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Research Article

EFL Student Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in Online Classroom Management: A Focus on Vocabulary Instruction

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Abstract

The study investigated (a) pre-service teachers' strategy use in managing online classes of young learners in terms of six categories of time, interaction, assessment, behavior, instruction, and content; (b) the extent to which their practice matched their beliefs; and (c) their strengths and weaknesses in online classroom management. To collect the required data, the teaching practices of 26 pre-service teachers, 19 females and 7 males, who were MA students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language at Iran University of Science and Technology were observed and then rated according to 40 strategies defined in a rating scale. The participants were also asked to rate their own online teaching, and then their scores were compared with those of the observers. They also answered three interview questions on their strategy use, strengths, and weaknesses in managing their class in the Adobe Connect. The results of this mixed methods research revealed that student teachers used time management strategies more than the other strategies in their practice and that the majority of them overrated their strategy use. The results also indicated that their strengths in using the components of classroom management could be hierarchically ranked as time, interaction, content, instruction, behavior, and assessment.

***Keywords*:** teacher belief, practice, online classroom management, teaching vocabulary, young learners

Introduction

The popularity of online and blended learning, as noted by Salmon (2011), is growing exponentially in the last few years. With the outbreak of the COVID-19, this popularity has ever increased and both young and adult learners have placed more demands on online learning. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is gradually fading away, many Iranian educational centers,

including schools and universities hold classes online from time to time because of air pollution and extreme weather conditions. Therefore, teachers need to be well-prepared and competent enough to manage teaching in online classes. To respond to these demands, both in-service and pre-service teachers are required to acquire adequate knowledge on online pedagogical theories (Chikasanda et al., 2013). Since pre-service teachers, as defined by Lourenço and Raquel Simões (2021), have no qualifications for teaching and tend to enroll in a higher teacher education program, such pedagogical theories are essential to be included in their curriculum at the university. In the context of the current study, MA students of TEFL are considered pre-service teachers as the purpose of offering them the study program is preparing them for teaching English at Iranian schools. In fact, they are student teachers who play the role of future language teachers. One way of helping such teachers to acquire online pedagogical knowledge is through attending online professional development programs in which teachers can receive the required instruction, have immediate interaction with teacher educators and colleagues, and have instant access to academic sources (Shaha & Ellsworth, 2013).

Hampel and Stickler (2005) argue that despite positive attitudes toward online language teaching and the availability of useful materials, teachers do not receive adequate instruction on how to broaden their teaching skills. It is indeed crucial to define a framework to allow pre-service language teachers to sharpen their skills and improve their knowledge in online teaching. As noted by Baran et al. (2014), teachers are required to rebuild and review their beliefs and conceptions about online teaching when shifting from face-to-face (F2F) classes to online ones. In order to stay fresh and avoid burnout, teachers should constantly reshape their knowledge of teaching and learning and reflect on their knowledge about language teaching throughout their careers (Farrell, 2012). Shin and Crandall (2014) consider participating in online or F2F reflective teaching groups and observing classes of own and others as activities for effective professional development. In a case study conducted by Farrell and Bennis (2013), the observed practices and stated beleifs of expereinced and novince teachers were investigated. A relationship was found between the experienced teachers' beliefs and practices; however, such a relationship was not found in the practice of the novice teachers.

Having considered teachers' professional development an ongoing reflective learning process, Lindberg and Olofsson (2010) argue that critical feedback and supports from colleagues are necessary to develop the profession. According to Shin and Crandall (2014), there are three approaches to professional development, which are theory-to-practice, coaching or

mentoring, and reflective approaches. This study mainly focused on the reflective approach, which is defined by Farrell (2007) as an approach when teachers directly research, reflect upon, and analyze their own work. Wang (2002) argues that the reflection and belief of pre-service teachers play a crucial role in building their future practice and technology incorporation. According to Wolff et al. (2016), teachers' belief and cognition affect the quality of online classroom management. Many studies (Omoteso & Semudara, 2011; Stronge et al., 2007; Freiberg et al., 1995) have also found that students' achievement has a direct relationship with the teachers' level of classroom management competency.

Martin et al. (2019) maintain that online teachers play a wide range of roles, namely a designer, a manager, a mentor, and a facilitator. Francis and Oluwatoyin (2019) define classroom management as teachers' ability to deliver the instruction to reach the ultimate goal, which includes the attempts teachers make to organize learners, monitor their behavior, organize their activities, follow an effective learning process, emphasize communication, receive feedback from students, use the course content to facilitate learning process, evaluate the outcome of learning, and make sure that learners' problems are solved. Bastedo and Vargas (2014) also argue that assessment, guiding learners, and group work management are the components of online classroom management. According to Wolff et al. (2017), maximizing learning is the primary purpose, while minimizing misconduct is the secondary purpose of classroom management. They also describe the elements of classroom management as the multifarious activities that a teacher does to facilitate, create, and support learning. To manage a class effectively, Wolff et al. (2016) argue that teachers should observe and analyze the pertinent events, perceive the events, evaluate the progress of events, and eventually choose the best pedagogical option. They further argue that teachers' perceptions of events directly influence the quality of managing a class.

According to Martin et al. (2019), content management, grading, learner encouragement and assignment collection are perceived to be the components of classroom management. Planning procedures, organization, and administration are also identified as the tasks required for online teachers for managing the class (Berge, 1995). It is also argued that classroom management consists of increasing interaction, conducting needs analysis, noticing learners' progress, encouraging positive behavior, and relieving anxiety (Good & Brophy, 2000; Ritter & Hancock, 2007). According to Genc and Aydin (2017), time, interaction, behavior, and teaching are the components of classroom management.

Shepperd and McNulty (2002) argue that time management is the predictor of student achievement, while poor time management is the reason why most students quit a course. Given the strategies for effective time management, Shi et al. (2006) suggest concise and clear writing of course contents, organizing the materials in an easy order, being mindful of asynchronous discussions, and employing technological tools available on online teaching platforms. Regarding the significance of interaction management, Hillman et al. (1994) state that a high level of interaction can boost students' attitude, achievement, and motivation. They also consider the intervention of technology as a practical medium to allow learners to communicate with course contents and other participants. Dawley (2007) consider interaction and feedback two important factors to deliver a successful online teaching. Bastedo and Vargas (2014) define five types of interaction: learner to teacher, learner to learner, learner to environment, learner to tools, and learner to content. Regarding the skills needed for effective online interaction, Barker (2002) highlights participating in asynchronous conferences, employing e-mail, using chatrooms, fostering word processing skills, authoring web pages, and taking advantage of technological tools.

Bastedo and Vargas (2014) consider assessment the requirement of online classroom management and highlight the necessity of improving novice teachers' knowledge of various types of strategies and theories on online language assessment. Having considered beliefs and assessment practices of teachers of young learners, Nikolov and Timpe-Laughlin (2021) highlight areas, such as game-based assessments, technology-mediated assessment, and designing age-appropriate tasks. They further state that classroom observation is a useful strategy to assess young learners; however, teacher educators do not often take this method into consideration, emphasizing their roles in conducting research on the practices of teachers' classroom assessment. Nunan (2011) recognizes assessment as one of the challenges of teaching to young learners. Although the integration of assessment is an indispensable part of learning, Snae and Brueckner (2008) argue that in case young learners receive negative outcomes, they probably become discouraged to continue learning. They represent a multimedia-enhanced learning environment with an online assessment part and assert that young learners' assessment of vocabulary learning can be developed by online quizzes and tests. Online quizzes are employed as a tool of e-assessment which, as noted by Cohen and Sasson (2016), is a web-based assessment. E-assessment helps teachers provide rapid feedback on students' learning procedure and reduce their workload on assessment (Whitelock,

2009). Bailey (2008) states that the graphic features technology offers can provide a friendly context for assessment, which makes testing enjoyable for young learners through familiar cartoons or games.

One of the main domains of research in classroom management is the behavioral approach. However, Garton and Copland (2019) note that researchers have paid scant attention to behavior management of young learners. Behavior management, according to Oral (2012), includes a number of tasks, such as teachers' management of their own and learners' activities, using appropriate methods against unfavorable behavior, fostering effective interaction opportunities, and enhancing interaction between learners and carrying it on. Martin et al. (1998) highlight providing a reward, establishing opportunities for student talk and introducing rules as the elements of behavior management. Considering online students' misbehavior, Kelly and Gaytan (2019) note that students become anxious because of vague explanations both about the content and teachers' behavior during the class. According to Barbetta et al. (2005), the purpose of misbehavior is twofold: to gain something (e.g., attention) and to keep away from something (e.g., homework). They also suggest the following strategies for managing misbehavior: Scheduling for transition time, taking wise ignoring into account, being mindful about the principles of breaks, possessing explicit expectations, involving other individuals such as parents in the management process, and treating learners' misbehavior professionally.

According to Gunawan (2017), managing instruction includes the process of using all resources available to achieve the objectives of learning. However, as found by Dashtestani (2014), lack of interaction, online resources and facilities, teachers' knowledge of managing online classes are some of the reasons why implementing online EFL instruction is challenging in the Iranian context. Yasin and Mustafa (2020) assert that the emphasis of any type of EFL instruction is on learning process according to which the entire plan of learning resource manipulation should be tailored. Garton and Copland (2019) list timing and seating, grouping, sequencing, setting up activities, monitoring, and providing instructions as some of the components of second language instructional management process.

In an online learning environment, the organization of contents is of great importance. What can keep learners motivated is the correct choice of content to which learners can relate (Nunan, 2011). Wolff et al. (2017) acknowledge that successful teaching and learning are entangled with both content and pedagogical procedures by which content is presented. It is also argued that instructors need to improve their technological literacy in order to create and design course materials (Bennet et al., 2008: Selwyn, 2009). In a

study conducted by Salehizadeh et al. (2020), teachers considered technological pedagogical competence more important than native-like command of English. However as noted by Moser et al. (2021), shifting from traditional content to online methods of teaching during the pandemic requires distinct approaches. Azizi (2022) compared the quality of F2F classes and that of online classes during the pandemic in Iranian context. The results indicated that online classes could not have the same quality and standards of F2F ones. The main reason behind this conclusion was the lack of instructors' knowledge of managing online classes. To manage online classes, Cross and Polk (2018) emphasize automation of activities, such as uploading video files, assignments, worksheets, and other curriculum content in a planned delivery. Cross and Polk also state that most learning management systems are equipped with such features, enabling online teachers to save a substantial amount of time by implementing automation.

To manage instruction of young learners, Linse and Nunan (2005) emphasize teachers' awareness of young learners' basic psychological and physical needs and emphasize their important role of care and instruction provider. According to Nunan (2011), possessing a short attention span, possessing natural curiosity, avoiding abstract concepts, and being sensitive are characteristics of young learners when attending a course. When it comes to preparing content for young learners' vocabulary learning, the matter of age is always a priority. Garton and Copland (2019) argue that when selecting vocabulary items to teach young learners, age consideration associated with learners' cognitive development is of great importance. In the same vein, Chujo and Nishigaki (2005) highlight the necessity of selecting the lexical items that are in line with students' level and age. Apart from age-appropriateness, Nation (2013) suggests employing visual items, objects, physical actions, and word cards for promoting learners' understanding and memorization process.

It is argued that young learners absorb lexical items through activities that are fun and engaging and this process is improved by combining words with actions (Albaladejo et al., 2018). Cameron (2001) highlights the use of songs and storytelling as two important tools of teaching vocabulary to young learners. As stated by Elgort and Nation (2010), direct techniques such as absorbing new words from a vocabulary notebook, word cards, and word lists are practical methods of learning vocabulary. Similarly, Garton and Copland (2019) argue that by using word cards learners can absorb more vocabulary items at a faster pace. Spiri (2008) found that the use of digital flashcard tool called Word Champs was more useful for language learners than the printed

version. Lewis (2004) lists e-cards, e-groups, podcasts, e-mails, weblogs, and online downloadable materials as some of the technological tools that can be implemented in online classes of young learners.

Marzano (2003) considers classroom management a big challenge of novice teachers. Some studies (Baker et al., 2016; Chesley & Jordan, 2012) have stated that novice teachers of adults and young learners are not prepared to use practical classroom management strategies. Regarding the importance of practical classroom management for teachers of young learners, Nunan (2011) emphasizes teaching the strategies of classroom management to teachers of young learners to promote children's interaction and engagement in the class. According to Garton and Copland (2019), the lack of theoretical approaches to teachers' practice of classroom management shows that teachers may not have received adequate psychological and educational methods on the matter during their pre-service education. To achieve this, student teachers are required to gain effective knowledge on online classroom management principles and components and how to implement them in online classes.

A number of studies (Wolff et al., 2015; Wolff et al., 2016; Weber et al., 2018; Prilop et al., 2021) have been conducted on online classroom management. However, given the significance of educating pre-service teachers for managing online teaching, it seems there is no study investigating EFL pre-service teachers' strategy use for managing online classes of teaching vocabulary and the extent to which their beliefs about classroom management matched their practice. This study thus explored the strategies used by EFL pre-service teachers for managing online classes of young learners, determined the extent to which their beliefs matched their strategy use of managing online classes, and identified their weaknesses and strengths in using strategies of classroom management. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What strategies are used by student teachers for managing online classes?

2. To what extent do rating scores on classroom management strategy use given by the student teachers match those of observers?

3. In which component of classroom management do student teachers perform well and where do they need more practice? Is there consistency between their views and their actual practices?

Method

This study employed a mixed methods design which, as noted by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), is the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to collecting and analyzing. More specifically, it drew on explanatory sequential design in which the quantitative data collection was followed by the qualitative ones. In addition, the integration occurred between quantitative and qualitative data analysis. In other words, combinations of instruments, including interviews, observations, and rating scale were used for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, demonstrating the application of triangulation (Cohen et al., 2018).

Participants

The participants were 26 MA students of TEFL at IUST whose courses were all held online in the Adobe Connect due to the pandemic. They were 19 female and 7 male students with the age range of 23 to 37 years, who were chosen based on convenience or opportunity sampling. They completed the teaching methodology course during which they learnt about the theoretical aspects and methods, including GTM, Audiolingualism, designer methods, CLT, Post-method as well as principles and theories of online teaching. One part of their final score for the course was devoted to a 15-minute vocabulary teaching demo to their classmates who took the role of young learners aged 6-9 in the Adobe Connect Software. The researchers also participated in this study as observers.

Instruments

The data collection instruments included a rating scale for observing the online teaching and a semi-structured interview with three questions. The observation was quantitative, systematic, and highly structured. In other words, the observers knew in advance what they were going to look for and had the observation categories pre-ordinated, helping them generate numerical data. Moreover, non-participant observation was conducted by the observers. The focus of the observation was to determine the strategies used by the student teachers for managing the online classes. The observation took place in one single event (i.e., one teaching practice) and teaching practices of 26 student teachers were observed. The observation was based on a rating scale, consisting of six categories of online classroom management (i.e., time, interaction, assessment, behavior, instruction, and content) defined in 40 strategies. To compare the classroom management of student teachers with their own belief, they were also asked to observe their own practice and rate

it using the rating scale. It is worth noting that the classes were video-recorded and later rated by the student teachers themselves.

An interview was also used to gain more insight into student teachers' online classroom management strategy use. The interview was classified as semi-structured, since the questions were open-ended and the wording of each question was adjusted to each interviewee and the responses given. In addition, prompts, such as rephrasing, clarification, guidance, and repetition were also provided to each interviewee. The interview questions were about the strategies they used in their teaching practice and their views of their strengths and weaknesses in each category of classroom management.

Procedure

The main principles for ethical procedures included respecting the participants' autonomy through informed consent, minimization of harm, and protecting their privacy through addressing confidentiality and anonymity. Before conducting their teaching practice, the student teachers were taught about the principles of online teaching as well as using technologies such as online games, quizzes, and websites for teaching English to young learners. Two sessions were also allocated to familiarizing them with the features of Adobe Connect for their practice. For rating their teaching practice, a rating scale with six categories of online classroom management defined in 40 strategies was designed after reviewing the literature by the researchers. The scale was a four-point one in terms of 0 = Not at all, 1 = Weak, 2 = Moderate, and 3 = Good. The researchers tried to make theme-based strategies and included the categories representing a range of strategies used for managing online classes. The categories included time (five strategies), interaction (seven strategies), assessment (five strategies), behavior (five strategies), instruction (thirteen strategies), and content (five strategies). Some of the strategies in the scale were added from the literature on online teaching vocabulary to young learners, while most of the strategies were suggested by the researchers. The validity attributed to the rating scale and interview questions was of expert and content validity in which two experts holding PhD in TEFL reviewed the draft checklist and questions based on the existing literature on the categories of online classroom management. The clarity and accuracy of items were checked and found relevant to be implemented during the research process. The draft checklist was then revised according to the experts' feedback. To rate each student teacher's performance, two raters observed each performance. To enhance consistency and to interpret each performance the same way, the two raters had discussion about the best

approach to interpreting each observation. To calculate inter-rater reliability, Cohen's Kappa statistics were then used. The result of this analysis was .92.

In addition to the researchers' observation, the students themselves observed their own practice. Their video practices were cut by Avidemux software and the format of the recordings was also changed into MP4 by Xmedia Recode Software so that all students could watch their own practice easily. After that, the first researcher made a phone call with all participants to receive their oral consent and to explain the procedure of their contribution. She also sent a voice message to each participant through WhatsApp, explaining the procedure of the research and what they were expected to do. Once they became aware of the whole procedure, their video practice file as well as the rating scale in the Word format were sent to them via WhatsApp. They were given a ten-day deadline to watch their own practice and rate it according to the strategies defined in the rating scale. Having completed the rating scales, the second researcher set a time for an online interview with each student teacher.

The online interviews were mostly conducted on WhatsApp, and the interviewees were asked to either choose a voice call or a video call. Most of them chose to have a voice call except for three students who preferred to make a video call. The interview was according to the codes of ethics. In other words, the interviewees were fully aware of the procedure. To elicit the honest and authentic answers, the interviewer used various types of probes, such as elaboration, clarification, and detailed oriented probe. The interviewer established a good rapport with each of the interviewees and guaranteed the confidentiality of their responses. They were also provided with the result of their practice as a reward for their cooperation. During the interview, the researcher recorded the conversation with an audio recorder with the permission of the respondents. The data obtained from the interviews were then transcribed and used for theme-based analysis, and the researchers tried to use the interviewees' own words as much as possible. The researchers already rated the participants' classroom management strategy use based on the strategies listed in the scale and identified each student's strong and weak points. They then compared their ratings with the participants' interview responses to their weak and strong points. This comparison provided the researchers with the participants' matched and mismatched responses to their practice.

Data Analysis

To investigate the strategies used for managing classes, the percentages and medians of the strategies were computed. The descriptive statistics and correlational analysis of all six categories of classroom management were also calculated. In addition, theme-based analysis was conducted to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the interview questions. In other words, thematic analysis, the process of identifying patterns in the qualitative data, was used and the raters followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework (i.e., becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing up) for analyzing the qualitative data. In addition, the raters used apriori codes, which were the names of the categories of the scale drawn from the literature. Frequencies and percentages for student teachers' strong and weak points in the categories of online classroom management were calculated. The data obtained from both the observers' and the student teachers' ratings were also compared to determine the extent to which the student teachers' practice matched their belief about online classroom management. After that, the frequencies and percentages of the match and non-match on the strengths and weaknesses in classroom management were computed.

Results

Student Teachers' Strategy Use for Managing Online Teaching Practice

The researchers rated student teacher's classroom management. Their strategy use in terms of the categories of classroom management (i.e., time, interaction, assessment, behavior, content and instruction) is provided in Tables 1 to 7.

Table 1

Student Teachers' Time Management Strategy Use

Strategies	Not at all	Weak	Moderate	Good	Median
1. Allocating equal amount of time to each section of teaching new words, such as pre-teaching, teaching, and practicing	-	3.8	46.2	50	2.5
2. Solving technological glitches to avoid wasting time during the class	3.8	30.8	30.8	34.6	2

3. Preparing course materials and uploading them earlier to the online class	-	-	3.8	96.2	3
4. Starting and ending the class at certain time	-	3.8	26.9	69.2	3
5.Focusing on the most important activities	-	3.8	30.8	65.4	3

As shown in Table 1, considering the good option, the highest percentage (96.2%) was received by the strategy of preparing course materials and uploading them earlier to online class, while the lowest one (34.6%) was gained by the strategy of solving technological glitches to avoid wasting time. With regard to the moderate option, the strategy of allocating equal amount of time to each section of teaching new words received the highest percentage (46.2%). In addition, the lowest median (Median = 2) was related to the strategy of solving technological problems, while the highest one (Median = 3) was obtained by preparing and uploading materials in advance, starting and ending the class at a definite time, and concentrating on important subjects, indicating that the majority of the participants were good at adopting these strategies to manage the time effectively.

The first interview question investigated the strategies the student teachers used to manage time in their teaching. Their responses along with the frequency of their answers in parentheses are presented as follows: Preparing a physical lesson plan in advance (n = 19), reviewing and practicing the materials in advance (n = 6), having a lesson plan in mind (n = 6), checking the time during the class (n = 4), using a timer (n = 2), prioritizing each section in terms of its necessity (n = 2), uploading files earlier to the class and getting familiar with all technological features (n = 2), introducing certain rules to avoid wasting time (n = 1), defining short tasks in the lesson plan (n = 1), and merging two related tasks (n = 1). Student teachers' strategy use for managing interaction in their practice is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Student Teachers' Communication Management Strategy Use

Strategies	Not at all	Weak	Moderate	Good	Median
1. Forming a friendly relationship with students	-	3.8	23.1	73.1	3
2. Taking advantage of technological features, such as webcam, microphone, chat box or white-board available in Adobe Connect to facilitate students' engagement and involvement	3.8	30.8	30.8	34.6	2
3. Providing students with feedback on their vocabulary learning when necessary	7.7	7.7	34.6	50	2.5
4. Showing reaction to learners' ideas and comments	-	3.8	34.6	61.5	3
5. Encouraging learners to discuss the meaning of new words	19.2	30.8	26.9	23.1	1.5
6. Noticing students' mistakes	7.7	11.5	53.8	26.9	2
7. Engaging silent students with vocabulary learning	15.4	19.2	11.5	53.8	3

As indicated in Table 2, the highest percentage for the good option (73.1%) was obtained by the strategy of forming a friendly relationship with students, whereas the lowest percentage (23.1%) for the option of 'not at all' was gained by the strategy of encouraging learners to discuss the new words. Table 2 also shows that the strategies of forming a friendly relationship, showing reaction to learners' ideas, and engaging silent students received the highest median (Median = 3). However, they did not opine that the learner encouragement could be an important strategy to increase the interaction among the students (Median = 1.5). The participants were also asked to state the strategies they used to promote online interaction among students: Their responses were as follows: Calling the names of silent students (*n* = 8), using webcam (*n* = 7), giving access to microphone (*n* = 6), having a high level of energy (n = 5), dividing students into small groups (*n* = 4), providing a friendly atmosphere (*n* = 4), asking students to turn on their webcam (*n* = 4), motivating students to participate in the class (*n* = 3), providing rewards (e.g. using stickers) for class participation (*n* = 3), using games (*n* = 3), using

humor (*n* = 2), using realia (e.g., pets, fruits, clothes, etc.) (*n* = 2), not being harsh and strict (*n* = 2), using social media sites such as WhatsApp or Telegram (*n* = 2), using technologies (e.g., chat box) available on the platform (*n* = 2), reminding students' birthday date (*n* = 1), using peer correction (*n* = 1), wearing colorful clothes (*n* = 1), and using poll pod to elicit students' ideas (*n* = 1). Their views about managing assessment are provided in Table 3.

Table 3

Student Teachers' Assessment Management Strategy Use

Strategies	Not at all	Weak	Moderate	Good	Median
1. Monitoring and assessing learners' progress using online technological tools (e.g., online quizzes such as Quizizz Website)	34.6	23.1	7.7	34.6	1
2. Using formative assessment to guarantee progress	15.4	30.8	42.3	11.5	2
3. Tracking students' development by providing them with online vocabulary games (e.g., Wordwall)	34.6	15.4	11.5	38.5	1.5
4. Assigning grade for cooperation and participation	53.8	19.2	15.4	11.5	0
5. Assessing learners' pronunciation of new words by addressing them either individually or in group	15.4	15.4	19.2	50	2.5

Table 3 indicates that the highest percentage of strategy use (50%) was obtained by the strategy of assessing learners' pronunciation of new words while the lowest percentage (11.5%) was related to the strategy of using formative assessment and assigning grade for cooperation and participation. As also shown in Table 3, the highest median (Median = 2.5) was related to the strategy of assessing learners' pronunciation of new words, while the lowest median (Median = 0) was gained by the strategy of assigning grade for participation. Student teachers were also interviewed to name the strategies they used to manage online learners' assessment. The extracted themes along with their frequencies are as follows: Playing different games to elicit the new words (*n* = 6), using online tools (e.g. Bamboozle) (*n* = 6), making sentences using the new words (*n* = 5), reviewing new vocabulary items (*n* = 4), group/individual pronunciation practice (*n* = 4), giving assignments on the

new words (*n* = 3), using the whiteboard feature on Adobe Connect (*n* = 3), using breakout rooms (*n* = 2), adopting indirect methods of error correction (*n* = 1), and using video songs to review new vocabulary items (*n* = 1). Student teachers' strategy use for managing online behavior is provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Student Teachers' Behavior Management Strategy Use

Statements	Not at all	Weak	Moderate	Good	Median
1. Introducing certain rules throughout teaching	46.2	30.8	7.7	15.4	1
2. Indicating vivid teacher authority	7.7	11.5	46.2	34.6	2
3. Giving positive feedback to praise certain behaviors among students	-	3.8	19.2	76.9	3
4.Adopting non-verbal features or certain reactions, such as capital letters or loud voice to address misbehavior among students	26.9	23.1	23.1	26.9	1.5
5.Encouraging students to show respect to their peers	34.6	19.2	42.3	3.8	1

As indicated in Table 4, the highest percentage (76.9%) of strategy use was related to giving positive feedback to praise certain behavior, whereas the lowest percentage was obtained by encouraging students to show respect to their peers. The strategy of giving positive feedback to praise certain behavior also received the highest median (Median = 3), while the strategies of encouraging learners to show respect to their peers and introducing certain rules throughout teaching received the lowest median (Median = 1). The student teachers were also asked to state the strategies they used in their practice for managing online behavior. Their responses were as follows: Using social media sites to talk about misbehavior (*n* = 8), teaching them class codes (*n* = 8), ignoring misbehavior (*n* = 7), giving rewards for positive behavior (*n* = 5), distracting children with class activities (*n* = 2), allocating negative points for misbehavior (*n* = 2), minimizing students' favorite activity (e.g., games) (*n* = 2), devolving responsibility to noisy students (*n* = 1), providing students with interesting contents (*n* = 1), and writing classroom

rules on a card (n = 1). Their strategy use in managing instruction in their practice is provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Student Teachers' Instructional Management Strategy Use

Strategies	Not at all	Weak	Moderate	Good	Median
1.Considering different learning styles when designing activities	-	19.2	46.2	34.6	2
2.Considering learners' previous knowledge to plan activities based on their level	-	15.4	30.8	53.8	3
3.Simple and clear instruction for activities and assignments	-	11.5	15.4	73.1	3
4.Clear and correct pronunciation of words	-	-	30.8	69.2	3
5.Praising individual accomplishments on remembering and repeating every vocabulary	3.8	11.5	15.4	69.2	3
6.A welcoming tone and teacher's high level of energy and enthusiasm make students more engaged with learning process	-	-	23.1	76.9	3
7. Teaching new words in context	-	3.8	19.2	76.9	3
8. Teaching form and function of each word	3.8	19.2	50	26.9	2
9. Using both direct and indirect teaching	3.8	26.9	30.8	38.5	2
10. Presenting multiple exposure to new vocabulary items	-	15.4	42.3	42.3	2
11. Teaching new words through songs, physical activities, or gestures	3.8	-	19.2	76.9	3
12. Using various games for teaching and practicing new words	11.5	30.8	23.1	34.6	2
13. Giving assignments on new words	19.2	42.3	7.7	30.8	1

As shown in Table 5, the highest percentage (76.9%) was gained by the three strategies of having a high level of energy, teaching new words in context, and teaching new words through songs, physical activities, or gestures; while the lowest percentage (26.9%) was related to teaching form and function of each word. Table 5 also indicates that seven strategies received the highest median (Median = 3), while giving assignments was the

strategy which received the lowest median (Median = 1). Student teachers were also asked to state the strategies they used to manage the instructional procedure in their online teaching practice. Their responses were as follows: Creating an interesting context through telling stories (*n* = 6), using realia to teach new words (*n* = 5), repeating new words in sentences (*n* = 2), sharing the whiteboard with students (*n* = 2), and analyzing new words from several aspects (*n* = 1). Their strategy use in managing content is provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Student Teachers' Content Management Strategy Use

Strategies	Not at all	Weak	Moderate	Good	Median
1.Choosing the difficulty level of words in accordance with the level of students	3.8	3.8	15.4	76.9	3
2.Designing content before the class to avoid rush and confusion plan activities based on their level	-	3.8	3.8	92.3	3
3.Providing picture and visual representation of the words	-	-	-	100	3
4.Considering interesting contents (e.g., using favorite cartoon characteristics) to draw learners' attention to new words	-	3.8	42.3	53.8	3
5. Using technological tools (e.g., online quizzes, applications, or websites) to teach vocabulary	38.5	11.5	19.2	30.8	1.5

As Table 6 shows, the highest percentage (100%) was received by the strategy of providing picture and visual representation of words, while the lowest one (30.8%) was obtained by using technological tools to teach vocabulary. Table 6 also shows that four items received the highest median (Median = 3), which were providing visual items, using interesting contents, considering learners' level, and preparing content before the class. The lowest median (Median = 1.5) was obtained by using technological tools to teach vocabulary. Student teachers were also interviewed about the strategies they used to manage the content, and their responses were as follows: Using online quizzes and games (e.g., Wordwall) (*n* = 6), using online websites such as YouTube to create engaging content (*n* = 4), uploading attractive and high-quality content (*n* = 4), using flashcards (*n* = 3), conducting needs analysis

before creating content (*n* = 3), and using sources other than course books (*n* = 1). The strategies in the scale were classified into six categories. The descriptive statistics and correlational analysis of each category were analyzed. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Correlational Analysis and Descriptive Statistics of Categories of Classroom Management

Categories	1	2	3	4	5	*6*	*M*	*SD*
1.Time	-	.531**	.594**	.533**	.732**	.305	2.53	.37
2. Interaction		-	.704**	.698**	.689**	.365	2.15	.56
3. Assessment			-	.421	.675**	.478	1.46	.68
4. Behavior				-	.491	.214	1.67	.65
5. Instruction					-	.563**	2.31	.42
6. Content						-	2.49	.43
**. $p < .05$ (2-tailed)								

As highlighted in Table 7, the highest mean score (*M* = 2.53) was obtained by time management, while the lowest one (*M* = 1.46) belonged to assessment management. Table 7 also indicates that their responses to the strategies of time management were the most homogeneous (*SD* = .37), whereas those to the strategies of assessment management were the most heterogeneous (*SD* = .68). Their use of categories of classroom management could be hierarchically ranked as time, content, instruction, interaction, behavior, and assessment. Table 7 also indicates that there was a positive, large correlation between the categories of time and behavior (*r* = 732), assessment and interaction (*r* = .704), behavior and interaction (*r* = .698), instruction and time (*r* = .732) except for content management, which mostly showed moderate, positive correlation with other categories. In addition, a small, positive correlation was found between managing behavior and content (*r* = .214).

Observers' and Student Teachers' Ratings of Classroom Management Strategy Use

The teaching practices were rated by both observers and student teachers. The overall score for the rating scale was 120. Given the researches' ratings, the student teachers' lowest score was 69 while the highest one was 100. The most frequent score (*f* = 4) was related to 79. Given student teachers'

ratings of their own management strategy use, their scores ranged from 53 to 112, and the most frequent scores (f = 2) were 83, 84, 87, and 96. The ratings were compared. The results of the descriptive statistics for the categories of overrate, underrate and match are provided in Table 8.

Table 8

Percentages of Overrate, Underrate, and Match on Online Classroom Management

Categories	*F*	*%*	Cumulative %
Underrate	10	38.5	38.5
Overrate	16	61.5	100.0
Match	0	0	0
Total	26	100.0	

As indicated in Table 8, the majority of the student teachers (61.5%) overrated their performance on managing teaching vocabulary to young learners whereas about two-fifths of whom (38.5%) tended to underestimate their strategy use. Table 8 also highlights that no one's score matched that of the observers. Information about their strong and weak points in their classroom management is provided in Table 9.

Student Teachers' Strengths and Weaknesses in Managing Online Classes

To recognize the student teachers' views of their strengths and weaknesses in online classroom management, an online interview was conducted. Their strengths and weaknesses in terms of the categories of classroom management are provided in Tables 9-12.

Table 9

Student Teachers' Strong Points in Categories of Online Classroom Management

Categories	*f*	%	Cumulative %
1. Time	7	26.9	26.9
2. Interaction	7	26.9	53.8
3. Behavior	1	3.8	57.7
4. Instruction	4	15.4	73.1
5. Content	7	26.9	100.0
6. Assessment	0	0	0
Total	26	100.0	

As Table 9 shows, the participants reported their most strengths in the three categories of time, interaction, and content (26.9%). However, no one considered assessment management as their strength. The observers also identified the students' strengths and weaknesses. The descriptive statistics of match and non-match categories about the student teachers' strengths in online classroom management are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Percentages of Match and Non-Match on Student Teachers' Strengths in Classroom Management

Categories	*F*	%	Cumulative %
Not Match	14	53.8	53.8
Match	12	46.2	100.0
Total	26	100.0	

As shown in Table 10, about half of the participants' responses (53.8%) to their strong points in managing online classes mismatched the observers' assessment of their practice. However, two student teachers were accurate in identifying their strong points. Some of their matched and mismatched answers to their strengths are provided below.

Samples of Matched Answers

"Instructional management was my strong point in this practice, because I used a wide range of methods to teach new vocabulary items."

"I was really good at managing the contents. I searched several websites to create ideal contents for teaching new words to young learners and uploaded them earlier to the class to avoid rush."

"In my opinion, instructional management was my strong point, because I tried to follow three steps in my practice, which were pre-teaching, teaching and practicing."

"I know how to treat my students in the best way possible. I would go for interaction management as my strong point in this practice. I could manage to elicit answers from almost all students and called their names at least once during the class."

"I performed really well in almost all categories. However, if I were to choose only one category, I would definitely go for interaction management. I am an energetic person; this characteristic helps me draw learners' attention and engage them in class activities."

Samples of Mismatched Answers

"Content management was where I found most strength in. I tried to use as much interesting contents as possible to draw learners' attention to the subject matter."

"In my teaching demo, I used all the technological features available in Adobe Connect, namely whiteboard, poll pod, break-out rooms to foster instructional skills. Thus, I believe that these tools helped me teach the new words in the perfect way possible."

"Behavior management was my strong point in this practice. My first principle when dealing with young learners is 'friendship'. When we become their friend, not their teacher they stop misbehaving. At least this is what I have realized so far."

"I consider interaction management as my strength. There is a strategy or better called a trick to improve interaction management in young learners' classes. All a teacher needs to do is become friends with only one student. If just one student likes you, the rest will start liking you as well and this is how interaction takes place."

"I choose content management as my strength. I used a thorough PDF file, including all the materials I was going to teach."

Table 11 shows the student teachers' weaknesses in online classroom management.

Table 11

Student Teachers' Weaknesses in Online Classroom Management

Categories	*f*	%	Cumulative %
1. Time	5	19.2	19.2
1. Interaction	3	11.5	30.8
2. Assessment	13	50.0	80.8
3. Behavior	2	7.7	88.5
4. Instruction	1	3.8	92.3
5. Content	2	7.7	100.0
Total	26	100.0	

As indicated in Table 11, the student teachers' weaknesses in managing online classes could be hierarchically ranked as management of assessment, time, interaction, behavior, content, and instruction. Half of the participants showed that they had the greatest weakness in managing assessment. Table 11 also highlights that the least weakness was related to instructional management. Their self-assessed weaknesses in their practice were also compared with the observers' ratings. The descriptive statistics of this comparison in terms of the categories of match and non-match are provided in Table 12.

Table 12

Percentages of Overrate, Underrate and Match of Student Teachers' Weakness in Online Classroom Management

Categories	*f*	*%*	Cumulative %
Not Match	12	46.2	46.2
Match	14	53.8	100.0
Total	26	100.0	

Table 12 shows the extent to which student teachers' perceived weaknesses matched/mismatched their performance. As highlighted in Table 12, self-assessment of 53.8% of the participants matched their practice, while 46.2% of the respondents' ratings mismatched their online practice. In other words, the number of the matched answers was higher than that of the mismatched ones. Some of their matched and mismatched answers about their weaknesses are provided below.

Samples of Matched Answers

"Assessment was definitely my weakness in the teaching practice. There were many reasons behind this. Firstly, I did not even consider that! In fact, I skipped it. Secondly, I could have used online quizzes, websites, as well as online games."

"Unfortunately, I could not manage my time appropriately. That is probably because I wanted to engage all students in the learning process."

"I do not think that I had any weakness in CM categories. However, were I to choose one, I would say interaction. That is because I am an introverted person. It takes time for me to become intimate with my students. I think I should work on my personality."

"Definitely assessment. I did not consider that at all. I thought I would not have had enough time for assessment. Therefore, I spent most of my time on other categories, such as content and instructional management. If I were to do this practice all over again, I would definitely choose a couple of online games and send their links to students before the class. This is both funny and practical."

" I wasted too much time on warm-up activities and also reacted to every comment my students made. We started discussing certain issues then when I looked at my watch, I found that I lost the track of time. I think the best strategy for me is skipping some of my students' comments."

Samples of Mismatched Answers

"Managing time was definitely my weakness. I think I did not prepare a practical lesson plan."

"When I observed my video practice for the second time, I noticed an important weakness. I was really awful at presenting the contents on Adobe Connect. I think the main reason was that I was not familiar enough with the different features of this platform. Although before the practice we had been

taught about them, I still had so many problems with it. That is probably because I am not a tech person."

"I think my main weakness is behavior management. That is because I had never been educated on how to treat young learners."

"Interaction management was my weakness in the teaching demo. I think I need to step out of my comfort zone and start talking with students and reacting to their comments during the online class."

"Assessment was my weakness. In my practice, I did not consider assessment as an important factor and my focus was mainly on teaching the new words in the best way possible."

Discussion

The result of the student teachers' strategies used for managing online classes revealed that time management strategies were the most frequent ones. This might be because they were successful in preparing and practicing the materials related to their teaching and designing an effective lesson plan to allocate adequate time to each section. This finding is in contrast with that of Shi et al. (2006) who found that time management in online classes was a challenging item. The results also revealed that more than half of the participants overestimated their performance. In other words, their belief did not match their practice. This might be due to the fact that student teachers often tend to overestimate their ability and competence. This finding is similar to that of Farrell and Bennis (2013), who found that novice teachers' beliefs had more controversy with their practice compared with more experienced teachers.

The participant student teachers indicated the greatest strengths in managing time and content in their teaching practice. This finding might be due to the time limit already set by the instructor for their demo and students' endeavor to observe the time limitation. As Cross and Polk (2018) argue, setting limits is the key and the best method to manage the time in online classes is sticking to the schedule. Concerning the strength lying in the content management, the availability of downloadable materials on the Internet, the variety of such contents, and the tools available for editing contents according to learners' needs and interests could be the most logical justifications. This result supports that of Salehizadeh et al. (2020) who found that EFL teachers emphasized technological pedagogical competence for online instruction. This result however shows incongruity with that of Cross and Polk (2018) who considered creating online contents cumbersome

because of the ignorance of appropriate strategies and tools as well as the lack of support on behalf of the experts.

Interaction management seems to be challenging when it comes to online teaching. However, around one-fourth of the student teachers indicated strength in managing online interaction due to implementing a number of strategies, such as asking questions, finding learners' interest, showing reaction to their comments, using appropriate and interesting contents, and effective collaboration. This finding is in contrast with that of Wolff et al. (2015) who concluded that novice teachers could not consider the valuable role of a teacher to foster interaction and engagement. Dashtestani (2014) also found that lack of effective interaction creates challenges for implementing online EFL instruction.

Given the student teachers' practice, assessment was identified as the most challenging component. It could be stated that in teaching language to young learners, assessment has always been under question and stakeholders have always been wondering about the best methods of assessment for young learners (Garton & Copland, 2019). Nunan (2011) also recognized assessment as one of the challenges of teachers of young learners. Due to lack of familiarity with various methods of online assessment, some student teachers ignored using them in their teaching practice. This may also be due to ignoring this method by teacher educators in the professional development programs. This finding is in line with that of Nikolov and Timpe-Laughlin (2021) who revealed teacher educators' overlook and lack of information about performing online assessment by EFL teachers.

The analysis of the student teachers' practices also revealed that they rarely showed signs of weakness in the instructional management owning to strategies, principles, and methods related to online teaching which were taught to them in the teaching methodology course prior to their practice. In addition, managing instruction did not seem to be a considerable challenge. This highlights the importance of teacher education programs in offering effective instruction on online teaching. This result is in line with that of Weber et al. (2018), who highlighted the important role of student teachers' improvement of professional vision in developing teachers' performance. Azizi (2022) also emphasized teachers' knowledge of managing online classes for offering effective instruction.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate EFL student teachers' beliefs and practice on online classroom management as well as their strengths and weaknesses in the categories of management, namely time, interaction, assessment, behavior, instruction, and content. It also examined the extent to which student teachers' self-rated scores of online classroom management matched those of the observers. The findings indicated that the student teachers used time management more than the other categories and that the majority of them overrated their strategy use in managing online classes. The results also revealed that they performed well in management of time, interaction, and content and about half of them were accurate in identifying their strengths. Regarding the challenges, assessment was the most challenging component for more than half of the participants, and most of them were able to determine their weakness accurately.

It is highly recommended that student teachers attend the online teacher professional development programs for teaching vocabulary to young learners. They can also benefit from the strategies introduced in the study and apply them in their future practice. To prepare them for effective classroom management, teacher educators can consider their strategy use to provide a balance between their beliefs on managing classrooms and their practice. For example, since student teachers' self-assessed weaknesses and strengths did not match observers' ratings, teacher educators can provide instruction on how to implement the strategies in their teaching. They can also consider student teachers' strengths and weaknesses when designing a syllabus for educating student teachers. For example, given the student teachers' weaknesses, strategies of monitoring students' behavior, evaluating learning outcome and learners' progress, fostering effective communication, providing rapid feedback through online quizzes and tests, providing rewards, and treating learners' misbehavior professionally should be highly emphasized by teacher educators. More specifically, student teachers did not perform well at assigning grades for cooperation and participation as well as using formative assessment. They also had challenges of using strategies of behavior and instruction. Introducing certain rules at the beginning of the instruction and giving assignment on new words were the strategies at which they were weak. To help them meet the challenges, teacher educators can also suggest various strategies, such as using games and online tools to elicit the new words, using online materials on YouTube (e.g., videos and songs), adopting indirect methods of error correction, and benefiting from the features available in Adobe Connect (e.g., whiteboard).

Future researchers could explore the issue of online classroom management by interviewing language teacher educators about their programs for preparing student teachers for managing online classes of young learners. In addition, they can examine more categories of online classroom management, namely organizing students, ensuring an effective learning process, and evaluating the outcome, which were excluded from the rating scale. The impact of training on various components of classroom management on student teachers' teaching practice can also be investigated. For example, student teachers can be asked to observe experienced online teachers' classroom management and then the impact of such observation on their teaching quality can be explored. Considering experienced teachers' online classroom management strategy use may prove an important area for future research.

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Biodata

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باورها و عملکردهای معلم دانشجویان زبان انگلیسی در مدیریت کلاس آنلاین: تمرکز بر آموزش واژگان

این مطالعه (الف) استفاده از استراتژی معلمان قبل از خدمت را در مدیریت کلاس های آنلاین یادگیرندگان جوان از نظر شش دسته زمان، تعامل، ارزیابی، رفتار، آموزش و محتوا بررسی کرد. (ب) میزان تطابق عمل آنها با اعتقاداتشان؛ و (ج) نقاط قوت و ضعف آنها در مدیریت کلاس درس آنلاین. برای جمع‌آوری داده‌های مورد نیاز، شیوه‌های تدریس 26 معلم پیش از خدمت (زن = 19، مرد = 7) که دانشجوی کارشناسی ارشد آموزش زبان انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی در دانشگاه علم و صنعت ایران بودند، مشاهده و بر اساس 40 استراتژی در مقیاس رتبه بندی تعریف شد. همچنین از شرکت کنندگان خواسته شد که به تدریس آنلاین خود امتیاز دهند و سپس نمرات آنها با نمرات ناظران مقایسه شد. آنها همچنین به سه سوال مصاحبه در مورد استفاده از استراتژی، نقاط قوت و ضعف خود در مدیریت کلاس خود در Adobe Connect پاسخ دادند. نتایج حاصل از این تحقیق ترکیبی نشان داد که دانشجو معلمان بیش از سایر راهبردها در عمل خود از راهبردهای مدیریت زمان استفاده می کردند و اکثریت آنها استفاده از استراتژی خود را بیش از حد ارزیابی می کردند. همچنین نتایج نشان داد که نقاط قوت آنها در استفاده از مولفه های مدیریت کلاس درس می تواند به صورت سلسله مراتبی به صورت زمان، تعامل، محتوا، آموزش، رفتار و ارزیابی رتبه بندی شود.

کلمات کلیدی: باور معلم، تمرین، مدیریت کلاس آنلاین، آموزش واژگان، زبان آموزان جوان