Reflections on pre-service English Language teacher's experiences and practices during the COVID 19 pandemic teaching practice: Highlights and challenges from the lessons taught

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the challenges and highlights of teaching practice during the COVID 19 pandemic. Teaching practice is an indispensable part of the training of pre-service teachers. In light of this, teaching practice assumes particular immediacy and primacy given the opportunity it can afford for theory to blend in with practice. In a normal situation, student teachers are usually confronted by inexperience but to make matter worse, COVID 19 came with more challenges. In most circumstances, teachers were expected to use technology in their teaching to lessen direct contact and to reach a wider number of students. The data for this qualitative study was collected through an engagement with some English language student teachers who were asked to voluntarily write reflections on the highlights and challenges during their lessons within the teaching practice exercise. The findings portrayed that student came up with innovative ways of handling classes by themselves since it was not feasible for their lecturers to supervise them and give them the much-needed feedback that could improve their teaching. Secondly, the article upholds a view of language teaching as a social practice which we believe is well placed to reduce anxiety and build self-esteem. The study concludes that since learning during the COVID 19 appears to be more individualistic, it is important to promote student teachers' voice and agency in learner's learning to be able to build self-learning skills and learner's identity.

Keywords

Teaching methods, teaching practice, teaching challenges, English first additional language, teaching as social practice, voice and agency

Introduction/background

The main aim of pre-teacher and in-service teacher training is to provide student teachers with personal and professional skills that are needed in schools and other learning contexts. Teachers are required to deliver content knowledge, develop skills and foster attitudes that may enable learners to reach their potentials. Pre-service and in-service teacher training underpin a continuum of professional development that usually takes place over a number of years in a range of different settings and with differing purposes. Based on this belief system, "[c]ompetent learning is always a mixture of the theoretical and the practical; the pure and the applied; the extrinsic and the intrinsic; and the potential and the actual. In effect, competent learning represents the acquisition, integration and application of different types of knowledge. Each type of knowledge in turn, implies the mastering of specific related skills" needed to handle diverse classrooms (DoE 2015: 12). Viewed through this lens, learning should be a bi-product of the accumulation of acquisition, integration and application of knowledge.

Foncha et al. (2015) argue that South Africa pays due attention to the increasing challenges to schools in an attempt to make a difference. Based on this, pre-service teacher training is meant to meet the needs of learners by focusing on overcoming learning challenges through catching up with the learning needs of the learners and the public. Both the South African constitution and the Bill of Rights stress the promotion of unity in diversity which should form part of teacher training to facilitate and prepare teachers for the diverse classrooms clouded by mobility. In keeping with this, teacher training focuses on an inclusive approach which intends to afford all learners appropriate education within a conducive environment that is inclusive and supportive (Koc et al. 2009).

In resonating with the issues that we pointed out above, the Department of Education came up with the Education White paper 6 in 2001 both for schools and higher education which aspired that "higher education institutions should have a flexible curriculum and assessment policies that accommodate all students regardless of their learning needs" (South Africa, 1996:29). This was so because the justifiable evidence that the schooling system in South Africa is weak and that students who enter tertiary

education are not able (Ngoqo et al. 2018; Abongdia et al 2015; Jansen et al. 2011) to cope with the demands of tertiary education. Hence, "these cohorts of students have learning challenges that require their lecturers to go beyond the traditional teaching methods to put them up to scratch" (McPherson & Foncha 2022: 1).

According to Moncada-Comas and Diert-Boté (2022), the COVID-19 pandemic is a reagent for change because of its unique status quo that has led to many changes in opportunities including education that has led to educators exploring new ways/approaches in teaching. This in many cases has resulted in hybrid learning and teaching leading to some highlights and challenges which is the pivotal point in this paper. Given the current situation, learning and teaching is done through many channels. Hence, learning takes place through the interactions between the learner and the social world (Moncada-Comas and Diert-Boté 2022). Furthermore, through reflecting on their experiences and practices during the COVID 19 pandemic, the preservice teachers also developed new awareness about their instructional practices and zoomed in on teaching techniques essential for language teaching.

With the advent of COVID 19, pre-service teacher's teaching practice could not proceed as usual because they did not have the kind of supervision that is meant for them. They were only assisted online by their lecturers and the mentors were the only line of supervision. In this sense, the link between the theory taught in classroom and the actual practice during the teaching practice was not clearly taken care of but contingency measures like online assistance were put in place to assist in their teaching practice. Hence, this paper seeks to investigate the challenges and highlights of teaching practice during the pandemic with a view to propose recommendations to assist student teachers. In the section that follows, we will attempt to cover some issues and insights to attempt answers for the research question.

Literature review

As mentioned in the introduction, linking the acquisition and application of knowledge for teaching requires five core areas which are: disciplinary learning, pedagogical learning, practical learning, fundamental learning and situational learning. Today, higher education all over the world appears to be in a state of high uncertainty which makes it necessary to purposefully increase the level of technological and

methodological readiness of teachers for both face to face and online teaching and learning. The following five definitions are taken from DoE (2015) that focus on the expectations from pre-service teachers.

1) *Disciplinary learning*

This type of learning focuses on the content (subject matter) within a curriculum. Disciplinary learning is represented in the study of Education and its foundation including its philosophy, psychology, politics, economics, sociology and history of education. In addition, disciplinary learning also involves specific specialised subject matter relevant to the academic disciplines underpinning teaching subjects or specialisations.

2) *Pedagogical learning*

It is the study of the principles, practices and methods of teaching which includes knowledge of learners, learning, curriculum and general instructional and assessment strategies and specialised pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge also entails knowing how to present the concepts, methods, and rules of a specific discipline to create appropriate learning opportunities for diverse learners. This also involves a knowledge of assessing the content to see if the outcomes are achieved.

3) *Practical learning*

This deals with the analysis of different practices and resources across a variety of contexts, drawing from case studies, video records, lesson observations, among others to theorise practice. Practical learning can include aspects of learning from practice (e.g. observing and reflecting on lessons taught by others) as well as learning in practice (e.g. preparing, teaching and reflecting on lessons presented by oneself). It is therefore seen as is an important condition for the development of tacit knowledge, which is an essential component of learning to teach.

4) *Fundamental learning*

Fundamental learning is the ability to use the language of teaching and learning (information and communication technologies) competently. This kind of learning

focuses more on the use of key concepts in a given field as well as good knowledge of academic writing.

5) *Situational learning*

In situational learning, context is very fundamental because of the diverse nature of the classrooms. In the context of South Africa in particular, learning is very complex due to the differentiated nature of the society. With this in mind, learning can only work in nuanced ways (evidence-based methods) to confront the diverse challenges in the classrooms and the society at large. Situational learning should be able to tackle learner's background of poverty, diversity as well as foster inclusivity and be able to sustain the environment.

Work integrated Learning (WIL)

According to UNESCO Booklet 6 (2011), pre-teacher training is an essential component in preparing teachers to be able to meet up with the application of the knowledge of teaching. WIL is pivotal because it is key to accessing and strengthening the education sector responses. Based on this, "Pre-service training is a golden opportunity to address both the personal and professional needs of trainee teachers" (UNESCO 2011: 10). Therefore, the pre-service teachers should be trained as important professional and social role models for the learners and communities that they serve. The essence of teaching practice is to Ensure that the application of all the different learning above are part of the formal pre-service training of teachers which should help to provide pre-service teachers with benefits of evaluation, resources and accreditation. Based on this, UNESCO (2011: 11) concludes that "investing in pre-service teacher training is a strategic institutional need for a skilled cadre of professionals at training institutions, capable of supporting the education sector response." This is of course, an important component to be considered and addressed by all teacher training institutions.

Challenges of teaching and learning

Lack of sound knowledge in computers and technologies accounted for one of the challenges faced during the teaching practice. Amalzova et al. (2020) argue that teaching online differs greatly from conventional teaching and that preparation of

electronic education content is very time-consuming. In addition, the need to be taught how to work in a digital educational environment was rife. According to Almazova et al. (2020: 371):

> e-learning implementation into the educational process entails not only the development of new interactive methods of teaching, but also changes pedagogical process concerning students who are accustomed to the traditional full-time education system. The lack of students' skills for the intensive use of information technology in the educational process can be one of the obstacles to the successful application of e-learning.

It is worth noting that although the students have good knowledge of IT, they may lack the motivation to learn. Thus, it is the place of the teacher to keep learners motivated to learn by transforming the curriculum to a productive process of acquiring knowledge.

Another challenge that became recurrent during the pandemic included digital literacy on the part of both teachers and students. As mentioned earlier, Almazova et al. (2020) posit that online teaching is time consuming given that preparation takes twice as much time used for face-to-face learning. To make matters worse, online teaching prohibits productive interactions between students and teachers leading to lack or limited collaborative teaching methods and strategies. Rogers (2000) also indicates that socio-cultural and personality-related factors as well as the lack of support and training for new technologies remain a contributing factor.

In his study, Cuong (2021) focuses on the global and local challenges faced in language teaching in rural schools in Vietnam. He highlights the shortage of teachers as well as the development of the English curriculum as a major issue in the country. There is therefore no doubt that these challenges affect students' motivations towards language learning. This therefore leads to policy implications and inequalities in the policies. This is not in any way different from what is happening in South Africa especially where there are 11 official languages recognised by the constitution yet without the same status nationally in terms of preference.

Relevance and Importance of Reflections

Smith (2011) argues that "[t]here is evidence to show that reflective techniques such as critical portfolios and reflective diaries can help students to consolidate and assess their learning of a discipline and its practices." In view of this, since it was difficult for the lecturers to pay physical visits to the student teachers, reflections were seen as the best way to see if the students have put the theories taught in the University during their teaching practices. Reflections are nuanced because it is very challenging to trace exactly where a given learning came from, and we may even struggle to remember when we did not know how to do a certain thing. In this regard, when we question and consider our experiences, it becomes a powerful tool to develop future strategies, approaches and tactics in order to build skills to tackle similar future situations as well as fostering the skills that made us successful in the first place. Reflections therefore help us to think critically within the context of the present situation and how this may play out in the future (Helyer 2015).

Hence, for anyone to develop personally or professionally, continuous learning should be encouraged throughout their career. The most effective way to learn is through acquiring particular skills like the student teachers do during their teaching practice. Billett (2010) demonstrates the evolving relationship between self and work and how this relationship leads to reflective skills as well as to the development in individuals. In light of this, Helyer (2015) opines that reflective skills foster how to learn through accepting challenges and enhancing highlights that come with the process. This is so because reflections are known to afford individuals with the power to make sound decisions on the way forward. Thus, when people reflect, they critically appraise their experiences acquired through practice. Helyer asserts that "What makes reflection on practice such a powerful tool is the combination of more scholarly theorized thinking with practitioner's real-world experiences and learning" (p.17). He further holds that reflection harnesses thinking, acting, and collaborating as a supporting combination of creating a "nuanced, smart and superior results" (P.17).

Power in classroom discourses

Dennen and Wieland (2007) reveal that while most lecturers may conceive themselves as facilitators, online learning and teaching appear to postulate to the contrary. This is

true because any direct instructions from any instructor always tend to inhibit students from engaging and participating in classroom power-sharing which is known to undermine creativity. To this effect, Lapadat (2003) thinks that online classroom discussions portray students as knowledgeable and these students are therefore seen as experts in their subject of discussion especially in the instances where these students are afforded the opportunity to share and learn from one another. In view of this, Johnson (2016) argues that classroom interactions that encourage students to engage and participate in discussions seem to take away power role across the class while strengthening a discourse community. In light of this, when students are given a chance to share power in the classroom with their lecturers and peers, they become very motivated to engage and participate in classroom activities (Ngoqo et al. 2018; Foncha et al. 2016; Hargrove et al. 2010).

Knowledge construction

Online learning is similar to a face-to-face classroom learning in the sense that both may be conceived as communities of learning and knowledge construction within a given context (Johnson 2016; Golanics and Nussbaum 2008). Based on this, any learning platform; face-to-face or online which fails to engage students would definitely fail to achieve the outcomes of the subject. In light of this, any classroom discussion forum is capable of engaging students to participate and interact leading to knowledge construction. Furthermore, de Leon et al. (2010) are of the view that a community of students who interact through classroom discussion can integrate their prior-knowledge, experiences and successes into knowledge construction. This is to suggest that asynchronous online discussions are more likely to motivate students to share their ideas and experiences than they may afford in a face-to-face encounter.

Methodology

This article aims to state that the evidence for good policy and practice in pre-service teacher training is not even due to the nature of challenges confronted by pre-service teachers. In view of this, this article would attempt to highlight good policy and practice that show promise, despite the challenges faced by pre-service teachers. The data for this qualitative study was collected through reflections from English language student teachers during their teaching practice since COVID 19 pandemic did not allow

lecturers to visit these pre-service teachers physically. Here, the use of qualitative framework for this study needs to be justified. We felt that conducting this study in a qualitative framework through reflections would help us learn about the challenges confronted and faced by pre-service teachers rather than to prove about the challenges faced by them based on certain pre-conceived and pre-defined notions through a quantitative questionnaire.

Four student teachers were asked to reflect on any one English Home Language lesson that they taught during the teaching practice paying particular attention to the challenges and highlights of the lessons. No particular format or structure was given to them as you will see in the presentation that follows. The reflections were done voluntarily and did not form part of their teaching practice. Consent was sought from the students and all ethical protocols were observed.

Results and findings from the reflections

The data from the reflections from the pre-service teachers is presented below followed by the analysis and findings which generate the discussion. From the moment that COVID 19 escalated as a global pandemic, all schools faced a lockdown leading them to shutting their doors and introducing a rapid shift to online learning and this was not easy to teachers, students and parents. The online teaching soon became a new normal for universities but the schools embraced a rotational system that was brought in as a temporary measure but that dragged on forever. This new normal came with many challenges that teachers had to surf through. The reflections below are from pre-service teachers during COVID 19. The teachers are grappling with how to cover their syllabuses and the same time meeting their outcomes. According to Earthwatch (2021), the shift to online education for teachers means that they have to rethink their lesson plans to fit a very different format because a lot of the curriculum is dependent on the teacher being there and leading the students through certain things.

The following data are reflections from four English language student teachers during their teaching practice session in 2021.

Reflection 1

This is a reflection on an English lesson that I conducted on the 9th of September 2021. This was a literature lesson based on the poem 'Earth song' by Michael Jackson. The anticipated lesson outcome was for leaners to be critical thinkers and to be analytic. For example, to interpret the poem based on their understanding, to be able to understand figures of speech and to identify rhyming schemes. I designed the lesson to be learner centred, this was aimed at increasing the engagement and interaction of learners. I handed out the pages that had the poem and asked them to take out their books to take notes. I incorporated technology in my lesson by playing the poem from YouTube, the sound was clear as I used the Bluetooth speaker for the learners to listen to.

The use of technology in teaching the poem is something new and innovative that draws so much attention from the learners. Lentz and Foncha (2021) argue that blended learning provides learners with the liberty to study when it is most convenient to them. This is because learning can either take place in the classroom but if a learner fails to catch up for any reason, such a learner may resort to technology.

The highlight of the lesson was the use of technology. It was a different element and leaners were enthusiastic from the moment I was setting up until the song finished playing. While the song was playing, learners were reading the lyrics from their pages and singing along. The lesson felt like karaoke, and this was exciting to witness because when we just read the poem most times other learners get bored and sleep during the lesson, however with the music(poem) playing everyone was hyped and enthusiastic. I must confess that using technology inside the classroom was new to me because the school that I am in uses traditional teaching aids, therefore coming up with this idea and sharing it with other teachers was my highlight and has made me proud.

It is interesting to note that the use of technology in teaching made the learners to be very enthusiastic and paid so much attention to the lesson. More so, the teacher becomes more confident in the teaching as a new teaching approach is introduced.

The challenge that I faced was keeping the learners calm and making them settle. The learners were overly excited with the music playing and they sang loudly which made noise and was disruptive to other classes. When it was time to analyse the poem reading line to line, some learners were bored and were not as enthusiastic. I have also realised that when it comes to the content, learners did not know the basics of language and poetry analyses. The lack of knowledge and gap could be based on the disrupted learning that happened last year due to the pandemic.

Despite the positive impact of technology, the learners paid little attention to the teacher who was playing a facilitative role and so the teacher had to grapple with achieving the lesson outcomes.

Reflection 2

The classroom environment was well organised which helped to facilitate the lesson. The desks are arranged neatly in rows which allowed me to walk around the class so that everyone could see and hear me. The arrangement of the desk also allowed the leaners to view the PowerPoint presentation clearly. The learners entered the classroom quietly however, before they entered the classroom the teacher must follow covid protocols and sanitise the desk as well as their hands. This process took a few minutes to get everyone settled which affected the lesson due to time constraints. Therefore, the introduction took a bit longer and the lesson could not be completed.

In this reflection, one notices the use of technology (the use of PowerPoint) in teaching. However, there is the negative role of the COVID 19 protocol which is a new normal that takes off teaching time.

The lesson introduction was interesting, and learners were eager to give their opinions. I related the title of the poem to their own experiences and asked questions based on the title. I found this to be helpful because it awakened their interest to the poem. I also saw that I managed to capture their attention which made classroom participation much easier.

It is evident that the student teacher practices teaching poetry as a social practice which in turn helps to entice the learners and encourage participation in activities as anxiety is seemingly reduced.

During the lesson, when we got to the analyzation part of the poem, I found it challenging to remain on the topic. Many learners were giving their opinions which took time from completing all the lines of the poem. Although the participation was good and proactive, I had to raise my voice to settle them down, so that we could move on to the next stanza. I also realised that I should be clearer on giving instructions and when questioning the learners because some learners asked me to repeat myself.

The student teacher was challenged by the lack of clear instructions given to the learners which provoked indiscipline in the classroom. Secondly, time management was a problem.

By asking questions to different learners and allowing different learners to answer the questions, it contributed positively to the lesson because more answers could be compared, and it added to the content. The PowerPoint presentation was helpful because during the lesson the learners could take down additional notes. They also had a copy of their own notes. The classroom discussion dominated the lesson which was effective especially when teaching poetry because more views and opinions had been made. However, because many leaners participated, most shouted out their answers. I then constantly needed to remind leaners to refrain from doing that.

There is active participation in class because of the student-centred approach which enhances effective learning as well as confidence in the learners.

Reflection 3

Lesson 1: English: Poetry: Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley

The objectives of my lesson plan were as follow: leaners must be able to:

1. *Identify the use of lines, imagery, personifications, enjambment and volta.*
2. *Understand the content of the meaning of the words in the poems*
3. *Acknowledge nature over human achievements.*

Highlight encountered

The lesson in the beginning unfolded very successfully, the leaners were able to recognise images displayed in the pre-reading phase, they were able to answer

questions asked, such as listing the reason why people build statues. The learners were familiar with the structure of a poem, it was not hard for them to recognise it and they were familiar with few elements of the poem which made it easier for them to grasp the message in the poem. On the focused-re-reading phase, they were able to complete the annotated poem in groups. I did achieve the objectives of the lesson, learners were able to identify the elements of the poem, they understood the theme of the poem. Finally, the lesson was learner centred, as I used a reader response approach.

The student teacher is happy with the lesson and the learners' ability to identify the structure of the poem as well as annotate it. Hence, learning is taking place especially given that the student teacher uses a learner-centred approach.

Challenges encountered

Some of the learners did not participate during the lesson, especially when they were given a group work, I had to be strict so that they could take part. In addition, disruptive learners were making noise during the lesson. Noise making in the classroom interrupted and wasted time because I had to stop teaching and reprimand those learners. Scarcity of resources, the copies of the poem were not enough, the administration complained about the ink of the school, therefore not all students received a copy, they had to share a copy which was a challenge.

The lack of participation is highlighted here, and this is a common phenomenon in most classrooms. It is important to note that the disruption echoed in this reflection could be because the learners were sharing copies of the poem.

Reflection 4

Presentation of information

I thoroughly enjoyed teaching presentations of information as I enjoyed the content, and that I could relate the content to examples that the learners are familiar with. I found this very helpful and insightful as the learners were more focused and interactive during the lesson. I felt this was a strong point as it increased my confidence as well. At the start of my lesson, I manage to prepare all the media being used before the lesson started so that I could get maximum teaching time with the learners and start

the lesson at the allocated time without any technical errors, this I felt impacted my lesson tremendously, as I could assess any problems which may arise. As I conducted my lesson, I picked up on two learners who were constantly talking amongst themselves this started to cause a distraction amongst the learners in the class, I separated the two learners and the noise diminished immediately. Despite these challenges I have encountered I managed to conduct my lesson in the allocated time and finished all objectives of my lesson which I see as a major highlight. The learners were responsive and interactive throughout the lesson asking questions based on the concepts and content being taught making the lesson very enjoyable.

In this instance, learners were very focused and active in class. The student teacher prepared the class for the lesson on time and this helped to save time. There is also good classroom management as the teacher could discipline the disruptive learners.

Discussion

The first challenge that was identified from the reflections is the use of technology in teaching poetry. The learners paid much attention to the lyrics of the poem and the sound structure more than the instructions from the teacher and therefore defeated the purpose for teaching and learning. Lentz and Foncha (2021) argue that blended learning is a pedagogy which allows the student to learn at their convenience and should never be restricted to the classroom since they are able to make use of the virtual space as well. Although blended learning appears to be ideal in teaching and learning, it has a good number of limitations. The student teacher says that it is the first-time using technology in teaching. In view of this, the teachers would be required to learn how to incorporate technology in their teaching which can be so challenging. This position is supported by Wagner (2007:39) who suggests that "I myself was experiencing difficulty doing the very thing I wanted the students to do" which is exactly what the student teacher was going through.

Secondly, the availability of resources may also pose another challenge for online teaching and learning. Hence, both the teachers and learners may not be able to afford the necessary gadgets and learning materials required for online learning and teaching. The third challenge that may be linked to blended learning is participation in online learning and teaching. Learners may simply come online but may fail to

concentrate on the lesson but would be considered present just because such a learner signed into the class. The fourth challenge would be group work in an online session where interaction may either be too formal or very limited since online learning is void of the social aspect. In light of the above, learners are expected to "take charge of one's self and one's learning in the face of uncertainty and frustration" (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2013: 140). Based on this, Van Lier (2008) spells that students can initiate, take part in, and carry out actions in their learning process.

Reflections 2 and 3 suggest teaching poetry as a social practice where the learners had an opportunity to respond to what they were reading. Guofang (2020: 33) states that "becoming increasingly motivated and committed to improving" is the only way for teaching and learning to be successful. This is the only way to build self-esteem or a strong sense of agency that enable such learners to exercise a measure of control over their own learning despite the challenges they may be facing. Learning in this sense may be perceived as "tool-mediated and goal-directed action… connected with some outer activity" (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2013: 135).

Notwithstanding the above-stated issues, the student teacher in reflection 3 is challenged in her teaching because the instructions provided to the learners were not clear leading to an indiscipline classroom. Although she saw this as a challenge, we are of the opinion that learning was taking place as each learner was responding to the text subjectively (Sivasubramaniam 2009). In view of this, Guofang (2020: 33) argues that voice and agency is the "ability to act on their own learning through actively utilizing the resources and affordances in the learning environment" which is what is taking place in the classroom.

Rekabdarkolaei (2011: 326) points that "confusion and concern about how to handle discipline is rampant." Thus, "creating a secure, well-organized environment and enhancing students' self-esteem leads to more desirable student attitudes and behaviour than an emphasis on rigid control and punishment." It is evident that the student teacher in reflection 3 is encountering challenges with classroom control which in a way is affecting the ability of engaging all the learners. It may be due to the teaching method applied during the lesson with all students expected to work at the same pace on the same activity. The approach used reflects the current movement

toward increased student input into classroom life and toward a more positive approach to discipline issues (Gordon 1974). The student teacher in reflection 3 is a direct opposite to that in reflection 4 who arranges all teaching materials before the class and could manage and control the disruptive students during learning and teaching without affecting the flow and completion of the lesson.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, we conclude that reflection can act as a transformative and critical tool in the understanding of different perspectives. Based on this, there exists a relationship between reflection and identity construction because these reflections have served as a mirror for the student teachers to examine and inspect their own view of teaching and learning in line with who they really are and as well as the philosophical beliefs in pedagogy. In light of this, reflections afforded the student teachers the opportunity to position themselves in the wider community of teachers by making sense of their lived experiences in relation to self, others, society and contextual conditions.

In the era of COVID 19, learning has shifted to online mode with current educational philosophy which tends to favour more individualistic instruction as well as the need to tolerate student's diverse needs. Learner's agency assumes particular centrality since these learners are bound to take more responsibility over their learning just like the student teachers when they go out for teaching practice. In this regard, we are in favour of a new way of thinking in teaching and learning that promotes voice and agency in learning, teaching and assessment whether face to face or online. Agentic teaching goes beyond just the content but also targets language and culture. This kind of learning helps to promote student's culture whose focus is to promote meaningful interaction among peers as well as developing learner identity of engagement and participation in the learning process.

Limitations of the study

Given that the pre-service teachers were only visited once during their teaching practice, the reflections were limited and could not cover the scope of the study. It is therefore suggested that future investigation be done with multiple reflections to see

the trend of development. In light of this, the scope of this study is limited in one way or another but appears to open a gap for future research in the following areas:

(a) Lack of triangulation of results: At least one student from each class should have been interviewed online to ask about their experiences relating to the teaching and learning experienced in the 4 lessons taught by the 4 pre-service English Language Teachers.

(b) The four pre-service English Language Teachers could also have been interviewed to further probe on their recorded reflections.

(c) The 4 online classes could have been observed by the researchers and their observations could have been compared and contrasted with the reflections of the pre-service student teachers.

Recommendations and suggestions for future studies

One more sequential class taught by the 4 pre-service English Language teachers on another genre of literature, could be included for data collection to target broader range of data analysis. Secondly, triangulation of the data might have given a scope for the study if interviews with the pre-service teachers and observation by the researchers were brought in for data collection. Given the importance of post- lesson reflection, it can be recommended to be a mandatory requirement for the trainee teachers to write a post-lesson reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of their lessons, which can widen the scope of post-lesson discussion with the supervisor and enrich the discussion.

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