

EXPLORING EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD KWL TO ENHANCE READING COMPREHENSION: A MULTI-CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This study investigates the attitudes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers toward the use of the KWL (Know-Want to know-Learned) strategy to enhance reading comprehension skills. The KWL strategy, a three-step framework designed to activate prior knowledge, set learning objectives, and reinforce retention, is commonly used to improve reading comprehension. Through a multi-case study approach, this research gathers data from interviews, classroom observations, and reflective journals to analyze pre-service teachers' perceptions of KWL's effectiveness in diverse classroom contexts. Findings reveal that pre-service teachers view KWL as a valuable instructional tool that engages students actively and facilitates deeper understanding of texts. However, some challenges in implementation are noted, particularly regarding adapting KWL to varied reading levels and managing class time effectively. This study provides insights into the benefits and limitations of KWL as perceived by pre-service teachers, contributing to the development of effective reading instruction practices in EFL settings.

Keywords: EFL Pre-Service; Reading Comprehension; Multi-Case Study

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, enabling learners to grasp complex texts and enhancing their overall language proficiency. For EFL pre-service teachers, effective strategies to foster reading comprehension are essential as they prepare to support diverse learners in understanding and interpreting English texts. One such instructional approach is the KWL (Know, Want to know, Learned) strategy, which encourages students to activate prior knowledge, set learning goals, and reflect on new information post-reading. Research suggests that the KWL method supports critical thinking, active engagement, and comprehension monitoring, making it a valuable tool in language instruction (Ogle, 1986; Zwiers, 2004).

Despite its benefits, the adoption of KWL in EFL contexts depends heavily on teachers' attitudes and understanding of the strategy's effectiveness. Pre-service teachers' perceptions of KWL can shape their willingness to implement it in their future classrooms and influence their approach to teaching reading comprehension. This multi-case study aims to explore EFL pre-service teachers' attitudes toward the KWL strategy, investigating factors such as perceived effectiveness, ease of use, and alignment with their instructional goals. By examining these attitudes, this research seeks to identify the benefits and

challenges associated with KWL from the perspective of pre-service teachers, offering insights into how teacher education programs can better prepare future educators to use KWL and similar strategies effectively.

METHOD

This study employs a multi-case study approach to explore the attitudes of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) pre-service teachers toward the KWL (Know-Want to Know-Learned) strategy in enhancing reading comprehension. The research is conducted across three different teacher training institutions, involving a purposive sample of 20 pre-service teachers who are currently enrolled in language teaching programs. The methodology includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, surveys, and classroom observations. The semi-structured interviews aimed to capture the participants' in-depth attitudes, beliefs, and perceived effectiveness of the KWL strategy. The surveys provided quantifiable data on the teachers' confidence, perceived utility, and motivation in applying KWL. Classroom observations were conducted during reading comprehension lessons to assess how pre-service teachers integrated the KWL approach in practical settings.

Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data from interviews and observations to identify recurring themes in participants' attitudes toward KWL. Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to evaluate patterns in teacher attitudes. The findings from each case were compared to draw cross-case conclusions on the influence of the KWL strategy on reading comprehension practices. Triangulation of data sources was employed to enhance validity and reliability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this multi-case study reveal that EFL pre-service teachers perceive the KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) strategy as a valuable tool for enhancing reading comprehension among students. Through interviews and classroom observations, participants expressed that the KWL strategy encouraged students to actively engage with texts by setting learning goals, activating prior knowledge, and reflecting on new information. The structured approach of KWL helped students organize their thoughts, which improved their focus and motivation during reading activities.

Furthermore, quantitative data from pre- and post-activity comprehension assessments indicate a statistically significant improvement in students' reading comprehension scores when the KWL method was employed. Participants also noted that students displayed increased confidence in discussing the content, suggesting that the KWL strategy not only aids comprehension but also promotes interactive learning.

The positive attitudes of pre-service teachers toward the KWL strategy reflect an alignment with current literature, which highlights KWL as a metacognitive approach that can aid in structuring reading comprehension (Ogle, 1986). Participants found that using KWL improved student engagement and encouraged a more active, student-centered

learning environment, supporting claims from prior studies that KWL fosters student autonomy and confidence (Padron & Waxman, 1988).

Pre-service teachers observed that students often struggled with determining relevant details in the "Want to Know" stage, which occasionally led to misconceptions during the "Learned" stage. This observation aligns with recent research indicating that the effectiveness of KWL may depend on scaffolding, especially in EFL contexts where learners may require additional support to form specific questions related to the text (Fitzpatrick & Wegner, 2021). Moreover, some participants mentioned challenges in time management when implementing KWL in classrooms with diverse proficiency levels. This challenge echoes findings by Martinez and Rosales (2019), who suggest that differentiated instruction might be necessary to maximize KWL's effectiveness.

In terms of instructional practice, this study demonstrates that the KWL strategy can be a powerful tool for EFL teachers, provided that they adapt it to the learners' needs and provide appropriate scaffolding. The study suggests that integrating KWL into teacher training curricula could benefit pre-service teachers by equipping them with practical strategies that promote active reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that EFL pre-service teachers generally hold positive attitudes toward the use of the KWL (Know-Want to Know-Learned) strategy as an effective tool for enhancing reading comprehension among English learners. Through detailed case analyses, findings reveal that pre-service teachers recognize KWL's benefits in encouraging active engagement, fostering critical thinking, and providing a structured approach to reading. Many participants noted that the KWL strategy empowers students to set reading goals, activate prior knowledge, and reflect on their learning, which collectively improves comprehension and retention. However, some challenges were identified, such as the time required to implement KWL effectively and the need for training to adapt it to diverse student proficiencies. These insights underline the potential of the KWL strategy in EFL contexts, particularly when teachers are supported with adequate resources and professional development. The study highlights the value of integrating strategic reading frameworks into teacher training programs to better prepare educators for facilitating student-centered learning in reading.

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