

Prospective Teachers' Barriers in Field Practice Experience

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Abstract

Teaching Practice Experience Program is one of the mandatory courses for all students of the faculty of education. This activity aims to provide real experience for students as prospective teachers. This study described prospective teachers' difficulties in practical teaching during their field practice experience program in Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia. This study applied a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study type of research. The participants were selected purposively. They were the seventh-semester students of the English Department who had conducted field practice experience consisting of 6 students. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The result revealed that among the barriers they encountered during their field practice experience were difficulties in facilitating a vibrant classroom atmosphere, teaching by using English, selecting and implementing appropriate methods or techniques, especially in teaching writing skills and challenges to execute lesson plans. Henceforth, this research contributes to enrich the literatures of field teaching practice and the barriers found, so it can be a valuable reference in the next research to provide the solution of the problems.

Keywords: Prospective teachers; barrier; field practice experience.

1. Introduction

Field experience practice is one of the compulsory programs for students who learn at teacher training faculty. It aims to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge and experience to teach. Field experience allow novice teachers to comprehend thoroughly and facilitate their own transition from a student to a classroom teacher (Heafner, McIntyre, & Spooner, 2014). The program is also a transition process where a student teacher candidate act as a real teacher to develop teaching competence. Not only it provides opportunities for students to learn how to teach and work under the supervision of a supervisor, but it is also a medium where theory meets practice. It is where the student teacher candidates experience firsthand of the real world of teaching. Moreover, Field practice experience contributes positively on students' readiness to become a teacher (Aryani, 2023). Before conducting the practical teaching, the prospective teachers are equipped with knowledge in teacher education program.

Teaching is a complex activity. It requires skills and awareness of an educator towards his or her duties that involve planning, management, and knowledge related to the material being taught. These involve factors determining the success or failure of the teaching and learning process. In the practice, most students encountered problems during their teaching practice. Among the challenges they faced were a need for self-confidence to face students and the difficulty the delivering lesson to students.

In the field related to teaching problems, students feel nervous about dealing with students in a real classroom, which causes difficulty in delivering materials. As a result, they seemed incompetent and were underestimated and ignored by students in the classroom. Furthermore, they often felt insecure, and the learning materials needed to be delivered properly. They also need help to reach the teaching target, and the scenario that occurred in the classroom contradicted their plans. Considering the problems above, the researchers assume that prospective teachers face many problems in carrying out the practical teaching. Thus, this research explores students' difficulties in conducting practical experience programs in-depth in Langsa, Aceh. It is because the success or failure to resolve problems will determine whether the field practical experience program can prepare student teacher candidates to carry out their duties and roles as educators.

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2. Literature Review

Field practice experience is a program which facilitate prospective teachers to experience actual teaching in practical schools. It aims to equip the teachers' candidates to be professional education personnel. The field practice experience is referred to as teaching practice experience, which are curricular activities that must be carried out by practical students, as a training to apply the theory obtained within their studies, following the requirements that have been set to gain experience and field skills regarding the implementation of teaching at partner schools. It is evidenced by the implementation of field practice experiences the novice teacher's candidate obtained in-depth knowledge on leadership and classroom instruction, able to develop their craft as educational leaders (Akinde, Harr, & Burger, 2017). The program is also aimed at generating professional teachers facilitated teacher education program. The teacher education programs are the environments in which pre-service language teachers construct their knowledge, begin to form their personal identities and learn to teach (Hos, Cinarbas, & Yagci, 2019).

Teacher plays a critical role in a learning process. Among the teachers' roles are firstly, teachers as learning resources. It refers to teacher is said to be good when he can master the subject matter well—secondly, the teacher is the facilitator. A facilitator plays a role in facilitating students in learning process activities. As a facilitator, the teacher must be able to use media and learning resources properly. In addition, teachers must also be able to communicate and interact with students. Thirdly, a teacher is a manager. It refers to the teacher's role in creating a comfortable learning climate. Teachers must be able to manage learning resources and carry out their role as learning resources themselves. Fourthly, teacher as a guide. Students are unique individuals, that uniqueness can be seen from the existence of each difference. This difference requires the teacher to act as a guide. They are guiding students to discover their potential. In addition, teacher as a motivator. The learning process will be successful if students have the motivation to learn. Therefore, teachers need to grow and generate students' motivation to learn. Finally, teachers as evaluators. Teacher's role is to collect information about the success of the learning that has been done. As an evaluator, the teacher has two functions. The first function plays a role in determining students' success in achieving predetermined goals. The second function plays a role in the success of the teacher in carrying out all the activities that have been programmed (Sanjaya, 2013). Considering these roles, it is important to equip the prospective teachers with knowledge and practice during their study and the field practice experience to generate skillful teachers to play the role to support their students' learning and to achieve educational objectives.

Not only the professional knowledge, prospective teachers are also equipping with knowledge to facilitate learning activity during their studies. Learning defines as an interaction between educators and students. Students actively carry out learning activities, while educators facilitate learning activities. Good interaction between students and educators contribute to the achievement of learning objectives optimally. Learning activities involves several components which affect learning objectives. The components include the learning subject, lesson material, learning strategy, learning media, and support. Moreover, prospective teachers are taught to develop four competencies, namely pedagogical competence, which is the competency related to the mastery of the material; social competence, which is related to the ability of educators to interact appropriately, including to communicate with the community, students, educational institutions, and fellow educators; personal competence which relates to himself both as an educator and as a citizen; and personality competence which requires an educator to have a good personality, including trustworthy, honest, and responsible (Daryanto, 2013).

In addition, teachers are also essential to know factors affecting learning, which include teacher factor, which includes teachers' experience and backgrounds, class management or class control, lesson planning and mastery of learning materials also affects the learning process. Then, student factor is the student's background, ability, and basic knowledge of students that affect the learning activities. In addition, the gender, character, and attitudes of students require different treatment. Given these students' differences, teachers are required to adjust their learning styles—moreover, factors of facilities and infrastructure. Facilities are directly supporting the learning process. Infrastructure includes indirectly support for the learning process to continue. Another factor is the environmental factor, which involves class organization and socio-psychological climate factors affecting the learning process. Class organization factors include the number of students in one class. Smaller class organizations will be less effective in achieving learning objectives. The socio-psychological climate factor is the harmonious relationship between the people involved in learning (Suparman, 2012).

Prospective teachers are also experiencing microteaching session in a practicum during their studies. This includes efforts conducted by a university to assist prospective teachers in bridging theory, beside it is also focusing on classroom management, time management, and teaching expected lesson and content and practice (Rita Moore, 2003). Among the objectives of implementing microteaching are facilitating, training, and developing prospective

teachers in terms of basic teaching skills; to facilitating, training, and fostering candidates and teachers in terms of having the competencies expected by the provisions of laws and government regulations; to train the appearance and teaching skills which are carried out part by a part specifically in order to obtain maximum ability following the professional demands as a teacher; to provide opportunities for candidates and teachers to practice and correct and assess their strengths and weaknesses in terms of teaching skills, and to provide opportunities for everyone who practices to improve and improve their strengths and weaknesses so that teachers always try to improve their services to students.

In addition to carrying out teaching practices, students also evaluate the teaching methods of other students. It is carried out to correct students' mistakes in practical teaching. Through this assessment, the students may improve their teaching performance in the future practice. Microteaching is done before students use the Teaching Practice Experience at partner schools. During microteaching, students carry out teaching practices at the University with other students acting as students being taught. Meanwhile, during the Teaching Practice Experience, students carry out teaching practices for elementary, junior and senior high school at partner schools.

Some of activities carried out during the field practice experience include the student teachers observe the school environment and the implementation learning activities in the first ten days at the appointed schools. After carrying out the observations, they carried out guided teaching exercises under the guidance of in-service teachers. Afterwards, they will conduct independent teaching under the guidance of the in-service teacher assigned as their supervisor. As prospective teachers, practical students are responsible for all activities that occur during learning. Before conducting the field experience practice, the prospective teachers are equipped and trained with the knowledge and practical teaching in a microteaching subject. Microteaching is an activity for teachers or prospective teachers training to possess teaching skills through a simple pursuit process. As a course, microteaching is carried out for one semester. During the implementation of microteaching students carried out practical teaching exercises four times. Students carry out teaching practice exercises in pairs twice (peer teaching). After that, two classical teaching practice exercises were in one class, where the other students acted as students (Arifin & Barnawi, 2015).

3. Method

This study was qualitative with a case study type of research. According to Sandelowski (2000), qualitative descriptive study aims to retrieve information from stakeholders about their own experiences with the institutions to reconstruct the actual governmental design of public policies or organizational management systems. The method employed has to faithfully draw the picture upon which most interviewees from a given setting agree. In this case, the researchers aim to describe a specific phenomenon experienced by student teachers in the context of Langsa, Aceh, especially in exploring the difficulties they encountered in conducting field practice experience.

The research was conducted at IAIN Langsa, especially at Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty. The participants were students of the eighth semester of English Department IAIN Langsa, which was selected purposively. There were six students were selected as participant in the research. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews to investigate the participants difficulties in teaching English during the field practice program.

4. Results and Discussion

The researcher carried out activities to collect the required data during the research, such as directing and conducting the interview with several required participants.

4.1. The Results of Interview

In carried out the interview activities, the researchers conducted the interview with six students at the eighth semester of English Education Department IAIN Langsa. In this interview, the researchers focused to find out the students' difficulties in teaching English during the teaching practice experience in Langsa. From the result of the interviews, the researchers discovered several information related to the students' difficulties in teaching English during the teaching practice experience in Langsa.

From the 6 participants, there were 2 participants (1 and 6) who stated that they had difficulty in managing the class because of the student capacity of more than 30 students. The number of students makes them nervous dealing with students and it is difficult to get students' focus. They are mostly ignored in class. In addition, participants 4 and 5 revealed that they found it difficult to manage the class because of excessive nervousness. They stated that their

nervousness was caused by their concern over their English language skills which they realized that they were still very limited in getting into the world of practice. Then, participants 2 and 3 stated that they had difficulty in managing the class because of the students' loss of interest in learning. They do not know how to motivate students to learn. As a result, during the teaching-learning process, students complained more and even ignored what was said by the teacher. They stated that students lost interest in studying after the pandemic. This makes it difficult for them to direct students to focus on learning.

Furthermore, all participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) stated that they did not use English during the teaching and learning process. They do not use English during the teaching and learning process because their English skills are still very limited. Participants 2, 3, 4 and 5 stated that they had difficulty in speaking English because they only knew a little vocabulary which was not enough to use in communication and they had not been able to pronounce English sentences correctly. Meanwhile, participant 1 revealed that she had difficulty in translating English sentences into Indonesian meanings that were simple and easy for students to understand. That's why she chose not to use English during the teaching and learning process. Participant 6 also stated that he had difficulty speaking English with correct grammar, so he chose not to use English during the teaching and learning process. He was worried that it would cause him to teach the wrong things to students.

In addition, all participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) also stated that the most difficult English skill for them to teach to students was writing skill. They stated that it was because they themselves were not even able to master tenses and other basic English grammar. They do not know how to write English sentences with good and correct grammar. They are afraid to teach the wrong things to students. Participant 1 also stated that he had difficulty teaching speaking skills. Students who are not very familiar with English find it very difficult to get used to pronouncing English vocabulary, to remember and understand their meaning. Participant 6 also experienced other difficulties besides teaching writing skills. He has difficulty teaching listening to students who are also very unfamiliar with English. Students even find it very difficult to catch what participant 6 was said, let alone to write or even say it.

Besides, when the researchers asked about the participants' ability to apply the teaching skills that had been learned in the micro teaching course, the researcher got some information about the difficulties experienced by the participants. All participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) stated that they were not able to apply the teaching and learning process in accordance with what was taught in the micro teaching course because they did not teach using English as suggested in the micro teaching course. In addition, Participants 2, 3, 4 and 5 also stated that they had difficulty in mastering the English learning materials that they had to teach according to the syllabus determined by the available curriculum. They still feel unfamiliar with the material so they are not able to master it well. As a result, they are also not able to convey the material to the students properly. While participants 1 and 6 stated that they were able to understand the learning material, but they were not able to convey the learning material to students. They are confused about how to make students able to understand what they are saying. They also stated that they only teach using one method, namely the lecture method. They do not try to teach by playing for fear of having difficulty handling a large number of students.

Furthermore, the researchers found information that all participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) could not implement teaching and learning activities according to the lesson plans they had made. Participants 2, 3, 4 and 5 stated that they had difficulty implementing teaching and learning activities according to the lesson plan because they did not master the material that had been determined by the curriculum, so they taught other materials that were simpler and could be accepted by students. In addition, they also stated that the students had not been able to accept difficult material. They teach the material according to the ability of the students even though the material is not available in the syllabus that has been determined. Meanwhile, participants 1 and 6 stated that they had difficulty implementing teaching and learning activities according to the lesson plan because the material determined by the curriculum was too difficult for students who were not familiar with English to accept. They must teach the material beyond the maximum meeting specified by the syllabus. So when they should have taught other material, they still have to complete the previous material.

4.2. Discussion

The researchers desired to supply the clear reply to the research question. Therefore, the researchers will elucidate it below distinctly.

The research question that had been formulated "What are the students difficulties in teaching English during the teaching practice experience?" from the result of the interview, the researcher found that there were several students

difficulties in teaching English during the teaching practice experience. All participants experienced difficulties in managing the class. The thing that caused the participants to have difficulty managing the class was excessive nervousness. This nervousness makes it difficult for them to establish harmonious communication so that the learning atmosphere is not built properly. Therefore, the teaching and learning process becomes awkward so that students ignore the presence of participants during the teaching and learning process. Briggs in Anni, C, T., & Rifai (2012) describes learning as an educator's effort to shape an environment with student behavior, where students are given the opportunity and think and choose learning materials according to their interests and abilities. However, in this case, field practice students were unable to build the atmosphere or learning environment due to the difficulties they experienced.

Then, the researchers also found that during the field experience practice, the participants had difficulty communicating using English during the teaching and learning process. The things that cause these difficulties are the lack of vocabulary, not being able to pronounce English sentences correctly, and the difficulty of translating English sentences into Indonesian meanings that are simple and easy for students to understand. Therefore, the participants tend to use Indonesian when teaching English.

Furthermore, of the four English skills, all participants experienced difficulties in teaching writing, speaking and listening skills. The factors that made it difficult for the participants to teach these two skills were the participants' inability to master basic English grammar, and the lack of practice in speaking English in everyday life. Participants realized that these difficulties came from themselves who had not been able to master English skills well. How can they teach things that they are not even capable of mastering.

All participants realized that they had not been able to apply what they had learned in the micro teaching course into real teaching practice in schools. They found difficulties in the stages of delivering learning materials to students. Most of them even have difficulty because they are not able to master the material they have to teach. All participants tend to convey the material using the lecture method only. They only use the lecture method because they do not understand other teaching methods. Some of them choose not to teach with a fun method because it has the potential to cause other difficulties because they have to handle more than 30 students. This is contrary to the opinion of Sanjaya (2013) who states that the role of the teacher is very important in the learning process which includes the teacher as a learning resource, the teacher as a facilitator, and the teacher as a manager. In this case, it is very contrary to the facts that occur in field practice students at school. The inability of students in mastering learning materials, facilitating students in learning process activities and in learning management means that they cannot act as teachers as learning resources, facilitators, and managers.

Then, the researchers found that all participants had difficulty implementing the teaching and learning process according to the lesson plans they had designed. Participants have difficulty teaching material that is too difficult for them to understand so they teach other material that is easier to teach even though the material is not included in the curriculum.

Related to Suparman (2012), he states that the teacher is one of the factors that affect the learning system. Experience in the background of a teacher is part of the aspects that affect the quality of the learning process. In addition, the ability to manage learning, class control, lesson planning and mastery of learning materials also affects the learning process. In this discussion, it is very different from the reality faced by students practicing field experience. The difficulties they experience are the reason why students practicing field experience cannot achieve the criteria of a proper teacher and there are many differences in the facts they face when learning micro teaching and practicing field experience at school.

5. Conclusion

Based on the result and the analyzing discussion of the previous chapter, the researchers concluded that there were difficulties experienced by students during the teaching practice experience such as in building the classroom atmosphere, in teaching using English, in delivering learning materials especially writing skill, in mastering learning materials and teaching methods, and in applying the teaching and learning process according to the lesson plan.

Based on the conclusion above, the researchers believe that the students' difficulties in teaching English during the teaching practice experience be able to overcome by providing several suggestions. First, students should be more concerned about the relevant subjects before taking teaching practice experience. So that, they can implement the teaching and learning process based on the lesson plan. Second, students should be more recognized to the teaching strategy through the micro teaching subject. Moreover, the writers suggest that the other researchers should be able to

find out more students' difficulties in teaching English during the teaching practice experience and provide the best solution for the problems.

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