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REVIEWING THE COURSE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING AND EVALUATION: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

Abstract:

Language assessment is integral to teaching because it gives feedback about the quality of education. Without a good assessment, effective and motivating teaching practices are impossible either. Therefore, language teachers must be assessment literate to respond to assessment needs of their educational contexts. Nonetheless, teachers should not be only decision-makers in teaching and assessment process; students can also help them to shape by their reflections. Hence, a better foreign language education might be maintained. To do so, the first steps can be taken in teacher education programs where undergraduate students gain teaching competencies for their professional life. However, most of the studies have shown that the courses about language assessment and evaluation were found incapable in training their undergraduates as competent language teachers regarding assessment. Considering these arguments and findings, the present study aims to investigate what pre-service English language teachers think about their course named 'English Language Testing and Evaluation'. Specifically, it explores the needs and expectations of its attenders, whether the content of the course is beneficial or needs to be revised, and whether course-takers feel competent in language assessment at the end of the course. So, the current study is hoped to illustrate how a language assessment course in foreign language training programs are carried out from the eyes of its attenders and also, to give implications and perspectives on language assessment. The research context includes the course of 'English Language Testing and Evaluation' offered in one of the ELT Departments in Turkey. 43 pre-service English language teachers who were their last year of training participated in the study. Five open-ended questions were addressed to the sample, and they provided their responses in verbatim. The findings yielded most of the participants found the course beneficial and their needs and expectations were met. They gave examples of what they learned throughout the course semester. However, some indicated the course was too theoretical and did not provide practical knowledge for language assessment for their future experiences. They also complained about the coursebook to which teachers stuck all the time and did not supply up-to-date language assessment knowledge and practices. Therefore, most perceived themselves to have moderate levels of language assessment literacy. As a conclusion, it is recommended that the course content should be revised and improved in line with the requirements of modern ELT teachers' language assessment competencies as well as the needs and expectations of its own context.

Keywords:

language assessment literacy, English language teaching, foreign language education, pre-service teacher training, testing, assessment, evaluation

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