

Challenges Encountered by English Language Teachers in Same-Ability Classrooms: Evidence from United Arab Emirates High Schools

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Abstract : This study focuses on exploring the challenges encountered by English language teachers in same-ability English language classrooms in the United Arab Emirates public schools. This qualitative study uses open-ended questions for data collection from teacher participants. The study sample includes the participation of 60 English language teachers from 8 public schools across 4 emirates/cities in the United Arab Emirates. The study results highlight a number of challenges that are mostly encountered by English language teachers in their classrooms while teaching in same-ability classrooms, including lack of diversity in abilities, class-time limitation, difficulty in engaging all students (especially lower-achieving students), limited opportunities for peer learning and limited linguistic diversity. A set of suggestions is to be provided by participating teachers and researchers to improve the same-ability teaching and learning experience in English language classrooms.

Keywords : English language teaching, same ability grouping, ESL, English language learners

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