The Problems and Solutions in Teaching Practice for Preservice-Teacher Students

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Abstract

Numerous studies on teaching practice of the pre-service teachers indicated that the majority of the pre-service teachers have passed the teaching practice with good grade, but their teaching competence was not adequate. This study aims at firstly, identifying and mapping the problems overcome by pre-service teachers in some faculties of teaching. Secondly, formulating the solutions for those problems. This study employs literature research where the data was collected through written resources. Qualitative analysis was utilized to analyze the data. The resources were taken from 9 study results of teaching practice at 5 faculties of teaching and evaluation results of pre-service teachers' observation of FITK UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.

Key Words: *teaching practice, teaching competence, pre-service teachers*

Theoretical frameworks

There are some factors for preparing competent teachers. In addition to input quality of the teacher students, the quality of teaching and learning in the faculties of teaching as well as the quality of teaching practice program contribute significantly in preparing competent teachers. On the national perspective, the government has been formulated four types of teacher's competence as mentioned in the Description of Government Ordinance No. 19 year 2005 about the National Standard of Education, covering: pedagogical competence, personal competence, social competence, and professional competence.

Musfah (2012: 27) mentioned that, "A competence relates to the adaptation ability towards the new working environment, where one can carry out their duties satisfactorily based on their possessed ability". This is in line with what Debling (1995: 80) posed that, "Competence is a broad concept which embodies the ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations within the occupational area".

Competence is closely associated to the standard. Someone is considered as competent in his field when his knowledge, skill, attitude, and achievement comply with the

standard constructed by the institution or by government. Wolf (1995: 40) ads, "Competence is the ability to perform: in this case, to perform at the standards expected of employees".

Firstly, pedagogical competence is the ability to manage the pupils (BSNP, 2006: 88). Lang and Evans (2006: 1) mention about the criteria of an effective teacher, "A good speaker who understands their pupils very well, appreciates the difference, and utilizes some variations in their teaching and learning activities. His class is exciting and challenging, the assessment is conducted fairly since there are various way to show the students' comprehension about what they have learned."

Horowitz, *et al.* (in Darling-Hammond in Bransford, 2005: 88) in *Educating Teachers for Developmentally Appropriate Practice,* explained about the criteria of a good and effective teacher, that is: a teacher who can demonstrate the subject they are teaching and assist the pupils to comprehend and utilize the new knowledge and skills.

Secondly, personal competence is "the personal traits which are: a) firm, b) stable, c) mature, d) wise, e) dignified, f) well-behaved, g) exemplary for the pupils and the society, h) self-controlled, and i) sustainably self-improved" (BSNP, 2006: 88). Additionally, Musfah (2012: 43) mentions, "The essence of learning is a behavior change. A teacher will be able to change the students' behavior only if he himself has succeeded being a good human."

Thirdly, social competence is an ability of a teacher to be a part of a society in: 1) communicating orally and writtenly, b) using information and communication technology properly, c) interacting with the pupils, fellow teachers, academic staffs, and parents, d) interacting with the surrounding society in courtesy (BSNP, 2006: 88).

A teacher, like the other people, is social creature who lives side by side with the other humans. Teachers are expected to give a good model by performing their rights and obligations as part of the surrounding community. Teachers should have a high social sense, should be sociable and helpful. They should not be the individuals who are persevered and ignorance to the surrounded society (Musfah, 2012: 52).

Musfah states (2012: 54), "The teachers' duty is to teach the knowledge to the students. Teachers should not only master the materials they are teaching, but also comprehend them intensively and extensively. Therefore, the students should always learn to deepen their knowledge related to their subject of study."

Fourthly, professional competence is an ability to master the teaching materials intensively and extensively which consist of: a) concept, structure, and method of science, technology, and art which are coherent to the subject of study, b) teaching materials in school curriculum, c) concept connection of inter-subject, d) the application of scientific concept in

daily life, and e) the professional competition in the global context by preserving national values and culture (BSNP, 2006: 88). Boix-Mansilla and Gardner explained, "A teacher should apprehend the science, purpose, method, and the forms of materials he is teaching." (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005: 387).

Curriculums of teacher faculties are developed to prepare future teachers who possess at least those aforementioned competences. Despite various models of teaching, each faculty of teaching obliges its students to have teaching practice at schools. Teaching practice is conducted at the last year of study by the assumption that the pre-service teachers have already mastered the teaching theories and have passed micro teaching.

Teaching practice is a compulsory program for the students in order to equip them with skills for being professional teachers. The model of teaching practice varies from one teaching faculty to the others, either by the duration or by the scope. By duration, there are teaching practices which occur for four months or two months at schools. By the scope, teaching practices consist of classroom teaching only and the integrated one (classroom teaching and school administration). The latter model is applied by FITK UIN Jakarta with the term "Praktik Profesi Keguruan Terpadu (PPKT)". Similarly, FITK UIN Yogyakarta employs teaching practice model with the term "PPL I and PPL-KKN Intergratif" which focuses on promoting the students' competence in developing teaching materials and teaching practice in classroom.

The students' passing rate of teaching practice which is nearly 100% (Solihatun, 2012; Ilmi, 2013) has not yet adequately indicated a good teaching competence. The effectiveness of teaching practice, after all, can not be determined by the score of teaching practice examination nor the number of the graduates. Instead, the success of teaching practice is reflected by the process at classroom and school level. Score of teaching practice as a subject is often determined by the consideration of teacher tutors and the supervisors thus an objective and reliable standard is hard to determined.

As pre-service teachers, students are demanded to have skills of analyzing standard of competence/ basic competence, syllabus, lesson plan, and minimum passing standard. In addition to the mastery of the theory, these skills need 2 to 3 times real practice, under the supervision of expert lecturers.

The effectiveness of a teaching practice program is greatly affected by the student, supervisor, teacher tutor, students' characteristics, and school facilities (Solihatun, 2012). Furthermore, the quality of the study program and the quality of teaching and learning at the teaching faculty influences indirectly to the effectiveness of teaching practice.

Based on the related research results on teaching practice and based on the self-experience of author as a supervisor, below are the problems emerged during teaching practice which should be taken as consideration for the teacher faculty.

Students' Competence

Students' pre competence in developing the set of teaching and learning affects significantly to their performa in the classroom. This competence was gained during their study in the faculty. Therefore, the quality of study program and faculty as well as the students' intelligence are the prerequisite for building students' competence. However, Solihatun (2012) and Sukoco (2013) found that pre-service teachers are incompetence in comprehending the subjects based on syllabus. Based on Tim Revisi PPKT (2010: 2) report, it is mentioned that "The low rate of students' professional competence of FITK indicates the lack of experience exposure equipped for them". It is also caused by "the teaching method applied during the teaching practice did not use active learning. The lack of teaching experience impedes the students in handling the problems related to the teaching activities" (Huda: 2011).

Sukoco (2013) finds out that pre-service teachers' professional competence serves the lowest among the other three competences. Based on the survey of students' perspective, it is concluded that the pre-service PE (Physical Education) teachers are: 77% pedagogic, 81% personal, 69% social, and 60% professional. In SMPN 5 Malang, the competences of pre-service PE (Physical Exercise) teachers are: 69% pedagogic, 74% personal, 66% social, and 57% professional. Similarly, in SMPN 9 Malang, the preservice teachers' competence are: 83% pedagogic, 84% personal, 74% social, and 67% professional. SMPN 5, SMPN 9, SMPN 19 for the pegagogical aspects are 70%, 83%, 78%, personal: 74%, 84%, 83%, social: 57%, 64%, 57%, and professional: 49%, 57%, 49%".

One interesting finding is found in Izzah's (2009) study which summarizes that "Most of the Mathematics pre-service teachers have already been able to open the lesson well, but are failed in delivering the teaching objectives. In the main activities, most of the students have already mastered the questioning skills, giving reinforcements, and class managements. And, in the closing activities, the students have succeeded in concluding the lesson by making a summary with the students and giving follow-ups. Some students are able to conduct assessment in the form of mini test/ quiz and portfolio to measure the affective and psycomotoric aspects (workbook), and students' exercise book. However, the assessment was

not conducted continously, consistently, systematic and well-planned due to the limited duration of the teaching practice program".

On the other hand, Maharani (2006) points out that the pre-service PE teachers of State University of Malang year 2006-2007 has shown an overall good work during the teaching practice, but still needs improvement in the lesson closing technique. A small number of pre-service teachers linguistically ready for international based schools due to the English proficiency. As a result, these teachers are projected for average-quality schools.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the weaknesses of pre-service teachers are: subject mastery, teaching method, media of teaching and learning, lesson opening technique and lesson closing technique.

Pre-service teachers' commitment

Some pre-service teachers do not take maximum advantage of teaching practice program as a chance to learn directly and contextually from the school teachers. They tend to be passive at school while waiting the command from the teacher tutors. Ideally, they should pose questions and consider the school teachers as the informants who share about the art of teaching, theoretically and practically. The prompt presence of the pre-service teachers at school is also an indicator of their commitment to the teaching practice program. Small number of students use excuses to skip from schools which thus show their incommitment.

The Supervisors' Competence

The competence of supervisors in guiding and helping the pre-service teachers contributes profoundly to the effectiveness of teaching practice program (Khumaidi, 2012). However, the intensity of consultation and visitation to schools varies one another. The obstacle was not necessarily on the lack of supervisors' competence, but on the time availability of the supervisors. Therefore, it needs not only the commitment of the pre-service teachers but also the commitment of the supervisors to visit regularly their supervisees at schools and to monitor their progress.

Teacher Tutor

Teacher tutors who are the school teachers supporting the pre-service teachers in their daily teaching activities, play an important role in succeeding a teaching practice program (Khumaidi, 2012). These tutors are assigned by the schools to guide the pre-service teachers to master the tools and equipment in teaching and learning. The communication between the tutors and the pre-service teachers should be mutual and productive. As senior teachers, tutors are expected to share their best practice to their fellows related to the lesson planning, teaching method, and classroom management. This is very crucial since pre-service teachers have collected a lot of theories of teaching methods which are usually tested in ideal classroom. When faced to the real context, they need to make adjustment to solve emerged problems in the classroom. The problem is, not all the tutors are open to their juniors as some of them feel that the pre-service teachers are an additional duty for them.

Students' Characteristics

Students' learning motivation is influenced greatly by who teach them in the classroom. When taught by their class teachers, they show great enthusiasm. But when they are taught by the practicant, they show discomfortness and laziness. This kind of "shocking" situation is not always handled well by the pre-service teachers.

Surely, students' characters are varied in every school. Some students appreciate the presence of practicant teachers, but some are not. Huda (2011) mentions that there was a "lack of students' respect towards the practicant teachers during their teaching practice, an under-estimation of the subject of study, and also sleep during the teaching and learning activities."

School Environment and Facilities

Not all of the schools where teaching practices are conducted are the fully-equipped schools. Some are furnished with full facilities, but most of schools are not. Most of pre-service teachers conduct their practice at average-facility schools even poorly-equipped schools. The poor condition or the absence of school facilities hinder the smooth activity of teaching practice. Some technical equipment, such as: infocus projector, library, or speakers for language practice, when they are absent, it will affect negatively to the planning and ongoing program of the practicants.

The Curriculum of Teacher Faculties

Curriculum of teacher faculties should emphasize on not only the theories of education, but also on the practical implication (Safita, 2012). Some competences such as: analyzing standard competence/ basic competence, developing syllabus, writing lesson plan, and defining the minimum passing grade are essential to be underlined on the curriculum of the faculties. *Media of Teaching* subject, for instant, should be dominantly focusing on practice instead of theories. Microteaching should also be used effectively as the simulation of the real teaching context where theories of teaching is used properly.

Microteaching as a practical subject of study is aimed at adapting the practicants to the step-by-step of teaching and learning. By this mean, practicants are expected to conduct the lesson systematically and smoothly-flowing, from the opening stage to the closing stage. It is proven that the practicants who perform well on micro teaching, achieve better result in teaching practice. In terms of grade, those who succeed in micro teaching gain better score than those who do not practice on microteaching. Despite that hypothesis, there is no proven correlation between microteaching activity to the success of teaching practice program as what has been studied by Riyadi (2006) in Tarbiyah program STAIN Pekalongan.

Besides microteaching, faculties should also provide teaching practice programs with various approaches and methods, such as lesson-study based learning. Lesson study is a model of supervision to the teachers through collaborative and continous learning based on the collegiality principals and mutual learning to build a learning community (Susilo, in Rokhmawati, 2011).

Faculties should also provide an assistency program for preparing the students to teaching practice program as what has been initiated by Engineering Faculty, State University of Malang. Arsan (2007) points out that this assistency program is effective for preparing the students in their teaching practice program, with 64,6% effective and 31,8% effective enough. Teaching activity is 48,1% effective and 41,3% effective enough. Additionally, the assessment stage is considered 56,6% effective while 37,4% effective enough.

These research results suggest that the lecturers of teacher faculties should improve their teaching and learning quality by equpping the students (future pre-service teachers) both theoretical and practical knowledge related to the teaching and learning.

School Response

The presence of practicants at schools does not always get positive welcome from the schools. Most schools accept and welcome the practicants well, and just a small number of students who do not. There are various responses of the school, such as: accepting practicants in both semester (odd and even semester), only accepting in certain semester (odd semester only/ even semester only), or even declining totally.

From the mentioned explanation, it can be summarized that the problems urged in teaching practice (PPL) are:

Table 1.

Internal and external problems affecting the effectiveness of teaching practice program

Internal Problems	1) Practicants' (pre-service teachers) commitment
	2) Practicants' competence:
	   • Opening and closing the lesson
	   • Teaching method
	   • Developing materials
	   • Designing teaching media

External Problems	3) Supervisors
	4) Teacher-tutors
	5) Students' characteristics
	   • Lack of respect to the practicants
	   • Underestimation to the subject lesson
	6) School environement and facilities
	7) Curriculum of teacher faculties

Solution

From these seven problems, it is formulated some solutions and recommendations. First, problem of practicants' commitment can be overcome by a good monitoring system conducted by supervisors and teacher-tutors. All of these parties should have a control book that records the presence and the progress of the practicants. When an indication of discommitment is found, an immediate treatment will be given to avoid prolonged problem.

Second, problem of practicants' competence should be dealt with the faculty by evaluating and reviewing the lecturers' performance. The results of review and evaluation should be followed up by improvement actions, such as: training for lecturers, providing a superior learning facilities, such as libraries and micro-teaching laboratory.

Third, problem of supervisors and teacher-tutors. They should be evaluated through an evaluation meeting during teaching practice continuum. The meeting is to bolden the commitment of supervisors and teacher-tutors in guiding and supervising the practicants.

Fourth, students' characters. It is the obligations of school principals and the teachers to approach the students to be respectful to the practicants and to follow the teaching and learning activity actively and attentively.

Fifth, school quality. If it is possible, school should comply some criterias of a good school which has qualified curriculum, qualified teachers, and enough facilities. By this means, practicants can learn a lot about the best practice and the ideas in teaching and learning. They can learn from the good teachers about how to vary the teaching activities, how to manage difficult students, and such. Additionally, they can also learn from the academic staff on how to manage the administration stuff in supporting the teaching and learning. They also learn from the school environment on how to create condusive atmosphere for students to learn comfortably.

Sixth, teacher faculties should change the selection system for recruiting the new students. For instance, conducting an in-depth interview to explore the interest and the basic competence of teacher candidate related to teaching profession. Without passion in teaching, it is impossible to have qualified teachers who teach by heart. In FITK UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta for instance, this mode of recruitment does not exist. Preparing professional teachers is not enough by completing 7 semesters of learning and 1 semester of conducting teaching practice. Instead, it is the input quality of the students that decide. Table 2 describes the concept of developing future professional teachers.

Finally, teaching practice itself cannot effectively influence significantly in making the professional teachers. Professional teachers are created from the tightly selected candidates who are screened by their interest, passion, academic competence, and basic teaching knowledge. Curriculum of teacher's faculty should not only focuses on the learning, but also to the improvement of language proficiency, writing skill, and researching skill. Thus, the alumni will be ready for working and teaching in qualified schools.

Table 2. **Concept Framework of Preparing Professional Teacher Candidates**

Input	Process	Process	Output
1 →	2 →	3 →	4
Teacher faculty: High School Selection Program: interest and passion to be a teacher, academic competence, language proficiency (English or Arabic), and academic track record (scholarship experience).	Teacher faculty: Theory and Practice University-based Subjects Faculty-based subjects Study program subjects Microteaching laboratory Improvement program on Language Proficiency, Writing skill, and researching.	School: Teaching Practice Practicants' commitment, Practicants' competence (material mastery, methods, media), supervisors, teacher-tutors, students' characteristics, and school quality (environment and facilities)	Professional teacher candidates

Results

The implementation of teaching practice (PPL) still requires some improvements, ranging from curriculum LPTKs, lecturers, teachers, students, and schools. LPTK cooperation with the school is not only limited to sending students to the school, but also to answer the problems which have emerged during the PPL. PPL effectiveness is highly dependent on the competence of the practicants, practicants' commitment, tutors and supervisors, as well as the school quality. Student competence is highly dependent on the quality of inputs and the quality of the learning process on campus.

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