

# What Pre-Service Teachers Learn About Foreign Language Activities in Their Teaching Practicum

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe what pre-service teachers learn about Foreign Language Activities during their teaching practicum. The participants were five pre-service teachers who were 3<sup>rd</sup> year students at a university. The teaching practicum was conducted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class at an elementary school attached to a local university of education. Video recordings of the pre-service teachers' discussions about Foreign Language Activities were collected for data. Analysis was carried out by Modified Grounded Theory Approach (M-GTA). Results indicate that the pre-service teachers gained a better understanding of *Children's ways of learning English*, *Instructional knowledge*, *English knowledge*, *Importance of communication*, and *Collegiality* in their teaching practicum. Outcomes suggest that schools should consider giving pre-service teachers opportunities to practice through lessons for Foreign Language Activities, and suggest that peer learning is very useful in a teaching practicum.

## 1. Introduction

Foreign Language Activities became a compulsory part of the school curriculum for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2011. The objective of Foreign Language Activities written in the national curriculum Course of Study emphasizes oral communication. Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) revealed "Execution Plan for the Reform of English Education in Response to Globalization" in December, 2013. Under the proposal, MEXT will upgrade English to an official subject in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades from 2020. English teaching would start in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of elementary schools. In addition, reading and writing would be treated. The need of teacher training has been demanded, and many in-service teacher training sessions have been conducted. However, pre-service teachers' practicum for Foreign Language Activities has not been conducted much. Thus, in this paper, the author would like to describe what pre-service teachers learn about Foreign Language Activities during their teaching practicum.

## 2. Literature review

Kasuya et al. (2014) investigated students of Tokyo Gakugei University and found that there was no required subject and only one elective subject for Foreign Language Activities in Tokyo Gakugei University. Only a quarter of students take the subject. According to Uchino (2015), there are universities which do not have any subjects about Foreign Language Activities, and even if there are, most of the subjects about Foreign Language Activities are not compulsory. It can be said that many students have not learned about Foreign Language Activities before their graduation from a university. In addition, Kasuya et al. (2014) revealed that students who had observed Foreign Language Activities lessons in their teaching practicum were less than 30% and students who had taught Foreign Language Activities in a teaching practicum were less than 10%. Students do not choose Foreign Language Activities for their lesson in their teaching practicum, because instruction skills for Japanese and math are main concerns for pre-service teachers. Monoi (2013) points out that there are few opportunities to learn Foreign Language Activities in a teaching practicum, because there are no instructors who can teach Foreign Language Activities at elementary schools.

There is some research about pre-service teachers' perceptions. Nahatame (2014) investigated pre-service teachers' perceptions. Results showed that they had anxiety about their speaking, especially pronunciation of English, and they needed chances of observing and conducting lessons. Monoi (2013) conducted a survey to university students and results showed that perceived knowledge would have the potential to change based on the curriculum offered by universities. On the other hand, their anxiety will be difficult to change in a short amount of time. Matsumiya (2013) attempted speech practice to foster university students' English proficiency to ease their anxiety and the results revealed that many of the participants felt the practice enjoyable and effective, however, many of them were still anxious about their English. English proficiency seems to be a main concern for pre-service teachers.

Itoi (2014) revealed that pre-service teachers realized lack of their English proficiency after a teaching practicum. Ikuma and Hosoda (2015) investigated one pre-service teacher's change of beliefs before and after the teaching practicum. An experience of teaching children by herself made her have new beliefs. Although these two studies revealed pre-service teachers' change before and after their teaching practicum, there has been little that focuses on pre-service teachers' perceptions about Foreign Language Activities during their teaching practicum. Thus, in this paper, the author would like to describe what pre-service teachers learn about Foreign Language Activities during their teaching practicum.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Location

This study took place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class at an elementary school attached to a local university of education. In this school, English was taught not only to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students but also to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students once a week. The author was a homeroom teacher of this school in 2013.

#### 3.2. Period

The teaching practicum was conducted for four weeks. The period was from October 15<sup>th</sup> to November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

#### 3.3. Participants

The participants were five pre-service teachers (*A-san*, *B-san*, *C-san*, *D-san* and *E-san*) who were 3<sup>rd</sup> year students at a local university. The author explained the purpose of this research and got the informed consent of participants. A 2<sup>nd</sup> grade homeroom teacher (the author) participated as a MKO<sup>1</sup>. Table 1 shows the background of the pre-service teachers.

**Table 1 The background of the pre-service teachers**

Pre-service teachers	Sex	Major field	Experience of learning English before junior high school days
<i>A-san</i>	M	Japanese	None
<i>B-san</i>	M	Mathematics	None
<i>C-san</i>	F	Arts and Crafts	None
<i>D-san</i>	F	Music	None
<i>E-san</i>	F	Science	None

#### 3.4. Data collection and analysis

Video recordings of the pre-service teachers' discussions about Foreign Language Activities were collected for data. Total number of recorded discussions is 17. Each is about 30 minutes long. All data were collected in Japanese and the results were translated into English by the author. Analysis was carried out by Modified Grounded Theory Approach (M-GTA) developed by Kinoshita (2003, 2007). M-GTA is a modified version of Grounded Theory Approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which is a discovery oriented research framework aimed at gaining insights from the point of view of participants (as in the case of this study, of the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their teaching practicum experiences). In M-GTA, the recorded videos were transcribed. Sentences that seem similar were gathered and given a concept name. Then, a concept name, its definition, examples and theoretical notes were recorded on an analysis worksheet (see Appendix). Several concepts were

integrated into a category. Some concepts would become categories themselves.

### 3.5. The teaching practicum schedule

The teaching practicum of the pre-service teachers was carried out for four weeks. The pre-service teachers observed and conducted not only Foreign Language Activities lessons but also other subject lessons, because elementary school teachers teach all subjects in Japan. However in this paper, the author focused on Foreign Language Activities.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> week (Oct.15<sup>th</sup>-Oct.18<sup>th</sup>), the pre-service teachers observed two Foreign Language Activities lessons of the homeroom teacher (the author). Observing these lessons was important in the teaching practicum because the pre-service teachers had not observed Foreign Language Activity lessons. *A-san* wrote “I do not have any images of Foreign Language Activities lessons” in the questionnaire conducted in the beginning of the teaching practicum. It is because that Foreign Language Activities was not a part of the elementary school curriculum when the participating pre-service teachers attended. In addition, all of them have not taken a class for Foreign Language Activities yet in the university. This situation is the same as the reports of Uchino (2015) and Kasuya et al. (2014) in literature review. The homeroom teacher’s lesson topic was “Do you like vegetables?” The pre-service teachers had discussions including the homeroom teacher (the author) afterschool on those two days and the author recorded the sessions.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> week (Oct.21<sup>st</sup>-Oct.25<sup>th</sup>), the pre-service teachers planned and taught their individual lessons. Each pre-service teacher taught one Foreign Language Activities lesson. They discussed the lessons with the homeroom teacher (the author) before and after a pre-service teacher conducted a lesson. The total number of discussions is five. The author recorded all sessions. Each pre-service teacher conducted a lesson titled as below. These topics are from the school’s curriculum, not their original. They adapted their lesson plans accordingly to the curriculum.

*A-san, B-san, C-san*: “What subject do you like?”

*D-san, E-san*: “Let’s make a play using a picture book”

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> week (Oct.28<sup>th</sup>-Nov.1<sup>st</sup>), the pre-service teachers started making lessons collaboratively. They set goals, planned procedures of a unit and each lesson in this week. They jointly made up a lesson unit as below. Each pre-service teacher was assigned one lesson of the unit. The pre-service teachers had discussions five times including the homeroom teacher (the author) in this week. The lesson planning meetings were video recorded. In the beginning of this week, the pre-service teachers made a unit of “What time is it?” The main activity is asking “What time is it?” each other using cards. During the discussion, the homeroom teacher (the author) facilitated collaborative thinking by asking, “What do you know about the objective of Foreign Language Activities written in the Course of Study?” and “What do you mean by communication?” They offered their insights during the discussion. Then, the pre-service teachers realized that communication was exchanging new information, and then they changed the topic of the unit to “What time do you get up?”

They realized that just saying phrases in English each other was practice, not authentic communication, because no new message was exchanged. The homeroom teacher adjusted the pre-service teachers' discussion like this. This role is important in a teaching practicum of pre-service teachers, because they do not have much teaching experience yet.

<b>Lesson Plan</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Let's ask times of daily routine
<b>Goal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Enjoy becoming to know friends' times of daily routine.</li><li>* Ask and answer using English of daily routine and time.</li><li>* Know differences between English and loan words.</li></ul>
<b>Procedure of the unit</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Know about English of daily routine (<i>D-san</i>)</li><li>2 Know about English of time (<i>E-san</i>)</li><li>3 Ask "What time do you get up?" to each other. (<i>C-san</i>)</li><li>4 Ask "What time do you go to school?" to each other. (<i>B-san</i>)</li><li>5 Ask "What time do you go to bed?" to each other. (<i>A-san</i>) [Open class]</li></ol>
<b>Procedure of the open class</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Greetings</li><li>2 Pronunciation of daily routine</li><li>3 Game "Simon says"</li><li>4 Song "What time do you get up?"</li><li>5 Ask "What time do you go to bed?" to each other</li><li>6 Share information from No. 5</li><li>7 Reflection</li></ol>

In the 4<sup>th</sup> week (Nov.5<sup>th</sup>-Nov.8<sup>th</sup>), each pre-service teacher conducted an assigned lesson of the unit which they made up together. The process was carried out in a manner as when one conducts a lesson, others observe it and then discuss it to refine the next lesson plan. They discussed the lessons before and after a pre-service teacher conducted a lesson. The total number of discussions is five. The author recorded video of them. Finally one of them opened a lesson (referred to as an open class) to other classes' pre-service teachers and homeroom teachers and had its reflection with them.

#### 4. Results and discussion

##### 4.1. Emerged categories

Five categories emerged through comparative analysis of the data gathered from participants. These are *Children's ways of learning English*, *Instructional knowledge*, *English*

*knowledge, Importance of communication, and Collegiality*. Table 2 shows emerged categories and its concepts.

**Table 2 Emerged categories and its concepts**

Categories	Concepts
<i>Children's ways of learning English</i>	Listening Guessing
<i>Instructional knowledge</i>	English use Instructional skills Understanding children
<i>English knowledge</i>	
<i>Importance of communication</i>	
<i>Collegiality</i>	Deepen one's thought Help each other

#### 4.2. Category 1 *Children's ways of learning English*

The category *Children's ways of learning English* has two concepts "Listening" and "Guessing."

##### 4.2.1. Concept "Listening"

About "Listening," *A-san* and *C-san* were surprised that children listen to and understand English well. They thought that children's listening ability was better than their ability. According to Brewster and Ellis (2002), children have a natural ability to grasp meaning from a variety of sources: body language, intonation, gesture, facial expression and social context as well as language itself.

"I was surprised that children raised their hands just after the teacher's 'Anyone?' I could not catch the teacher's words. Children could sing a song they listened for the first time." (*A-san*)

"Children's listening ability is great. I could not catch what the teacher said. She said 'If . . . , discuss . . .' What did she say? Children's listening ability is unbelievable." (*C-san*)

*D-san* was surprised that children learned English without knowing the alphabet.

"We need to look at the alphabet to understand, but children did not. I wonder why children can understand well without [knowing the] alphabet. They pronounced with native-like pronunciation. It is because of young age, isn't it?" (*D-san*)

In the questionnaire conducted in the beginning of the teaching practicum, *D-san* wrote, "It's difficult to teach English without knowing the alphabet. It's insignificant to teach children English, because they do not understand." This belief developed early on for pre-

service teachers because when they were students, learning the alphabet were taught first. Lortie (1975) contends many beliefs teachers hold about teaching originate from personal experiences as students. When she saw that children could understand English without knowing the alphabet and realized that oral activities suit children, the belief that the alphabet should be taught first has changed.

#### 4.2.2. Concept “Guessing”

About “Guessing,” *E-san* and *B-san* realized that guessing was important for learning English. According to Brewster and Ellis (2002), children are skilled at guessing and predicting.

“Even if a teacher used a little difficult English, children could understand the meaning from teacher’s expressions and gestures.” (*E-san*)

“Children somehow could understand English which they didn’t learn yet by understanding situations.” (*B-san*)

*A-san* and *C-san* realized that children were learning English in different ways from them.

“I was impressed that children guess meanings of English without teacher’s translation or explanation.” (*A-san*)

“We learned grammar of ‘Do you like . . . ?’ in junior high school, but children do not. They can understand the meaning without an explanation or a translation.” (*C-san*)

The pre-service teachers learned from a traditional method of teaching English through direct deductive explanations of grammar and remembering words one by one in a junior and a senior high school. Thereby, they seem to be impressed that children understood English inductively without explanations or translations. The pre-service teachers thought that teachers should make chances to guess for children in a class.

“I understood that it was important to make children think about meanings of English through teachers using a lot of English with gestures and expressions.” (*E-san*)

“Children could guess meanings of English by teacher’s gestures. It is important to make students guess meanings of English.” (*B-san*)

“Teachers should speak English all the time because children can understand English through teacher’s gestures and expressions.” (*D-san*)

“It is significant to develop ability of guessing meanings.” (*C-san*)

#### 4.3. Category 2 *Instructional knowledge*

The category *Instructional knowledge* has three concepts “English use,” “Instructional skills,” and “Understanding children.”

#### 4.3.1. Concept “English use”

About “English use,” the pre-service teachers learned that it was important to use a lot of English in a context from watching the homeroom teacher’s lessons. Curtain and Dahlberg (2010) wrote that teachers should consistently conduct instruction in the target language with minimal use of the native language and translation.

“The homeroom teacher used English almost all the time. It is hard to do that for me.”  
(*B-san*)

“The homeroom teacher spoke English in a context. That is why children understand English well.” (*D-san*)

“The homeroom teacher says a key sentence ‘Do you like . . . ?’ many times in various activities. So students can listen to English many times unconsciously.” (*A-san*)

#### 4.3.2. Concept “Instructional skills”

About “Instructional skills,” the pre-service teachers thought that their instructional skills were not enough.

“My voice was small and flat. I need to modulate it.” (*C-san*)

“We need to plan how to use a board. It is important to have children put only things they need on the desk.” (*E-san*)

“Children did not understand my instructions sometimes. I have to think about good instructions.” (*B-san*)

Their limited classroom experience would make it difficult for them to anticipate student responses and misconceptions or to estimate appropriate timing of lesson elements (Burroughs and Luebeck, 2010). In the early stages of learning to teach, teachers stick to a lesson plan. Senior (2006) mentioned,

Pre-service teachers tend to view lessons as collections of discrete parts, rather than as integrated wholes. As yet unable to see which parts of the lesson are more vital than others, they are unsure whether or not to terminate an activity and move on to the next segment (p.43).

The pre-service teachers thought that they had to deal with unexpected children's reactions with flexibility. They realized that it was important to adapt themselves to children's reactions by teaching the lesson themselves.

“I could not deal with things that I could not predict.” (*E-san*)

“I was flustered when I had unexpected things. I have to listen to students’ remarks.” (*C-san*)



“We have to think how to deal with unexpected students’ reactions.” (*B-san*)

“We need to judge situations immediately, because lessons are not carried out as planned.” (*A-san*)

“I would like to react to students’ remarks with more flexibility. Although I always want to do what I planned, it is natural that students say unpredictable things. I do not have to persist with a lesson plan.” (*E-san*)

“I always looked at a lesson plan during a lesson. I would like to see students’ reaction carefully.” (*D-san*)

They also learned about time control. All of them could not control time. *A-san* learned that teachers should guarantee children’s thinking time.

“Children need time to think. If a teacher calls children’s names quickly, they are deprived of their thinking time. Warm-up activities run on too long.” (*A-san*)

“We need to control time, we often run short.” (*B-san*)

“I was too hasty in the end of the lesson.” (*E-san*)

“I was surprised when I looked at a clock. A lot of contents were still left then.” (*D-san*)

“I was in a hurry, so I could not look at children’s reactions well.” (*C-san*)

Sometimes pre-service teachers let warm-up activities run on too long, forgetting that their function is simply a lead-in to the main part of the lesson (Senior, 2006). Time is a main problem for pre-service teachers.

#### 4.3.3. Concept “Understanding children”

About “Understanding children,” the pre-service teachers learned that it was important to see children’s learning situations and to set up teaching goals, topics and activities along them.

“We should always observe and understand students to pick up students’ remarks well in a lesson.” (*A-san*)

“I thought classroom English was easy before, but now I know it is difficult to use it along with children’s reactions.” (*E-san*)

“The homeroom teacher’s lesson plan is great. Teaching goals and activities are set up along children’s learning situations. I had thought that writing about students in a lesson plan was just a form, and I can copy a lesson plan from anywhere. But now I understood that we should know students’ situations to plan lessons.” (*B-san*)

*E-san* realized that it was difficult to use classroom English along children’s reactions. *B-san* changed his mind about a lesson plan along children’s situations, not a copy from anywhere. He also mentioned, “The homeroom teacher used familiar things to children in their daily life

for a topic, for example, vegetables children grew.” He realized that the homeroom teacher selected vegetables as a meaningful topic because children grew some vegetables, such as tomatoes, green peppers and eggplant in a subject of life skills. *D-san* and *E-san* realized that decision-making and collaborative learning were effective for children.

“The homeroom teacher let children choose words they want to say, that is a point why children like English.” (*D-san*)

“Teacher gave a lot of group activities to help each other, so students who are weak at English could answer.” (*D-san*)

“The homeroom teacher gave activities to know things about each other.” (*E-san*)

During the discussion, *C-san* realized that the purpose of Foreign Language Activities is not forcing children to remember English. *A-san* realized that understanding children is significant to make a lesson.

“I had thought that the most important thing was acquiring knowledge. But through making a lesson plan collaboratively, I understood that the learning process was significant. In a class, teachers should encourage students to think, not force them to remember things.” (*C-san*)

“I made a lesson plan through only from a teacher’s view. It is important to make a lesson plan through understanding students’ situation.” (*A-san*)

The needs of children and how they learn must be considered first (Brewster and Ellis, 2002). Developing this awareness through experience is helpful to become a teacher.

#### 4.4. Category 3 *English knowledge*

Kawakami (2008) points out that most Japanese started learning English from their junior high school days and many abstract meaning words are taught along their intellectual ability in junior high school. Or if they did have some knowledge of these terms, they may not have been reinforced because they did not use them. *A-san* did not know how to say *horenso* [spinach] and *nasu* [eggplant] in English.

“I could not catch *horenso* [spinach]. How do you say *horenso* in English? I could not catch *nasu* [eggplant] either.” (*A-san*)

Because English was not part of the elementary school curriculum when the participating pre-service teachers attended, they may not have had much introduction to basic and familiar English like giraffe, cucumber, stapler, etc. This is similar to the point that they know countable nouns and uncountable nouns as knowledge, but they have never used them. Because we do not have the concept of countable and uncountable in Japanese, Japanese

have native language interference using them. *C-san* did not know that we should say, “I like tomatoes”, not “I like tomato.” And they did not know that when we say, for example, about broccoli, it was correct to say “I like broccoli,” not “I like broccolis.”

“I was reminded of countable nouns and uncountable nouns today. The homeroom teacher uses them correctly.” (*B-san*)

“The homeroom teacher corrected children’s ‘I like tomato’ to ‘I like tomatoes.’ Should we say ‘I like tomatoes?’ ” (*C-san*)

The pre-service teachers learned those English words and structures. Teachers should have content knowledge which is the subject matter to be learned or taught. Knowledge of content is of critical importance (Koehler and Mishra, 2009). The pre-service teachers became to know some English knowledge in this teaching practicum.

#### **4.5. Category 4 *Importance of communication***

Real communication which has authentic information is important in language learning (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2010). During the discussion, the pre-service teachers realized what real communication is. They changed their unit topic regarding communication.

“Communication is to know things about each other. I learned that exchanging information was important, not just a practice.” (*C-san*)

“Communication is to know feelings of each other. Now I know real communication is important.” (*D-san*)

“Communication is to express our thoughts and feelings.” (*E-san*)

“Communication is to be interested in one’s remarks. Our first lesson plan was missing communication.” (*B-san*)

“Asking ‘What time is it?’ each other using cards is just a practice, not communication”. (*A-san*)

“Activities to know things about each other through communication in English are good.” (*D-san*)

The pre-service teachers had thought that Foreign Language Activities were just fun games and songs or saying something orally in the beginning of the teaching practicum. The image has completely changed.

“I had not understood meaning of communication. I had thought saying something with a partner orally was communication. But it is not included meaningful information.” (*E-san*)

“First, I thought it was OK to give some games and songs in Foreign Language Activities lessons, but now I know exchanging information is significant.” (*B-san*)

“I thought it was OK to teach simple words and expressions, but now I do not think so. Exchanging information is crucial in communication.” (*A-san*)

“My thought about Foreign Language Activities has completely changed. Now I understand that the purpose of Foreign Language Activities is communication, not remembering many words.” (*D-san*)

“I thought that the Course of Study was just a form and teachers did not care about it before, but now I think it is very important.” (*E-san*)

“I realized that I haven’t understood the Course of Study. The purpose of Foreign Language Activities is to enjoy communication, not to remember words and expressions.” (*B-san*)

*E-san* and *B-san* realized that reading Course of Study and understanding the purpose of Foreign Language Activities were significant.

#### 4.6. Category 5 *Collegiality*

According to National Association for the Study of Education Methods (2011), the core principle of school-based teacher development through lessons is teacher collaboration. Several authors (Al-Weher, 2004; Fosnot, 1996; Graham, Hudson-Ross and McWhorter, 1997; Gunstone, Slattery, Baird and Northfield, 1993; Jadallah, 1996; Magliaro, Murphy, Sawyers, Altieri and Nienkark, 1996; Sherman and MacDonald, 2007) suggested that collegiality, social interaction and use of discourse were key experiences for pre-service teachers and teacher educators. In this study, the category *Collegiality* is substantiated and supported by two concepts “Deepen one’s thought” and “Help each other.”

##### 4.6.1. Concept “Deepen one’s thought”

About “Deepen one’s thought,” the pre-service teachers worked out and deepened their thoughts through peer’s advice. Al-Weher (2004), Graham et al. (1997), and Gunstone et al. (1993) concluded that peer discussions, collaborative group activities, and strong personal and professional relationships were critical elements. The pre-service teachers deepened their knowledge of teaching and they were able to constructively reflect on what they were doing through their peer’s advice. Evidence showing value of collegial peer advice can be seen in the following comments from the participants.

“I could deepen my thoughts through saying my thoughts and listening to other pre-service teachers’ thoughts.” (*E-san*)

“I learned many things from peer’s lessons.” (*A-san*)

“Discussing among pre-service teachers is meaningful. It is not good to ask a homeroom teacher answers easily.” (*B-san*)

“New ideas and insights were shared. How to use picture cards effectively was new to me.” (*D-san*)

Knowledge is co-constructed in dialogic nature of the discourse. The comments above point out that making lessons collaboratively provides opportunities to share knowledge stemming from classroom practice and rich experiences. Further comments from the participants support the claim.

“We worked out thoughts and ideas through writing a lesson plan together.” (*E-san*)

“I could break a deadlock through advice from members. I would like to use classroom English a lot in the future. I would like to ask colleagues after I become a teacher.” (*D-san*)

“I realized that I had fixed thinking through peers’ advice. Now I do not think that I should not teach English.” (*C-san*)

In the comments the three pre-service teachers expressed knowledge gain from working together and in particular *D-san* and *C-san* have changed their thoughts, which is a sign of development. Collaboration among teachers not only adds to knowledge gain (new idea and insights) about teaching, but also has affective considerations by providing emotional support.

#### 4.6.2. Concept “Help each other”

Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy and Hoy (1998) hold that increased collaboration with supportive peers can support pre-service teachers when they seem to lose their self-confidence due to a lack of experience and self-efficacy. In this study, the pre-service teachers reduced their anxiety of teaching. This can be seen in the supporting concept of “Help each other” as the pre-service teachers supported each other especially about pronunciation practice.

“I have confidence of pronunciation now, because *D-san* and *E-san* gave me a list of classroom English.” (*A-san*)

“It was good that we practiced classroom English together.” (*D-san*)

*A-san*, *C-san* and *D-san* were worried about their pronunciation in the questionnaire conducted in the beginning of the teaching practicum. However, their comments show a gain in confidence. On the other hand, this was not entirely the case. In the questionnaire conducted at the end of the teaching practicum, several other participants had mixed feelings. *B-san* wrote, “I still do not have confidence of pronunciation, but I feel that I can do it” and *E-san* wrote, “I am not good at instructing in English. But I would like to keep practicing. We are a team. I didn’t feel lonely,” whereas *A-san* reported confidence gain again, “I could communicate well in English.”

Overall, their comments were positive and showed progress. They reduced their anxiety of pronunciation and responded positively. The pre-service teachers also helped each other

about time keeping, which was their main concern.

“I was thankful to their advice of time keeping.” (A-san)

“It is very significant we know about children jointly.” (E-san)

“We shared information about students, which is very helpful to prepare lessons.” (C-san)

E-san and C-san realized that sharing information of children was helpful. Comments related to collegiality show strong evidence that to observe peer's lessons and then discuss them collaboratively was very useful for pre-service teachers' practicum. It also should be said that although the homeroom teacher (the author) has a lot of experiences and plays an important role as a MKO by giving advice to the pre-service teachers, she cannot think as a novice teacher. To increase involvement of the pre-service teachers so that they could observe peer's lessons, think about what they say and did and then discuss collaboratively was very useful for developing pedagogical skills. Collegiality was a key experience for pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers developed as teachers through experiencing collegiality.

## 5. Conclusion

The pre-service teachers gained a better understanding of *Children's ways of learning English*, *Instructional knowledge*, *English knowledge*, *Importance of communication*, and *Collegiality* in the teaching practicum. They learned a lot of things by observing children, planned and conducted lessons by themselves and discussing their experiences and ideas with peers. A teaching practicum is the only chance to learn Foreign Language Activities practically in university days. However there is still little teaching practicum about Foreign Language Activities. Outcomes of this study suggest that schools should consider giving pre-service teachers opportunities to practice through lessons for Foreign Language Activities. In addition, this study suggests that peer learning is very useful in their teaching practicum.

## Note

1. MKO (The more knowledgeable other) refers to someone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner in Vygotsky's theory (Moll, 1990).

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## Appendix

One analysis worksheet is below. The author will avoid showing all worksheets, because of lack of space.

### Analysis worksheet

Concept	Instructional skills	
Definition	Skills to conduct a good lesson	
Examples	<i>C-san</i>	● My voice was small and flat. I need to modulate it.
	<i>E-san</i>	● We need to plan how to use a board. It is important to have children put only things they need on the desk.
	<i>B-san</i>	● Children did not understand my instructions sometimes. I have to think about good instructions.
	<i>E-san</i>	● I could not deal with things that I could not predict.
	<i>C-san</i>	● I was flustered when I had unexpected things. I have to listen to students' remarks.
	<i>B-san</i>	● We have to think how to deal with unexpected students' reactions.
	<i>A-san</i>	● We need to judge situations immediately, because lessons are not carried out as planned.
	<i>E-san</i>	● I would like to react to students' remarks with more flexibility. Although I always want to do what I planned, it is natural that students say unpredictable things. I do not have to persist with a lesson plan.



	<p><i>D-san</i></p> <p><i>A-san</i></p> <p><i>B-san</i></p> <p><i>E-san</i></p> <p><i>D-san</i></p> <p><i>C-san</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I always looked at a lesson plan during a lesson. I would like to see students' reaction carefully.</li> <li>• Children need time to think. If a teacher calls children's names quickly, they are deprived of their thinking time. Warm-up activities run on too long.</li> <li>• We need to control time, we often run short.</li> <li>• I was too hasty in the end of the lesson.</li> <li>• I was surprised when I looked at a clock. A lot of contents were still left then.</li> <li>• I was in a hurry, so I could not look at children's reactions well.</li> </ul>
Theoretical notes	<p>Appropriate instruction</p> <p>Flexibility</p> <p>Time control</p>	

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