



# Online Transformational Learning to develop Egyptian EFL Prospective Teachers' Pedagogical skills during COVID-19 Pandemic

**By**

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## التعلم التحويلي عبر الإنترنت لتنمية المهارات التدريسية لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية المصريين ما قبل الخدمة أثناء جائحة كوفيد ١٩

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### ملخص

أدى انتشار جائحة كوفيد ١٩ إلى إغلاق المدارس ولم يكن لدى المعلمين المصريين ما قبل الخدمة الوقت الكافي لمواصلة التدريب العملي الفعلي في المدارس كشرط مسبق لاجتياز برنامج اعداد معلمي اللغة الانجليزية، ولهذا تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تنمية المهارات التدريسية لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ما قبل الخدمة من خلال التعلم التحويلي عبر الإنترنت وقد استند جمع البيانات على المنهجين الكمي والكيفي ، قام الباحثان في المرحلة الأولى من الدراسة ، بتطبيق قائمة المهارات التدريسية ، ودليل التدريب العملي المقترح لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ما قبل الخدمة بكلية التربية جامعة المنوفية (ن = ٣٣). وفي المرحلة الثانية ، أكمل ١٥ معلمًا قبل الخدمة للغة الإنجليزية سجل تأملّي للتعقيم. وقد تم تحليل البيانات كميًا ونوعيًا. وأشارت نتائج الدراسة الحالية إلى فعالية التعلم التحويلي عبر الإنترنت في تعزيز المهارات التدريسية لدى معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ما قبل الخدمة.

### الكلمات الدالة

التعلم التحويلي عبر الإنترنت - المهارات التدريسية لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ما قبل الخدمة -  
جائحة كوفيد ١٩ .

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### **Abstract**

The spread of Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in schools' closing. Egyptian prospective teachers did not have enough time to continue the actual teaching practicum in schools as a prerequisite of their preparation program. The current study aims to explore the effectiveness of online transformational learning in developing EFL prospective teachers' pedagogical skills during COVID-19 Pandemic. Based on an interpretive paradigm, this mixed method study aimed at probing into the perceptions of Egyptian EFL prospective teachers of transforming actual teaching practicum into online one. Data collection was based on a sequential mixed methods approach; thus, in the first phase of the study, the researchers administered a pedagogical skills observation checklist and a teaching practicum course manual for EFL prospective teachers in the third year English section at the Faculty of Education of Menoufia University in Egypt (n=33). In Phase Two, 15 EFL prospective teachers completed a reflective journal. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings of the current study indicated the effectiveness of the online transformational learning in enhancing EFL prospective teachers' pedagogical skills.

### **Keywords**

Online Transformational Learning- Egyptian EFL Prospective Teachers'  
Pedagogical skills - COVID-19 Pandemic

### 1.1 Introduction

Within the Egyptian context, pre-service teacher education programs are responsible for preparing teachers through a four-year program in faculties of education. The aim of EFL teacher education is the preparation of competent and capable English teaching professionals who can meet the contemporary working life's requirements. Teacher education programs (TEP) experience several challenges the most important of which is how to maintain high quality of instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. It becomes imperative that TEP attempt to replace this pattern with a new one that stresses collaboration and collegiality instead of isolation and social distancing. Transformational learning can be utilized to refine teaching practicum course experience and help EFL prospective teachers develop their pedagogical skills. It allows trainees to focus on one pedagogic aspect at a time and aids in promoting understanding of lesson structures. Also, it helps lighten the load of taking the responsibility of teaching the entire lesson and this, in turn, enlightens their practice.

Transformational learning involves the evolution of learners' perspective where they explore themselves and reflect on the impact of their learning (Mezirow, 2000). Communication with colleagues, shared experiences and reflections create shared responsibility for a collaborative learning process. Transformational learning transforms the teacher training model to a new professional development perspective, considering learning as a unique event for self-improvement (Larrivee, 2000). Teaching practicum course is a scientific framework for professional learning in which prospective teachers design, record, publish and disseminate their pedagogical experiences using online technologies (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012).

### 1.2 Background of the problem

EFL prospective teachers who practice teaching EFL in the preparatory school classrooms have difficulty teaching real pupils in actual foreign language classrooms, especially after the school closure because of Covid-19 pandemic. They are not confronted with the realities of the school and pupils; in a certain class they must teach. They do not have sufficient knowledge concerning some teaching practices e.g. giving and receiving feedback, correcting mistakes and/or errors, assessing and/or

evaluating pupils' learning. This might be due to the insufficient knowledge and lack of practical skills that ought to be provided by teacher education programs, especially the pedagogical skills component. It is the teaching practicum course that should compensate EFL prospective teachers and provide them with the necessary practical skills that empower them to be good teachers. Transformational Learning can be incorporated in the student- teaching process to help student- teachers develop academically and professionally. Given the advantages of Transformational Learning and the possibility of integrating it into the process of online teaching practicum, the researchers suggest that Transformational Learning could be used to help EFL Prospective Teachers develop their pedagogical skills. Transformational Learning has several benefits for them. However, it has not received the researchers' attention in Egypt.

#### Pilot study

The researchers conducted a pilot study where they interviewed some supervisors of EFL (N=8) who supervise EFL prospective teachers in their teaching practicum. All of them reported that EFL prospective teachers know about lesson planning and some teaching skills theoretically, but when it comes to the implementation stage, they become unable to practise what they have studied. Some of them still need to practice several skills during school closure.

The findings showed that (75%) of students feel unable and dissatisfied with their ability to use English all the time. About 70% of them are not cognizant of the skills the “present- practice stage” contains. Practicing their pedagogical skills during school closure constitutes the most problematic area of 70% of them.

#### 1.3 Statement of the problem

EFL Prospective teachers have difficulty in some pedagogical skills. For instance, they cannot start the lesson, warm- up, present vocabulary and grammar effectively and interestingly, provide appropriate feedback, evaluate students' learning, and end the lessons appropriately. Also, they feel dissatisfied and insecure about their ability to deal with some classroom practices. Given such difficulties EFL prospective teachers encounter and given the advantages of transformational learning and the

possibility of integrating it into the teaching practicum course process, the current study attempts to use online transformational learning to help EFL student- teachers develop their pedagogical skills during school closure because of Covid-19 pandemic.

#### 1.4 Questions of the study

The present study attempts to answer the following important question:

How far would online Transformational Learning help EFL prospective teachers develop their pedagogical skills?

Out of this question, these sub-questions are branched:

1- To what extent does online Transformational Learning develop EFL prospective teachers' overall pedagogical skills?

2- How do EFL prospective teachers describe their experiences of online transformational learning?

#### 1.5. Hypothesis of the study

The current study attempted to verify the following hypothesis:

1. There is a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between the study group's mean scores in the pre – post-tests of overall and each of pedagogical skills observation checklist independently in favor of the post-test.

#### 1.6. Significance of the study

The current study might be significant to:

EFL prospective teachers of EFL as it helps them develop their classroom pedagogical skills through incorporating online Transformational Learning in Methods courses and Practicum. Transformational learning encourages students to critically examine their assumptions, grapple with social issues, and engage in social action. The current study might also enable teachers know how to create a safe environment; encourage students to think about their experiences, beliefs, and biases; use teaching strategies that promote student engagement and participation; pose real-world problems that address societal inequalities; and help students implement action-oriented solutions.

The current study allows trainees to focus on one pedagogic aspect at a time and aids in promoting understanding of lesson structures. It also

helps lighten the load of taking the responsibility of teaching the entire lesson and this, in turn, enlightens their practice.

#### 1.7. Delimitations of the study

The current study was delimited to:

- A sample of EFL Prospective Teachers (n=33) selected from third year English majors, Faculty of Education, Menoufia University.
- The second semester of the academic year 2019/2020.

#### 1.8. Design of the study

The present study follows a sequential exploratory descriptive mixed-method design (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). First, the researchers administered the quantitative phase of the research followed by the qualitative one. They used one group pre-post intervention quasi-experimental design for examining the effectiveness of online Transformational Learning in developing EFL prospective teachers' pedagogical skills. The qualitative phase is represented by EFL prospective teachers' reflective journals. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis is conducted in an integrated manner to create a strong foundation for the argument about themes emerging from the data and contributing to a comprehensive and relevant analysis.

#### 1.9. Instruments and materials of the study

The researchers prepared and used the following instruments and materials: -

- A pedagogical skills observation checklist.
- A teaching practicum manual for EFL prospective teachers.
- EFL prospective teachers' reflective journals.

#### Definition of terms

##### Transformational Learning

Transformational learning refers to the process of transforming the frames (i.e. perspectives, mental habits and sets) into more open, discriminatory, emotional and reflective ones to create beliefs and ideas that lead to the right action (Mezirow, 2000). Transformational learning alters what we know; and how we know (Kegan, 2000, p.

50). Transformational learning is operationally defined in the current study as the process where students learn in four different ways. First, they can describe existing reference frames; Second, they can learn these new frames; Third, they change the habits of the mind, and fourth, they can change their perspectives.

#### Pedagogical skills

Veer (2006, p. 233) defined “classroom teaching or pedagogical skills as a set of teaching behaviours that are effective in bringing about desired changes in FL learners”. According to Gray and Stark (2007); Sivarajah et al. (2019) pedagogical skills include introduction, presentation, practice, application, evaluation and follow-up. Aliweh (2012) defined the term as teaching performance skills that also include classroom management. In the current study, the term is used to refer to the EFL prospective teachers’ use of teaching skills, macro and micro, to teach preparatory school pupils in EFL classrooms. The terms pedagogical skills and teaching skills are used interchangeably in this study.

#### Literature Review

##### **Teaching practicum course as an essential part of teacher education programs**

Teaching practicum course is a college - supervised instructional experience; the clinical course of a graduate school program, which usually leads to a university or college degree or teacher education certification. It is, according to Merç (2015); Vo, Pang, and Lee (2018), a clinical component of teacher education programs. The primary goal of teaching practical course experience is to provide prospective teachers with careful psychological experience to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to positively impact students’ learning and development. The teaching training course is an opportunity to fully engage in the daily life of a primary, prep or secondary school. EFL prospective teachers need to learn the principles and practices that develop productive teaching and learning relationships with students.

##### **Aim and/or objectives of EFL teaching practicum**

EFL teaching practicum course aims to develop EFL prospective teachers’ knowledge, skills and attitudes toward EFL teaching and learning.

By the end of teaching practicum, EFL prospective teachers will be able to:



- Plan and prepare their lessons effectively.
- Prepare and use various instructional aids and learning resources.
- Present the various English language skills and aspects appropriately and effectively.
- Communicate using the various modes: receptive, expressive and interactive.
- Recognize the English curriculum of primary, preparatory and secondary school students
- Make use of the recent trends and up-to-date strategies in teaching.
- Manage time in an effective manner.
- Develop several assessment classroom techniques.
- Adopt professional behaviors and discard non-professional ones.
- Evaluate pupils' and / or students' learning.
- Develop high teaching self-efficacy.

Online transformational learning

Safe and Inviting Environment

Professors can create a safe and welcoming environment by exploring students' contributions and ideas, monitoring students' reactions and emotions, establishing the quality of collaboration, mediating with peers, and mediating when conflicts arise. (Blackburn Miller, 2020; Larrivee, 2000; Pisters, Vihinen, & Figueiredo, 2019; Sucylaite, 2012; White & Nitkin, 2014). If there is a twisted discussion in the internet class, teachers can build mutual trust among students by organizing small and consistent groups and providing facilities to maximize their contribution. Regular online communication between students forms the basis of a support class community.

Such conversations are critical to the success of the alternative attribute because it facilitates students' collaboration and tolerates ambiguity and variability (Cranton, 2006). The online environment is ideal for this process as there is no time or space for web courses. Integrated or asynchronous student discussions can help build confidence in online classes. (Comeaux, 2005). In addition, many

students appreciate participation in computer-mediated communication than direct instruction (Olaniran, 2005). Online forums allow students to think freely, which is especially important for those at high risk of leaving the classroom due to their gender or personality style (Bender, 2003). Students become more engaging and interactive by giving them the opportunity to interact with peers and responding to others' thoughts on a given situation (Mayors, 2008).

#### Online adaptations

Effective online instruction often encourages students to become self-directed learners, set learning goals, lead discussions, share resources, collaborate with others, develop knowledge and places importance on student decision-making (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004). Many teaching strategies that aimed at student participation and interaction in the online environment are face-to-face adaptations (Granton 2006). For example, Russo (2001) described the effectiveness and value of case studies examination, which increase student engagement and their mutual empathy.

In a similar vein, Conrad and Donaldson (2004) suggested that in web-based courses collaborative analysis of case studies can be done by students using tools such as email, forum boards and chats. Bender (2003) described how asynchronous discussion boards can be used to facilitate student discussions. In this adaptation, one student defends an idea and the second student is an appraiser. Postings allow for continuous expression and provide a written record of the exchange.

#### Strategies for Facilitating Transformative Student Engagement and Learning Opportunities

Some strategies have been identified to facilitate transformational learning, always in a context that critically reflects experience. According to Crantons (2002), there are specific examples of transformational learning strategies, such as activating event creation, student autobiographies, time capsules, metaphorical analysis, and critical self-reflection. To promote critical self-reflection, we need to give students the opportunity to question their assumptions, examine how they think and feel about the consequences of possessing certain beliefs in and out of the classroom (White & Nitkin, 2014).

### Pedagogical skills

Pedagogical skills refer to the teaching or pedagogical skills effective teachers of EFL should have to be able to teach pupils and / or students in the various stages of education. In other words, a teaching or an instructional skill is defined as a set of teacher behaviors which are effective in bringing about desired changes in FL learners (Veer, 2006, 233). Following are some perspectives delineating knowledge in addition to some instructional or teaching skills taxonomies.

### Subject-Matter Knowledge

There are attempts to describe what foreign language prospective teachers need to know regarding their subject-matter. According to Fandiño (2013); Rollnick and Mavhunga (2016), Content knowledge of language teachers consists of three components: (1) Language proficiency, (2) civilization and culture, and (3) language analysis. He argues that language proficiency is important for effective teaching. Teachers should be aware of the culture associated with the language they teach. In addition, they must be prepared to develop students' knowledge and useful use of the cultural content of modern materials, but most importantly, they should help their learners gain self-awareness about others. (Bell, 2005; García, Moser, & Davis-Wiley, 2019).

### Pedagogical content knowledge

Pedagogical content knowledge refers to what teachers know about teaching their particular subject matter. It includes forms of presentation, explanations, illustrations and demonstrations used to make subject matter comprehensible to students (Chen, Housner, & Wayda, 2011). It is important for FL teachers to become able to translate subject matter into instruction that is appropriate to the various levels of ability and the backgrounds brought by students. They should have educational background through studying education, psychology, curriculum, methods of teaching, and educational technology (Dittrich, Shrum, & Stewart, 2001).

### **Planning skills**

It refers to the process that precedes teaching and focuses on what teachers want / expect their students to know, understand, feel, appreciate, and be able to do. At this phase, the teacher should consider what to teach and how to teach it in order to make teaching and learning worthwhile for all (Jantarach & Soontornwipast, 2018). The planning phase includes the following skills:

- (1) Formulating behavioral / instructional objectives.
- (2) Selecting the instructional media that are appropriate to the nature of the lesson.
- (3) Determining the content (what to teach)
- (4) Selecting the teaching methods and strategies (how to teach)
- (5) Selecting the evaluation styles and procedures

Teachers should be clever and adept at the planning skills as good planning results in effective teaching. Also, planning gives teachers confidence and security and prevents problems from arising in the foreign language classroom (Lunsmann & Zhang, 2016).

### **Implementation of pedagogical skills**

It is the process in which teachers actually teach what they have thought of, and planned, to accomplish the goals and / or objectives determined (Dittrich et al., 2001; Rollnick & Mavhunga, 2017). In other words, it focuses on how teachers get their students to reach the goal(s) and / or objective(s). This stage comprises the following skills:

#### **Warm-up**

Warm-up can take place through informing students of the goal(s) and / or objective(s) and what teachers want them to achieve by the end of the class / session. Also, it can take place through general questions on today's lesson and / or providing an introduction of what the class / lesson is about (Dean, Hubbell, Pitler, & Stone, 2012).

#### **Presentation skills**

Having warmed up students, the teacher presents the new lesson /material. Presenting the new material can easily take place through appropriate

methods, strategies and instructional media. Teacher presentation of the new material is complemented by students' practice and production where the teacher acts as a guide, facilitator, and manager (Bosley & Anuyahong, 2018).

### Questioning

It refers to the teacher's use of questions to teach the lesson and stimulate students to interact and communicate in the foreign language (Jiang, 2014). The EFL teacher spends much time asking questions and responding to students' questions. Questions and responses make up two thirds of what happens in the foreign language classroom. Effective teachers use questions not only to teach and check comprehension, but to foster thinking and speed as well (Fukuda, Lander, & Pope, 2020).

### Providing appropriate feedback

Questions and answers in FL classes lead to providing feedback. Feedback means not only correcting students, but also offering them an assessment of how well they have done the task given to them (Harmer, 2001). Effective teachers use feedback once students respond as they believe that it is the respondents' right to recognize whether they are correct or not (Song, Hoon, & Alvin, 2017). The feedback they provide depends not only on the kind of mistake being made (slip, error, and attempt), but also on the type of the activity the students are performing: feedback during oral and written work (Klein, Fukawa-Connelly, & Silverman, 2017).

### **Evaluating students' learning**

Evaluation refers to the process in which the teacher attempts to gather information that can be used to determine if his/her teaching has been successful. It focuses on how the teacher can determine whether students have attained/ achieved the goal(s) and/or objective(s) determined and identified in the planning stage (Dean et al., 2012). Successful teachers implement formative assessment during instruction and aim to improve student and teacher performance while summative evaluation takes place at the conclusion of instruction and aims to make final judgments about students' learning (Harmer, 2001).

### 3-Method and Design

The current study follows an exploratory sequential mixed-method design (Deadley & Tashkori, 2009). The researchers first conducted the quantitative phase of the research, followed by the qualitative one; This allows the researchers to present in detail the assumptions behind each phase. At the qualitative phase of the study, students wrote reflections on their experiences about online transformational learning.

#### 3.1. Participants of the study

The researchers used two types of sampling strategies: probability and non-probability (Morrison, Cohen, & Manion, 2011). The probability strategy was used in the first phase of the study were a random sample of 33 students from the Faculty of Education at Menoufia University. Those students are characterized by certain features that qualify them to be representative of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) community in Egypt. In the 2019/2020 academic year, they all joined as regular EFL prospective teachers practicing their practicum in Menoufia Governorate preparatory schools. In the second stage, the non-probability sampling technique was used when collecting the study qualitative data. The sample consisted of 15 EFL prospective teachers who were purposely selected. Participants in the second phase were selected after agreeing to participate and they were very keen to write their reflective journals.

#### Instruments and materials of the study

##### **Pedagogical skills observation (pedagogical skills) checklist**

###### - Aim of the checklist

The pedagogical skills observation checklist aimed at observing EFL student-teacher's pedagogical skills before and after intervention.

###### - Description of the checklist

A twenty-five-item observation checklist was designed by the researchers to be used in observing EFL prospective teachers' pedagogical skills. The 25 items belonged to 5 dimensions, namely: set induction and warm up, presentation, practice, classroom management and evaluation. All items were rated using a 5-point scale where: Very poor (= 1) Poor, (= 2), Fair (= 3), Good (= 4) and Very good (= 5).

### Validity and Reliability of the checklist

The checklist, in its initial form, was submitted to panel of jurors in the field of curriculum and methods of teaching EFL to determine the appropriateness of the pedagogical skills. The researchers made the required modifications, so the jurors indicated that the checklist was valid. Both the initial and the final forms of the observation checklist are shown in Appendix (A).

To ensure the reliability of the observation checklist, inter – observer reliability was used. The result was (90) percent, thereby reflecting that the observation checklist proved to be highly reliable.

### **The online transformational learning's guide**

An online transformational learning's guide was designed by the researchers to develop EFL prospective teachers' pedagogical skills through teaching practicum.

#### Intended learning outcomes

Upon completion of this online transformative learning guide in teaching practicum, students will be able to:

- articulate students' personal views on effective learning in students' specialization and consider how students' view of learning may affect students' teaching.
- master the different teaching skills.
- use transformational learning strategies.
- consider inclusion of various learning styles.
- maintain enthusiasm for learning among students and the lecturer.
- describe, assess and choose suitable dynamic learning methods for students' educating setting.
- identify the course design rules that would advise students' decision regarding the best way to use transformational learning methods; for different groups of students.
- design transformational learning activities in students' specialization, including creating effective questions, facilitating and prompting the learning activity.

The online transformational learning's guide contains six sections:

A. A lesson planning model

- B. Objectives (Intended learning Outcomes)
- C. Pre-assessment
- D - Online Transformational learning Activities
- E- Post Assessment
- F- Summary /Closure

#### The design of the experiment

Researchers noticed that a wide range of students own personal mobile phones that have a direct access to the internet and that they log in different social accounts repeatedly as a means to entertain and keep up with recent news. Researchers divided students into groups according to the schools they registered in for their practicum training. These groups were guided by their school supervisors, specialized staff members, and the researchers. In addition, when learning communities were created, students were encouraged to introduce themselves through their personal learning accounts. The researchers selected three types of online learning to be combined and used in the research:

#### Synchronous Online Learning.

Synchronous online learning enabled groups of learners to participate in a learning activity from any location at the same time. This included online chats and video conferencing, as these tools allowed both students and instructors to ask and answer questions instantly while being able to communicate with other participants.

#### Asynchronous Online Learning

In this type of online learning, groups of learners studied independently of each other at different times and places without real-time contact. They gave students more flexibility because they allowed them to use self-paced learning, learn individually, and they are expected to achieve their own learning goals.

#### Online Collaborative Learning

In online collaborative learning, there are three stages of knowledge building through group discussion; generating ideas where different thoughts are collected, organizing ideas where participants compare, analyze and classify ideas through discussions and arguments, and finally, the stage of intellectual integration and consensus, including agreeing to disagree, usually through an assignment, reflective tasks, or other joint tasks (Harasim, 2012, p. 82). Learners must work together



and practice teamwork to achieve the common learning goal. This is done through the formation of effective groups, where each individual learner must take into account the strengths and weaknesses of other learners in the same group.

The orientation sessions aimed to prepare the students for the intervention by

a) Explaining the importance of pedagogical skills and b) Identifying what is meant by transformational online learning as a medium of learning and interaction, utilizing all kinds of media and different types of resources.

#### Experimentation

After the orientation sessions, all the stages of the actual implementation took place online. All the groups were connected and able to chat at any time of the day. Chat service provided all the students, supervisors and the researcher with many tools that supported and facilitated communications such as text chatting, audio calls, and video calls. The researchers then appointed the dates of the lessons according to the availability of all the students of each group. The cancellation of colleges and schools gave the students the privilege of being free most of the day. There were rules for the chat determined by the researchers, such as a) No talking in Arabic language, b) No personal data of any kind can be shared, c) No side talks outside the frame of the academic content, and d) All chats and posts were reviewed by the supervisors, staff members and researchers.

Each session was preceded by resources that could be videos, pictures, concept maps, charts, diagrams or whatever necessary to prepare and motivate the students to receive the information. Each session was a combination of different resources that satisfy all types of learners. These resources were either offline or online. a) The aim of offline illustrating resources such as presentations/concept maps/ strategy modeling charts is to introduce new concepts, organize students' thoughts, or to be used to upload important files to the groups. b) Online resources could illustrate videos, educational games, external reading texts and additional recommended websites.

The ministry of education proposed some distance learning system options for the communication between teachers and learners. Among these distant learning options was the "Egyptian Knowledge Bank" website on the internet, which enabled the students to log into various

materials and resources remotely, as part of preventive measures to limit the spread of the Corona virus, after disrupting the study. The Egyptian Ministry of Education revealed the procedures for digital and technological transformation within the steps of developing education in Egypt, by setting curricula and educational content on the Egyptian Knowledge Bank, for all educational levels to help students complete their lessons electronically over the Internet in light of the current crisis of Corona Virus that the world is exposed to. The course went online, where communication tools, asynchronous discussion boards and email were used to improve communication and complete course plans in addition to the main discussion area that used for general discussion related to the overall course content.

#### -Evaluation

Formative evaluation took place through EFL prospective teachers' self and peer evaluation using the Transformational Learning observation checklists prepared by the researchers for that purpose in addition to the conferences that took place in the post Transformational Learning stage. Summative evaluation at the end of the treatment is manifested by the post application of the pedagogical skills observation checklist.

#### The Reflective Journals

In using the reflective journal as data collection method, participants were always provided with a reflection task and required to write everything they thought of while performing the task. To ensure the reflective journals' validity and reliability, the researchers took into account some methodological considerations about written report data collection as suggested by Moon (2006): first, providing participants with guidance and directions to encourage the reflective process rather than explaining the process itself, second, recognizing the participants' individual differences in their thinking and writing; and finally using reliable categories to code the reflective journals, in addition to pairing this method with other data collection methods.

Participants of this activity, (n=15), were exposed to training in how to answer the questions in the reflective journal. Training involved the importance of reflection and how to reflect on their ideas about themselves, their peers, the activities, and their lecturers. The training

session was deemed important to equip EFL prospective teachers with necessary skills, so that they can be willing and comfortable to answer the questions in the reflective journal.

In the training session, the researchers introduced the reflective journal process to EFL prospective teachers both written by modelling the process to them and orally by telling them what they could do if they experience any difficulty. After training, and in the next session, EFL prospective teachers were given the reflective journal. These EFL prospective teachers were allowed to use "whatever language they felt most comfortable using" during their reflective journal writing.

## Results and Discussion

this section encompasses two parts. The first part deals with the study results while the second part deals with the discussion of the findings in relation to the hypotheses of the study.

### 4. Pedagogical skills checklist Results

EFL prospective teachers' scores on the pre-post administrations of both the pedagogical skills observation checklist was analyzed statistically. Relevant data to the hypotheses of the study are provided in this part.

Table (1) t-test results of the study group's mean scores on the overall skills in the pre-post administrations of pedagogical skills checklist

	Pedagogical skills	Administration	N	M	S.D	D F	t	Level of significance	$\eta^2$ ED. Importance
Pedagogical skills	Set induction and warm-up	Pre	33	10.87	1.01	32	66.97	0.05	0.99 Important
		Post	33	17.69	0.94				
	Presentation	Pre	33	20.48	1.62	32	32.65	0.05	0.97 Important
		Post	33	30.94	1.05				
	Practice	Pre	33	23.07	1.54	32	41.36	0.05	0.98 Important
		Post	33	34.61	0.62				
	Classroom	Pre	33	9.06	0.85	32	44.92	0.05	0.98

	Pedagogical skills	Administration	N	M	S.D	D F	t	Level of significance	$\eta^2$ ED. Importance
	Management	Post	33	13.36	0.71				Important
	Closure and Evaluation	Pre	33	8.76	0.62	32	47.43	0.05	0.98
		Post	33	14.09	0.77				
	Overall	Pre	33	72.24	2.92	32	72.35	0.05	0.99
		Post	33	110.69	2.27				

It is evident from table (1) that “t” calculated value (72.35) was higher than tabulated “t” (1.69) with df (32) at the significance level (0.05) of one-tailed test. So, there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study group on the pre- administration (72.24) and post administration (110.69) in favor of the post administration. This showed that the study group students attained remarkably higher scores in the post administration than in the pre- administration of pedagogical skills checklist. Therefore, the development of the study group students’ overall pedagogical skills was due to using transformational learning. Thus, the first hypothesis (with overall and each of the skills independently) was accepted.

It is evident from table (1) that eta square results of pedagogical skills including Set induction and warm-up, Presentation, Practice, Classroom Management and Closure and Evaluation were 0.99, 0.97, 0.98, 0.98, and 0.98 respectively. The eta square result of overall pedagogical skills was 0.99. This reflects that there is educational importance for all the statistical results of pedagogical skills checklist.

#### 4.2 Reflective journals’ results

##### Research findings

Research Question: How far would Transformational Learning help EFL prospective teachers develop their pedagogical skills?

To gauge the effectiveness of online transformative learning in EFL prospective teachers’ practicum, data were gathered using the EFL

prospective teachers' reflective journals. Data analysis revealed that online teaching practicum created a learning context that contributed to enhance EFL prospective teachers' pedagogical skills which play a significant role in influencing EFL prospective teachers' efficacy levels and teaching skills development.

Qualitative data analysis revealed three main themes: pedagogical skills, transformational qualities and emergent difficulties. Additionally, categories emerged from codes to present the multiple perspectives perceived by the participants' opinions that reflect the personal experiences of each participant often differ.

#### First: pedagogical skills

##### Planning

Data analysis highlighted the value of lesson planning skills to make EFL prospective teachers feel secure. For example, EFL prospective teacher 1 stated that:

“Good planning is very important for successful teaching as it assists EFL prospective teachers to teach effectively, as it helps the EFL prospective teacher know exactly what s/he will do and how to do it. Designing associated lesson resources for certain learning objectives is a very crucial point in lesson planning.”

EFL prospective teacher 2 saw lesson planning as “most important” for the EFL prospective teacher because it directed him/her to present and prepare the new material and other difficult aspects. She stated:

“It helps me to think about the lesson before teaching.....I have to think of the problems that may face me.....This gives me confidence in front of the learners.”

##### Preparing lesson resources

EFL prospective teacher 10 said:

“Aids are important as they help us as EFL prospective teacher to clearly present more new vocabulary items or structures, interest the learners, develop their motivation, and help our students understand better and develop positive attitudes towards EFL learning.”

In line with this, two EFL prospective teachers added this part of the teaching practicum session to their reflective journal as a part of their training:

“I have to ask myself the following questions: Which aids are likely to be most effective? Are they varied or attractive enough? Am I making full use of them? Do they make clear the purpose for which they are used? Are they convenient to handle?”

From a different perspective, three EFL prospective teachers reflected about having the chance to design or prepare their lesson resources by themselves. For example, EFL prospective teacher 8 said:

“I feel more confident in my own abilities, I get the opportunity to design slides or printed materials that are suitable to my learners.”

As far as preparing lesson resources is concerned, data analysis revealed that online teaching practicum was effective: it emphasized the relationship between lesson resources and achieving objectives and as a result, this helps finish the assigned syllabus set by the government. Also, preparing lesson resources using modern technology can be an essential tool for constructing students’ knowledge. Student teacher ??? said:

“To teach the content online practicum present the new vocabulary items and structures before teaching the lesson so as to help pupils understand it. With this in mind, in presenting vocabulary, structures and the lesson, EFL prospective teachers should use various methods and techniques.”

#### **Skill of explaining**

As evidence of explaining skills being a focus in the online teaching practicum course, EFL prospective teacher 2 added this documentary evidence to her reflective journal:

“In my group I have planned a 45-minute lesson that include explanations skills and giving examples. Each EFL prospective teacher has a turn to teach a lesson while the others observe me.”

However, one EFL prospective teacher voiced his concern about an important missing point in the explanation process. He said:

“Theoretically, I can tell you everything about explanation. This course helped me to know how to assess the effectiveness of my

explanation in helping students understand and if not, how the explanation process can be modified for better results.”

The above extracts reveal EFL prospective teachers’ awareness of their needs to know the ways by which they can use students’ feedback on their explanation to inform planning. Also, the above extract showed that EFL prospective teachers were keen to change their plans in the light of feedback to suit their students’ needs.

#### Lesson closure

Regarding lesson closure, EFL prospective teacher 3 said:

“The end of a lesson is a good time for students to read, start homework, or chat quietly. While closing, the instructor should summarize, analyze, evaluate and reflect on what he has learned in the lesson.”

When asked about achieving lesson closure, one of the EFL prospective teachers revealed how he practised lesson closure in the sessions:

“In order to close a lesson, I review the main points which have been taught in a brief way. Then, I return to the main question of the lesson for the purpose of checking if the new knowledge is correctly gained.”

Another EFL prospective teacher added to his reflective journal as documentary evidence some examples of closure questions that are used to close the lesson:

“What did we learn from today’s lesson? Another thing EFL prospective teachers can use if they don’t have much time to ask questions, is to ask students to think and write down a word or concept they learned from today’s lesson.”

The above extract reveals that the lesson closure skill was practised in the course and it was only limited to recalling main facts, skills or ideas covered in the lesson. closure also has been used after each section of the lesson such as after listening to a story or finishing some exercises, for the purpose of formative assessment.

#### Subject matter knowledge

The subject matter knowledge category reflects helping EFL prospective teachers to have secure pedagogical knowledge and understanding of ELT and explaining language functions in different contexts.

“The online teaching practicum course helped me to know the latest trends in teaching language. The course was good in focusing on using different materials to warm students up.” (EFL prospective teacher 1)

EFL prospective teachers consider subject matter Knowledge as an important part of their academic knowledge. Without mastery of the target language, the teacher could not help students learn and use it. This was highlighted by a participant who stated:

“The online teaching practicum course helped me to teach language grammar and vocabulary but not oral skills. This will easily help me quickly address the students’ needs and at the same time, I will be able to identify areas of weaknesses in their learning. Being competent in English will enable me to teach language skills appropriately.”

This online course was seen favorably a source of mastery in the target language because of its direct impact on the teacher’s work. For example, one participant said:

"Studying online really helped me spell words correctly. The course was excellent at focusing on using different materials to warm up students and prepare them for the for other activities in the book " (EFL prospective teacher 11)

#### Teaching and management

The teaching and management category reflects making effective use of the materials and equipment available in class and the environment, accomplishing the objectives of the lesson are to ensure that all class hours are used for study within the allotted time.

“online teaching practicum helped me with my time management but not my classroom management as when it came with real students, it was really different.” (EFL prospective teacher 12)

Online teaching practicum course was particularly useful in the time management of the lessons and the amount of content. For example, EFL prospective teacher 10 stated:

“The course helped me manage my time with careful planning. If I do not plan my lesson well, I will lose the time by doing nothing.”

#### Online Learning environment



During the sessions, online teaching practicum helped us share ideas and practice these skills such as set induction, questioning, using aids and lesson closure (prospective teacher 7). Other EFL prospective teachers' commented in their reflective journal convey statements such as "it is a good learning experience", and "the course helped me plan for my practicum".

#### Personal pedagogical development

EFL prospective teachers found online teaching practicum course effective in developing their personal pedagogical skills. The personal pedagogical development category reflects involvement in collaborative planning, evaluating advice and feedback, and staying up to date with educational and critical thinking to enhance students' achievement. Teaching practicum assisted them to benefit from feedback given by my supervisor. EFL prospective teacher 7 said:

"I asked my peers to watch my lesson during online practicum with the supervisor because the class teacher did not attend with me. After the lessons, I get their feedback about my method of teaching, what I need to change, what they like and what they do not like, so I can change it next time."

Feedback from supervisors was referred to by another participant in his reflective journal:

"With my supervisors, whatever their advice for me, I try to discuss it with them politely. The problem is the supervisors' opinions are in many situations different from our EFL prospective teachers' one. For example, we learnt in the teaching practicum course lesson planning steps and when we used them in practicum, the supervisors asked us to change it saying that we have to use the teachers' guide steps."

Another EFL prospective teacher revealed how the teaching practicum course was effective in enhancing their pedagogical development. EFL prospective teacher 3 said:

"It was the first time to work in groups and know the importance of feedback. Peer feedback is highly important as because we teach English as a foreign language and if I am a good teacher I should listen to the opinions of other colleagues for my academic development".

Peer feedback

Feedback is a valuable component in the teaching practicum course as it gives EFL prospective teachers information about their efforts to improve a particular teaching skill. In this regard, EFL prospective teacher 1 said:

“The sources of feedback in the teaching practicum situation in the present course are: video recording of the lesson; the EFL prospective teacher himself/herself, then, fellow peers and finally the EFL prospective teacher.”

One of the difficulties related to the critique phase is the way EFL prospective teachers used to give feedback to their peers. Their feedback was general and they started with the negative critique not the positive. For example, EFL prospective teacher 4 clarified that since the feedback EFL prospective teachers provide to other teachers is crucial to their learning to improve their teaching, she drew their attention to some important points to bear in mind during each teacher's presentation. For example, she said:

“I advised my EFL prospective teachers to be focused and not be too general. Thus, instead of saying to the EFL prospective teacher that he was not clear in his explanations, we have to tell him exactly where he was not clear and describe why we had trouble understanding him. The best way to give feedback is to identify a small number of things the person did effectively in addition to a few things on which he or she can improve, so, think about what is best to focus on for each EFL prospective teacher.”

Another problem is the wording used in the feedback by EFL prospective teachers to their peers. EFL prospective teacher 7 said:

“What we want is that the EFL prospective teacher can benefit from peer feedback. In this respect, they have to be careful with the words they use when giving feedback to their peers. Words such as ‘weak’, ‘poor’ can cause breakdown in the communication process inside the teaching practicum classroom. Even positive words such as ‘excellent’ and ‘very good’ need to be used carefully followed by the reasons for giving that feedback.”

EFL prospective teachers want some devices to guide their way when they give and receive feedback. In this respect, EFL prospective teacher

I said:

“I find it so difficult to begin my critique on a blank paper. I was confused from where to start. I believe feedback is useful, but it was not perfectly used as we have not been used to such a thing in our education in Egypt.”

Another psychological factor that seemed to affect peer feedback was EFL prospective teachers' fear of failure before their peers. For example, EFL prospective teacher 13 said:

“At the beginning of the course, fearing to fail before my peers was annoying me and made me hesitate about the idea of giving feedback or being criticised by my peer. However, I cannot ignore its usefulness to improve my teaching.”

#### Videotaping

The video-taping category reflects watching a recorded video of a lesson presented by an EFL prospective teacher to identify points of strength and weakness.

“A digital camera was used to videotape the lesson in the current teaching practicum course because a fixed one was not available.”

When asked about video usage, EFL prospective teacher 1 said:

“Having prepared and presented the lesson on the teaching skill concerned, the video was viewed to identify points of strength and areas that need improvement. Then, the EFL prospective teachers received feedback from peers and from the EFL prospective teacher.

When asked about planning for the videotape viewing procedures, EFL prospective teacher 4 said that she did not do any planning for viewing videos with EFL prospective teachers. She commented:

“Honestly, there is no planning for that. It is up to each EFL prospective teacher and how he manages his sessions. Also, no printed guidelines or checklists were used in teaching practicum sessions. The EFL prospective teachers wrote their comments on a blank piece of paper.”

When asked about their feeling towards video, EFL prospective teachers clarified that they felt at ease being video-taped. Some of them preferred to watch the video by themselves, with slightly more females than males saying this, although a significant number, all of the males, preferred to

watch it with the EFL prospective teacher and the peer group, which was also seen as desirable by the EFL prospective teachers. For example, EFL prospective teacher 9 said:

“I prefer to watch my video alone or with my female friends. I feel very shy when males see me in the video.”

The need for pre-course training was also voiced by many EFL prospective teachers, for example, EFL prospective teacher 4 said:

“I wish I had been prepared for video watching or video critique before the course began. Maybe two or three sessions to introduce this new technique would help us to understand what will happen in the course. I feel it is really important but not used well. Honestly, I was not prepared whether mentally or emotionally for ‘video’ in the teaching course.”

Some appeared to gain a view of themselves as a teacher. EFL prospective teachers commented that it was really effective to see themselves teach especially for them as EFL teachers as this helps them review their language usage, gain insights into their classroom performance, and become more self-conscious to their EFL production. For example, EFL prospective teacher 12 said:

“Video helped me to see things that I did not notice before while presenting the lesson, such as when I repeat OK, OK after each sentence. I tried to lessen my usage of this word.”

In the same context, EFL prospective teacher 14 said:

“Watching the video tape benefitted me a lot to improve my performance; however, I found the feedback given to me by my peers too general and not related to the skills we practice. I think if we had been given forms to fill in, it would be more concentrated.”

The above extract reveals how EFL prospective teachers rated the videotaping as effective but requiring more EFL prospective teachers’ guidance to obtain usable feedback.

Furthermore, the current study findings emphasized that Transformational Learning can be extremely beneficial and professionally rewarding. It gives co-teachers equal opportunities in the co-taught classrooms recommending that teacher educators should train EFL prospective teachers to collaborate, not isolate, in their teaching.

## 5.2. Conclusions

Based on the current study findings, the following conclusions could be made:

- Online Transformational Learning is one of the strategies used to refine the teaching practicum course experience and can be used as a complement to other strategies.
- Online Transformational Learning helps EFL teachers become responsible for planning, teaching and evaluating their pupils and/or students.
- Providing modeling and appropriate feedback to EFL prospective teachers helped them develop pedagogical skills effectively.

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