

Teacher Perceptions of Best Practices in English Language Teaching

Farahnaz FAEZ

University of Western Ontario, Canada

Michael KARAS

University of Western Ontario, Canada

Understanding teachers' beliefs of what constitutes good practice is important as it has a significant impact on their pedagogical choices in the classroom. To this end, this case study explores perceptions of best practices in English language teaching from the perspective of preservice teachers completing an MA TESOL program in Canada. Forty-two international students originally from China documented what they believed were the best practices used in the ESL classes they observed as part of their MA TESOL program. Data was analyzed qualitatively and the 20 most cited best practices are identified and presented. Results offer an important frame of reference for teachers to reflect on and examine their own beliefs and practices in relation to those that are appreciated by a group of teachers.

Introduction

Classroom observations have long been used in language teacher education programs as a way to understand classroom practices and as a professional development tool. Whether it be observing expert, experienced teachers in the classroom, self-observing one's own teaching using videos, or even watching fellow novice teachers, keenly observing others teach remains a key developmental tool when preparing language teachers (Baily, Curtis & Nunan, 2001; Gebhard 2009). Day (1990) notes observing (experienced) teachers can help teachers: 1) develop terminology for discussing teaching, 2) enhance awareness of principles