs and perceptions. It is therefore an important and challenging role for the teacher educator in the Arab world, not only to incorporate student teachers' prior knowledge into its curricula but to shift different forms of knowledge and ensure that changes are reflected in students' teaching practices.

Issue 3: Impact of Teacher Education Delivery Approaches upon Student Teacher Practices

Seen primarily as the inculcation of knowledge and skills, the potentially powerful effects of teacher educators' teaching styles on student teachers' practices have mostly remained unrecognized to date, (Korthagen et al, 2001, Kane, 2002; Lunenberg et al, 2007), yet alone in an Arabic context (Barber et al. 2007). At the heart of this issue is what Kennedy (1999, p.3) called "the improvement of practice problem". If the aim of teacher education programmes is not simply to transmit explanations of teaching but to support teachers-in-training in developing their own understandings and practices, then the issue of how teacher educators in the UAE conceptualize the knowledge and practices that they seek to develop in student teachers is a critical one.

Many teacher educators believe that student teachers learn in a similar way to that of children – through providing opportunities for hands-on experiences in an interactive supportive environment (Colby and Atkinson, 2004). While practical experience, including such activities as micro-teaching, problem-solving and internships, has long been a part of most language teacher education programs, these experiences are often too few and not sufficiently focused on the realities of the classroom (Crandall, 1996; Korthagen et al, 2001), including an Arabic context (Eilam, 2002; Barber et al, 2007). Drawing on the work of Bruner (1986) and Vygotsky (1978), a number of language educators (Crandall, 2000; Cameron and Baker, 2004; Verity, 2005; Lunenberg et al, 2007) recommend that more extensive and intensive practical experiences be integrated throughout teacher education programs, providing student teachers with greater opportunities to link theory to practice and receive support from experienced teacher educators.

Student teachers may learn about teaching by example as much as through the content and activities presented (Wilson, 1990, in Jay 2002, p1). Thus teacher educators seek pedagogical approaches and experiences that will challenge their thinking about teaching and learning and at the same time connect theory to practice. Also critical for professional development is to involve students in "learning activities that are similar to ones that they will use with their students" (Bransford et al, 2000, p.204). However, teacher educators don't often practice what they preach and function as a model for the teaching practices they seek to promote (Anderson, 2005). Embedded is the subtle message of "Do as I say, not as I do". In order to improve the impact of teacher education to develop new visions of learning in the U.A.E., teacher educators may need to begin teaching student teachers as they are expected to teach.

Research Focus and Specific Research Questions:

The research focus of this study is to determine the impact of a revised teacher education methodology course for Year Two B.Ed. students on their reading approaches used during teaching practice in foreign language classrooms. The specific research questions, arising out of the literature review are as follows:

1. What is the perceived and observed influence of a revised (Vygotskian social constructivist) teacher education curriculum upon student teachers' reading teaching methods during teaching practice in UAE foreign language classrooms?

2. What is the perceived and observed impact of reforming delivery in the college classroom (using the constructivist delivery innovations of performance modelling, systematic micro-teaching and problem-based learning) upon student teachers reading teaching methods during teaching practice in foreign language UAE classrooms?

3. How do student teachers interpret the impact of teacher education pedagogy upon their prior beliefs, knowledge and practices, i.e. the 'apprenticeship of observation' and how does this impact their beliefs and 'knowledge' about teaching reading in an EFL Emirati context?

Research Methodology

The study described in this thesis is an evaluative, instrumental, qualitative case study which is motivated by concern about 'is what we are doing worthwhile?'(West-Burnham & O' Sullivan, 1998, p.121) and if not, how can we take action to improve it? Case studies are the preferred strategy when how or why questions are being posed and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (Yin, 1994, p.1). An intrinsic case study seeks out emic meanings held by people within the case in an effort to understand and present a 'richly detailed portrait' (Merriam 1998) of the impact of the *particular* – in this case particular pedagogical college experiences upon student teachers' beliefs, knowledge and reading practices in a UAE foreign language setting. It also incorporates an implicit ethnographic facet in terms of Hammersley's (2002) depiction of ethnography as involving the researcher in the everyday life of the key participants, as their teacher educator. This partially ethnographic aspect is mirrored in the study's pedagogical orientation - Vygotskian socio-cultural approaches.

Contextualized data was collected over a six month period, during the second year of a four year Bachelor of Education degree. Three principle research contexts generated and captured data for analysis –College X in one Emirate, five colleges in other Emirates within the College system and the government primary school environment. Three phazes of research were created, as summarized in Table 1: a twenty week intervention of a revised reading course; application of reading theory and practice in Emirati Government primary schools and interpretation of the intervention using a dialogic forum.

As the study's epistemological orientation is interpretative, the findings rest mainly on the perceptions of an intact group of sixteen Emirati female student teachers who were undertaking the methodology course on the teaching of reading. Using 'homogeneous purposive sampling' (Patton, 1990), the production of meaning, tactic knowledge and naturalistic generalizations was emphasized in dialogic forums. The anonymous contributions of 90 secondary participants from across the UAE (who also studied the EDUC 250 course) in both online discussions and course evaluations consolidated and confirmed perceptions of

the core group of student teachers in College X, demonstrating an increased self-awareness, reflection on practice and problem-solving orientation to the EFL reading classroom. Eight Western teacher educators were involved in this research, three at College X who participated in non-participant observations, one of whom was the researcher. Five were from the College system in other Emirates and participated in course evaluations at the end of the semester (College System, 2007a).

All participating student teachers, regardless of background (i.e. Bedouin or merchant) dress in a black 'abaya' (cloaks) and 'shayla' (head scarves), with only their faces uncovered. Most of these women are driven to and from college by a male relative or driver in vehicles with tinted windows. Their home lives, "which play a central role in their experiences, is very restricted compared with women students from Western countries" (Richardson, 2004, p.432). For example, the reality for most of these young women is a pre-destined life where marriage is arranged, often during their B.Ed. degree. The student teachers' home lives are often controlled by elders and most of them are prohibited to socialize with men, shop alone or travel without chaperons. However, despite society's adherence to a strict Muslim code of behaviour for women and contrary to the perceptions of the typical Emirati woman who is "protected from public display and not involved in the public arena" (Richardson, 2004, p.433), this study's core group of student teachers are enthusiastic and empowered to contribute to the building of their country's education system. As the first generation of Emirati student teachers to attain a degree in education and as much needed 'agents of change', they are a product of behaviourist schooling and it is negative memories of previous learning experiences that fuel their desire for educational change.

In addressing the key research questions of this study, a variety of tools operationalised the research (Johnson, 1994) and allowed for triangulation of evidence, including non-participant observations of students teaching reading while on teaching practice placements, semi-structured focus group interviews, online discussion forums, documentary analysis of student and faculty course evaluations and other relevant documents such as teaching practice reports. This aimed to produce a 'truer' picture of the

impact of pedagogical college experiences upon the ongoing construction of student teachers' styles of reading teaching.

Initial documentary evidence from both student and faculty course evaluations revealed a need to change the Year Two reading methodology course (EDUC 250) to make it more relevant to the context of teaching in an Emirati environment. In addressing the key research questions, semi-structured focus group interviews were used to uncover student teachers' perceptions of the influence of teacher education delivery innovations and curricular changes upon their own reading teaching methods during Teaching Practice. Student teachers were assigned to a particular focus group according to reading teaching ability (as based on teaching practice reports) and included categories of 'confident', 'developing' and 'reluctant' reading teachers, which facilitated comparison of perceptions and abilities of developing reading styles. There were four to eight participants in each group as per Krueger and Casey's (2000: 74) guidelines for focus group numbers must likely to produce optimal interpersonal dynamics.

The social aspect of the group interview, the potential for extended discourse and the face-to-face influence on revealing immediate thoughts were reasons for the collaborative data tool. The focus group interview itself provided a safe environment for participants where they could "share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of people from the same socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender backgrounds" (Madriz, 2000, p.835). However, in the online discussions, the focus was on evaluating how student teachers interpreted the impact of teacher education experiences upon their prior beliefs, new knowledge and reading teaching practices. The nature of the online mode provided these EFL student teachers with time to develop their thoughts and arguments, (Le Cornu and White, 2000) the written versus the spoken mode. Bloomfield, (2000) further argues that the dialogic nature of online discussions provide student teachers with opportunities for ongoing negotiation of identity that, drawing on Britzman (1991), she sees as fundamental to learning to teach. Drawing on the social construction of mind, language and discourse (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978), this also maintained an emphasis on reflection and 'reasoning teaching' (Johnson, 1999). Finally, non-participant observational analysis was carried out by teacher educators at College X,

to observe and monitor student teachers' styles of reading teaching in action in the EFL classroom. As a non-participant observer in classrooms, the researcher engaged in recording field notes as based on competency areas, but at the same time being a participant in the process of observation through active ongoing mentoring practices before and after observations.

Table 1: Phases for data collection and an overview of the tools, contexts and timeframe for each phase

	Phase 1: Intervention	Phase 2: Application	Phase 3: Interpretation
Description	1. Rewriting and developing the course 2. Implementing curriculum review and delivery approaches (Microteaching, problem based learning and modeling)	A teaching practice placement during the college intervention of a revised reading methodology course where student teachers teach reading in Emirati government primary schools	1. The perceived influence of college content and delivery by student teachers using a dialogic forum. 2. Teacher educators (*6) and Student teachers (*90) evaluating course content and delivery
Timeframe	20 week Reading Methodology Course in Semester 2 Year 2	2 week teaching practice experience in Semester 2 Year 2	End of the 20 week Reading Methodology Course
Context	6 Women's Colleges in the College system (90 student teachers)	UAE government schools (16 student teachers)	6 Women's Colleges across the College system – Online Discussions (90 student teachers) ADWC-Focus Group (16 student teachers)
Research Tools	**Documentation:** Course Outlines Course evaluations (pre-intervention)	Non-participant observation **Documentation:** Teaching Practice Reports	Online Discussions Focus Group Interviews **Documentation:** Course Evaluations

Data Analysis

In some ways, the stages of data collection and analysis cannot be clearly separated, since choice of methods, participants, structure and content, as well as decisions made during the data collection, such as whether or not to pursue an unexpected thread initiated by a participant, are all interpretative choices (Clarke, 2005). The process of analyzing data was complex, involving a hybrid approach to qualitative thematic analysis, where emergent themes related to the effectiveness of curriculum development and instructional delivery of a Revised Teacher Education Reading Course became the categories for analysis. It used a deductive a priori approach advocated by Crabtree and Miller (1999) to reach the first level of

interpretive understanding and the data-driven inductive approach of Boyatzis (1998) using manual coding by highlighting key themes and words to reach the second level of interpretative understanding. "Both are legitimate and useful paths" in describing and explaining a pattern of relationships (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.431) and demonstrate how key themes are supported by excerpts from the raw data. This blended data analysis approach aided triangulation and reliability of data analyzed, along with allowing additional themes to emerge direct from the data.

Deductive analysis, involved manual encoding of online discussion postings, categorized a priori based on issues derived from a review of literature and related to the key research questions. Flanagan's (1954; Farrell, 2008) Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was used to draw out the most memorable aspects of student teachers' past and present learning experiences that had made a difference to their understanding of themselves as developing teachers (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) and particularly to their style of reading teaching during Teaching Practice. Other data such as teaching practice reports and course evaluations were analyzed using the 'cut and paste' technique (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990) in which sections relevant to the research questions were identified and categorized into the key themes. Colour coding was used where necessary to organize the material into 'chunks' (Rossman and Rallis, 1998). This further coding process enabled the researcher to identify coherent patterns across the data, providing a degree of cross-referencing between the different types of data collected as well as between the two data analysis approaches. Inductive analysis was conducted only with focus group interview data, derived from key participants in College X. These student teachers began to take greater ownership of the processes of narrative construction by extending answers and emphasizing particular topics that were of significance to them. This strengthening of participants' control prevented the focus group interviews from having a selective focus (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000) and allowed key ideas to be explored further.

Results
Guided by the study's research questions, which ironically fit into the coincidental thrust of government determination to reform a failing government school system and simultaneously "emiratize" and

professionalise the teaching profession (Mograby, 1999; UAE Ministry of Education and Youth, 2000; Clarke & Otaky, 2006), the new reading methodology course is not an insignificant component in the move towards the realization of those national aspirations. While the establishment of this innovation in teacher education methodology draws on global forces in response to local needs, the perceptions of those female Emirati student teachers who will be charged with improving the teaching of reading in government schools has been central to the EDUC 250 course's enactment. Three themes of 'becoming EFL student teachers' have synthesized the analysis and provides a framework for the discussion of the study's research questions. These include 'Contrasting the traditional behaviourist reading paradigm within the college constructivist reading paradigm'; 'Transformational teacher education pedagogy' and 'Becoming agents of change through reconstructing conceptions of practice'. A summary of the findings in relation to each key research question is provided below.

In addressing Research Question One and drawing on the work of Vygotsky (cited in Bodrova and Leong, 1996 and Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002), student teachers from across the six women's colleges explicitly linked reading theory to practice in both curriculum and assessment as an improvement of the revised reading methodology course. The revised course moved from understanding reading as a multifaceted, complex phenomenon to immediate practical application of concepts and methodologies in the college classroom, thereby providing a foundation for student teachers' development as EFL reading teachers. Of particular note was student teachers' satisfaction with the diversity of reading approaches introduced to them, along with explicit practice during microteaching lessons before they went on teaching practice placements. Despite the fact that all participants felt there was an increased theoretical, methodological and practical knowledge of EFL reading teaching for student teachers, teacher educators felt this course could have been extended beyond Year Two of the B. Ed. To a lesser degree, experiential knowledge (Eraut, 1989) formed on teaching practice placements in private English schools emerged as a positive scaffold for student teachers, facilitating practice to theory (Kortegen et al. 2001), while teaching practice

placements in UAE government schools were seen to have a negative influence on their emerging styles of reading teaching.

However, there were differences among the three focus groups. The developing and reluctant student teachers tended to make generalizations and assumptions about the suitability of reading approaches for different age groups and ability levels. They lacked the synthesis, critical analysis and coherence, evident in the confident student teachers' responses. For the reluctant group in particular, new experiences and received theories may have only contributed to their learner knowledge and not transformed into their teacher knowledge (Prestage and Perks (2001). However, the confident student teachers displayed sophisticated knowledge and criticality when choosing EFL reading approaches and took a strong ideological positioning that constructed their developing beliefs and practices. Therefore this study found that shifts in knowledge varied considerably depending on the ability level of the student teacher, thereby extending previous literature.

In addressing Research Question Two, this study has shown that the college delivery innovations of systematic microteaching, performance modelling and problem-based learning can effectively support Emirati student teachers' embodiment of learning to teach EFL reading as they develop systems of knowledge, beliefs and Vygotskian (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002) constructivist reading methods. These scaffolded teacher education approaches were found to provide student teachers with opportunities for observation, discussion, collaboration and reflection on teaching. By providing greater opportunities to link theory to practice, student teachers not only felt they were taught in the EDUC 250 course as they were expected to teach on Teaching Practice, but they also made connections between modelling of reading strategies observed in the college classroom with examples of best practice modelled in private English schools. The teacher educator's ability to intentionally challenge and motivate student teachers' beyond what was just out of their reach was a recurring emergent theme within Emirati student teachers' responses. Not only was their own learning scaffolded, but explicit modelling of scaffolded constructivist

reading approaches for young EFL was also observed and cited as a major influence on shaping what they do in the EFL classroom. Effective elements of teacher education methodology, as remembered by student teachers included 'Shared Reading', 'Reader's Theatre', 'Electronic books', 'Watching vodcasts/videos', modelling of 'Pre, while and post reading' stages, 'Modelled different reading lessons', 'Total Physical Response' (TPR), using 'Intonation and Predictive Questions', 'Acted out with us' and 'musical instruments'. Teaching Practice reports revealed that many of these modelled strategies were indeed trialled by student teachers during their teaching practice placements (College X, 2007b). These findings are consistent with Lunenberg et al. (2007) in that student teachers may learn about teaching by example, as much as through the content and activities presented.

To a lesser degree, yet contradicting Lunenberg et al, (2007), the influence of implicit modelling of positive attitudes towards reading and constructive feedback on mini-lessons by the teacher educator was reported as increasing student teachers' confidence and motivation to learn. Other skills developed during microteaching practice included proactivity, resourcefulness and improvisation. Consistent with another study conducted in the Gulf by Al-Methen, (1995) both teacher educators and student teachers felt this practical experience in college minimized the risk of failure in the EFL primary classroom and provided an opportunity for their teaching to be analyzed and evaluated not only by themselves but through peer and teacher feedback. Student teachers' overall confidence in the structure of the programme as an alternation between school and college, in an attempt to optimize the integration between theory and practice is exemplified in their responses, where they use their already existing frameworks and incorporate both theory with a small (t) and capital (T) into their professional thinking. This mirrors Korthagen et al.'s (2001) realistic model of teacher education. Together, they have developed their own 'language of practice' in which they have discussed, authored and even documented example cases within the context of teaching reading in an EFL Emirati environment.

However, again there were differences among the three groups of student teachers. Although connecting theory and practice through modelling, microteaching practice, problem-based learning, the Emirati

government school primary curriculum and course assessments - increased student teachers' understanding and criticality of the learning-teaching cycle, it was only the confident student teachers who were aware of the artificiality and limitations of situated college practices. They consciously raised challenges they may face when entering the real EFL Emirati classroom environment. However, on the contrary, the majority of reluctant student teachers perceived teacher educator performance modelling as an exclusive way of teaching and lacked the ability to perceive teacher education practices as merely a starting point, from which to develop individual styles of reading teaching, which confers with ideas expressed by Loughran (1997) and Jay (2002). Also the confident student teachers displayed an ability to accommodate knowledge and skills (Piaget, 1971) by connecting previous learning experiences in college with performance modelling observed during the EDUC250 course, whereas the developing and reluctant student teachers tended to compartmentalize their learning from year to year. Teacher educator observations also revealed differences amongst the three groups of student teachers. For example, the confident and developing student teachers attempted to take more risks with their teaching, in terms of interactive strategies used, classroom management and organization and enact pedagogic change in schools, in contrast with their previous learning experiences. While the developing student teachers had developed a true interactive style of reading teaching, the confident student teachers had developed an eclectic style, that combines both interactive and behaviourist styles of teaching. However, while the majority of reluctant student teachers advocated drawing a clean break with their past behaviourist learning experiences in focus group discussions, in favour of constructivist teaching approaches; teaching practice reports reveal that in practice many of them teach reading as they had been taught, rather than as they had been taught to teach. As recognized in the conceptual framework, student teachers can espouse particular knowledge and beliefs, yet still employ classroom practices that contradict these (Woods 1979; Johnson, K.E. (1999). This distinction is one of the key findings of this study and one that shows the power of the apprenticeship of observation in influencing external behaviours of Arabic learners, especially for weaker student teachers. This leads to the third research question.

In addressing Research Question Three, previous reading experiences in school are cited as a major influence on shaping what they do or don't do in the EFL classroom which confers with authors such as Lortie (1975); Florio-Ruane & Lensmire (1990) and Grossman (1990). In an Emirati context, student teachers recall teachers instilling students with fear and accuracy of choral reading was promoted to the detriment of making meaning accessible (Mustafa's, 2002; McNally et al, 2002; Shannon, 2003; Taha-Thomure, 2003; Clarke et al, 2007; Barber et al., 2007). Having a lasting impact on how student teachers define themselves as readers and developing reading teachers, the dichotomies of 'traditional' versus 'modern' are characterized by a startling degree of consensus. This consensus is reinforced by the shared discussions of the group which reifies certain ways of understanding EFL reading teaching, while simultaneously excluding others, such as behaviourist teaching methods. Similar to Clarke's study (2005), the findings therefore reveal a basic division between the 'traditional' teachers of the past and themselves as the new teachers of the future, that at times take the form of hostility and antagonism. Fleshing out the details of this overarching opposition include oppositions such as 'fluency' versus 'accuracy' of reading; 'student-centred' versus 'teacher-centred' teaching; 'traditional' versus 'modern', 'behaviourist' versus 'interactive' and 'passive' versus 'active'. Viewing themselves as enlightened practitioners, this study reveals Emirati student teachers desire to 'make a difference' in developing 'a love of reading' and voicing the type of classroom environment they want to create: a print-rich and literacy-rich environment that motivates and engages learners in the reading process, using student-centred interactive reading approaches, differentiated reading, an established daily routine for reading aloud and opportunities for home-school links. Based on their professional beliefs, student teachers offer a testimony of change that distinguishes them from the past, and propels them into a constructivist reading environment, as observed in the teacher education classroom. Their determination to become agents of change is unsurprising, given the negative memories of most student teachers of their own behaviourist style of previous schooling. Emerging from this study are pedagogically confident student teachers in terms of their growing awareness of a range of alternative constructivist strategies for teaching reading to young EFL learners. However, as highlighted in research question two above, while all Emirati student teachers embraced

constructivist pedagogy as modelled in the college classroom, only some student teachers were able to transfer this awareness to classroom practices.

In addressing the study's research questions above, the findings have clearly shown how this Vygotskian constructivist-based contextualized EFL model of teacher education reading pedagogy can better prepare Emirati student teachers to enact pedagogic change in the government Emirati reading classroom.

Professional and Conceptual Significance of the Study: Implications of Teacher Education Pedagogy for Theory, Policy and Practice in a UAE EFL Context

Overall, this study's contribution in relation to recent developments in teacher education pedagogy is significant in many ways. In relation to the impact of implementing constructivist teacher education pedagogy based on Vygotskian principles, it has afforded insights into the significant impact of performance modelling, systematic microteaching and problem-based learning upon student teachers' reading teaching behaviours in a country that is part of an under-researched region of the world. Within the current literature on pre-service language teacher education pedagogy itself, comprehensive accounts of approaches such as performance modelling are not readily available (Lunenberg et al, 2007). This study is an example of how such innovative pedagogical practices can contribute to extending the range of possibility for 'best' practices within teacher education in an Arabic context. It has closely examined the specific mechanisms by which Emirati student teachers construct new understandings of classroom practice through scaffolding, assisted performance and guided participation in the language teacher education classroom. It draws on the insights and practices within Korthagen et al's (2001) model of realistic teacher education and for the *first time* from this region adds to the literature by showing an emerging constructivist-based contextualized EFL model of teacher education, aiming to enact pedagogic change in the government Emirati school system. It has therefore begun to address the recognized need to improve English teaching in the UAE (Loughrey et al., 1999). It afforded insights into the teaching of reading in a UAE context, both at college and school levels and the findings have shown that student teachers are already making a difference in increasing the quality of reading teaching in schools.

Additionally, in relation to theorizations of teacher education within a Vygotskian socio-cultural perspective (Wells, 1999), as a process of identity formation, it has offered a way of thinking about the formation of reading teaching styles as a dynamic process of identity development involving past and present influences. The study has therefore been a catalyst for change in the Emirati education system as increasing numbers of U.A.E. national women take up positions as English teachers in local government schools.

There are also important implications for developing other teacher education reading programmes in the UAE, particularly when the pressing need for change in college pedagogy has already been acknowledged in the research literature (McNally et al, 2002; Syed, 2003). Drawing on the key tenets of this research, the pedagogical implications for policy and practice within education courses include establishing the importance of building concrete links between reading theory and practice, engaging in curriculum review processes, implementing constructivist-based teacher education approaches and making the development of contextually appropriate materials and pedagogy a priority. The organization, relevance and applicability of delivery approaches and resources chosen, if contextualized, may equip student teachers better for the realities of the EFL Emirati school environment. This in turn may set new ground for enabling second language student teachers to develop as confident EFL reading teachers.

Increasingly, the dialogue between the local and the global permeates all of our consciousnesses (Gallagher, 2007) and so this case study speaks of, and to, both local and global contexts. A particular observation that is likely to have some relevance for similar EFL contexts is the particular importance of teacher educator assisted performance when learning to teach through the medium of a second language. As evidenced in focus group responses; performance modelling, systematic microteaching and problem-based learning activities assisted EFL student teachers to co-construct their understanding of the content material they were learning in their course along with preparing them for the practical realities of the EFL Emirati teaching environment. Notably, the positive backwash effect on student teacher learning caused by teacher educator performance modelling could be harnessed and applied in other contexts of teacher

education and in so doing, extend the range of possibility in pedagogical practices for second language teacher education.

However, the danger of over-scaffolding, over-assisting performance and over-guiding participation raise questions for the course and indeed for other teacher education methodology courses - the question of just how much scaffolding and feedback on microteaching and problem-based activities is appropriate and feasible. As evident from this study, the reluctant student teachers lacked the ability to develop individual styles of reading teaching, perceiving teacher educator performance modelling as an exclusive way of teaching. Reflecting on Fullan's (1993; 2001) writing on the conditions needed for educational change, this might negatively affect student teachers' future ability to act independently as reading teachers in government schools; and thus mitigate against the courses expectation that they will become change agents locally. This tendency to shy away from individual action and cling to the security of assisted performance may well be something to be aware of in other similar contexts of educational innovation.

A further limitation of the present case involves the fact that the data for this study was collected over a six month period, representing a small chunk of the students' enrolment in their four year teacher education programme. However, as the teaching of reading was not explicitly focused on beyond Year Two of the B.Ed. programme, it is therefore suggested that there is need for further research into the delayed influence of teacher education pedagogical experiences upon student teacher/graduate reading teaching practices. Also by focusing on the curricular and pedagogic changes made to the EDUC 250 reading course across six colleges, the influence of mentor school teachers' teaching practices on student teachers' developing reading styles has not been as strongly attended to. Reflective practice and student teacher's own reading habits - are not much addressed either. Other idiosyncratic aspects of this case include the fact that the student teachers featured here are amongst the first nationals to become professionally qualified English teachers; the fact of the widespread reform of their country's educational system, the small numbers of student teachers involved, the relatively few constraints on innovation in this case due to a new programme - all of these circumstantial factors have combined to produce a degree

of scaffolding, assisted performance and guided participation that is perhaps unlikely to be replicated as fully in other contexts, beyond the UAE. However, other forms of constructivist pedagogical practices may be effective in other contexts of teacher education.

By nature, any educational case is complex, changing, and contextualized (Gallagher, 2007). While descriptions and analysis of selected aspects of this case have been documented, it is ultimately for readers to construct their own meanings from the evidence of the perceived impact of this revised teacher education reading course upon student teachers' reading teaching, and to draw inference for their own particular pedagogical contexts. However, it is suggested by way of conclusion to this case study that performance modelling, systematic microteaching and problem-based learning may constitute the foundations of a paradigm of second language teacher education pedagogy in action that is underpinned by constructivism, a specific perspective that is currently lacking in the research literature. Constructing such a paradigm from a singular case is paradoxical, yet when integrated with other similar studies from the region, this case can contribute towards providing a greater understanding of a Vygotskian constructivist teacher education paradigm in the UAE that may have resonance elsewhere. Exploring ways in which EFL Emirati student teachers learn to teach reading is the job of a lifetime. It is, nevertheless, a journey that will never end, because no matter how effective we are as teacher educators, we can always improve.

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