The Reflections of Jordanian EFL Student Teachers on their Instructional Acomplishments in the Practical Education Programme

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Abstract

This study attempted to explore the accomplishments achieved by (78) EFL student teachers who were taking the practicum courses in the second semester 2004/2005. To achieve this purpose, an open questionnaire was used to elicit data from the participants in this study about their accomplishments in the spheres of classroom management skills, lesson planning, development and design and production of instructional aids, instructional methods, the acquisition of interpersonal skills and finally the evaluation of EFL classroom students' learning. The results of the study, above all, pointed to the importance of the practicum.. It was also found out that most of the instructional skills were acquired by the EFL student teacher gradually as the student teachers advance in the practicum. As far as classroom management skills were concerned, their acquisition was linked to the nature of the classroom, its size; relationships with EFL classroom students, quality of instruction and nature of teaching methods adopted by the student teacher. In the

sphere of lesson planning, the student teachers discovered, through lesson planning, the importance of new teaching methods and media and aids as well as the importance of the lesson plan itself. In the acquisition of interpersonal skills, student teachers in this study pointed to the importance of establishing links with practitioners in the co-operating school and the significance of such interpersonal skills in solving problems classroom students encountered. Also, the results pointed out that student teacher's development of the interpersonal skills was transferable to classroom students themselves in becoming willing to work together through co-operative learning activities. As to subject matter mastery, the responses of the student teachers varied who pointed to the need to have further links between university courses and school syllabuses and to give more specialization courses to these student teachers while several of them said that there was no problem with this competency.

The researcher recommended the importance of following up and monitoring the training of the student teachers in the pre-service programmes to ensure both the quality of such programmes and the extent of their contribution to the development of the instructional skills required to practice the teaching profession.

Introduction

The teaching practicum is considered one of the major components in the initial preparation of the university student teacher who wishes to practice teaching as a future profession. Around the world and in Jordan, many educational departments care about the practical preparation of their graduates of teachers. Most public universities in Jordan do have programmes that look after the practical aspect of teaching. This is supported by high governmental policy towards the affective preparation of teachers and also the pressures from schools in order to give training to prospective teachers in Jordan. The aims of the practical education programme in the University of Jordan emphasize that through the practicum experience, the student teacher is expected to establish a link between theory and practice. The student teacher within this framework is also expected to translate university knowledge and ideas into practical applications. Above all, the practicum course should enable the student

teacher to develop skills and competencies needed for effective teaching in the primary stage in Jordan.

The practical education course in the University of Jordan is a 12-credit hour course which students register for in the final semester of their undergraduate study. During this course student teachers are attached to co-operating teachers who are expected to have sufficient experience and wisdom in teaching a certain subject matter. The university supervisor and the university professor visit the student teacher to ensure he or she is effectively training in the schools. The student teacher first observes the school facilities, then observes the classrooms of different subject matter in a general observation period then the specialized classroom observation period where the student teacher observes the classroom where he or she is going to spend the rest of the practicum to train at, then the partial practice of teaching and finally the full teaching practice period which is relatively at the end of the practicum. The evaluation of the student teacher's teaching experience is shared between university professors and trainers and school principals and co-operating teachers.

Grossman (1990) introduced a model in which she outlined teachers' areas of knowledge. According to her, these areas included knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of general pedagogy, knowledge of pedagogical knowledge and context knowledge. The development of knowledge base on the part of teachers and their skills are worthy goals of teacher education programmes. According to Baildon (2005) the design of pre-service programmes is the major goal in order to address such knowledge areas.

It is important to throw some light on the description of some relevant course plans in the Faculty of Educational Sciences in the University of Jordan which could inform the background of this study. For example, a course entitled (Evaluating students learning in English) aims to enable the EFL student teacher to develop strategies suitable for the evaluation of EFL school students' learning with emphasis on other methods of evaluation such as learning portfolio, reports, projects, interviews, observations and the development of achievement tests that are valid and reliable and developing tests that fit brilliant and poor students. Another course is the practical education course which is

concerned with training the student teachers to acquire various skills such as planning for the lessons, educational technology, classroom management and evaluation. It enables the student teachers to adapt themselves psychologically, socially and skillfully with requirements of the teaching profession.

One relevant course is entitled (designing and using instructional material) which introduces the student teacher to audio and visual and audio-visual and interactive material regarding their definition, their relationship with educational technology and their role in the instructional process. It also enables the student teacher to identify the basics of designing and using material according to the systems model and the course ends with practical applications in designing and producing and using instructional materials in the different subject areas. One course is (Classroom management) which is concerned with enabling the student teacher to identify the general principles and importance of classroom management and the nature of the problems which the teacher encounters in the management of the students' behaviours and the reasons behind them. It includes the characteristics of the learners, the psychological and materialistic environment, teacher characteristics, recent developments in classroom management and the comprehensive model in classroom management.

Another relevant course is (Introduction to instructional Computer science) which enables the student teacher to know about the concept of the computer and its role in the instructional process and its applications to the instructional process and the use of the computer and the prepared software such as word processors, electronic tables and data bases. Another course is entitled (EFL curriculum) which introduces the student teachers to the nature of learning English as a foreign language or a second language; the aims and obstacles related to learning this language and identifying the main differences and similarities between the learning of English and Arabic and the extent of benefiting from learning English as a second language and discussing the various trends in constructing and analyzing the English curriculum with respect to aims, content, activities and evaluation and writing lesson plans and the development of various other methods of teaching.

University courses are expected to provide the student teachers with ideas and theories and knowledge that prepare them to practice teaching both during their pre-service education and through the rest of their professional life.

Literature Review

The literature review of the present study includes studies that relate to the student teachers' development and acquisition of teaching competencies and skills during the teaching practicum course**.**

Some literature looked at the relationship between subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge. McDairmid, Ball and Anderson (cited in Baildon,2005) reflected on what they referred to as subject-specific pedagogy. This, according to them, embodied teachers' ability to pose questions, make their curricular choices, select tasks and evaluate their pupils' understanding.

Scanlon (2005) examined the results of an experiment about the engagement of preservice teachers in the school teaching community in practice and how this assisted in the development of their professional development. The study pointed to three examples of pre-service programmes that incorporated legitimate tangential share as an important component in the pre-service teachers' academic studies.

Hoffman, Roller, Sailors, Duffy and Beretvas (2005) conducted a longitudinal study which focused on the education of elementary pre-service teachers in the teaching of reading and the influence of this on their first three years in their experience. The graduates from teacher education programmes who took part in this study were judged as excellent by a committee of experts who took part in this study. Two questions guided this research which included the effect which the participation in and the completion of a reading teacher education programme had on teachers' experiences as they move into the teaching profession. The other question was about the connection between teachers' preparation and their teaching experiences. A quasi-experimental design was adopted in this study where the teacher preparation programme was regarded as the intervening variable. This study was conducted over three years and the analysis of the data of this

study revealed that taking part in a high quality teacher education programme positively influenced the transitions which teachers entering the profession had and also had influence on teachers' effective teaching practices.

Weiyun (2005) referred to Sulman's (1986) study which represented, according to her, the starting point for suggesting a conceptual framework pertaining knowledge base that relate to effective teaching; that the development of the pedagogical content knowledge for pre-service teachers started to receive great attention from both researchers and teacher educators. She referred this attention to the major focus of pedagogical content knowledge both in knowledge related to the content and also of knowledge about teaching such a content. Rovegno (1993), on the other hand, pointed out that some aspects related to pedagogical content knowledge were initially both problematic and difficult to learn by pre-service teachers. Among the relevant examples were ,according to him, the tendency to plan segregated lesson contents which lacked a development of a progressive sequence.

Sebran (1993) found that preservice teachers started to make instructional decisions on the basis of their student's prior knowledge and also on the basis of skills' levels and then presented learning tasks through selecting words understandable by children. Weiyun's (op.cit) study focused on the importance of subject matter expertise without which according to him the preservice teacher can not provide students with feedback and not only so but to select the appropriate instructional techniques for the purpose of teaching the context in an effective way.

Walizar (2004) argues that research shows a relationship between teacher education and the quality of instruction provided to school students, though according to her the content of such teacher education programmes is not identified. The results of this study suggested that the guided reading methodology adopted and implanted by pre-service teachers had an effect on reading achievement as well as attitudes by second graders who were included in this study.

Yilmaz (2004) conducted a study on the factors that affect the development of instructional skills on the part of pre-service middle and secondary school teachers who teach science. The findings obtained in

this study revealed that although pre-service teachers in this study had true ideas about various instructional methods, still they experienced difficulty in the implementation of such knowledge in actual classroom environment. The biggest struggle student teachers had concerned the implementation of student-centered methods. The failure in the development of essential teaching skills had an important role in having unsuccessful teaching practice. Other factors that impacted on the instructional skills of student teachers included the methods course, students, setting for authentic practice and co-operating teachers. The study also revealed that there was a need to have adaptability of various instructional methods to fit future teaching practice.

Austin (2004) undertook a study that examined the state of technology for pre-service teachers for teacher education programmes in the state of Colorado. The results of the study revealed that in the programmes which required a course on educational technology, there existed a continuum related to experience of technology education available to teachers in the state of Colorado. This study was thought of by the researchers as having a potential impact pertaining to educational policy, design of programmes of teacher education and also the curriculum designed for technology of teacher education.

Dharmadasa (2002) investigated the perceptions of preservice teachers of the constructivist teaching and their perceptions of students' learning. Data were gathered through a written assignment which required student teachers to describe their ideas regarding their perceptions of both constructivist learning and students' learning. Fourteen themes were identified and grouped into four patterns. Eight themes concerned children's learning in a constructive environment and constructive teaching related to assessment and one concerned direct instruction. While most student teachers seemed to connect theoretical knowledge gained from their academic course work, they were not projecting such university knowledge to the actual classroom instruction. More than half student teachers emphasized that children's knowledge was constructed by these children through hands-on experience, active engagement in their learning tasks and the construction and reconstruction of experiences which were rooted in the prior knowledge of these students.

The above studies are concerned with the importance of pre-service programmes in enabling prospective teachers to come to terms with effective teaching practice.

Statement of the problem

The idea that student teachers train to acquire the essential skills has become the most important aspect of teacher education programmes. Undoubtedly, teacher education programmes care about the specification of a set of teaching standards that in order to be an effective teacher, the student teacher should gain access to. Studies in teacher education have over-emphasised several research topics and areas that though are related to teacher education, but have not thoroughly and fully touched on the essence of the teaching process and the relevant skills for practicing such an important profession. Recent literature has started to look at the professional institutions that look after the training and re-training of teacher from the perspective of achieving a number of standards that are either developed internationally and approved of or are set in light of the educational agendas in the same country. This study addresses a main training question about the accomplishments which EFL student teachers achieve during the practicum course in the University of Jordan.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer these research questions**:**

1- What are EFL student teacher's accomplishments during the practicum courses in classroom management**?**

2- What are EFL student teacher's accomplishments during the practicum course in lesson preparation?

3- What are EFL student teacher's accomplishments during the practicum course in preparing teaching aids and media?

4- What are EFL student teacher's accomplishments during the practicum course in evaluating classroom students' learning?

5- What are EFL student teacher's accomplishments during the practicum course in the field of teaching methods?

6- What are EFL student teacher's accomplishments during the practicum course in the field of the acquisition of interpersonal skills?

Definition of Terms:

EFL student teacher: A university student who takes the practicum course in the final year and in the last semester of his or her university study.

Accomplishment in training: As far as this study is concerned, an accomplishment in training is an achievement in one or more aspects or skills development in their training.

Practicum course: This is a 12-credit hour course which the student teacher takes to complete his or her study in which the student is trained on teaching.

Instructional skills: In the case of the present study, these included the skills of classroom management, lesson planning, designing and producing instructional aids, interpersonal skills, instructional methods and skills of teaching and evaluation skills.

Interpersonal skills: In the context of this study, interpersonal skills are used by student teachers of English to communicate with other teachers in the training school.

Significance of the Study

This study throws light on the issue that EFL student teacher acquire skills throughout their teaching practice that qualify them to be professional teachers when serving in the Ministry of Education schools. It also throws light on the contribution of the existing practical education programme in the University of Jordan in enabling student teachers to acquire skills of classroom management, lesson planning, teaching methods, instructional aids, evaluating students' learning and other relevant points. The investigation of these instructional aspects is important to the practical education programmes, university professors responsible for both instruction and supervision of EFL student teachers.

Description of the instrument

The instrument which was used in this study to gather relevant data about the accomplishments of the EFL student teachers who participated in the present study was the open format questionnaire**.** This open questionnaire (see Appendix provided) consisted of a number of items that were included depending on the relevant literature and the portfolios and reports written by the student teachers in previous training semesters. The experiences of those working in the practical education programme and those of the researcher as the director of the practical education programme and as a staff member who supervises EFL student teachers whilst in their practicum at the co-operating schools informed the design of the instrument of this study. Wagner (2005) reflected on relevant literature that sees the inclusion of stakeholder evaluation so as to gain a comprehensive vision concerning the programs accomplishments and value.

The questionnaire covered areas that had to do with the treatment of the EFL student teacher of university knowledge and theories in the practicum. Other points addressed the accomplishments of the EFL student teacher concerning the development and production of instructional media and aids. Other areas included the acquisition of interpersonal skills, teaching methods, classroom management skills and the evaluation of classroom students' learning.

Validity of the questionnaire

This study used an open questionnaire to explore EFL student teachers' accomplishments in the practicum course in the university of Jordan. The open questionnaire was forwarded to six lecturers specialized and interested in the field of language teaching and teacher training. All emphasized that the instrument was suitable to the purpose of this study. Their comments were taken into consideration when amending and modifying few of the questionnaire items.

Sample of the Study

The sample of this study included the following student teachers who were taking the practicum course in the second semester 2004-2005. One hundred and twenty five   EFL student teachers took the practicum course in the a above-mentioned semester. Seventy eight of them (see Table 1

below) took part in this study and responded to the items of the open questionnaire in this study.

Table (1): Sample of the study

No	EFL student teachers	No	%
1	Male	14	17.94
2	Female	64	82.05
	Total	78	100

Analysis of the data

As mentioned above, the researcher explored the accomplishments of preservice EFL student teachers in the practicum programme in the Uiversity of Jordan by using an open questionnaire to collect data related to the research questions . The reason behind using this research instrument was to ask open questions which were expected to elicit data that are expressed in a written form by the respondent. By doing so, the researcher avoided imposing any agendas on the respondents. However, after collecting the data, the responses of each question were grouped and refined to allow for themes and patterns to be identified. This allowed for counting the number of the responses that belong to each theme and pattern. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages were calculated as they appear in tables in this study.

Findings

The findings of this study are divided into those that relate to the accomplishment of the skills of the classroom management, preparation for lessons, acquisition of teaching methods and skills, competency in subject matter, the preparation and production of teaching media and aids and finally the development of interpersonal skills. These areas were among the most important areas as emerging from reports and portfolios prepared by EFL student teachers. Mulhim (2005) reflected on the basic competencies of successful teachers which, according to him, include competency of planning for the lesson and its objectives which embody the specification of instructional objectives of the subject matter, its content as well as the activities and the relevant media and aids. The second competency is the implementation of the lesson which includes the organization of the instructional experiences and activities and the use of them in the instructional process. The third is the evaluation

competency which covers the preparation of evaluation tools for the instructional material. Finally, the competency of human relations which implies the construction of positive human relations between teacher and students and among students themselves.

EFL Student Teachers' Accomplishments in Classroom Management

Table (2) EFL Student teachers' accomplishments in classroom management

No		No	%
1	The student teacher did not find any difficulty in classroom management though the high grade taught	26	33.33
2	Classroom management depends on the strong personality of the teacher and the treatment of students from different backgrounds	27	34.61
3	Classroom management is not achieved through teacher shouting at students but a friendly relationship with students	8	10.25
4	The student teacher is generally known as a trainee in the co-operating school, this made noise in his or her classroom	10	12.82
5	The difficulty of classroom management is in the beginning of the practicum then it disappears towards the end of the practicum	48	61.53
6	The student teacher had different situations which taught him or her how to manage the classroom and to deal with different ability students	4	5.12
7	The big number of students per class was a difficulty to manage the classroom	2	2.56
8	Classroom management was a pertinent problem throughout but in the future the student teacher will overcome it.	4	5.12
9	The student teacher became able to manage the classroom better than in the beginning of the practicum	20	25.64
10	Classroom management is considered among the most important elements in facilitating the instructional process	8	10.25
11	Kindness with classroom students is not the right way. Students should be afraid of the teacher to ensure the smooth proceeding of the lesson	6	7.69
12	Effective classroom management depends on the nature of the classroom students	4	5.12
13	The need to understand the ways of thinking of classroom students	4	5.12

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   Table (2) above indicates two things in the management of the language classroom: one is to treat classroom students in a friendly way. On the contrary another view expressed the need to show classroom students strictness in order to guarantee the development of the lesson. Several EFL student teachers saw that classroom management is a factor in the facilitation of the instructional process. The wide range of teaching experiences the student teacher had enabled him/her to re-vision how to manage the EFL classroom.

   Student teachers' reflections on their accomplishments in EFL teaching methods

Table 3 Accomplishments in EFL teaching method

No	Response	No	%
1	EFL student teachers said they reinforced classroom students and promised them to give them rewards and also used co-operative learning by dividing classroom students into learning groups	2	2.56
2	EFL student teachers used various and different methods in giving the material.	6	7.69
3	Student teachers seemed to be both communicative and behaviouristic at the same time	6	7.69
4	EFL student teacher emphasized the important role the classroom student played in the instructional process	2	2.56
5	EFL student teachers said that the teaching methods should be various to keep classroom students highly motivated to learn	6	7.69
6	EFL student teachers said that they used a variety of teaching method to resist traditional methods and then to introduce modern methods	2	2.56
7	EFL student teachers said that they were aware of the need to use different teaching methods, but according to them, the co-operating teacher was not able to use them a thing that forced them to use the co-operating teacher's teaching methods and style and that no co-operation was felt from the co-operating teacher.	3	3.84
8	EFL student teachers said that the teaching methods which the school teachers used were traditional and that these	2	2.56

	methods represented obstacles.		
9	Student teacher expressed that the benefit from the co-operating teacher's teaching methods	1	1.28
10	Student teacher reflected on the need to link the teaching style to needs of classroom students in English.	1	1.28
11	Student teacher emphasized the use of technology in teaching English and giving the students the biggest role in learning	1	1.28

The student teachers who participated in this study reflected on their teaching methods which they used in the teaching practicum. For example, a small number of EFL student teachers said they reinforced classroom students and promised them to give them rewards and also used co-operative learning by dividing classroom students into learning groups. Some EFL student teachers used various and different methods in giving the material. This reveals a widely subscribed to and used teaching approach called the eclectic approach. Sometimes the student teacher explained and gave chance to students and used the recorder and acting out to impart knowledge to the students by using the interesting media and aids. These students seemed to be both communicative and behaviouristic at the same time. A small number of EFL student teachers emphasized the important role the classroom student played in the instructional process. Several EFL student teachers said that the teaching methods should be varied to keep classroom students highly motivated to learn. Few EFL student teachers said that they used a variety of teaching method to resist traditional methods and then to introduce modern methods. A few EFL student teachers said that they were aware of the need to use different teaching methods but according to them the co-operating teacher was not able to use them a thing that forced them to use the co-operating teacher's teaching methods and style and that no co-operation was felt from the co-operating teacher. Reflecting on the methods of co-operating teachers, few EFL student teachers said that the teaching methods which the school teachers used were traditional and that they represented obstacles. One student teacher expressed that she benefited from her co-operating teacher's teaching methods. One student

teacher said that the teaching methods became various due to the practice, especially those related to giving the lesson and asking questions related to the classroom students' lives. Another reflected on the need to link the teaching style to needs of classroom students in English. Another student teacher said that she used technology in teaching English and gave the students the biggest role in learning and was far from traditional methods. One important issue is that student teachers brought with them multiple teaching methods, but because of the ignorance and inability of the co-operating teacher to use them, according to the student teachers, this situation did not help the student teachers to develop and to use them.

The reflections of EFL student teachers regarding lesson planning

Table (4) EFL student teachers' reflections on their accomplishments in lesson planning

No	Lesson planning	No	%
1	The student teacher developed good lesson plans	4	5.12
2	Learning about different models in lesson planning	2	2.56
3	Introduction of different teaching situations	4	5.12
4	Developing understanding of how to use behavioural objectives, teaching methods and assessment techniques.	3	3.84
5	Reflected on this unique experience	3	3.84
6	Developed the skill of the planning for teaching effectively	4	5.12
7	The skill for planning matured through this course	2	2.56
8	This course enabled the student teacher to be prepared for the lesson	4	5.12
9	The ability for planning , preparing for the lesson and preparing the teaching aids progressed through this course	6	7.69
10	The ability for planning and using aids and different teaching methods and pre-planning developed through this course	57	73.07
11	Planning required the student teacher to use new teaching methods and not traditional methods	4	5.12

12	Planning for lessons progresses through the continuing planning for lessons	3	3.84
13	Students knowledge and attitudes towards the new lesson were taken into consideration when planning for lessons	3	3.84
14	Planning for lessons enabled the student teacher to use effective teaching methods and media in the classroom.	6	7.69
15	Planning for lessons was difficult in the beginning especially in contingency cases, but the student teacher was able to develop his or her ability and to match the teaching approach to students' learning levels.	4	5.12
16	The student teacher faced the difficulty for planning for the lesson but with experience the student teacher was able to achieve the objectives of the lessons	8	10.25
17	The student teacher acquired an excellent ability in lesson planning, especially in specifying the lesson objectives and the procedures to apply the objectives by using interesting teaching methods and teaching media and evaluation techniques that consider individual differences.	22	28.20
18	The student teacher acquired the right way to plan for lessons and to distribute time according to each activity.	4	5.12
19	The student teacher learnt the need to continue planning and to pre-plan and to work to achieve objectives	10	12.82

EFL student teachers (see Table 4 above) said that they noticed progress in their ability for planning and preparing lessons as well as the preparation of teaching aids and media. This emphasizes the importance of the practicum. They also felt that planning for lessons necessitated student teachers to think about teaching methods and media and also matching the teaching methods to student teachers' learning levels. The table also demonstrates that student teachers acquired through lesson planning identification of suitable teaching methods, media and evaluation of the lesson.

EFL student teachers' accomplishments in interpersonal skills

Table (5) EFL student teachers' accomplishments in interpersonal skills

N0	Accomplishment	No	%
1	The student teachers' ability to work with other teachers progressed because the school works as one team	16	**20.51**
2	Every one has a distinctive style and so it is important to know the people with whom one communicates	4	**5.12**
3	Due to the change in co-operating teachers the student teacher was exposed to more than one way of dealing with others	4	**5.12**
4	The student teacher used to work with colleagues in training on several school tasks	6	**7.69**
5	Positive teamwork was available among trainees, teachers and administrators in the co-operating school	20	**20.64**
6	The student teacher learnt from the practicum experience and socialising with other teachers how to deal with school children	10	**12.82**
7	The student teacher acquired more than one social skill and bestowed to other colleagues knowledge about how to interact with others	9	**11.52**
8	The student teacher preferred to work individually because of the pitfalls of working with others	1	**1.28**
9	The student teacher had a limited skill in working with others because this skill is used to impose authority on the others	2	**2.56**
10	The student teacher acquired communication skills from the school principal and school teachers and that teachers community is negative, especially of those teachers establishing cliques to satisfy their own interests	4	**5.12**
11	The student teacher reflected on the need to deal with others according to their intellectual and age levels	4	**5.12**
12	The student teacher highlighted the spirit of co-operative learning skills by overcoming students establishing bad groups and through engaging students in acting out roles and competition groups and other activities	3	**3.84**
13	The student teacher reflected on the need to have both confidence and skill in how to interact with others	1	**1.28**
14	The teacher should be flexible and willing to work with all personalities in the school environment	4	**5.12**

As far as the social skills which the student teachers were expected to develop through the teaching practicum, Table (5) above indicates that the development of such skills depends on the type of personalities of the people at school, on the one hand, and also on the flexibility and readiness to socialize with school teachers and administrators. Student teachers reflected on the lack of social skills and the limited social skills in certain situations due, according to some student teachers, to the type of relationships among school teachers and school students. A major obstacle which faced EFL student teachers is that in some schools, teachers establish cliques to preserve their own interests. This confused the EFL student teachers.

EFL student teachers' reflection on their accomplishment in subject matter competency

Table (6) EFL student teachers' accomplishments in subject matter competency

No	Response	No	%
1	The student teacher did not feel competent in subject matter and so referred to the library and reading journals and newspapers to be more competent	14	17.94
2	The student teacher was able to teach the material with no help from the co-operating teacher where the student was able to answer classroom students' questions easily.	12	15.38
3	There was a big difference between the courses the student teachers took in the university and those applied in the instructional field	18	23.07
4	The student teacher from the beginning was competent in the field of specialization because what the student teacher took in the university was congruent with what the student teacher needs at school	28	35.89
5	The content material was not too difficult, but the way it was presented to students to understand was among the things that needed experience and knowledge and that the student teacher benefited from the observations they had in the beginning of the practicum	14	17.94
6	Teaching English needs practice and that this course	10	12.8

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	gave the student teacher the opportunity to practice the language and that no doubt the student teacher's skill in conversation and communication skills and the knowledge became excellent		2
7	In the beginning of the practice the student teacher was not courageous and competent, but the practice increased the student teacher's confidence in his/her knowledge.	8	10.25
8	The student teachers reflected on the need to be competent in subject matter to avoid the wrong answers given to the classroom students	6	7.69
9	Though the student teacher felt confident in subject matter competency, the student teacher noticed that specialization courses in the university were not enough.	10	12.82
10	The student teacher during the partial application on teaching period of their training need to check his/ her subject matter competency and that during full application period the student teacher was able to give the right answer to classroom students	4	5.12
11	Knowledge of subject matter was not a problem with little children but the problem might escalates in the case of older students as the linkage between theory and practice is not well established in this level of age	3	3.84
12	To overcome any weaknesses in subject matter the student teacher should pre-plan for lessons and refer to sourcebooks and the co-operating teacher for help	**1**	**1.28**

Table (6) above demonstrates that because EFL student teachers are required to teach up to the tenth grade in Jordanian schools so the issue of competency in subject matter becomes an important one. It also points to the potential weakness in subject matter especially in the case of low-achieving university student teachers. The table also pointed to the issue that as student teacher's experience during the practicum course advances the student teacher's knowledge of subject matter becomes a less serious problem. EFL student teachers wanted to see an increase in the specialization courses in the University without providing any further explanations. One issue is that EFL student teachers referred to the

library and other sources to strengthen and enhance their subject matter knowledge.

EFL student teachers' reflections on preparing instructional media

Table(7) EFL student teachers' responses concerning preparation and use of instructional media

No	Accomplishment	No	%
1	Student teachers said that it is important to enrich the lesson with instructional media because it is a means to communicate knowledge with the least cost and effort and speed.	22	28.20
2	The student teachers became able to use varied media whether from the school or from the actual life or media the student teacher has created with the help of students taking into consideration the congruence between the instructional media and the instructional objectives.	23	29.48
3	The preparation and use of the instructional media were among the most difficult and tiring things because it was difficult to find the media for the wanted objective, but with experience the student teacher overcame this problem and became more able to match the media to the objectives.	8	10.25
4	The student teacher used different instructional media which fitted the objectives and content of the lesson	22	28.20
5	The practicum experience affirmed that instructional media are effective to communicate knowledge to the students in an attractive and smooth way and also overcomes the routine in learning.	14	17.94
6	The student teacher had negative attitudes towards instructional media but during the practicum the student teacher became more interested in their effect on the classroom students' achievement in English.	2	2.56
7	The student teacher did not depend on the instructional media available at school because according to the student teacher they do not match what the student teacher learnt at the university.	1	1.28

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8	The instructional media production was a very important aspect in the student teacher's training because it presents creativity and deliverance	5	6.41
9	The student teacher made effort to use instructional media to achieve the objectives and varying and enabling the learner to shift from the traditional way of learning to modern ways of language learning.	11	14.10
10	The practicum course enabled the student teacher to acquire the skill of preparing and using instructional media.	17	21.79
11	Instructional media were not used because the student teacher taught higher grades where most reliance was on the textbook.	2	2.56
12	The student teacher became able to select the instructional media appropriate and designing them and using them to introduce an idea that serves learners in their lives.	4	5.12
13	The student teacher from the beginning introduces the new material by using media that facilitate the presentation of the new material.	4	5.12

The responses of EFL student teachers regarding the instructional media (see table 7 above) embodied the value of these media and aids in the teaching of English and the difficulty of using them and the lack of match between what the student teacher learnt in the university and available media at the co-operating school. Because of their fresh ideas and knowledge about educational technology which they recently received from university, EFL student teachers wanted to use them in enriching classroom instruction. The table above also indicated the importance of matching instructional media to lesson objectives.

EFL student teachers' reflections on accomplishments in evaluating student's language learning
Table 8 English language student teachers' reflections on evaluating language learning

No	Accomplishment	No	%
1	Evaluating students' learning is an important thing that after each objective the student teacher gave students worksheets, external questions and that students put words in sentences and write notes	15	19.23
2	Evaluating learners' through participation, short tests, homework activities and assignments, reports, research, and designing things that increase understanding of students' learning	16	20.51
3	The use of formative and summative evaluation	15	19.23
4	Reinforcement and evaluation of students' learning to check whether objectives are achieved through worksheets, open book exams and questions	8	10.25
5	From the student teacher's experience the student teacher used to evaluate students' learning through various ways such as inductive questions and other ways	5	6.41
6	The student teacher became able to use formal and informal methods of assessment by preparing the test, analyze it and evaluating learning during the lesson	4	5.12
7	The student teacher used to employ appropriate evaluation methods according to the target age group such as using games through which the student teacher checked whether learners achieved the objectives or not	8	10.25
8	The student teacher felt that there was an interaction between the student teacher and classroom students which encouraged the student teacher to evaluate their learning.	3	3.84
9	The student teacher used to evaluate students' learning through monthly exams	5	6.41
10	In the beginning of the practicum the student teacher used to use questions and worksheets only to check achievement of objectives but with experience the student teacher used other methods for evaluation	5	6.41
11	There are various evaluation methods such as monthly and daily exams, quizzes and revision sessions and weekly tests, discussions, and students' responses to activities.	6	7.69

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Different points emerge from table 8 above such as the EFL student teachers exploration of the importance of the practicum in enabling them to come to terms with the evaluation of EFL students' learning. The student teachers also identified the importance of checking the achievement of the learning objectives. The table also pointed to the use of both formative and summative evaluation. An important finding was that the student teachers varied their evaluation methods as they advanced in the practicum course. One important finding (see table above) is that EFL student teachers explored the value of evaluating the achievement of each and single objective in the lesson.

Discussion of the results

One important issue in the accomplishments of the EFL student teachers is that most student teachers see that their acquisition of the various instructional skills focused on in the present study seem to progress with experience. The findings of this study suggested that the practicum course represented an opportunity for discovery. This discovery concerned the accomplishments of the various EFL instructional skills such as classroom management, lesson planning, evaluation of learners' learning, interpersonal skills, the preparation and use of educational media and aids. This is consistent with findings of the study by Hoffman et al. (2005) which emphasized the value of pre-service programmes on teachers' effective teaching experiences.

In the sphere of lesson planning, again EFL student teachers pointed out that such a skill progresses with the student teacher's advancement in the practicum. It was also found out by the student teachers in this study that new methods are discovered and used and that new instructional media and aids are also identified by the student teachers during the practicum. Student teachers also pointed to the discovery of the importance of lesson planning due to their engagement in the practicum. Baildon (2005) said that student teachers learn the way to develop lesson plans and that , according to him, these should echo their understanding of pedagogy, student learning, subject matter and the contexts and purposes for learning. Also he said that these represent a theoretical framework one can make sense of students, their experiences and instructional strategies they employ.

In the area of acquiring interpersonal skills during the practicum course, EFL student teachers reflected on the progress in interpersonal skills due to establishing links with school teachers and other administrators; the identification of individual styles belonging to practitioners and working with more than one co-operating teacher. The collaboration with all people at school, dealing with school students and colleagues and the feeling among individual cases that socializing with others might motivate these people to control student teachers and also exploring the need to interact with others according to their age and intellectual maturation. The findings also pointed to the need for flexibility and willingness to work with others. EFL student teachers emphasized the point that interpersonal skills are transferable to classroom learners through EFL classroom instruction and echoed in students' learning in their use of co-operative learning skills. This is congruent with Scanlon's (2005) study which pointed out the importance of establishing links with professional community members.

As far as the expertise in subject matter is concerned, some EFL student teachers pointed to the need to strengthen further such a competency; the feeling of confidence on the part of some student teachers to teach without the assistance of the co-operating teacher and the feeling that there are links between university knowledge and school instruction. Student teachers also emphasized the need to be immersed in the practice to enhance subject matter competency. This study also revealed the importance of the practicum in improving student teachers' language skills; the feeling that specialization courses in the university were not enough; their discovery in the initial stages of their practicum of their weaknesses in the subject matter competency and their effort to overcome such weaknesses through the rest of the practicum course. It was also felt by the student teachers that the problem of the subject matter competency escalates in the case of teaching older students while it is not in the case of first graders as according to some student teachers the university gives knowledge above this level. These student teachers wanted the university to address the actual content of first graders' syllabuses. Among the suggestions given by the EFL student teachers themselves in order to overcome the problem of subject matter competency is to refer to the co-operating teacher for assistance or go

back to the sourcebooks and the need for pre-planning. Walizar (2004) indicated the relevance of teacher education content and quality of instruction provided to school students. Avdul (2001) wanted educators in teacher education programmes to provide their pre-service students with experiences that relate to new curricula exactly in the way school students experience such curricula in the classroom, otherwise according to him, prospective teachers will not do their teaching job effectively.

In the arena of the evaluation of the classroom students' learning, several things emerged from the findings of this study such as the discovery of the EFL student teachers of the importance of the practicum in enabling them to come to terms with the evaluation of EFL students' learning. The student teachers also detected the importance of checking the achievement of the learning objectives. The table also pointed to the use of both formative and summative evaluation. An important finding was that the student teachers varied their evaluation methods as they advanced in the practicum course.

The student teachers who participated in this study reflected on their teaching methods which they developed and used in the teaching practicum who used co-operative learning by dividing classroom students into learning groups. Some EFL student teachers used various and different methods in giving the learning material. Sometimes the student teacher explained and gave chance to students and used the recorder and acting out to impart knowledge to the students by using interesting media and aids. Some students seemed to be both interactionist and behaviouristic at the same time. A number of EFL student teacher emphasized the important role the EFL learner has in the instructional process. Several EFL student teachers said that the teaching methods should be diverse to keep classroom students highly motivated to learn. Few EFL student teachers said that they used a variety of teaching method to resist traditional methods and then to introduce modern methods while a few EFL student teachers said that they were aware of the need to use different teaching methods but according to them the co-operating teacher was not able to use them a thing that forced them to use the co-operating teacher's teaching methods and style and that no co-operation was felt from the co-operating teacher. A small number of EFL student teachers reflected on the traditional methods which some school

teachers used and that they represented obstacles. A single evidence pointed to the benefit from the co-operating teacher's teaching methods. One student teacher said that the teaching methods became variable due to the practice, especially those related to giving the lesson and asking questions related to the classroom students' lives. Another student teacher reflected on the need to link the teaching style to needs of classroom students in English. A single student teacher said that she used technology in teaching English and gave the students the biggest role in learning and was, according to this student teacher, far from traditional methods, i.e, up-to-date methods of teaching English. Britzman (cited in Baildon, 2005) argued that student teachers need to examine alternative theories and strategies out of which they can start to develop their ideas and theories of teaching and learning.

Concluding Remarks and Reccomendations

The findings of this study highlighted the following:

- The value of the practicum course in enabling student teachers of English to develop professional instructional skills.

- The importance of the gradual acquisition of the various instructional skills as the EFL student teacher advances in the training course.

- The importance of connecting university courses with the objectives and the content of EFL school syllabuses

- The idea that EFL student teachers experiment with university knowledge during the stages in the practicum before mature development of instructional skills is attained.

In the light of the findings of this study, the researcher proposed the following recommendations:

1- Emphasizing the role of the training practicum in the professional development of the EFL student teacher.

2- The need to consider and monitor the gradual development of the instructional skills on the part of the EFL student teachers.

3- The need to increase specialization courses.

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4- The need to assess the extent to which pre-service programmes enable prospective teachers to achieve the development of essential instructional skills.

5- Intensifying quantitative and qualitative studies to gain further insights into how student teachers acquire and develop their pre-service instructional skills.

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Appendix

Open Questionnaire

The following are the items included in the open questionnaire as a research instrument used in this study. The open questionnaire was administered in Arabic to allow the participants to respond to the questionnaire items freely**.** The open questionnaire was used to elicit data related to the instructional accomplishments of the EFL student teachers.

1- What were your accomplishments in transferring university knowledge into the actual classroom instruction during the practicum course?

2- What accomplishments did you achieve during the practicum course in the development of your classroom management skills?

3- What were your accomplishments in the development of interpersonal skills during the practicum course?

4- What were your accomplishments in the development of the lesson plans during the practicum course?

5- What were your accomplishments in the development of teaching methods during the practicum course?

6- What were your accomplishments in the development of methods of evaluating students' learning?

7- What accomplishments did you achieve in the development and production of instructional media and aids?