Exploring Concept Mapping as a Diagnostic and Predictive Assessment Tool in Pre-Service EFL Teacher Education

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Abstract

This study explored (a) pre-service teachers' knowledge structure on teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) reading using concept mapping in a language pedagogy course, (b) the characteristics of concept maps drawn, and (c) the relationship between concept mapping and the course achievement scores. The participants were 14 pre-service teachers majoring in English language education at a university in Hong Kong. The data sources included assessments of concept maps and final exam scores. The overall research findings reveal the educational potential of integrating concept maps as a diagnostic and predictive assessment tool in teacher education programs.

Keywords: Concept map, English as a foreign language, language teacher professional development, assessment in teacher education.

Introduction

Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge is of the utmost importance for successful classroom instruction and student learning (Pang, 2016; Tsui, 2012). However, little is known about how the
professional knowledge of pre-service teachers (PSTs) develops during their teacher education. Appropriate assessments for evaluating professional knowledge are required to elucidate the issue. Among several methods of assessing professional knowledge structures (Jonassen et al., 2013), concept maps (CMs) have been shown to be particularly informative and fairly easy to implement in classroom contexts. CMs are graphical instruments used to organize and represent information by establishing meaningful relationships in the form of propositions between concepts (Novak & Cañas, 2006). A review of the literature (e.g., Koc, 2012; Novak, 1990, Novak & Canas, 2006) indicates that the use of CMs has been most prevalent in science education and in primary and secondary levels of education. Therefore, the present study aimed to contribute to developing a research base in the application of CMs within pre-service EFL teacher education by exploring the potential uses and benefits of concept maps. The following section will review prior research on the significance of teacher knowledge and the potential of concept maps.

Literature Review

Teacher Knowledge as an Outcome of EFL Teacher Education

Numerous qualities make up an EFL teacher's profession. One of the most critical qualifications of an effective EFL teacher is obtaining pedagogical knowledge as well as knowledge of English as a discipline (Göksel & Söylemez, 2018). By extension, this brings teacher educators to the issue that pre-service teacher education programs ought to scrutinize the quality of the training provided to PSTs and that PSTs must be held accountable for the extent to which they acquire such professional knowledge from the teacher training (Sheridan, 2016). In this regard, then, it is imperative to monitor and assess PSTs' professional knowledge development throughout the teacher education program (Sandholtz, 2011).
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of predictive assessment of lesson planning suggests that a series of successive CMs may be fruitfully used as a formative assessment so that PSTs may visualize the pedagogical reasoning of lesson design.

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

**References**


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