

Exploring the Experiences of Transnational TESOL Professionals about Their Writing Assessment Practices: A Critical Ethnography in the Saudi EFL Context

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Abstract : This study aims to explore the assessment practices of transnational western teachers in Saudi EFL writing classrooms. The study adopts a critical ethnographic approach to understand the views and the experiences of four transnational TESOL professionals about how they navigate and negotiate their writing assessment practices in the Saudi EFL context. The qualitative data were collected through classroom observations and video recordings of the classroom teaching, which were followed by semi-structured interviews with the four TESOL teachers from Australia, England, USA, and Ireland. The data were analyzed from three perspectives of these transnational TESOL teachers in the Saudi EFL context: as a transnational teacher in monolingual context, as a transitional teacher abides by the prescribed curriculum and assessment instructions, and as a transnational teacher's vision for monolingual students. The results of the study revealed that owing to the transnational teachers' lack of understanding of the Saudi monolingual culture, bureaucratic structures, and top-down assessment policies in the institute where they work, their teaching and assessment of writing and other language skills are negatively affected and consequently had to be modified. Also, the Saudi learners' lack of interest and their lower level of English proficiency pose serious challenges to those transnational teachers' writing assessment practices. More often, the teachers find the prescribed writing curriculum and assessment tools ineffective in the Saudi EFL context. Because of these experiences, the transnational teachers in this study have exhibited their awareness of their monolingual/monoculture background, Saudi's cultural and religious values, and institutional structures, which have helped them customize or supplement the writing assessment practices accordingly.

Keywords : critical ethnography, Saudi EFL context, TESOL professionals, transnationalism, writing assessment

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