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Enhancing Teaching Performance of EFL Pre-service Teachers through Structured Self-Reflection Practices

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of self-reflection-based program on developing university pre-service teachers' performance in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). A group of 30 fourth-year pre-service teachers from the Faculty of Education, Hurghada University, Egypt, were randomly selected to form the experimental group. These participants received training through a proposed program based on self-reflection strategies to enhance teaching performance. Pre- and post-observation sheets and a conceptual knowledge test were designed to determine the effectiveness of the applied program. Results revealed statistically significant differences in the participants' mean scores between the pre- and post-administrations of the observation sheet for overall teaching performance, in favor of the post-administration. Additionally, significant improvements were observed in each individual teaching skill assessed by the observation sheet. Moreover, the findings indicated a statistically significant difference in the participants' scores on the conceptual knowledge test, also in favor of the post-administration. It was concluded that the proposed program based on self-reflection had a positive impact on enhancing the teaching performance of pre-service EFL teachers. Finally, the study presented relevant findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

Keywords: Teaching performance, self-reflection, EFL pre-service teachers

مستخلص الدراسة

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على فعالية برنامج قائم على التأمل الذاتي في تحسين أداء معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) قبل الخدمة في مرحلة التعليم الجامعي. وقد تم اختيار عينة مكونة من ٣٠ معلمًا في السنة الرابعة قبل الخدمة من كلية التربية بجامعة الغردقة- جمهورية مصر العربية- بطريقة عشوائية لتشكيل المجموعة التجريبية. تلقى المشاركون تدريبًا من خلال برنامج مقترح قائم على استراتيجيات التأمل الذاتي بهدف تنمية الاداء التدريسي. اعتمدت الدراسة على بطاقة ملاحظة قبلية وبعديّة، بالإضافة إلى اختبار لقياس المعرفة النظرية لتقييم فعالية البرنامج المطبق. أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات المشاركين في بطاقة الملاحظة قبلية والبعديّة لصالح القياس البعدي بما يعكس تحسّنًا ملحوظًا في الأداء التدريسي العام. كما تم رصد تحسن جوهري في كل مهارة تدريسية فرعية تم تقييمها. كذلك، أظهرت نتائج الاختبار فروقًا ذات دلالة إحصائية لصالح القياس البعدي. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن البرنامج المقترح القائم على ممارسات التأمل الذاتي، أسهم بفاعلية في الارتقاء بالأداء التدريسي لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية قبل الخدمة. وفي ضوء هذه النتائج، قدمت الدراسة عددًا من التوصيات والمقترحات التي تمهد لبحوث مستقبلية في هذا المجال.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأداء التدريسي - التأمل الذاتي - المعلمون قبل الخدمة في مجال تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

1. Introduction

Pre-service teacher training is a cornerstone of teacher education programs, as it equips candidates with the knowledge and skills necessary to become effective educators. Within the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), this preparation has become increasingly complex in response to the global demand for high-quality instruction. Meeting these challenges requires moving beyond traditional approaches to teacher preparation. Since many beginning teachers struggle to translate theoretical knowledge into effective classroom practice, there is a growing need for training models that integrate theory with authentic, practice-oriented learning opportunities.

Bridging this gap requires teacher education institutions to emphasize collaborative learning and reflective practices, which provide pre-service teachers with actionable strategies and nurture their professional identity. According to Tondeur et al. (2020), numerous studies emphasize the need for pre-service teachers to develop 21st-century competencies to navigate real-world teaching challenges. Similarly, Baksh (2016) stresses the importance of equipping pre-service teachers with specific skills for teaching English, particularly to young learners.

Effective teacher preparation requires a balanced approach that integrates both theoretical understanding and practical competence. Zeichner (2018) proposes a four-dimensional model for teacher preparation, emphasizing subject mastery, understanding of subject nature, awareness of learner needs, and proficiency in pedagogical strategies. Importantly, he advocates for a stronger focus on practical application rather than theoretical knowledge alone. In this regard, Hammerness and Klette (2015) assert that teacher education should not only build professional knowledge and skills but also cultivate reflective attitudes toward classroom instruction.

One essential ability in this developmental process is reflective thinking. Recent research highlights that the ability to reflect on one's professional identity is fundamental to effective teaching. Reflection enables teachers to evaluate their instructional decisions, recognize areas for improvement, and make informed changes. Poon and Lee (2022) assert that reflective practice fosters deep learning and bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching. This process also highlights reflection as a means of promoting autonomy and lifelong learning, qualities essential for thriving in dynamic classroom environments.

Flores (2014) describes self-reflection as a humbling yet essential process for enhancing teaching performance. It encourages teachers to critically analyze their beliefs, behaviors, and instructional choices. Flores further explains that reflective practice validates a teacher's ideals, challenges traditional norms, and fosters respect for diversity in classroom practice. Researchers such as Husu and Toom (2021) and Zulfikar and Mujiburrahman (2018) have proposed various frameworks to guide self-reflection among pre-service teachers, focusing on pedagogical decision-making, classroom interaction, and professional growth.

2.Theoretical Framework

A critical focus of teacher preparation programs is related to teaching performance, which is important, particularly for pre-service teachers who are developing their first classroom competencies. The teaching of performance in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context requires systematic development by student teachers through structured support and practice. This is particularly the case as pre-service teachers seek to learn how to teach, and understand what it means to teach, at the same time.

2.1 Teaching Performance for Pre-service Teachers

Richards (2015) refers to the problem that pre-service teachers encounter is that their studies were general and not relevant to their teaching assignments, so much of what they need

to know has to be acquired through on the job learning (P. 702). Further, he notes that pre-service teachers are engaged in a particularly difficult dual act of learning to teach at the same time as they construct the meaning of teaching. The teaching process is complex and it demands specific support structures and developmental approaches oriented to the particular needs of beginning teachers. His research shows that the success of performance development depends on its instructional technical skills as well as the conceptual understanding that lies at its roots.

Based on this understanding, Farrell (2015) argued that teacher development involves many key dimensions of teaching performance, which need to be systematically developed. His work showed that a teacher's work in the classroom includes more than the work of delivering instructions; Hence, planning, classroom management, assessment and building learning supportive environments are some of the multiple complex tasks that are required for effective teaching performance. The finding that these dimensions interactively, rather than independently, develop among each other was of particular importance, leading to the need for integrated approaches to performance development.

Building on these ideas, Johnson (2009) examined how EFL teachers develop their performance within sociocultural environments. She found that effective teaching performance is never simply generic but is always situated within educational and cultural environments such that pre-service or in service teachers have to learn to adapt their teaching to these contextual demands. Johnson makes the point that teaching is not, primarily, a series of routinized practices but it also requires the capacity to adapt and to innovate. Yet, teacher education programs, whether pre or in service, need to develop adaptive expertise that will allow the teachers lifelong learning and development. For EFL contexts, this finding is significant because of the role that cultural and linguistic factors can play in affecting the effectiveness of teaching.

Using the process of belief change during teaching practicum among pre-service EFL teachers as a focus, Yuan and Lee (2014) examine the process of belief change involved. In particular, the study pinpoints several stages involved in belief change: confirmation, realization, disagreement, elaboration, integration, and modification, and indicates evolved teacher cognitions in the process of change. However, sociocultural factors can be implicated in these changes, in terms of how pre-service teachers restructured their beliefs about teaching. What these findings stress is the need for establishing an open and supportive practicum environment to facilitate reflection, adaptation, and cognitive development, to better grow the pre-service teachers' teaching performance.

Similarly, extensive studies conducted on EFL teacher development for a global society by Kumaravadivelu (2012) indicated that the teaching performance of EFL contexts has to take on multiple competencies surpassing just basic pedagogical skills. His research shows that EFL effective teaching performance involves an integrated use of linguistic competence, teaching knowledge, cultural awareness and strategic teaching skills. The finding underscores the intricacy of performance development for prospective EFL teachers and demonstrates an essential requirement for elaborate support structures.

However, the challenges faced by EFL pre-service teachers during their teaching practice programs are investigated by Nababan and Amalia (2021). The study reveals numerous challenges pre-service teachers experience, these being challenges attributed to selecting appropriate teaching materials and motivating students. These create many challenges that indicate the difficulty of moving from theoretical knowledge to practical application in actual class situations. The findings highlight the importance for teacher preparation programs to reconfigure their teacher education curriculum and strive to provide the supports and preparation necessary to help pre-service teachers face the unique

challenges of teaching practice.

This conceptual review has several critical insights regarding teaching performance development in pre-service EFL teachers. Richards' (2015) findings for the gap between the expectations of being a teacher and the practices of teaching do not fit well with teacher education as indicated by the repeated research adverting to the fact that teachers need a dual apprenticeship in the process of learning to teach and conceptually developing on what teaching essentially means.

2.2 Assessing teaching performance

Assessing teaching performance has become a central concern in teacher education, particularly when preparing pre-service teachers for the realities of the classroom. Stronge (2018) argues that teaching performance is a multidimensional construct that reflects how well a teacher can plan, deliver, and evaluate instruction while maintaining a productive learning environment. For pre-service EFL teachers, the process of assessment provides a window into their developing professional identity and offers teacher educators insight into the areas that need growth and support. Danielson (2013) explains that teaching performance should be understood in a broad sense. It is not just about delivering content, but about combining knowledge, skills, and personal qualities in a way that creates good learning opportunities. A teacher's performance usually reflects how they design lessons, handle the classroom, interact with students, and check how much students have learned.

Effective teaching is connected not only with instructional techniques but also with relationships and classroom atmosphere. König and Klemenz (2020) highlight that teacher effectiveness is not limited to technical proficiency. While clarity of instruction, planning, and subject knowledge are essential, qualities such as enthusiasm, fairness, and care for students are equally vital. In this sense, teaching performance combines professional competencies

with interpersonal attributes that shape student engagement. Wyatt-Smith et al. (2021) argue that because teaching is so complex, no single measure can capture performance accurately. They recommend a multidimensional approach that integrates classroom observations, student feedback, lesson portfolios, and self-reflection. This provides a fuller picture of teachers' abilities and helps connect pre-service teachers' theoretical learning with real classroom practice.

Assessment of teaching performance should be developmental, not only evaluative. Feedback is most effective when it highlights strengths, points out areas for growth, and guides future improvement. Used this way, performance assessment becomes part of continuous professional learning instead of a final judgment (Timperley, 2019). Trust and Whalen (2020) note that recent changes in education, such as technology integration, student-centered approaches, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, have reshaped how teaching performance is understood. Teachers are now also assessed on their adaptability, ability to maintain engagement across learning modes, and flexibility in responding to challenges.

In summary, assessing teaching performance is a complex but necessary process. It serves the dual purpose of ensuring accountability while also supporting professional learning. Because teaching involves multiple dimensions, evaluation should not be seen as a static judgment but rather as a tool that promotes continuous growth for both pre-service and experienced teachers.

2.3 Reflective Practice and the Development of EFL Teaching Performance

The current globalized era necessitates a profound transformation in educational approaches and teaching performance. As Korthagen et al. (2014) contend, there is a new social panorama of globalization that demands new challenges to the school of the twenty-first century and to the conception of

teacher training. One of the main changes is that teachers must assume their learning in order to develop professionally and not wait for third parties to do it for them. The public-school context needs teachers prepared to solve the problems and challenges of the classroom within the school, seen as an institution with social characteristics defined by its own context.

Hence, Kaasila et al. (2020) argued that teachers' reflection focused on pedagogical practice represents the tool to teach teachers to think and reflect so that they, in turn, teach their students to think, since what is understood in depth from one's own experience is better taught. Although the importance of reflective thinking as a tool for teaching is recognized, it must be borne in mind that the value of this tool lies in the fact that it is the objective of education. Thus, reflection is positioned in initial and continuous training, both with respect to the theoretical foundations of teaching processes, and their application in the classroom as an indispensable instrument for developing teaching performance.

Beauchamp (2015) discussed the notion of reflection, which is a polysemic term, goes far beyond the field of study of educational sciences and teacher training. The notions of reflexivity, reflective thinking, practical-reflexive, practical reflection and reflection in action are terms that are often amalgamated in the theoretical field of reflection with different visions of authors who were interested in and continue to research on this topic.

For Dewey, reflective thinking arises from the experience of a lived situation and considers it as a process to produce a new situation. He was concerned with the routine thinking of students in their school learning, the execution of actions guided by impulse, tradition or authority. Osterman and Kottkamp (2019) point out that the reflection proposed by Dewey represents a process of meaning-making, in a structured and systematic way developed in a collaborative way, in which the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and others is valued. As a sequential cognitive process,

Dewey defines reflection as the ability to describe, understand and explain a real classroom situation thereby the ability to construct and understood the meaning. Marshall (2019) reviewed the concept of reflection and stated that reflection is a process whereby the mind keeps away from spontaneous and disordered ideas and pulls them towards creating a logical order with which they are brought together in rigor, reflection thinking. The formed result of reflection is new knowledge and is based on the teacher's practice. To reach that desired situation, the process of reflection needs time to become explicit, conscious and constitute itself as practice.

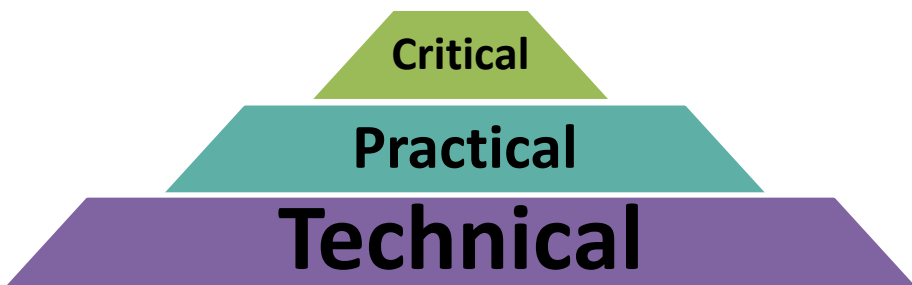
According to Day (2017), reflection is a way to enhance teachers' decision-making power and autonomy because it enables teachers to interpret and reformulate their pedagogical work, set within a social and political context as well as an institutional one. Reflective thinking recognizes that teachers generate and manage knowledge based on their pedagogical work and provide new knowledge about good teaching practices. However, it is a personal task, and the result is significant because, among other advantages, it provides a means to evaluate goals, purposes, and methods, and thus identify the values that lie at the root of successful practice. Reflection with the vision of generating changes and improvements in pedagogical practice is probably the most challenging dimension of teaching in these times.

Reflection, in its different theoretical interpretations, can thus be concluded to represent a cognitive process that reconciles theory with practice, understanding what happens at the time of practice, what works and how it works to construct a comprehensive understanding that gives meaning to the activities we perform. This cognitive process encourages reflection in the classroom to help solve problems for the teacher, who in an unknown situation analyzes his experiences to find the answer, which may lead to structuring or not the new knowledge resulting from the reflection carried out.

Beauchamp (2015) identifies reflection through four

categories that include cognitive and affective processes; internal and external reasons of reflection; moments of reflection in relation to action; and the specific context in which the teacher reflects and analyzes his or her practice. For Bashan and Holsblat (2017) reflection occurs at three levels of hierarchy (technical – practical – critical) in which teachers make decisions, the third level being critical reflection, in which the teacher is expected to analyze the objectives of teaching indicated in the curriculum and their contribution to learning. This reflection of the teacher is seen as transversal, a necessary competence for professional practice. The evaluation and development of these visions of reflection are fully valid and with time and ongoing research they will continue to advance in light of the new challenges of developing EFL teaching performance.

Figure2.4.1 - Three levels of reflection



Bashan and Holsblat (2017)

Dewey (2022) presents a pattern in his five-stage cyclical model of action, observation, analysis, reconceptualization and testing which enables a systematic way for novice teachers to examine and improve their teaching practice. When conducted in a hybrid professional learning community, this reflective cycle allows pre-service teachers to advance systematically from problem identification to problem solution, as supported by individual contemplation as well as collaborative analysis. The iterative nature of the model makes it especially well-suited to promoting teaching performance improvement on the basis of continuous refinement through repeated cycles of practice, reflection and refinement in a

professional community of practice.

Schön's work establishes an important difference between reflection in action and reflection on action. Reflection in action often provokes a reflection on action, because it puts 'in reserve' questions that are impossible to deal with at the time, but the professional returns to analyze them with detention after the execution of the action initiated. In the case of reflection on action, it may not be very fast. it can last for minutes, hours, days, or even weeks or months, depending on the rhythm of the activity and the limits that are characteristic of the practice (Schön, 2017). In teaching, reflection takes place after a lesson, at the end of the day, the week, the unit, and even the year and allows the teacher to analyze their action and prepare them to reflect faster on the action, apply their expertise, and respond appropriately to the action.

Thus, Structured reflection is a critical component examined within teacher preparation programs, particularly through the lens of evolving reflective practice theory—encompassing Dewey's cognitive approach, Schön's reflexive model. These frameworks offer valuable insights for effectively integrating reflection into teacher training. This is especially relevant to the current study, which explores how these theoretical models can be synthesized within a hybrid Professional Learning Community (PLC) environment. In this setting, pre-service teachers engage in both individual reflection and collaborative analysis of their teaching practices. The literature emphasizes that reflection should not occur in isolation but must be situated within a social context that acknowledges the broader educational culture.

2.4 The practical-reflective EFL teacher

In traditional teaching, educators primarily functioned as transmitters of knowledge and cultural values. In contrast, contemporary pedagogy, as noted by Darling-Hammond (2017), emphasizes a reflective approach where teachers engage thoughtfully with students rather than relying on unexamined

practices. While many teachers naturally reflect on their practice before, during, and after lessons, this alone does not qualify them as practical-reflective professionals. Drawing on Schön's framework, the practical-reflective teacher maintains a continuous, critical relationship with their practice, reflecting both *in* and *on* action. This ongoing process of distancing, reviewing, and understanding their work enables them to generate meaningful, positive changes in their teaching.

The practical-reflective teacher demonstrates teaching performance centered on three dimensions of reflection: reflection as a social experience, as recognition and interaction, and as a critique of ideologies. These dimensions of reflection make sense in the school of this century, in which the roles of the teacher have evolved, the workspaces have changed, and the demands of families and educational authorities have multiplied (Hargreaves, 2021). It is therefore appropriate to broaden Schön's definition of the practical reflexive to incorporate a dimension focused on teachers' social reflexivity. This expanded view emphasizes how educators actively seek to understand their social context to give meaning to their professional practice, build their identity, and situate their role within the school ecosystem.

Beauchamp (2015) states that identity in teacher development is fundamental to what is expected of reflection. The 2nd dimension rests upon the teacher's search of recognition or identity construction, regarding how his professional practice is perceived or received in his environment, especially his students. Finally, the 3rd dimension appeals to the teacher's level of critical reflection to express their ideologies and social practices that underlie their professional practice. In this conception of personal and professional development, the practical-reflective teacher needs to strengthen qualities that allow him to reflect in a personal and collaborative way.

Consequently, hybrid professional learning communities evolve from the practices of traditional teaching to show how pre-

service teachers' teaching performance is developed by the use of reflective practice. Structured support systems for developing reflective capabilities are needed as Darling-Hammond (2017) notes that the shift from formative knowledge transmission to reflective pedagogy requires structured support systems supporting the development of reflective capabilities. This validation serves to legitimize the incorporation of hybrid PLCs with self-reflection by giving pre-service teachers the individual and collaborative spaces in which to develop the three key aspects of reflection, social experience, recognition, and interaction, and critique of ideologies.

2.5 From individual reflection to collaborative reflective practice

In pedagogical practice, teachers integrate theoretical knowledge with experiential knowledge shaped by their disciplinary training and social context. As Lubbe & Botha (2020) emphasize, critically examining pedagogical practice involves questioning teaching assumptions, choices, and actions—a process requiring structured scaffolding like reflective practice to guide meaningful reflection. The primary objective of reflective practice extends beyond merely complementing initial teacher training or supporting ongoing professional development, as learning to teach is a lifelong process. Rather, its core intention is to prompt teachers to critically question their teaching methods, transforming problematic classroom situations into new pedagogical opportunities that simultaneously enhance teacher's teaching performance and improve student learning outcomes. Consequently, it is essential to recognize that reflective practice is inherently unique and individualized, with each teacher employing distinct reflective strategies that resist standardized, mass-training approaches.

Ruffinelli et al. (2020) emphasize that reflective practice constitutes a methodical intellectual stance requiring deliberate methodological commitment from educators. They argue that

teachers cannot genuinely embody this reflective posture without critically examining the ethical, social, and political dimensions of their work, their operational context, and the underlying beliefs guiding their practice. This extends beyond routine pedagogical analysis of learning sessions, representing a deeper engagement with the multifaceted nature of professional educational practice.

A significant body of research highlights the transformative potential of reflective practice in shaping effective educators. Alsuhaibani (2019) underscores the critical role of reflective practice in enhancing teaching performance, particularly for EFL teachers, noting its value in addressing contemporary educational challenges. While pre-service teachers initially acknowledge the importance of reflection, their practice often becomes superficial and repetitive over time due to insufficient structural support. This gap highlights the need for scaffolded, structured reflection strategies—such as guided reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action—to foster deeper critical engagement, enhance professional decision-making, strengthen teacher identity, and improve overall teaching effectiveness in EFL contexts.

In this way, reflective practice helps to bridge the gap between teachers' beliefs and actual classroom practices to create a learning situation that combines previous experience, specific contexts, and theory-guided practice. Going through this path of reflection requires that reflective practice be carried out in a systematic way, in a team made up of teachers and oriented to the social aspects of teaching, from general pedagogical issues to the interaction between the teacher and students in the classroom.

3. Context of the Problem

High-quality pre-service training is crucial for the success of future teachers in their professional careers. Much of a teacher's core professional competency is acquired during undergraduate education. It is during this formative period that pre-service teachers not only gain essential pedagogical skills but also begin to

develop the attitudes and dispositions necessary for effective teaching. As Buehl and Fives (2019) emphasizes that teacher education should aim to instill a positive attitude toward the profession while deepening content knowledge.

Competent and well-prepared teachers are widely recognized as the most vital resource in any educational system. The primary mission of teacher training institutions is to graduate educators who are well-equipped to handle the real-world challenges of the classroom. Yilmaz and Sahin (2011) found that most pre-service teachers valued effort and understanding over innate ability, suggesting that teacher education should emphasize skill-building and reflective growth. However, research by Saqr and Tennant (2016) indicated that pre-service teachers often face significant difficulties during their practicum. These challenges include inadequate preparation, insufficient mentor-mentee collaboration, and limited exposure to effective classroom practices.

Studies also reveal gaps in pre-service teachers' instructional abilities. Many pre-service teachers struggle with lesson planning, classroom guidance, and student evaluation. Evertson and Weinstein (2013) noted deficiencies in classroom management, student discipline, and routine classroom procedures. In response, Nzilano (2013) recommended comprehensive reforms in professional development programs, alongside stronger collaboration among universities, schools, and educational stakeholders to support teaching competency.

In the Egyptian context, several studies (e.g., Abd Almenam, 2015; Keshta, 2008; Al Rohaily, 2010; Mohamed, 2020; Kandeel, 2019) have documented persistent issues in the teaching performance of pre-service teachers. A common theme across these studies is the difficulty pre-service teachers face in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge, particularly in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), and actual classroom practice. Field training environments often fail to reflect the progressive methods taught in university courses, discouraging innovation and

reinforcing outdated teaching models. Consequently, many pre-service teachers tend to imitate the practices of their mentor teachers without critically analyzing their effectiveness.

Through her own experience as an English language teacher and supervisor of practicum students, the researcher has observed similar challenges. Many pre-service teachers struggle to develop coherent lesson plans, maintain classroom discipline, and implement effective assessment techniques. To further explore these issues, a pilot study was conducted using a teaching performance observation sheet targeting 10 fourth-year English pre-service teachers at Hurghada Faculty of Education. The sheet evaluated three key areas: lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment techniques. Results indicated performance levels of 60% in lesson planning, 45% in classroom management, and 55% in assessment—suggesting that significant improvement is needed for pre-service teachers to meet acceptable teaching standards.

In addition, in-person interviews were conducted with practicum supervisors from three schools in Hurghada, Red Sea Governorate, to obtain expert perspectives on the performance of pre-service teachers and pinpoint areas needing improvement. The supervisors noted several persistent challenges impacting teaching effectiveness and stressed the value of self-reflection practices to support the development of pre-service teachers' teaching performance.

4. Statement of the problem

In light of the literature review and the pilot study results, it is evident that EFL pre-service teachers have some performance problems and difficulties. These problems negatively affect their teaching performance. So, the researcher investigated using self-reflection based- program to develop EFL pre-service teachers' performance.

Hence, the study attempts to answer the following question:

5. Questions of the research

What is the effect of a self-reflection-based program on EFL pre-service teachers' performance?

In addressing this main question; these sub-questions were also answered:

- 1) What is the current level of EFL 4th year basic education pre-service teachers' teaching performance?
- 2) How can a self-reflection-based program affect pre-service teachers' performance?

6. Hypotheses of the study

The present study tested the following hypotheses:

- 1- There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post administrations of the overall teaching performance observation sheet in favor of the post administration.
- 2- There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post administrations of each teaching performance in the observation sheet in favor of the post administration.
- 3- There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post administrations of the conceptual knowledge test in favor of the post administration.

7. Aim of the research

The present study aimed at:

- Developing EFL pre-service teachers' teaching performance.
- Measuring the effectiveness of self-reflection based- program on developing pre-service teachers' performance in teaching English language.

8. Significance of the research

The present research may

- Introduce strategies as tools that can be used in EFL teacher preparation programs.
- Direct the attention of EFL specialists to the importance of using self-reflection in education

9. Study Design

The present study employed a one-group design to investigate the effectiveness of self-reflection strategies on enhancing pre-service teachers' performance in teaching the English language. Two instruments were used to collect data: an observation sheet and a conceptual knowledge test. A pre-observation and an equivalent post-observation were administered using the observation sheet to evaluate participants' classroom teaching behaviors before and after the intervention. Additionally, a pretest and posttest were conducted to assess gains in pedagogical knowledge and teaching-related competencies. The results from both tools were compared to determine the overall effectiveness.

10. Participants

The participants of the current study were a group of 30 EFL pre-service teachers at the fourth -year (basic) English department. The participants were male and female pre-service teachers and their ages ranged from (21 to 23 years old). They were selected from Hurghada faculty of education, English department, Hurghada University.

11. Instruments and Materials

The researcher designed the following tools and materials

- Teaching performance observation sheet for observing, assessing, and scoring EFL 4th year basic education pre-service teachers' teaching performance.

- Conceptual knowledge test for assessing EFL 4th year basic education pre-service teachers' knowledge of teaching performance.
- A rubric for evaluating and assessing pre-service teachers' knowledge of lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment.
- A program based on self- reflection strategies, to develop the experimental group's teaching performance.

12. Results of the study

The first hypothesis of the present reserach stated " There is a statistically significant difference of the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post administrations of the overall teaching performance observation sheet in favor of the post administration". To verify the validity of this hypothesis, paired sample t- test (SPSS program) was used. The t-test results aimed at comparing the mean scores of the group of the experiment on the pre and post observation in overall teaching performance.

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
pre post	-4.06667E1	7.38747	1.34876	-43.42519	-37.90814	-30.151	29	.000

Table 1 indicates a highly significant difference between the pre-observation and post-observation scores ($t(29) = -30.151$, $p < .001$). The mean difference between the two conditions is -40.67 (pre - post), with a standard deviation of 7.39 and a standard error of the mean of 1.35. The results revealed a statistically significant

improvement in participants' scores from pre- to post-observation, as the negative mean difference indicates that the post-observation scores were significantly higher than the pre-observation scores. These results assure that the program was effective in developing pre-service teachers' performance in teaching the English language. Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted.

Moreover, in order to make sure that the results obtained from the t-test were reliable and to measure the effect of the proposed program on pre-service teachers' performance in teaching the English language, its effect size on pre-service teachers' performance in teaching was calculated according to the following formula:

$$dz = \frac{\text{M difference}}{\text{SD difference}}$$

- dz is Cohen's d for paired samples.
- M difference is the mean of the difference scores between the paired observations.
- SD difference is the standard deviation of the difference scores. The referential frame work for identifying the effect size values is as follows:

Table 2

Criteria to which the effect size is judged.

Effect Size value	Interpretation
0.2	Small effect
0.5	Medium effect
0.8	Large effect
≥ 1.0	Very large effect

The calculated effect size value is (approximately -5.503 (absolute value 5.503) which is more than the very large value effect (1.0). This indicates that the proposed program had a large effect on pre-service teachers' teaching performance on the post observation sheet as compared to their performance on the pre observation sheet.

The second hypothesis of the present study stated "There is a statistically significant difference of the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post administrations of each teaching performance in the observation sheet in favor of the post administration".

In order to verify the validity of this hypothesis, paired sample t- test (SPSS program) was used. The t-test results proved that there was statically significant difference between the pre and post observation mean scores in each of the overall Planning, Management, and Assessment. In other words, the t-tests results proved to be statically consistent with the above stated hypothesis. Therefore, the second hypothesis was also accepted. The following tables show this statistical significance.

Table 3
Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effe ct Size
	Mean	Std. Deviati on	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pre plan – post plan	-1.41000E1	3.28371	.59952	-15.32616	-12.87384	-23.519	29	.000	4.29 Large

A paired samples t-test was conducted to examine the effect of the proposed program on pre-service teachers' overall planning. The results revealed a significant mean difference between pre- and post-plan scores (Mean Difference = -14.10, SD = 3.28, $t(29) = -23.519$, $p < .001$). The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from -15.33 to -12.87, indicating that the true mean difference is likely to fall within this range. In addition, the effect size value (4.29) shown in the above table also reveals the conclusion that the proposed program had a large effect on pre-service teachers' overall planning as shown in their performance on the post observation sheet as compared to their overall planning on the pre observation sheet.

Table 4
Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect size
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pre-manage post-manage	-1.44333E1	2.55536	.46654	-15.38752	-13.47914	-30.937	29	.000	5.65 Large

A paired samples t-test was conducted to examine the effect of the proposed program on the difference between "pre-management" and "post-management" scores. The results indicated a statistically significant mean difference (Mean Difference = -14.43, SD = 2.56, $t(29) = -30.937$, $p < .001$). The 95% confidence interval for this mean difference was quite narrow, ranging from -15.39 to -13.48, suggesting a precise estimate of the true difference. Furthermore, the effect size value (5.65) shown in the above table also reveals the conclusion that the proposed program had a large effect on pre-service teachers' overall management as shown in

their performance on the post observation sheet as compared to their overall management on the pre observation sheet.

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect Size
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pre-assess post-assess	-1.22000E1	2.96415	.54118	-13.30683	-11.09317	-22.543	29	.000	4.116

A paired samples t-test was conducted to examine the effect of the proposed program on the difference between "pre-assessment" and "post-assessment" scores. The results indicated a statistically significant mean difference (Mean Difference = -12.20, SD = 2.96, $t(29) = -22.543$, $p < .001$). The 95% confidence interval for this mean difference was quite narrow, ranging from -13.31 to -11.09, suggesting a precise estimate of the true difference. Furthermore, the effect size value ($d = 4.12$) reveals the conclusion that the proposed program had a large effect on pre-service teachers' overall assessment as shown in their performance on the post-assessment as compared to their overall assessment on the pre-assessment.

The third hypothesis of the present study stated "There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post administration of the conceptual knowledge test in favor of the post administration".

In order to verify the validity of this hypothesis, paired sample t- test (SPSS program) was used. The t-test results proved that there was statically significant difference in the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post administrations of the conceptual knowledge test in favor of the post administration. In other words, results of the t-tests proved to be statically consistent with the above stated hypotheses. Therefore, the third hypothesis was also accepted

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect Size
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pre-test post-test	-2.19667E1	7.00976	1.27980	-24.58416	-19.34918	-17.164	29	.000	3.13

The paired samples t-test reveals a highly significant difference ($t(29) = -17.164$, $p < .001$) between pretest and posttest scores. The posttest scores are higher than the pretest scores, as indicated by the large negative mean difference (-21.97). This significant increase is further emphasized by the very large effect size ($d_z = 3.13$), suggesting that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post administrations of the conceptual knowledge test in favor of the post administration. Therefore, hypothesis two is accepted.

To sum up, the three hypotheses were supported. The pre-service teachers achieved tangible progress in their teaching performance after the implementation of the program as compared to their teaching performance before the program application. Hence, these positive findings of the study proved the large effect of the proposed program on developing the 4th year university pre-service teachers' overall teaching performance in teaching the English language and teaching performance indicators as well.

13. Discussion of results:

13.1 Quantitative Discussion of Results:

The primary aim of this research was to examine the effectiveness of a Self-Reflection based-program on enhancing the teaching performance of EFL pre-service teachers. The

results, as reflected in the post-observation and post-test scores, demonstrated a notable improvement in the participants' teaching performance compared to their pre-observation and pre-test results. Statistical analysis revealed a significant t-value favoring the post-intervention scores, indicating that the observed improvement was not due to chance. These findings provide strong evidence that the intervention was effective, and as a result, all the research hypotheses were confirmed. Therefore, after the implementation of the proposed program, the participants demonstrated tangible progress in both overall teaching performance and each performance domain (planning, management, and assessment).

Furthermore, other qualitative relevant data were obtained through the participants' applications that could support and illustrate the quantitative finding which revealed that self-reflection approach has had a large effect on improving the 4th year university pre-service teachers' performance in teaching the English language. Providing pre-service teachers with the opportunity to take part in their own professional development and collaborate with colleagues to share strategies and best practices gave the participants the opportunity to attain self-realization and to share responsibility in their learning, and become active participants. Pre-service teachers had also the opportunity to plan lessons cooperatively, observe each other's teaching and give constructive feedback. They reflect on their own teaching methods, identify areas of strength and then discuss collectively. This led to deeper insights, strong peer support and more sustainable professional growth and consequently, improved their teaching performance.

Thus, the study results are parallel to the results of many previous studies conducted in the field of English language pre-service teachers' teaching performance. It confirms the results obtained by Simanjuntak (2020), who conducted a study that aimed to evaluate the teaching performance of pre-service

English teachers in Indonesian primary schools. The findings revealed that pre-service teachers improved their ability to manage young learners, implement communicative tasks, and use appropriate teaching aids effectively. The study coincides with the results obtained by El-Asri (2024), which aimed to investigate the challenges faced by newly graduated EFL teachers in Morocco. The results of the study indicated that teachers struggled particularly with classroom management due to limited practicum exposure, suggesting a need for more practical training to develop their teaching performance.

The results of the current study were confirmed by the results obtained by Velasquez et al. (2023) who conducted a significant study that aimed at exploring the role of reflective teaching in pre-service English teacher development. The review found that engaging pre-service teachers in reflective practices, such as peer discussion, lesson restructuring, and resilience-building, not only improved instructional quality, but also helped them adapt and innovate their teaching methodologies.

The results of this study coincide with the results obtained by Antasari (2023) who conducted a study that aimed at investigating teaching performance growth among ten Indonesian pre-service English teachers in a school-based practice program. Results showed that weekly supervision and feedback led to clear improvements in lesson planning, classroom structure, media use, and student engagement though pronunciation, grammar accuracy, and lesson closure remained areas needing development.

The results of the current study are parallel to the results obtained by Altarawneh et al. (2023), who studied Jordanian pre-service teachers' self-efficacy before and after a school-based practicum. Quantitative findings indicated a significant increase in overall self-efficacy, especially in instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement, despite reported challenges with academic supervision and cooperating

teachers. To conclude the quantitative phase of the study, it is clear that the results of present study are consistent with other studies that sought to develop EFL pre-service teachers' teaching performance; Altarawneh et al. (2023), Antasari (2023), Velasquez et al. (2023), El-Asri (2024), Simanjuntak (2020).

13.2 Qualitative Discussion of Results:

Lesson Planning

Before the implementation, participants' lesson plans were generally rigid and closely tied to textbook structures, with little consideration for student needs or local context. As the sessions progressed and participants engaged in deeper self-reflection, their planning practices improved. They gradually shift from a fixed lesson formats and began planning with more focus on students' needs and flexibility. Many pre-service teachers noted that peer feedback helped them see lesson planning differently, no longer as a routine task, but as an engaging and purposeful planning process.

Participants shared that they had a clearer understanding of learning objectives, how to break lessons into manageable steps, and how to meet different students' needs. Their lesson plans began to include more interactive methods, such as think-pair-share, using visuals, and teaching grammar in meaningful contexts. In their journals, they showed more awareness of how to connect goals, class activities, and assessments, showing growth in their teaching knowledge.

In this respect, a participant stated *“Before the program, my lesson plans were just copied from the training manual. Now I actually think about what my students need and how to plan for that.”*. Another one mentioned *“My mentor always told me to include warm-ups, but I didn't know why. After the reflection tasks, I now use them to activate prior knowledge, not just fill time.”* Another one added *“Sharing lesson plans in the PLC was really eye-opening. I realized how differently others*

sequence a topic, and I started experimenting with my own formats.”

Classroom Management

Classroom management emerged as one of the most challenging domains for pre-service teachers. Early reflections revealed that many relied on reactive, control-focused methods, typically adopted from their mentor teachers without much thought or adjustment. Over time, however, discussions helped them work together to address shared challenges like handling off-task behavior, working with students of varying skill levels, and organizing smooth transitions between activities. Many pre-service teachers noted that *“We used to feel like we had to control everything. Now we understand how to create a classroom culture where students are responsible too.”* As described by one participant *“At the beginning, I shouted to get attention. In the last weeks, I used non-verbal signals we practiced in PLC, and students responded better.”*

Through structured reflection activities and collaborative discussions, participants showed noticeable growth in using proactive classroom strategies, like setting clear routines, using positive reinforcement, and encouraging student participation. In addition, observing peers helped them realize that the emotional ups and downs of managing a classroom are common, which in turn supported their development into more confident and compassionate teachers. Several participants reflected that *“Talking with our peers made us realize that classroom management isn’t about control—it’s about relationships and being prepared. That shift helped us feel more confident.”* One of the participants pointed out that *“One of the best things I learned from the PLC was how to give students more responsibility. Letting them lead small parts of the lesson made them more engaged and easier to manage.”*

Assessment

Assessment was the area where participants appeared to experience a significant change in thinking. At first, many of them saw assessment mainly as final tests or marking using rubrics. However, through reflective activities and access to shared tools, their understanding expanded to include more formative methods, like using exit slips, taking observation notes, and involving students in assessing each other's work. According to one of the participants *"Assessment used to be just marks for me, but now I see it as a tool to understand how students think and how I should teach next."*

As they progressed through the program, participants increasingly incorporated quick ways to check for understanding into their lessons and made thoughtful adjustments based on student responses. Their journal entries reflected a growing sense of confidence in giving meaningful feedback, and conversations provided valuable opportunities to exchange practical tools, such as rubrics and questioning strategies, specially adapted for teaching English. One of the participants reflected that *"I didn't think I could assess students without a test. But now I use exit slips and quick checks, and they actually tell me more about what students learned."* Another one added *"Now I write questions that make students think, not just recall. Assessment has become part of my teaching, not just something I do at the end."*

14. Pedagogical Implications

- The use of the hybrid program based on self-reflection helped pre-service teachers build greater self-confidence in their teaching abilities. Feeling more confident helped them participate better in class and take more responsibility when planning and teaching lessons

- Self-reflection based-program helped pre-service teachers change the way they approached their teaching practice. They became more reflective, more intentional in their planning, and better able to discuss and analyze classroom experiences. These improvements were clearly reflected in the pre and post test results, as well as in the observation sheet scores, across the three performance domains.
- The program contributed significantly to the development of core pedagogical skills, including the ability to give and receive feedback, reflect critically on teaching practices, adapt lesson plans, and apply appropriate assessment tools. These are essential for professional growth and future success in the classroom.
- The combination of ongoing formative feedback, summative assessment, and structured reflection helped student teachers become more aware of their progress. By identifying both their strengths and areas needing improvement, they took ownership of their development and worked actively to enhance their performance in planning, managing, and assessing learning.

15. Recommendations

Based on the reached results and conclusions, the study offers the following recommendation to the different parties concerned in the teaching of English, namely mentors, pre-service teachers, and course designers.

For Mentor Teachers :They are encouraged to support reflection through regular conversations with pre-service teachers about their teaching experiences. Mentors are recommended to talk with pre-service teachers about their teaching experiences, not just what happened, but why certain decisions were made. These discussions can help pre-service teachers think more deeply about their practice.

- It is helpful when mentors show how they plan lessons, manage the classroom, and assess student work. These real examples can give pre-service teachers practical ideas they can try in their own teaching.
- Mentors are recommended to give clear and supportive feedback. Feedback should be honest but encouraging. Mentors should try to focus on how the pre-service teacher can improve and grow over time, instead of only pointing out mistakes.

For Pre-service teachers: They should take reflection seriously as pre-service teachers should use self-reflection to learn more about their teaching. Reflecting regularly helps them become more aware of what works, what doesn't, and what they can improve.

- Pre-service teachers should see feedback from mentors and peers as a tool to grow. They are also encouraged to ask questions, try different strategies, and take responsibility for their own learning.

For course designers: They are recommended to include reflection as part of the course. It is important to make time for reflection throughout the training program. This could be through journals, reflection prompts, or small group discussions that connect directly to what happens in real classrooms.

- Lessons about teaching should focus on real challenges that pre-service teachers face, such as how to plan well, manage students, and assess learning. Using examples, case studies, and practical tasks will help prepare them better for real teaching.

16. Suggestions for Further Research

- Future studies could examine the long-term impact of self-reflection strategies on teaching performance after pre-service teachers enter the profession, to assess whether the development achieved during training is sustained in real classroom settings.

- Researchers may explore the effectiveness of self-reflection strategies in specific subject areas beyond English, such as mathematics or science, to see if similar improvements in lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment are observed.
- It would be valuable to investigate how the frequency, duration, and structure of hybrid self-reflection-based sessions influence pre-service teachers' engagement and professional growth.

17. Conclusions

This study concludes that self-reflection strategies offer a powerful framework for developing essential teaching competencies among pre-service English teachers. The hybrid model implemented, combining collaborative interaction with individual reflection, proved effective in supporting growth across key areas such as lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment. Based on these findings, it is recommended that teacher education programs adopt similar approaches, particularly during practicum periods, to strengthen the link between theory and classroom practice.

The results also emphasize the value of sustained support systems that allow pre-service teachers to engage in reflective inquiry, receive feedback, and build professional confidence. Ultimately, the study affirms that when teaching is treated as a collaborative and reflective process, it moves beyond routine implementation and evolves into a more thoughtful, responsive, and informed pedagogy.

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