# Investigation of Reflective Practice for Pre-Service Teachers in Saudi Arabia

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#### ABSTRACT

This study targeted investigating pre-service female teachers' reflective practice and identifying the effect of pre-service female teachers' academic specialization on their reflective practice in Saudi Arabia. To achieve the objectives of this study, a 27-item Likert-five-type questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was handed out to 195 Kindergarten, Elementary Class Teacher, and Quranic Studies female student teachers in Education College, IAU University. The study found that the degree of female student teachers' reflective practices was high in 9 skills, medium in 10 skills, and weak in 8 skills. The study also showed that Kindergarten female student teachers practice reflective teaching skills higher than both Quranic Studies and Elementary Class Student teachers. The study recommended the necessity of teaching the procedural research course for both the Elementary Class female student teachers and Quranic Studies female student teachers and Quranic Studies female student teachers and Research course for both the Elementary Class female student teachers and Quranic Studies female student teachers and Research course for both the Elementary Class female student teachers and Quranic Studies female student teachers, as it includes the female student teachers' practice of reflective teaching skills during practical training in schools.

#### Keywords

Reflective Practice, Female Students, Education College, Pre-Service Female Teachers.

#### Introduction

The teacher has a significant part in the educational system. The success of the educational process is associated with the success of the teacher. He is the leader who achieves the greatest benefits of the educational process with his intellect and effort. The best curricula, programs, and activities cannot achieve their objectives unless there is a teacher who is fluent in investing effectively.

Therefore, teacher professional development is an extremely essential aspect of teacher education programs and must be based on the motivations that result from the practice of the teacher reflection and self-criticism of the teaching procedures for students. Head and Taylor (1997) confirmed that professional development means growth and modification. It is the process of being converted into a better teacher where a teacher is incessantly asking himself about the techniques of improving his performance, how to enjoy teaching more, and how to motivate his students' learning. Teacher professional development becomes urgent for the teacher, in addition, reflective teaching has become one of the prominent models in teacher education in general.

Reflective practices provide some practical experience that leads to the professional

development of teachers and encourages teachers to develop their teaching performance as & Maarof(2007) showed that Genc(2010) reflective methods can improve an instructor's practice by allowing the investigation of factors that could positively or negatively influence his instructional procedures, increase perception regarding his own preferences and beliefs, permit more responses to the needs of students and institute the crucial links between practice and theory. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2002, 2008) has raised it obvious that reflective practices ought to be a vital component of teacher education programs (Ostorga, 2006).

Reflective teaching inspires instructors to comprehend their students' requirements and aptitudes. Moreover, reflective instructors are more probable to advance reflective students. If the instructor practice reflection, he can more efficiently inspire students to reflect on, investigate, assess, and progress their possessed learning. These are the main abilities in active learning and in the growth of independent students (Habib, 2017).

Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe (2011) confirmed that reflective instruction presents instructors the chance to rejuvenate their performance and to comprehend the influences of their instruction. Some of the profits of reflective instruction are: -Successively, an increasing direction among teachers has been shaped to grow the reflective skills, critique, and self- inquiry by instructors, allowing them to dynamically participate to educate learners for a life full of sequential variables.

Despite the increasing interest in programs of teacher's preparation in Saudi Arabia, and the continuous efforts to develop them, reflective practices did not receive much attention from female students, which led to their failure to apply them in schools during field training.

Through the researcher's supervision of female students of the College of Education in previous years, she noticed that the focus was mainly on the technical skills of teaching, such as lesson planning, classroom management, or imitating teaching practices of other teachers, instead of focusing on establishing a reflective dialogue with learners and providing them with feedback, and then enhancing their learning, and reflecting on and improving teaching behaviors. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify reflective practice among female student teachers of the Education College, IAU University, and to that end, two questions were framed:

- 1. What is the degree of practicing reflective teaching among female student teachers of the Education College, IAU University?
- 2. Are there statistically significant differences between the means scores of the sample members for their reflective practices due to the specialization?

## Literature Review

## **Reflection and Reflective Practice Definition:**

The beginning of reflective thinking reversed to John Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983). Where Dewey (1933) claimed, gaining from experience is improved by reflective thinking. So, reflection involves students in mindful memory that prompts to uplifted comprehension of learning and relevant significant exchange of learning and aptitudes. Dewey built a difference between a reflective and routine action. As stated by Dewey, a routine action is a performance that is directed headily, normally, and firmly. Otherwise, reflection is an "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends" (p. 6).

The reflection as an experience: the capability to reflect critically about own actions of person and alternatives, and to understand the wider contexts within which these alternatives were produced (Fook & Gardner 2007), So reflection keeps students in attentive recollection that guides to a strengthened understanding of learning and pertinent alter of skills and learning. Moreover, Schön (1987) considered that reflective practice signifies a vital feature to increase proficient action.

Moon (2005) claimed that reflection is an intellectual processing procedure utilized to attain an objective or to achieve several forecasted outcomes. It is utilized with a view to have the best comprehension of concerning notions which are complex or dispersed and is to a considerable scope established on information reprocessing. Eventually, it was clarified as experience react including mindful recollection and checking of the experience the same as a base for assessment and the decision making and the same as an exporter for planning, preparation, and taking steps (Mirzaei, Phang, & Kashefi, 2014). Reflective teaching is viewed as an essential feature of proficient teachers (Afshar & Farahani, 2015).

In addition, reflective teaching has its basis in the constructivist theory, which highlights that learning implies reorganizing the world and constructing new meanings in ways that are personal. So, in order to achieve learning, new ideas are incorporated gradually into the existing paradigm through reflection (Blazques, 2007).

Reflective teaching is a procedure of extending and heightening the series of inquiries to ask about instruction practices, supposing an arranged and orderly method to instruction practices, and cooperating with other peers having similar inquiries (Robertson & Yiamouyiannis, 1996). Also, reflective teaching is supposed as "a cycle of thought and action based on professional experience" (Wellington, 1991, p. 4). Also, it is one of the main techniques in which the learner can learn from his experiences and it assists the learner to create the connections between theory and practice and expands their experiences and abilities towards turning into qualified practitioners (Jasper, 2003)

Wallace (1991) saw the friendly connection reflective between practice and teacher development so he stated that the reflective technique permits growing teachers' freehand to investigate with a maturing experience's framework. It offers them the chance to assess their relationships with learners, their beliefs, skills, and accomplishments and disappointments in an authentic setting. It starts the increasing teacher's track for turning out to be an "expert teacher" (Richard & Lockhart, 1994).

El-Okdah(1998) stated that reflective practice is a continuing, inquiry-based procedure involving instructors' promise, either individually or collaboratively, to critically examine their behavior and that of their learners as well as other aspects of the teaching-learning context in order to improve them.

Reflective teaching is defined as thinking back for the teacher's own instruction. It comprises thinking and rethinking about teacher's performance before, during, and after class procedures and activities. Instructors have to reflect on the problems of their students which are expected to happen during the accomplishment of instructional goals. the instructors must consider the instruction and learning strategies and procedures that they will require to think about in presenting the assumed content. (Artzt, Curcio, Gural, & Thomas, 2015; Farrell, 1998).

Graves (2002) showed that reflection is one of the greatest effective means that teachers can use to investigate, comprehend, and go ahead of their practice and instruction. Reflection is about learning to realize and to comprehend what is realized. It is not merely being competent to find difficulties and outline solutions, while both are vital. Pawan (2003) showed that reflective instruction includes teachers' self-assessment of their applied model by resources of which they issue their individual notions of instruction and studying in addition to their instructional practices which is presented to serious examination. Moreover, Webber (2013) defined reflective practice as the teacher's ability to submit teaching practices to analysis, discussion, and criticism in order to understand teaching practices during the teaching and learning processes.

The researcher concludes that reflective teaching is a flexible procedure by the instructors and students starting with planning and critique, evaluation, implementation, examination and analysis, evaluation and re-planning, setting future goals, re-practice, and implementation. Also, assessment in reflective teaching is continuing in all stages of the student learning and does not stand at a certain stage.

## **Benefits of Reflective Practice**

reflective teaching is the teacher's ability to observe and reflect on the instructional plans, how to implement them, evaluate them, identify their strengths and weaknesses, suggest alternatives, and develop future visions for the continuous improvement of the teaching performance, which affects the performance of students. Considering that reflective practices are fundamental for the professional development of instructors in general (Kim, 2005)

Reflective practices supply instructors with the proficiency to overpower their educational issues, teaching methods, and content of subject that was provided in the classroom (Rarieya, 2005). Moreover, Choy (2012, p.169) stated that "teacher reflective teaching can be believed of as applying requisite phases to examine and analyze problems difficulties before taking procedures or action" and also. Al-Hashim (2019) indicated that reflective instruction includes thinking deeply about our practice and the practices of others, to learn from and gain new viewpoints on the failures and oppositions ingrained in our learning states, increase judge, and improve the chance of taking bright action when states are multipart, unequalled, and inexact.

The importance of reflective practice lies in its ability to upgrade practice in the classroom and enhance the characteristics of instruction and learning processes for learners and instructors. Though. Webber (2013)noted that the development of reflective teaching skills helps the teacher to identify the shortcomings of each learner, and thus set the suitable learning technique and how to teach better. Moreover, Allen (2005) indicated that reflective teaching simplifies significative intellect, debate, and discussion amongst peers about instruction and education which will stimulate a suitable modification in course and instruction.

The aim of reflective instruction is selfinquiry, and progress, in addition to the development of a person's experience. Forms of reflective practice (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Moon, 1999) emphasize that intentionally revisiting actions with the demand to learn and gain from these attitudes will better allow a learner to plan for, and efficaciously cope with, upcoming actions of the same nature. The survey had revealed that the skill to connect information and practice together consequences in profound learning and promotes an extra optimistic learning skill for learners (Braine, 2009; Leung & Kember, 2003; Moon, 1999; Mc Carthy, Cassidy, & Tuohy, 2013).

That being supposed, there is no agreement on which reflective instruction support instructor development and progress his practices (Allen, 2005), thus, teachers' reflection would be vital, as procedures of change from education are enormously important in the understanding of a person's own uniqueness, attitudes, and successive practices as an instructor (Brookfield, 1995; McAdams, 2004). Additionally, Slade, Burnham, Catalana, & Waters (2019) showed that reflective practice eases the growth of additional knowledge, information, dispositions, and skills in instructor applicants by developing critical thinking of activities in an actual -life setting.

Frick, Carl, and Beets (2010) discussed the significance of teacher's reflection on his own helpful practice and instruction to develop and improve the learning of his learners and this study proposed that teachers should not only stimulate and develop reflection in their learners but would themselves be reflective professionals and practitioners.

Reflective practice can be sponsored in numerous formats as Cirocki & Widodo (2019, p. 21) stated that "we mainly employ five formats in our reflective practice workshops: writing reflective journals/diaries, peer observation of teaching, lesson study, action research, and reflecting with digital technologies (e.g., blogging and photovoice)".

Reflective practice captures a diversity of structures. occasionally, it is a single follow up: thinking or writing a journal. occasionally it is applied with others: speaking with a confided adviser or contributing to a reflective teaching association. It can also be a mixture of both, with discussion after a single reflection. It may be a free format or go along an example. It contains concerning purpose truths of the setting, with an individual report. A reflection perhaps complemented with extra documents, for instance, the response from others. reflective procedure inserts a thought: an investigation of one's own expectations about proficient practice in addition to expectations of the career and the wider civilization (Brookfield, 1998).

Self-reflection proposes a technique for initiating instructors to register understandings into how their information and attitudes relate to the program resources with which they are operating. Reflective practice can aid an instructor to comprehend the difficulty of his person continued experiences, and how his information "grows through time" (Freeman, 1996, p. 101)

Several educational studies have concluded the reflective importance of teaching and recommended the need to integrate reflective teaching in teacher education programs (Abu Sultan & Abu Askar, 2017; Hassan, 2013; Zahid & Khanam, 2019; Disu, 2017; Carey, 2017; Kumari & Naik, 2016; Naicker & Rensburg, 2018). Whereas, the study of Al-Omari, Al-Dahmash, Ali, & Al-Sulaimi (2018) found that teachers practice reflections to a high degree but the study of Hassan & Mojtaba (2018) and the study of Al-Rashidi (2018), found that the degree of using the teachers for reflective practices was average. And the study of Bawaneh, Moumene, & Aldalalah (2020) indicated that the degree of reflective instruction for teachers was somewhat low.

Considering the results of all these studies, the current study sought to investigate reflective practice for pre-service teachers in terms of their specialization. The researcher decided to conduct this variable not only because it is not intensely examined but also because it is significant for additional research growth. Also, the procedural research course is not common for teaching in teacher preparation colleges in Saudi Universities at the bachelor's level. However, the Kindergarten Program at the College of Education, IAU University took the lead in teaching the procedural research course as a mandatory requirement in the last year before graduation, and this does not apply in the other majors in the college.

#### Methodology

The descriptive approach was followed, through which the degree of practicing reflective teaching skills among female student teachers of the Education College at IAU University in Saudi Arabia was investigated.

#### **Participants**

The participants included 195 female students at the College of Education, IAU University who they were enrolled at the three departments: (35) female students from the Quranic Studies department, (76) female students from the Kindergarten Department, and (84) female students from Elementary Class Teacher Department. All of them are enrolled in the eighth level of College Education. Their age varied from 20 to 30 years; and the study was done in the fifth week from the second semester for the academic year of 2019-2020. The following table describes the study sample in terms of the specialization:

Table1

Description of the study sample of students of the College of Education in the three specializations

variable	specialization	frequency	ratio
Female Students'	Quranic studies	35	17.95
specialization	Kindergarten	76	38.97
	Elementary Class Teacher	84	43.08

#### **Data Collection Instruments:**

For the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was developed to identify the pre-service female teachers' reflective practice in Saudi Arabia. It involves 27 five-point Likert-scale items whose Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated to be 0.81. In order to certify its validity, it was experts viewed who indicated that the questionnaire had a suitable level of validity.

After ensuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaire which was used in the study, it was handed out to the participants. The participants were confirmed that their response would be saved secret and that the questionnaire could be responded namelessly.

## **Data Analysis**

All analyses were performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version17.0. arithmetic means, standard deviations, and ratios; to determine the reflective practice of female students of education college (question 1), and one-way ANOVA (questions2) to analyze the data which was collected.

#### **Results and Discussions**

To answer the first question which purposed to determine the degree of practicing reflective practice for female Students, the arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item in the questionnaire was calculated as follows:

#### Table 2

Means, standard deviations, ranks, and the degree of practicing reflective teaching for female students in descending order:

No	Items	Mean	S. D	Rank	Degree
1	I make sure that the expected learning outcomes are defined.	4.53	.50	2	high
2	I choose activities and learning materials that improve students' thinking.	4.41	.77	3	high
3	I review my teaching plan before implementing it.	4.26	.49	5	high
4	I always ask myself what I will do to achieve goals.	4.55	.61	1	high
5	I Analyze classroom events to modify them.	3.16	1.14	16	medium

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No	Items	Mean	S. D	Rank	Degree	
6	I am pleased to receive feedback from my own		.57	6	high	
0	manager or supervisor.	4.17	.57	U	mgn	
7	I ask reflective questions which appropriate to the	2.28	.47	21	low	
/	level of my students.	2.20	.+/	21	10 W	
8	I inspire learners to reflect on everything that they	2.26	.44	22	low	
0	perform during the session.	2.20			10 10	
9	I give students time to think before answering the	3.29	.70	15	medium	
	questions asked.					
10	I accept the students' comments about the teaching	4.09	.62	7	high	
	of the subject.					
11	I register what I felt unsuitable in a specific file to	3.43	.81	10	medium	
	evade performing it in future.					
12	I compare the session that I carried out with the previous sessions.		.89	8	high	
	I evaluate students' works after carefully examining			2 4	high	
13	them.	4.27	.82			
	I discuss with my students the reasons for their low-					
14	test scores.	3.36	36 .86	12	medium	
	I reflect on the level of my students 'participation	2 7 4		0		
15	and interactions.	3.76	.76	9	high	
16	I solve classroom problems as soon as they arise.	3.33	.66	14	medium	
17	I am interested in exam questions that develop	2.42	05	11	1'	
17	students 'thinking.	3.42	.95	11	medium	
	I use appropriate tools to collect information about					
18	my performance (such as: writing a diary, audio	2.19	.77	23	low	
10	recordings, video format shares, completion files	2.19	.//			
	).					
19	I ask students to ask reflection questions about their	2.31	.53	20	low	
17	performance.	2.31 .33		20	10 w	
20	I arrive at future teaching practices after reviewing	1.71	.81	25	low	
	the lesson.					
21	I attend training courses directly related to teaching.	1.77	.62	24	low	
22	I am constantly improving my teaching practices.	3.08	1.13	18	medium	
23	I invite my classmates to attend some classes	3.07	.94	19	medium	
	regularly.			-		
24	I debate my instruction practices with my	3.33	.87	13	medium	
	colleagues.					
25	I record successful teaching practices to benefit from them	3.16	.73	17	medium	
26	from them.	1.57	.54	26	low	
20	I conduct action research during training practice. I periodically review research and articles in the	1.37	.34	20	IUW	
27	educational specialization.	1.31	.49	27	low	
	Overall	3.18	.31		medium	
	Overan	5.10	.51		meanum	

It is clear from Table 2 that the average phrase of the questionnaire of reflective teaching skills ranged between (4.55 - 1.31) with a general average equal to (3.18), and a standard deviation

(0.308), which indicates an average level of reflective practices among female students of the Education College at IAU University in Saudi Arabia. This is due to the novelty of the concept

of reflective teaching among female students at the college of education, and the lack of full awareness of all reflective teaching practices and applications. And reflective practices do not include in the teaching methods courses which are presented to students at the college of education.

These findings from the first research question are consistent with the study of Zahid & Khanam (2019), which indicated that the teacher's performance was average in practicing reflective teaching while differing from the results of the study of Al-Omari, Al-Dahmash, Ali & Al-Sulaimi (2018), which indicated a high level of reflective teaching practice among teachers, and differs from the results of Rayan (2014) study, which confirmed the rise in reflective practices among teachers of Alkhalil Education Directorates.

To answer the second question which purposed to determine the differences between the means scores of the sample members for their reflective practices due to the specialization, one-way ANOVA was used for independent samples to identify the differences and the following table explains that:

Table 3

Means, SDs & one-way ANOVA results according to the female students' specialization.

Variables	Source of	Sum of	Degrees of	Mean of	F	Significance
	Variance.	Squares	Freedom	Squares		Level
reflective	Between Groups	9079.770	2	4539.885	202.748	.000
practice	Within Groups	4299.225	192	22.392		
	Total	13378.995	194			

It is noticed from Table 3 that there are differences in the degree of practicing reflective by female student teachers at Education College, IAU University in Saudi Arabia attributed to the academic specialization where the value of (P=0.000). Scheffe test for later comparisons to know the direction of differences was applied as shown by Table 4.

## Table 4

Scheffe test findings for later comparisons of the direction of differences in the degree of practicing reflective teaching by female student teachers at Education College according to the academic specialization:

Student's major	Average Mean	Kindergarten	Elementary Class Teacher	Qur'anic studies
Kindergarten(n=76)	94.45		.000*	.000*
Class teacher(n=84)	80.11	.000*		.399
Qur'anic studies(n=35)	81.40	.000*	.399	

\*Function at significance level  $(0.05 \ge \alpha)$ 

Statistically significant differences were found at a significant level of 0.05 in the practice of reflective teaching among female student teachers of the education college according to the specialization, and these differences were in the direction of female teachers, specializing in Kindergarten. This result indicates that female student teachers who specialize in kindergarten employ reflective thinking skills greater than both

student teachers who specialize in an Elementary Class Teacher and Quranic Studies.

Whereas female student teachers, specializing in Kindergarten, studies the procedural research course for professional development in Kindergartens, the number of credit hours for it is 3 hours, code for a child 405, and it is studied at the eighth level, but this course is not included in the specialization of Quranic Studies and the specialization of an Elementary Class Teacher.

This course aims to inculcate the habit of continuous reflection on classroom practices by encouraging the female student teachers to practice the role of the researcher in the daily challenges that she faces, whether in the classroom or in the school. The pre-service female teacher also learns procedural research skills as a way to reflect on classroom practices in order to review and improve them.

This is consistent with Capobianco & Joyal, (2008) that indicated that constant engagement in cooperative action research is one of the ways in which science teachers can build a bridge between improving their students' learning and their professional learning as teachers and as research educators. Also, the study of Cullen, Akerson, & Hanson (2010) found that participation in procedural research provides teachers with an opportunity to increase their confidence in teaching, in addition to that action research provides the kind of professional development necessary for teachers to challenge the continuous changes in teaching.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In summary, the results of this study showed that the reflective practice of female student teachers in the college of education were at the median level. It was also found that there are statistically significant differences at a significant level ( $\alpha \le 0.05$ ) in the reflective practice of female student teachers in the three specializations (Kindergarten, Elementary Class Teacher. Quranic Studies) in the College of Education, which were attributed to the specialization in favor of female students' specialization in Kindergarten. As the study of female students specializing in Kindergarten for the procedural research course during field training enables the students to reflect on classroom problems in a scientific way by implementing a full cycle of procedural research steps, and give chance to monitor own teaching practice(Vivekananda-Schmidt, 2011) thus gaining research skills and reflective thinking(Zambo & Zambo,2007), which affects their personal and professional development (Patton and Parker 2014).

Moreover, the findings of this study propose that including topics of reflective teaching within some courses such as the curriculum of teaching methods at the college of education. Also, the procedural research course should be included in the curricula of Class Teacher and Quranic Studies programs to assist students in conducting research during the field training period, which affects their reflective skills positively.

The necessity of holding training courses for female student teachers during the field training period; to train them to practice teaching skills in general, and reflective teaching skills, through school curricula. Raising awareness of faculty members in colleges of education about the importance of professional development for student teachers through practicing reflective thinking in observing and solving problems.

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