

Delving into How Pre-Service ELT Teachers Leverage AI in Practicum

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Abstract

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in education has increased steadily. Particularly, teacher candidates are expected to be competent and capable of properly integrating AI to boost teaching and learning efficiency for their future classes. Although they can benefit from AI in several ways, they sometimes have challenges in their practicum. Then, this study aims to explore the perspectives and experiences of pre-service ELT teachers about using AI in their practicum. 19 teacher candidates who already completed one semester of practicum in various school settings were interviewed. The analysis of their responses showed that most of them utilized Gemini and ChatGPT along with others for numerous purposes such as lesson planning, brainstorming, generating visuals and audio tracks. Also, they used AI to create materials and activities for different language skills (e.g., speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary) tailored to characteristics of students. The main reasons to exploit AI in practicum were stated as saving time and getting inspiration. However, they faced some problems about AI such as inaccurate information, unsuitable activities, robotic phrasing and tone, difficulties in giving relevant prompts, need for modifying the outputs, and limitations of free versions. Thus, all of them emphasized that AI is just an assistant and cannot replace human teacher. Since nearly all discovered AI on their own, they underlined the necessity of a formal training about AI, especially considering prompt engineering, pedagogical and ethical usage. Hence, this study demonstrated the need for explicit teacher training for different components of AI integration in ELT.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI Integration, Language Education, Practicum, Pre-Service Teacher