



# “How did my teacher training help me?” Voices of newly-graduated Emirati teachers

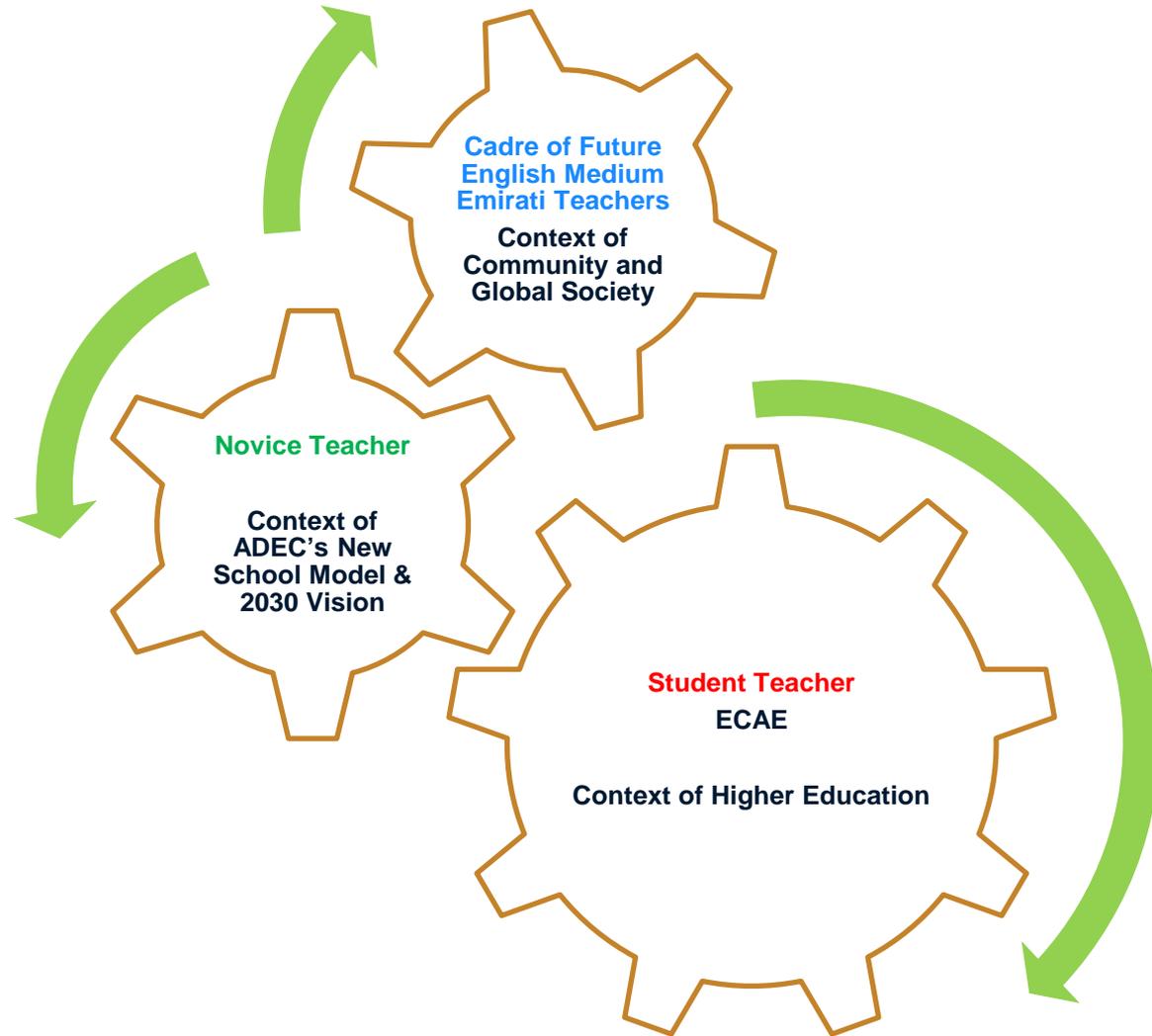
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# Overview of the Research Study

- This is a collaborative research study
- Research Aim:
  - To determine the challenges faced by ECAE new graduates during their first year of employment as English medium teachers
  - To identify the effectiveness of the teacher preparation and its relevance to novice teachers in their practice
  - To investigate the use of English as a medium of instruction by non-native speakers of English
- Mixed Design – Quantitative and Qualitative methods
- Participants – Emirati novice teachers
- Data Collection Tools
  - Survey Questionnaire
  - Individual In-depth interviews
  - Letter box strategy – focus group style

# Conceptual Framework of the Study



# Focus of this session

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- Discuss our research design
- Context of the study
- Methodology
- Presentation of Findings
- Discussion

# Context of the Study

- Total Population in the UAE - 8,248,000  
Citizens: 948,000, Expats: 7.3 million



(Gulf News p. 16, March 11, 2012)

- Funded and Sponsored by ADEC, Abu Dhabi Emirate
- ECAE initiated in 2007, students enter from High School
- Around 300 students, mainly from the Abu Dhabi Emirate and supported by about 35 faculty members
- Abu Dhabi public school system is in the midst of educational reform and it is often referred to as the “New School Model”

# Study Participants & Context

- ECAE Graduates – B.Ed degree, all Emiratis
- Currently employed as English Medium Teachers (EMTs)
- Working as novice teachers in Cycle 1 (grades 1-5) and KG classrooms
- Our graduates with IELTS band 6.5 and above were employed as EMTs in grades 1-5.
- Our graduates with IELTS band 6.0 were employed as EMTs in KG c
- Our graduates with IELTS band of 5.5 were employed as Arabic Medium Teachers (AMT) in KG classrooms

# Study Participants & Context

- Education Reform – New School Model - Staffing
- In Cycle 1 (grades 1-5) English , Math and Science subjects are taught by western EMTs from UK, US, CAN, AUS, NZ, SA.
- In the Kindergarten (KG), there are two teachers - Arabic (AMT) and English (EMT) teaching in the same classroom. (Bi-literacy)
- Currently 20% are working as EMTs in Cycle 1 schools
- About 30% are working as EMTs in KG
- About 50% are working as AMTs in KG

# Study Participants - Continued

- Age group: 20-24yrs – 78%, 25-30 yrs – 18%, above 30 yrs – 4%
- Gender: 3 males and 27 females
- Majority- over 93% attended public schools in Arabic medium
- Over 75% of their Mothers had not finished high school
- Over 60% of their fathers had not finished high school
- About 64% had family working in the teaching profession

# Survey Instrument

- **Construction of the survey questionnaire**
- **Invitation to Participate**
  - Introduction – email consent, online link to survey
  - eSurveysPro.com
- **Main parts of the survey:**
  1. Demographics
  2. Language Use
  3. Teaching Profession
  4. The Curriculum
  5. Teaching Strategies
  6. Personal

(Total 75 questions, 16 were demographic information)

# Interview Guide

- Interview guide included 14 questions:
  - Challenges
  - Surprises
  - Preparation at the college
  - Communications with the school community
    - Parents, school administration and staff
  - Role as an Emirati EMT
  - Use of Language in the classroom
  - Home and work balance
- Individual interviews were conducted (30-45mins)
- Face to face and phone
- Transcribed verbatim
- Preliminary analysis have been completed

# Specific Research Questions for discussion:

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- To what extent do novice teachers perceive their preparation in the college as relevant to their professional practice?
- What challenges do novice teachers face?

# Preparation: Planning and Curriculum Implementation

## Survey Responses

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
My college courses prepared me to plan effective lessons.	74	22	4	0
My college courses prepared me to implement the ADEC curriculum.	59	30	11	0
I can plan to ensure progression across ages and ability ranges.	11	81	4	4
I can create unit plans and lesson plans from the ADEC curriculum	61	31	8	0

# Challenges: Planning and Curriculum Implementation

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## Completing the curriculum

*I faced great challenges to overcome in organizing my time, sometimes we get stuck on one subject and the 3 periods suddenly finish..and I feel that every day I have this overload of working because I'm behind in the curriculum and I can't move to the next step until I'm sure that all the students understand what I'm saying.*

# Challenges: Planning and Curriculum Implementation

## Planning

*I prefer it if all the teachers sit together and say let's do the planning together. If we shared the responsibility for planning also the teaching would be much easier. But some of the teachers they don't want to do this. They want to be perfect and have a competition between the classes. So I want more sharing .... I want the principal or the vice principal to say let's do the planning together.*

# Preparation: Behavioural Management and SEN

## Survey Responses

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
I can use different strategies to manage students' behavior.	46	54	0	0
My college courses helped me understand	35	54	11	0



# Challenges :

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## Behaviour Management

- *How to manage my classroom is a challenge – my students' behavior, because I have a violent student, really violent. She interrupts my class all the time.*
- *It's really hard if you appear to the students that you can't manage your class, you are not in control ... If they see me weak .... they won't listen to me anymore*

# Preparation: Teaching Strategies

## Survey Responses

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
I know how to adjust my teaching practice for different learning styles	31	65	4	0
I can use teaching strategies to suit individuals, groups and whole classes	46	50	0	4

# Challenges : In the classroom

## Using Student centered teaching strategies

- *I'm trying to do that all the time but six of my students are not able at all, if I leave them, they will not do anything...sometimes they just give me a funny look while I'm teaching because they don't understand.*
- *You know, science is very heavy. So, you can't like give them one information and let them do everything, you know, like activities or something..you have to explain more....it should be like 70% the students who are doing the work and 30% the teacher, but in my case actually it's 50/50.*

# Preparation: Internship

## Survey Responses

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
My internship was useful and relevant to me as a novice teacher.	65	31	4	0
My internship gave me the skills, knowledge, and confidence I needed to teach successfully.	69	27	4	0
I had enough time on internship to prepare me to be an effective teacher.	54	38	8	0

# Were you well-prepared by your internship?

## Internship was more difficult than 'real life'

*Practicum was more difficult than teaching now. I felt more stress during Practicum and thought teaching now will be the same as Practicum. But it is not.. maybe because it is my classroom and I can do what I want*

## Internship was too demanding

*I wish that they left us to feel being a teacher without any other things from the college. Because last year they gave us the action research project simultaneously with the practicum..*

## Internship was helpful

*To be honest with you the practicum really helped. It gave us a lot of experience to teach and give us the confidence to be teachers, to be ready to teacher students*

## Don't only give us the good schools!

*I suggest .. most of the practicum schools we visited we really good schools like model schools, but when I began my real teaching it's at a low level, in everything and this problem continues that the farther away the schools are from the city the lower they are. When I see the xxxx school I really want to go there !*

# Perceptions: How could the college have prepared the novice teachers better?

- *Projects at the college that should reflect the reality of the school. They are based on NSM or certain theories. But it would be better to take the feedback from Emirati teachers or from UAE experts and UAE teachers.*
- *I think Emirati teachers need to have more practice in researching, as students and teachers. We don't know how to start to begin in doing this, we had action research in the practicum but we need courses to help Emirati students and teachers with research.*

# Perceptions: How could the college have prepared the novice teachers better? Continued .....

- *Maybe if the college trained us more to differentiate lessons*
- *We learned for higher grades about problem solving, but not for KG, I found it difficult because they cannot write and how can I make them problem solve like in Bloom's Taxonomy?*
- *In our college we worked more on the paper .. But we need more ... practical. Maybe if they invite the teachers from the KG and let them give us some lessons, bring videos from the school, this is the best way*
- *I think the college should have prepared us to deal with parents*

## Perceptions: How could the college have prepared the novice teachers better? Continued .....

- *The college needs to give us a lot of ideas and methods to teach us how to manage the KG children.*
- *We need more information for special needs. One of my friends has an autistic student. How would I deal with that? I don't know.*
- *I suggest to focus more on the foundation to learn more and have deep English language.*
- *The college can help us by providing us with more English courses...*

# Were you well-prepared to teach overall?

- *I think we were 99% prepared. Like when they (other teachers) saw my lesson, they were amazed and they said you are teaching like you have been teaching for a long time! I felt prepared in planning, formative and summative assessment, ICT (KG teacher)*
- *The college gave us all the ideas that we needed. In applying this there is a problem, because I am in KG. In the KG it has to be simple things (KG teacher)*
- *The college was good in all the areas – management, how to teach reading, writing, how to do the assessment. The teaching was perfect*

# An emerging sense of confidence?

- *The first time I met Western EMTs I thought they would be the teachers and I would be the student, but during working, now I realize that I have strengths and weaknesses and they have strengths and weaknesses. They help me and I help them.*
- *When I came here, I feel I am ready.. Everyone was asking me " how do you know how to do this?". I said from the college, I learned everything I needed to learn.*
- *I am treated as if I am an experienced teacher*
- *I feel like I am part of them (EMTs), and we really work together, they wished more teachers are coming like me*

# A desire for a different perspective?

## One student's suggestion ....

*Sometimes, I think, why not, let them travel outside to see how the teachers teach them kids in English ... I mean, don't send me to England or America because this is their language. Send me to Finland! Any other country where they teach the students English but it's not their mother tongue. I don't know if it's possible or not!*

# Challenge: Working with parents

- *At first I said [to the mother] “you know your kid is good” and really he is bad. Then I said to myself actually I can’t deal with him. So next time I said this to his parent. She said “yes I know that and I was surprised you said he was good”.*
- *There were some parents who came to school and said, “where is the English teacher, we didn’t see a western teacher in my daughter’s class”, the VP told him, “yes, that is the English teacher”, he said, “no! She is an Emirati! No I don’t want her to teach English!”*

# Challenges: Relationships

- *The different nationalities. We have EMTs, all of them except me are western teachers and we have Arabic and Emirati teachers. I think treating with these three kinds of teachers was a big challenge for me to treat with all of them.*
- *At first the Arabic teacher did not understand my classroom management because she screamed and they sit down and listened but I used praise. The Arabic teacher she used a method with them and I disagree...She didn't listen so I went to the Head of Faculty ....*

# Challenges: Balancing Work and Home Life

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have enough time to prepare for my lessons	8	61	23	8
I am able to balance work requirements with my personal life	12	68	20	0
My family is supportive of my work as a teacher	19	65	11	4

# Challenges: Balancing Work and Home life

## Lack of Balance

- *Until this moment I feel that I don't have balance, and sometimes I feel that I'm not able to accomplish what's required from me, like, for example, marking, correcting students' notebooks etc. Many times I take work home. Last month I didn't do anything at weekends .. I was just sitting working ... Sometimes you feel like you're alone, nobody supports you, nobody helps you*
- *I tried several times to manage my time but I failed ... I was really confused...overloaded work*

# Challenges: Balancing Work and Home life ..

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- *Actually, it's too hard. I cannot manage my home. I can manage the school but I do not have a time for the home, because I'm still learning. My husband has started to say, "enough please. Just to, stay and look after the kids and that's it ... halas, finish, stop"*
- *I hate the way I take some of my work in the home, because I don't have a time to do it in the school.*

# Reminder that our survey showed that ..

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- Over 75% of their mothers had not finished high school
- Over 60% of their fathers had not finished high school

Many of these novice teachers are the first generation of degree-takers

# Challenges: Being Accountable

## Induction of the novice teacher

*I think they are treating me like other teachers who have been teaching for many years. Like I don't know about the file and no one told me about it and other documents and they wanted it this week. It is the same with the students' portfolio, I did not know that. Many things I know only now*

## Accountability to 'Others'

*But translating is killing me because they want me to translate every single document...I am the medium between the Arabic and English teachers for emails, in the meetings or assembly. If they want the EMTs to know something then I translate for them*

# Novice Teachers' suggestions for induction

- *We need teacher assistants inside the class too.*
- *We want a school mentor to follow us and guide us as we had in the practicum, because in the school we missed the continuous guidance.*
- *We need school mentors for all the novice teachers for the first 3 years to improve our level of teaching, somebody to follow our progress through*

*“All novice teachers participating in the induction program should be assigned qualified mentors and that mentors should be selected according to certain criteria” (Ibrahim, 2012)*

# Further suggestions for induction ....

Formalised training for the administrative side of education: portfolios, eSIS assessment systems, etc. Many students felt stressed by these aspects, e.g.

- *Nobody sat with us and told us how to do it, you know, about the grading system.*
- *I have nobody helping or telling me about the eSIS and what to do*
- *As a teacher working under ADEC there is a lot of paper work I have to do...teaching was like a subheading and less important*
- *The other thing that still shocks me is that for each single thing I do I have to have evidence for it.*

# Further suggestions for induction ....

- Allow one day, or half a day release to catch up on paper work, observe other teachers, talk to their mentor etc. as in some other countries
- College Induction program: Maintain links with the college and attend beginning teacher meetings for additional support
- Information sessions for family members/spouses to encourage support?
- Interpersonal / relationship training courses in working with other teachers? Handling conflict? Communication with parents?
- Guarantee of one teaching section only for first year

# Future plans ....

- *[We will teach] until we find another job, because we are facing lots of obstacles, pressure from ADEC, the school administration, parents, and different levels of students.*
- *We would like to continue our masters to find another easier job.*
- *I am studying Master of Human Resources Management which means I am planning to leave this job as soon as possible, frankly, plus I want to add that the teacher's salary is very low compared with other jobs ...*
- *As soon as I find another job I will quit!!*

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*Listening to the voices of these novice teachers, and acting upon it, is critical for retention (and recruitment) of Emirati teachers!*



**QUESTIONS, FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

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