



Challenges Faced by Novice Emirati Teachers

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Research SIG Presentation – March 14th 2013

19TH INTERNATIONAL TESOL ARABIA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

From KG to College to Career



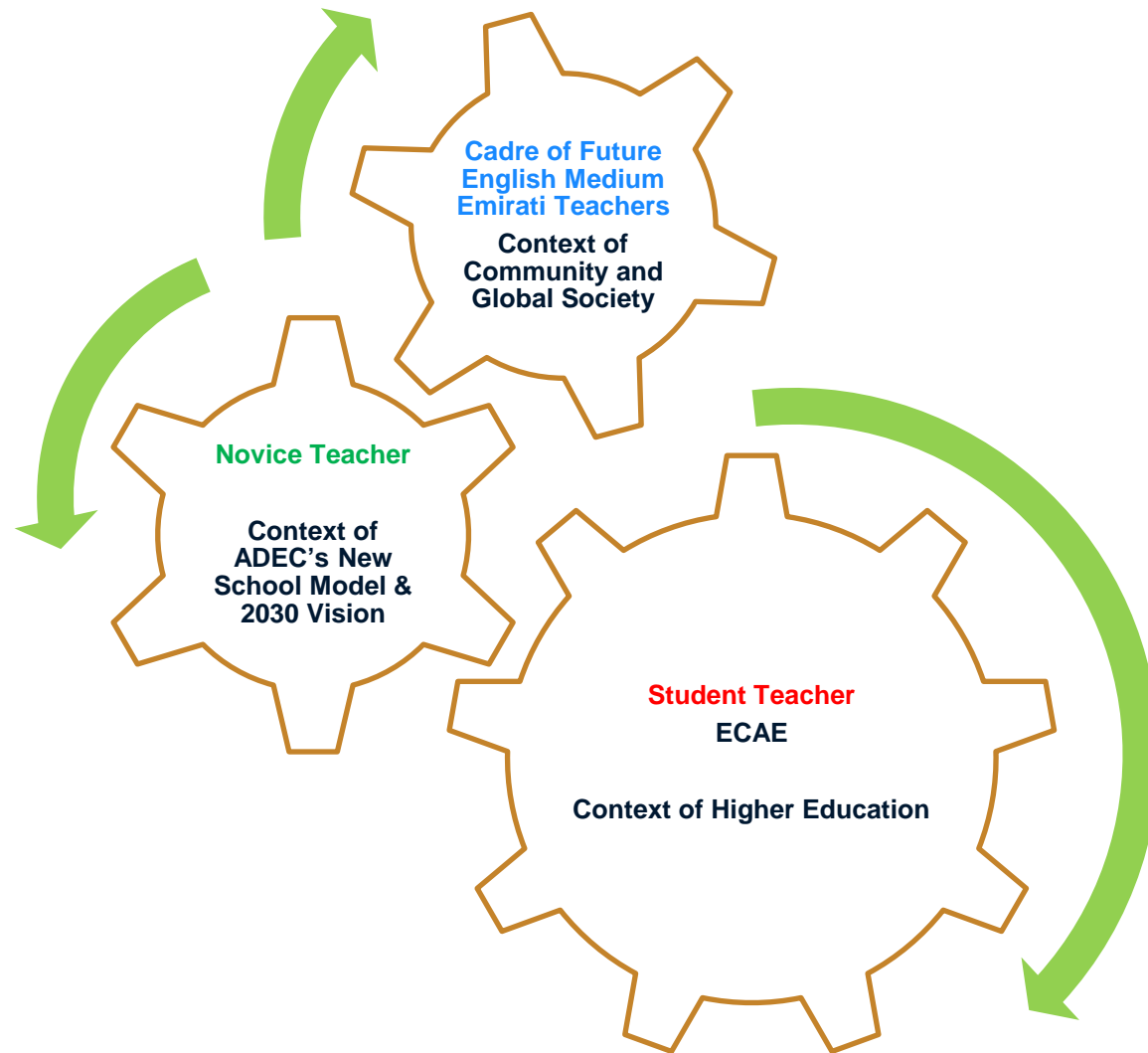
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Overview of the Research Study

- This is a collaborative research study
- Research Aim:
 - To determine the challenges faced by ECAE new graduates during their first year of employment as English medium teachers
 - To identify the effectiveness of the teacher preparation and its relevance to novice teachers in their practice
 - To investigate the use of English as a medium of instruction by non-native speakers of English
- Mixed Design – Quantitative and Qualitative methods
- Participants – Emirati novice teachers
- Data Collection Tools
 - Survey Questionnaire
 - Individual In-depth interviews
 - Letter box strategy – focus group style

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Focus of this session

- Discuss our research design
- Context of the study
- Participants
- Construction of the survey questionnaire
- Interview Guide
- Presentation of Findings
- Discussion

Context of the Study

- Total Population in the UAE - 8,248,000
Citizens: 948,000, Expats: 7.3 million



(Gulf News p. 16, March 11, 2012)

- Funded and Sponsored by ADEC, Abu Dhabi Emirate
- ECAE initiated in 2007, students enter from High School
- Around 300 students, mainly from the Abu Dhabi Emirate and supported by about 35 faculty members
- Abu Dhabi public school system is in the midst of educational reform and it is often referred to as the “New School Model”

Study Participants & Context

- ECAE Graduates – B.Ed degree, all Emiratis
- Currently employed as English Medium Teachers (EMTs)
- Working as novice teachers in Cycle 1 (grades 1-5) and KG classrooms
- Our graduates with IELTS band 6.5 and above were employed as EMTs in grades 1-5.
- Our graduates with IELTS band 6.0 were employed as EMTs in KG c
- Our graduates with IELTS band of 5.5 were employed as Arabic Medium Teachers (AMT) in KG classrooms

Study Participants & Context

- Education Reform – New School Model - Staffing
- In Cycle 1 (grades 1-5) English , Math and Science subjects are taught by western EMTs from UK, US, CAN, AUS, NZ, SA.
- In the Kindergarten (KG), there are two teachers - Arabic (AMT) and English (EMT) teaching in the same classroom. (Bi-literacy)
- Currently 20% are working as EMTs in Cycle 1 schools
- About 30% are working as EMTs in KG
- About 50% are working as AMTs in KG

Study Participants - Continued

- Age group: 20-24yrs – 78%, 25-30 yrs – 18%, above 30 yrs – 4%
- Gender: 3 males and 27 females
- Majority- over 93% attended public schools in Arabic medium
- Over 75% of their Mothers had not finished high school
- Over 60% of their fathers had not finished high school
- About 64% had family working in the teaching profession

Survey Instrument

- **Construction of the survey questionnaire**
- **Invitation to Participate**
 - Introduction – email consent, online link to survey
 - eSurveysPro.com
- **Main parts of the survey:**
 1. Demographics
 2. Language Use
 3. Teaching Profession
 4. The Curriculum
 5. Teaching Strategies
 6. Personal

(Total 75 questions, 16 were demographic information)

INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Interview guide included 14 questions:
 - Challenges
 - Surprises
 - Preparation at the college
 - Communications with the school community
 - Parents, school administration and staff
 - Role as an Emirati EMT
 - Use of Language in the classroom
 - Home and work balance
- Individual interviews were conducted (30-45mins)
- Face to face and phone
- Transcribed verbatim
- Preliminary analysis have been completed

Key Findings of the Survey

Motivating Factors of becoming a teacher:

Always wanted to be a teacher	35%
Working in a female only environment	27%
My family wanted me to be a teacher	18%
Want to be able to teach my own kids	10%
For financial reasons	10%

Challenges ...

Which aspects of the novice teachers' work were perceived as being 'challenging'?

Challenges: Planning and Curriculum Implementation

Survey Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My college courses prepared me to plan effective lessons.	74 %	22 %	4 %	0
My college courses prepared me to implement the ADEC curriculum.	59 %	30 %	11 %	0
I can plan to ensure progression across ages and ability ranges.	11 %	81 %	4 %	4 %
I can create unit plans and lesson plans from the ADEC curriculum	61 %	31 %	8 %	0

Challenges: Planning and Curriculum Implementation

Completing the curriculum

I faced great challenges to overcome in organizing my time, sometimes we get stuck on one subject and the 3 periods suddenly finish..and I feel that every day I have this overload of working because I'm behind in the curriculum and I can't move to the next step until I'm sure that all the students understand what I'm saying.

Challenges: Planning and Curriculum Implementation

Planning

I prefer it if all the teachers sit together and say let's do the planning together. If we shared the responsibility for planning also the teaching would be much easier. But some of the teachers they don't want to do this. They want to be perfect and have a competition between the classes. So I want more sharing I want the principal or the vice principal to say let's do the planning together.

Challenges: In the classroom

Survey Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I know how to adjust my teaching practice for different learning styles	31 %	65 %	4 %	0
I can use teaching strategies to suit individuals, groups and whole classes	46 %	50 %	0 %	4%

Challenges: In the classroom

Differentiation

All lessons should have these differentiated activities, even if it's hard, they should do it. Maybe if the college trained us more (to differentiate lessons) (Cycle 1 teacher)

We learned for higher grades about problem solving, but not for KG, I found it difficult because they cannot write and how can I make them problem solve like in Bloom's Taxonomy? (KG teacher)

Challenges : In the classroom

Student centered teaching strategies

I'm trying to do that all the time but six of my students are not able at all, if I leave them, they will not do anything, seriously, this is silly, but they can't read or write. Sometimes they just give me a funny look while I'm teaching because they don't understand. (Cycle 1 teacher)

Challenges : In the classroom

Survey: Behavior Management and SEN students

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I can use different strategies to manage students' behavior.	46	54	0	0
My college courses helped me understand the needs of students with special needs.	35	54	11	0

Challenges : In the classroom

Behaviour Management

How to manage my classroom is a challenge – my students' behavior, because I have a violent student, really violent. She interrupts my class all the time.

It's really hard if you appear to the students that you can't manage your class, you are not in control ... If they see me weak they won't listen to me anymore

Challenges: Were you well-prepared to teach?

Survey Responses - Internship

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My internship was useful and relevant to me as a novice teacher.	65	31	4	0
My internship gave me the skills, knowledge, and confidence I needed to teach successfully.	69	27	4	0
I had enough time on internship to prepare me to be an effective teacher.	54	38	8	0

Challenges: Were you well-prepared to teach?

Internship was more difficult than 'real life'

Practicum was more difficult than teaching now. I felt more stress during Practicum and thought teaching now will be the same as Practicum. But it is not.. maybe because it is my classroom and I can do what I want

Internship was too demanding

I wish that they left us to feel being a teacher without any other things from the college. Because last year they gave us the action research project simultaneously with the practicum..

Challenges: Were you well-prepared to teach?

Overall

I think we were 99% prepared. Like when they (other teachers) saw my lesson, they were amazed and they said you are teaching like you have been teaching for a long time! I felt prepared in planning, formative and summative assessment, ICT (KG teacher)

The college gave us all the ideas that we needed. In applying this there is a problem, because I am in KG. In the KG it has to be simple things (KG teacher)

Challenges: Balancing Work and Home Life

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have enough time to prepare for my lessons	8	61	23	8
I am able to balance work requirements with my personal life	12	68	20	0
My family is supportive of my work as a teacher	19	65	11	4

Challenges: Balancing Work and Home life

Lack of Balance

Until this moment I feel that I don't have balance, and sometimes I feel that I'm not able to accomplish what's required from me, like, for example, marking, correcting students' notebooks etc. Many times I take work home. Last month I didn't do anything at weekends .. I was just sitting working ... Sometimes you feel like you're alone, nobody supports you, nobody helps you

Challenges: Being Accountable

Multiple Roles and Responsibilities

We learned that we have more than one role being a teacher...So playing all these roles at once was really a challenge for me

Lots of Paper Work

As a teacher working under ADEC there is a lot of paper work I have to do...teaching was like a subheading and less important

Assessment / Accountability – Classroom based

The other thing that still shocks me is that for each single thing I do I have to have evidence for it. I have finished over 4 unit and I had to do the evaluation for each unit and then get the principal to sign.

Challenges: Being Accountable

Induction of the novice teacher

I think they are treating me like other teachers who have been teaching for many years. Like I don't know about the file and no one told me about it and other documents and they wanted it this week. It is the same with the students' portfolio, I did not know that. Many things I know only now

Accountability to 'Others'

But translating is killing me because they want me to translate every single document...I am the medium between the Arabic and English teachers for emails, in the meetings or assembly. If they want the EMTs to know something then I translate for them

Kindergarten - A Special Case

Working with the Arabic Teacher

I am a bi-lingual teacher so I think I can do the Arabic and English together. I can do it. I can start with Arabic and turn into English. I feel good about being a bi-lingual teacher and I want my own class because I can speak both English and Arabic

Different ways of Managing Behavior

I use praise. At first the Arabic teacher did not understand my classroom management because she screamed and they sit down and listened but I used praise. The Arabic teacher she used a method with them and I disagree...She didn't listen so I went to the Head of Faculty and she agreed with me and she talked to the Arabic teacher

Kindergarten – A Special Case

Communication – Language: Arabic or English?

The AMT in my classroom is OK. We have words for Arabic and English. I put English words on the wall but many AMTs don't want English and they think Arabic is more important and they have problems with that.

When I did the writing after the guided session, she wrote on the same chart in Arabic. Also when I do the bar chart I wrote the title in English. When the students went home and I came back the poster was all in Arabic. Now if I want to create a chart and I am responsible I will do Arabic and English because I do not want her to come and do it again

Kindergarten – A Special Case

Communication – Language: School Expectations

The Arabic teacher will introduce the new concept on Sunday and I have to do it on Monday. The students they have to listen to the Arabic language before the English language and I think it is a little bit confusing for the kids...She starts with 10 minutes in the morning in Arabic and then I have 10 minutes. In the beginning I faced some difficulty with this.

Communication – Parents

I had one problem with one parent. I was asked to read a story. I was reading the story but was speaking in Arabic thinking they will not understand and the Head of Faculty said don't speak in Arabic, only English.

Kindergarten - A Special Case

Perceptions: AMT - limited curriculum Knowledge

I felt prepared in planning, formative and summative assessment, ICT, make and create things, make our books on topics if there were no books around. In the P D session on gifted and talented and inclusion, we responded to all their questions and feel we are prepared. AMTs don't know much.

Pedagogical differences

Today I had the principal, HOF, EMTs and AMTs attend my model lesson. They said this is the first time they see KG1 students read and write. A boy wrote 'cold' and a girl wrote 'hot' on the board. The boy swapped the 'd' and the Arabic teacher was correcting but I said it is OK.

Emirati – English Medium Teacher - Identity

- I am a bilingual teacher

I feel good about being a bi-lingual teacher and I want my own class because I can speak both English and Arabic.

- I can do this...I know my culture, traditions and language

it's understanding their oral Arabic conversations, and then switching them in English. Or, you know, answering that in English, or making that Arabic question into English.

- I am an Emirati EMT

Visitors are brought to my classroom because I am the only Emirati...

Emirati – English Medium Teacher - Identity

- Perceptions - translator
 - Medium of communication EMTs and AMTs – Arabic and English

Our principal did a meeting for us and she speaks in Arabic and she doesn't find someone to translate, so I had to translate. But unfortunately they made it as my job.

- Tensions – roles EMT vs AMT, interactions

With the non EMTs I think we are perfect. I think there is a huge difference between us and them. For example in creating the resources – our resources are better than their resources. In dealing with the kids ok they are more perfect than me but in creating the resources and using strategies we are perfect.

Emirati – English Medium Teacher - Identity

- I am treated as if I am an experienced teacher

I feel like I am part of them (EMTs), and we really work together

They wished more teachers are coming like me

- Others (non EMTs) see me as a western EMT
- Other Emirati teachers feel honored, proud, respected
 - Emirati is a qualified EMT in the circle of western EMTs

During the break-time the Arabic teachers always invited me to have food and sit together and as normal person, you prefer to sit with the person with your language, your customs and traditions, but that doesn't mean that I want to eliminate them .. it's just .. natural.



QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

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