

Change in policy, change in practice?

Trainee teachers and assessment practices during the
practicum

Focus of this study

This study investigates:

- the extent to which trainee teachers put into practice their evolving understanding of assessment practices,
- what type of assessment strategies are used,
- how confident they were in carrying out classroom based assessment, and
- any factors that stood in the way of their practising their new skills.

Data collection

- Data is collected through an analysis of their daily written reflections, lesson observations, and face-to-face interviews.

Context of the study

- Teacher education course of two years at Master's level
- Curriculum covers:
 - *Pedagogical content knowledge*
 - *Educational context knowledge* - relevant sociological, philosophical and psychological issues
 - *Educational research and enquiry*
 - *Field placement* – blocks of 5 weeks around Easter each of the two years
 - one day a week in schools all year round
 - one day a week to focus on research

Methodological aspects

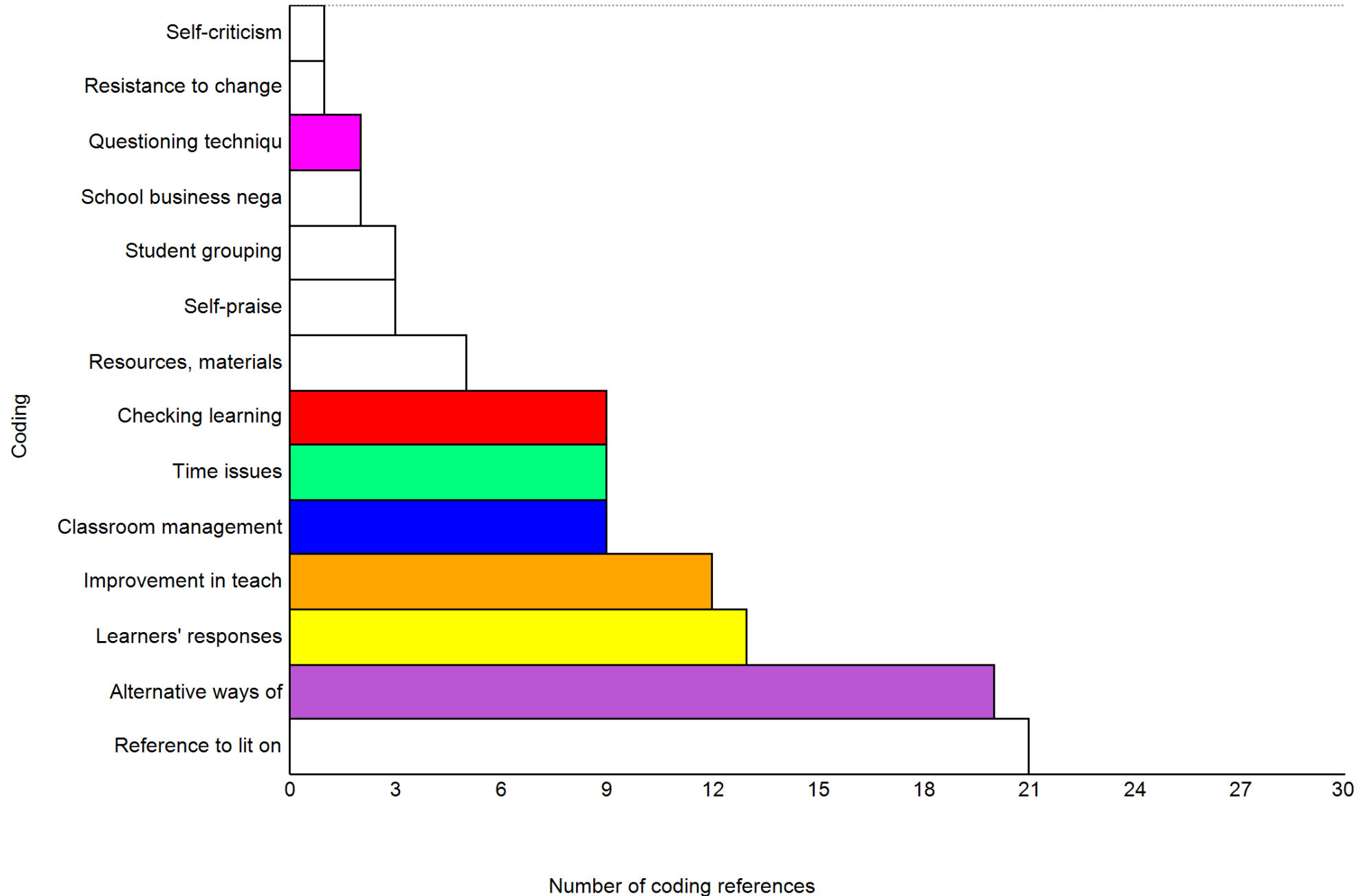
- Participants - Student teachers of English –small number – 6
- Data collection
 - Students' daily reflections during the practicum – analysed using NVIVO
 - Face-to-face interviews with students
 - Lesson Observations

The last form of data collection is problematic and might be discarded.

Coding using NVIVO

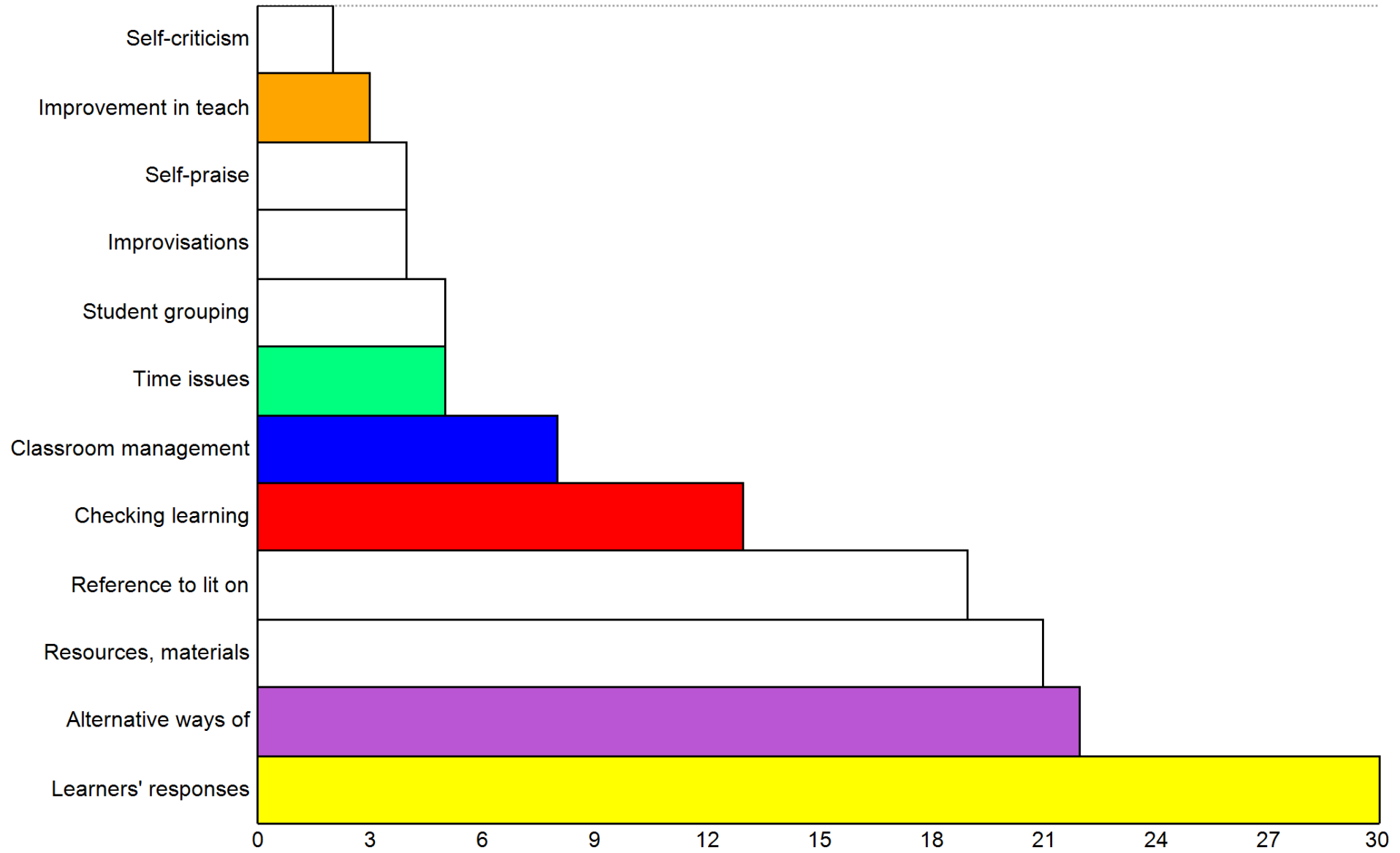
- The student teachers write a daily reflection – a thoughtful piece about the day's lessons.
- Thematically
- By lesson
- Coding requires interpretation to an extent.
- No pre-determined codes; these took shape as I read through the data and classified in according to what I felt the data was saying.

Erika - Coding



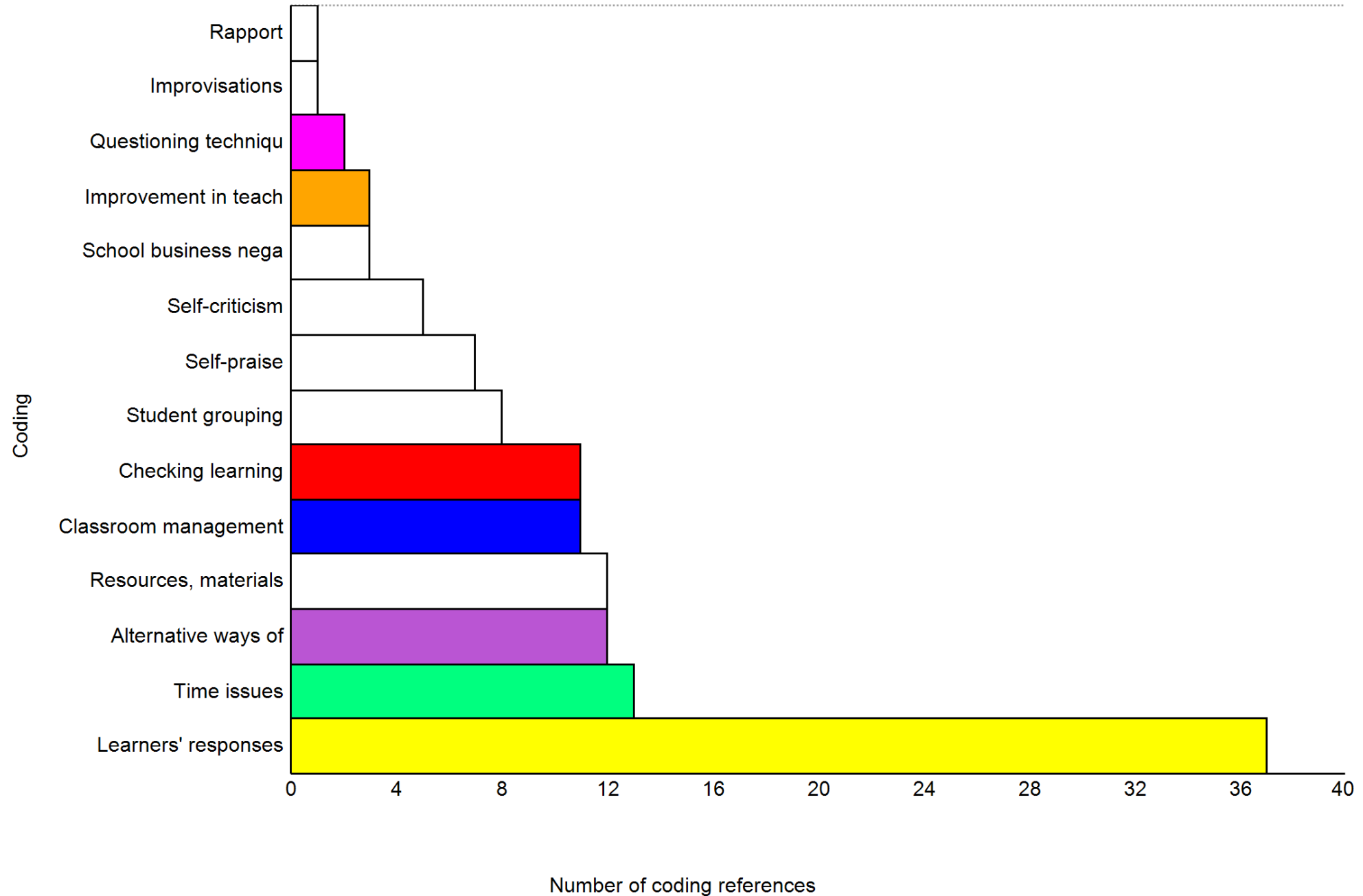
Maria - Coding

Coding

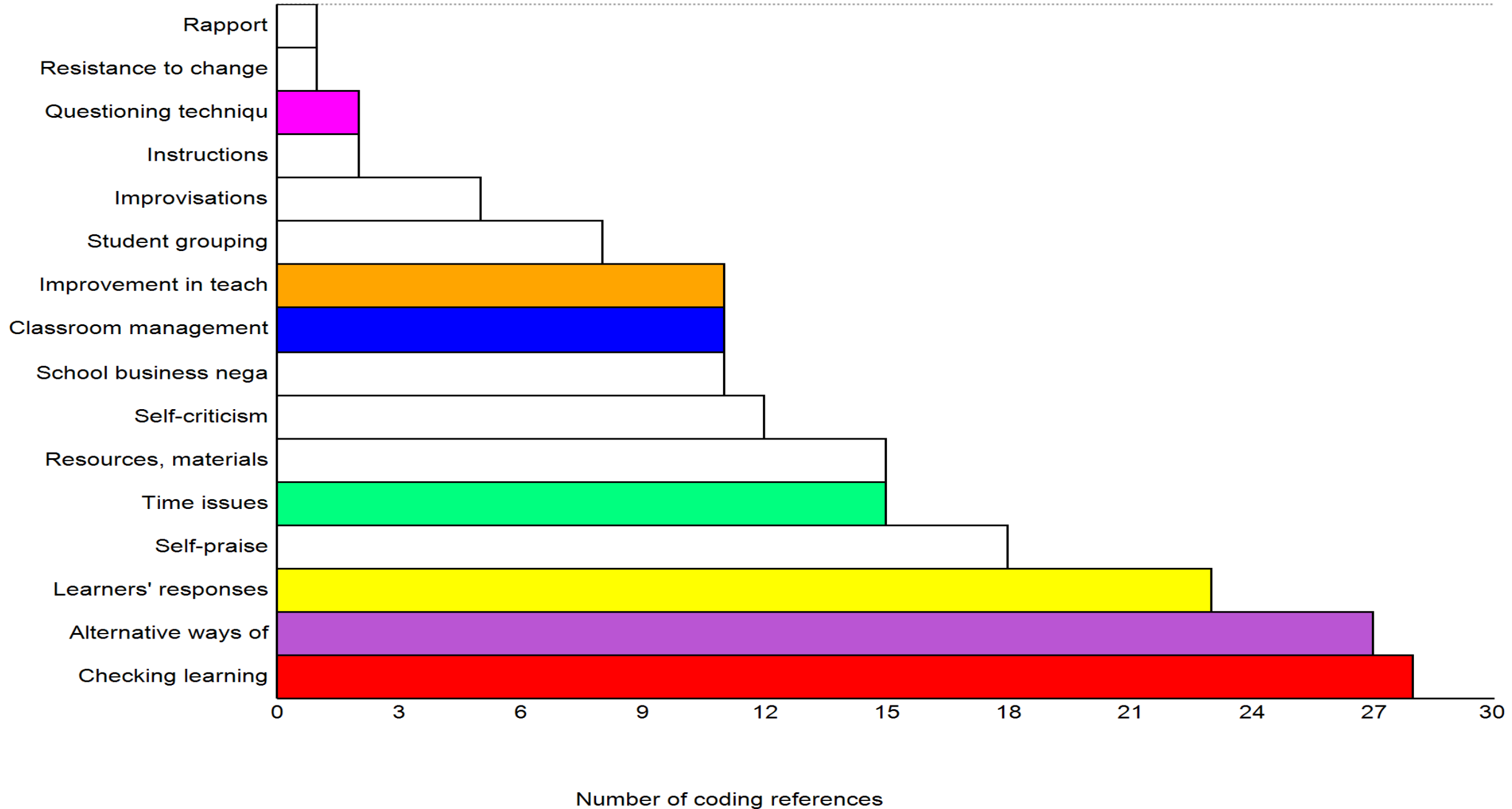


Number of coding references

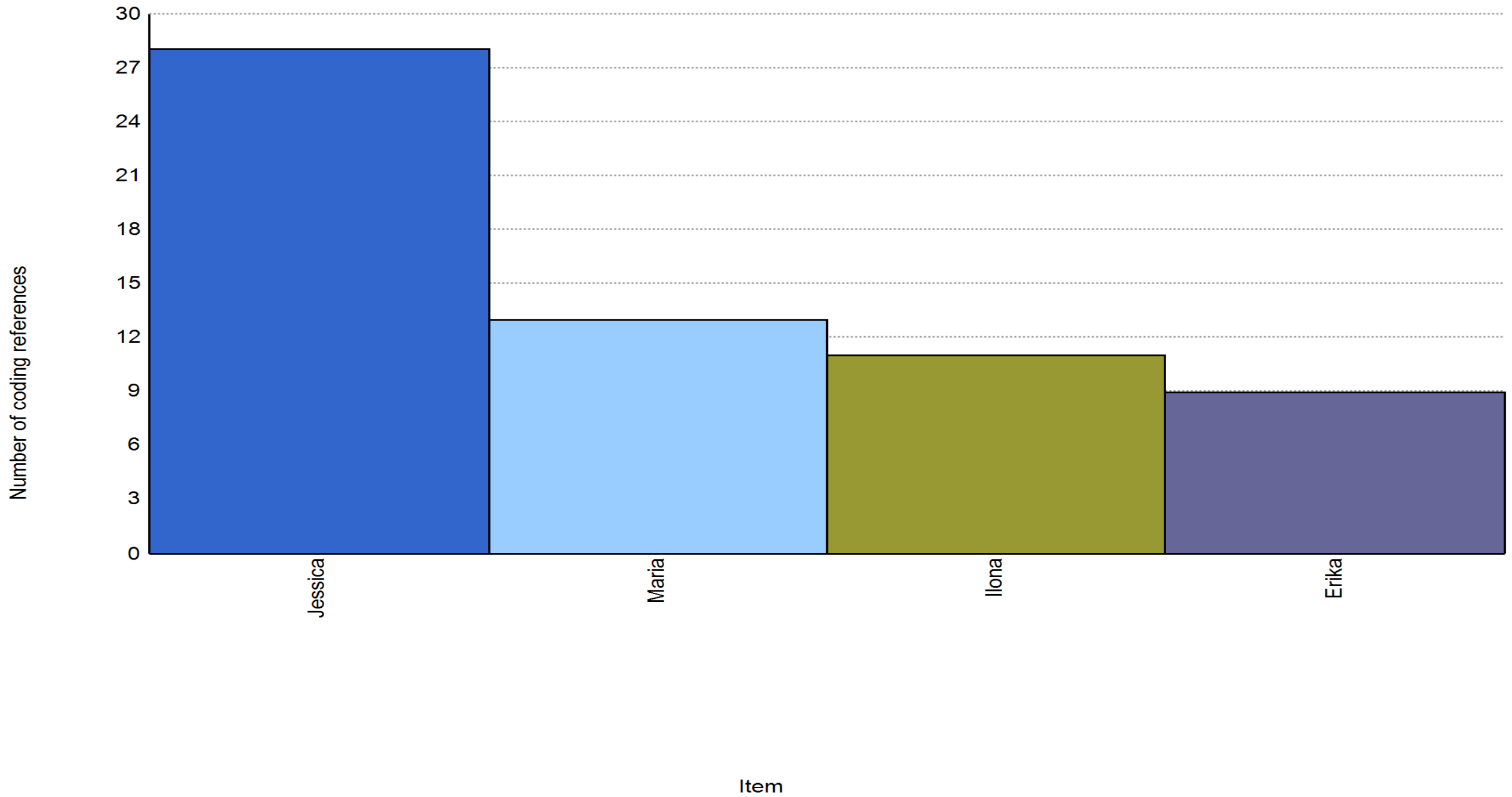
Ilona all files - Coding



Jessica all codes by number of occurrences



Checking learning - Coding by Item







Student teachers daily reflections

- [<Files\\All 4 sts\\Erika>](#) - § 9 references coded [2.95% Coverage]
- Reference 1 - 0.14% Coverage
- In order to get feedback on students' understanding, the 'Rule of Thumb'
- Reference 2 - 0.57% Coverage
- I also made use of Exit Tickets (Dr Spiteri's PPT presentation on Formative Assessment for LHN 5003, 2018) at the end of my second lesson with this group of students and this helped me to get a clear idea of what the students grasped from the lesson and what they feel they could improve on.
- Reference 3 - 0.41% Coverage
- The 'Rule of Thumb' approach to check for students' understanding was also very effective with this group of students and it helped to give me an insight into their understanding all throughout the lesson.

- Reference 4 - 0.36% Coverage
- Through this speed dating activity, students were able to make use of '*must*' and '*have to*' in the context of a job interview, whilst also enhancing their listening and speaking skills
- Reference 5 - 0.16% Coverage
- This structure helped for learning to take place as successfully as possible.
- Reference 6 - 0.42% Coverage
- they were all able to appropriately make use of the key vocabulary learned by asking questions and describing both their own feelings, personal qualities, likes and dislikes, as well as those of their classmates.

- Reference 7 - 0.34% Coverage
- students were able to identify the function of using adjectival phrases for personal descriptions. Students were then able to study the function of each adjectival phrase
- Reference 8 - 0.22% Coverage
- All students discussed the given questions effectively and found examples in the text to support their answers.
- Reference 9 - 0.35% Coverage
- On a different note, I found using Exit Tickets to be a useful approach to concluding the lesson effectively which helps to end the lesson with an effective yet short conclusion!

- [<Files\\All 4 sts\\llona>](#) - § 11 references coded [4.42% Coverage]
- Reference 1 - 0.36% Coverage
- I used the 'daily journey' method and some of them wrote new words they learnt to spell or even interesting facts they did not know before about the world's evolution.
- Reference 2 - 0.28% Coverage
- I used different methods of assessments and varying so much seemed to make them even more focused because they would not know it
- Reference 3 - 0.57% Coverage
- The learning objectives of the lesson were set very clearly and I observed this from the students' daily journal. Some of them wrote that they learnt about Valletta in the past (simple past) and how Valletta has been changing for V18 (present perfect continuous).

- Reference 4 - 0.25% Coverage
- I used the topic of football and they were using the comparatives and superlatives without knowing towards the end.
- Reference 5 - 0.40% Coverage
- There were fewer students in this class today and I managed to work differently with them. For example I asked them to check each other's work by going round and switching their places.
- Reference 6 - 0.83% Coverage
- This made the students feel more empowered and that they were more confident in what they were doing. All students participated in the lesson and I made sure that even the students of the LSA were engaged throughout the whole lesson and that the others in their groups worked at the same pace. The students volunteered for answers and were kept on their toes when nominating at random.

- Reference 7 - 0.13% Coverage
- The level of the lesson was appropriate for every student.
- Reference 8 - 0.25% Coverage
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- Reference 11 - 0.13% Coverage
- The level of the lesson was appropriate for every student.

- [<Files\\All 4 sts\\Jessica>](#) - § 28 references coded [14.53% Coverage]
- Reference 1 - 0.25% Coverage
- Firstly, all objectives were reached and I believe that the material set was appropriate to students' ability level.
- Reference 2 - 0.51% Coverage
- At first, I must admit that I was a little bit shocked because they found the vocabulary exercise to be of a higher level than theirs even though with the help of each other, together with some prompting, they completed it successfully.
- Reference 3 - 0.63% Coverage
- Nevertheless, whilst evaluating the lesson I thought that a better alternative to this could be modifying the exercises and give students words in the context of a sentence such that they are able to matching the word with the right definition more easily by deriving the meaning from context.
- Reference 4 - 0.88% Coverage
- Other than that I came out of the lesson with a huge smile on my face because I could tell that students pushed themselves further to levels which they thought they could not reach, also because rather than being given an explanation, I kept insisting to elicit the content from students and even if this took a lot of prompting they still managed to come to a conclusion and gave the answers I was looking for.

- Reference 5 - 0.87% Coverage

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- During this lesson I believe that students were happy to be creative as rather than having an exercise which tested what they learnt from the lesson, they did so in the context of their own imagination as they were free to choose which ever context to derive examples from as long as it satisfied the objective of the lesson. Students even asked questions that showed their desire to extend their learning.

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- Reference 6 - 0.40% Coverage

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- Like the first class, these students needed a bit more prompts for answers to be elicited from them and to answer the questions asked hence activities took slightly longer than anticipated.

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- Reference 7 - 0.48% Coverage

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- the objectives were fulfilled. The listening tasks were adapted to suit different levels of ability, it was integrated with the fortnight topic and included activities in which students learnt through inductive teaching.

- Reference 8 - 1.09% Coverage
- However, with respect to one of the classes, which happens to be that of lowest ability, I feel that students need more help from the teacher as the material they are expected to cover might be slightly more challenging than what they could handle. This often results in some taking whole-class feedback which would not be acceptable to use with other classes, yet I believe that at least until students have enough self-confidence in their own abilities, a push from the teacher would be rather beneficial.
- Reference 9 - 0.92% Coverage
- I also need to keep working harder on time management. Lessons tend to be thirty-five, if not thirty, minutes long. For this reason, I need to plan the right amount of activities and leave out activities that students can do without yet at the same time reaching the learning outcome successfully just the same. In so doing, I would be using time more effectively rather than rushing through the lesson to do all that is planned.

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- Reference 10 - 0.36% Coverage
- Other than that, I am very pleased with how students are reacting to the content of the lesson as I have noticed from their work and feedback at the end of each lesson.
- Reference 11 - 0.56% Coverage
- Although the objective was reached successfully as when I asked students to write a sentence describing what they learnt during today's lesson they all identified the use of collocations with make and do, I think that the lesson could have been more implicit.
- Reference 12 - 0.19% Coverage
- Nevertheless, students managed to make the connections and used the model as intended.
- Reference 13 - 0.40% Coverage
- Most of them found it difficult to complete the task since they did not completely understand what was being said in the video as it was slightly long and had some technical terminology.

- Reference 14 - 0.06% Coverage
- objectives were fulfilled.
- Reference 15 - 0.78% Coverage
- I believe that this affected student's contribution to the lesson because I was surprised that the 7-8 students spotted much less differences and similarities between the two texts presented than the 5-6-7 class who were more engaged with the reading and reached the objective (of comparing two texts about the same topic) more successfully than the other class.
- Reference 16 - 0.75% Coverage
- For these reasons, I would say that more than the learning outcome was achieved today as not only did students learn about different facts in relation to Easter which they did not know before, but they had an opportunity to enhance and show their creative work with others as well as reflect about and share world-wide Easter beliefs and traditions.

- Reference 17 - 0.58% Coverage
- First off, this class was of a much lower level than the first hence the discussion had to be more teacher-guided. Even though it was more teacher-centred I believe that given the ability of speaking this was the only way how the objective could be reached successfully.
- Reference 18 - 0.11% Coverage
- The objective was fulfilled with all three classes.
- Reference 19 - 0.32% Coverage
- I was very pleased with how the language lesson turned out, however, upon reflecting a bit on the adaptations done to suit student's ability levels.
- Reference 20 - 0.50% Coverage
- The 7-8 students, had to memorise superstitions seen in a video then re-write them from scratch. With the 6-7/5-6-7 students however, students had to match them before watching the video then watching the video to check their answers.

- Reference 21 - 0.21% Coverage
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- The objective was fulfilled successfully and it was also an activity which they found interesting.
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- Reference 22 - 0.73% Coverage
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- Also, from the feedback that I took from students at the end of the lesson, students felt very prepared to write a picture story thus showing, not only that the learning objective was fulfilled successfully but also highlights good scaffolding for both writing lessons as students could link and refer to material covered from both lessons.
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- Reference 23 - 0.35% Coverage
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- Whilst the 7-8 class followed the instructions as intended and went about with the activities as planned, the 5-6-7 class found the same task far more challenging.

- Reference 24 - 0.58% Coverage

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- Even though they did not solve the mystery, the speaking objective of this lesson was fulfilled nonetheless because just as done with the other two classes, students spoke about their personal experience of being a particular character who is part of a murder mystery.

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- Reference 25 - 0.36% Coverage

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- Both objectives were reached successfully however I feel that I needed better scaffolding and resources for the lesson on character analysis with the 5-6-7 class. The

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- Reference 26 - 0.80% Coverage

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- I differentiated the material in an attempt to suit all three levels and challenge them accordingly. For this reason, I gave the 6-7 and 5-6-7 students a copy of the conversation transcript with blanks to be filled in with formal and informal phrases. However, I left the 7-8 without the transcript and asked them to write down formal and informal phrases whilst listening.

- Reference 27 - 0.22% Coverage
- Students were very engaged in the lesson and it resulted into a very fruitful discussion about adverts.
- Reference 28 - 0.64% Coverage
- Nevertheless, the objective was reached as the criteria for designing an advert was discussed. Students also created their own adverts. Not only did students enjoy this activity but it served as useful practise to ensure the fulfilment of the objective and students' understanding of the lesson.

- [<Files\\All 4 sts\\Maria>](#) - § 13 references coded [10.24% Coverage]
- Reference 1 - 0.81% Coverage
- From the exit slips I collected, I realised that although the learners did understand what I wanted them to write down, they did not understand that I wanted them to write an individual sentence and not the same sentence as the people they were in a group with during the previous activity.
- Reference 2 - 2.81% Coverage
- What Black and William (1998) term as “assessment for learning” strategies, i.e. “activities undertaken by teachers, and their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged”, took place in today’s lessons in the form of peer assessment, CCQs and nominating.
- With regard to the lesson I had with 1 Coral, CCQs took place when the learners were set a peer-assessment task based on a role-play, where while one pair did the role play, the other pair ticked the relevant boxes in a checklist of criteria, and one mark was given per criterion satisfied. CCQs such as: “Will you be doing your role play without anybody watching you?” and “Who will be watching you?” were used to check if the learners agreed what they needed to do. I did not write these on my lesson plan but felt the need to ask them such questions when I set up the peer assessment activity. The learners answered these questions correctly.

- Reference 3 - 1.00% Coverage
- In this way, peer assessment helped the learners understand better the importance of various verbal and non-verbal characteristics in interviews, as they did not only create a role-play based on criteria, but assessed another role play based on the same criteria. They were thus able to detect whether the necessary verbal and non-verbal aspects were included.
- Reference 4 - 1.10% Coverage
- With regard to the two other lessons I had with the year 8 classes (S2567, S234), the language structures which were used for expressing opinions were not only used in groups, but also when I nominated students to ask them to mention certain opinions they gave while discussing controversial sports. In this way, whenever I checked for understanding, the learners showed that they had understood.

- Reference 5 - 0.30% Coverage
- The students performed well as they managed to convert the formal statements to informal ones successfully.
- Reference 6 - 1.10% Coverage
- That being said, the students know what they need to do as they managed to select the relevant success criteria for a recommendation email (including formal statements) and were able to identify the use of such criteria in the model provided. In this way, they are now able to write a recommendation email in which they will describe their friend (a football player)'s appearance and personality.
- Reference 7 - 0.30% Coverage
- the students worked well together and came up with very good stories using the linking words worked on before.

- Reference 8 - 0.23% Coverage
- In fact, the students worked well in their groups and came up with a great product.
- Reference 9 - 1.13% Coverage
- That being said, one of the pairs did not get the presentation done. This is why I split the presentations over two days, so that students who do not manage to get it done and students who are absent get a second chance. The students who did not get it done, though, shall get negative points, as they all needed to get their presentations done till today, and it would not be fair on those who got it done.
- Reference 10 - 0.57% Coverage
- At the end of the lesson, when I told the students to say which presentation was their favourite, the students based their judgement on the presentation-related criteria focused on in the previous lessons.

- Reference 11 - 0.48% Coverage

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- In addition, I believe that the format of the handout helped them plan their stories as it was in the form of a diagram (with boxes and arrows) rather than in a linear form.

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- Reference 12 - 0.23% Coverage

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- In fact, the students worked well in their groups and came up with a great product.

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- Reference 13 - 0.19% Coverage

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- Everyone spoke as they all had to answer their partner's questions.

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Title and Content Layout with List

- Pre-service teacher education represents a valuable period in the journey of becoming a teacher during which trainees learn about good practice in teaching, learning, and assessment. Skills and pedagogical content knowledge are gradually developed, among which are those relating to classroom based assessment and its pivotal role in the teaching and learning process. Pre-service teachers learn about fundamental concepts and practices in assessing learners' language skills and abilities on a daily basis in a classroom context adopting an assessment for learning approach. This preparation has recently taken on the importance it deserves following a change in local assessment policy which sees classroom based assessment made more visible and formalised as teachers are expected to record and report instances of students' learning during the school year. This evidence of student learning is intended to be used formatively to support learners with their learning, and summatively as it contributes to the end-of-year formal summative assessment. Trainee teachers on a two-year Master's level teacher education course carry out their practicum formally over a five-week period and observe lessons on one day a week during the rest of the year. This paper investigates the extent to which the trainee teachers put into practice their evolving understanding of assessment practices, what type of assessment strategies are used, how confident they were in carrying out classroom based assessment, and any factors that stood in the way of their practising their new skills. Data is collected through an analysis of their daily written reflections, lesson observations, and face-to-face interviews.

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