

# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGLISH TEACHING PRACTICUM AT AL ISTIQAMAH BOARDING SCHOOL BANJARMASIN

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## **ABSTRACT**

Language teachers are expected not only learn the theoretical knowledge such as grammar, linguistics, teaching methodology, curriculum, or assessment but also the practical knowledge on how to apply those theories in teaching. As candidate teachers, students from Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training need to feel the benefits of teaching practicum. The main purpose of this research is to describe the implementation of teaching practicum conducted by English Department students at *Al Istiqamah* boarding school Banjarmasin in the academic year of 2013/2014. Next, it focuses on the students' perception of teaching practicum, the role of mentor teachers at school, and the benefits they gained as well as the constraints that they faced during the two-month period of teaching practicum. This qualitative research takes 5 students teacher as the participants, respectively 2 students at MA and 3 students at MTs *Al Istiqamah*. The findings reveal that despite multiple challenges faced during teaching practicum, student teachers have positive perception towards the practice as they could learn how to adapt to various classroom situations. Student teachers tried to implement the theoretical knowledge from the coursework of English Department such as how to use appropriate media and apply various techniques in teaching. However, there are some constraints such as language skills, student behavior, limited school facilities, and lack of support from mentor teacher.

Key words: teaching practicum, student teacher.

Colleges or universities which have teacher education programs usually include in their curriculum a compulsory course called teaching practicum, or in Indonesian term *PPL* or field experience practice. In a four-year undergraduate study, this course is usually offered toward the end of the third year after the students have passed several theoretical courses in the previous semesters. In general, the field practice or *PPL* is implemented for two semesters: *PPL 1* (commonly known as peer teaching or microteaching), which is conducted in campus, and *PPL 2*, which is conducted at schools where they have to teach real class for a period of two months.

While doing their teaching practicum at school, student teachers will work closely with a supervising teacher or mentor teacher (in Indonesian it is known as *guru pamong*). The university or institution where the student teachers comes from also appoints a lecturer who will act as a supervisor, but usually his/her role is not as much as the mentor teachers at school. In Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin, *PPL 1* is conducted in the sixth semester, and *PPL 2* in the seventh semester. The location for *PPL 2* is selected secondary schools and madrasa around Banjarmasin. In addition, the student teachers from Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin are required to spend two months at selected school and practice 10 times with 1 mid test and 1 final test time.

The benefits of school-based practicum or *PPL 2* have been noted by a number of scholars. Hobson et al (2006), for instance, point out that school-based practicum allows student teachers access to authentic classroom, and helps student teachers to learn how to respond to a wide variety of situations which occur. The school placement of student teachers will also enable them to enact the concepts they have learned through their engagement with specific strategies (Rosaen & Florio-Ruane, 2008 in Grossman et al, 2009). As Richards & Farrell (2011) noted, “academic courses cannot replicate the actual experience of teaching and many things happen in teaching that coursework does not usually prepare teachers for. Coursework cannot prepare such things as adjusting a lesson to respond to learners’ difficulty [...], redesigning a teacher-led grammar practice activity [...] turn it into a group task, or dealing with a disruptive student...” (Farrell, 2007 & Senior, 2006, as cited in Richard & Farrell, 2011, p.4). This means many unpredictable things may happen in the classroom that student teachers should be ready to make a sound decision to make the teaching and learning process successful.

### **PROBLEMS STATEMENT**

Several research questions have been formulated for this research. They are:

1. What are student teachers’ perceptions of their teaching practicum experience at *Al Istiqamah* boarding school? Are they able to apply the theoretical knowledge from their study at English department? What kind of theoretical knowledge can they use during their teaching practicum?
2. How is their relationship with the mentor teacher? How supportive is the mentor teacher in helping them to develop a successful lesson?
3. What benefits do they gain and what constraints do they find?

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **The Definition Of Teaching Practicum**

In teaching practicum the focus is not on what student teachers know but on what student teachers can do. It is an opportunity to learn more about the *process* of language teaching and many of the skills that student teachers need to master to be an effective language teacher (Richards & Farrell, 2011).

Kirkpatrick (2007), who has done research on ELT in Indonesia, suggested skills and knowledge that English teachers should possess. Among them are: know the context, able to evaluate materials critically, have an understanding of method used in the community, able to evaluate methods for specific contexts, and able to provide an appropriate and attainable model for their students. Student teachers should also have pedagogical skills and knowledge that would enable them to apply classroom management effectively, such as how to motivate students to use the target language, or how to deal with difficult students. Furthermore, Richards and Farrell (2011) suggest that conversations with mentor teacher and observation and reflection on own teaching experiences are important parts of the learning process in teaching practicum.

## **The Roles of Mentor Teacher**

Five main roles of school mentor are as practical advisor, provider of constructive advice, role model, provider of support, and assessor (Hobson et al, 2006). The mentor teacher is responsible for reviewing the lesson plan, observing the teaching process, and giving guidance and feedback to the student teachers. Often, student teachers will be teaching in a class that is part of school regular course, and it is the responsibility of mentor teacher to ensure that the class will receive adequate instruction from the student teacher. Ideally, mentor teachers are expert teachers who already have experience in supervising and giving guidance to novice teachers. In addition, they should be willing to listen and consider different classroom approaches used by the student teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2011). However, some constraints such as workload and not having sufficient time in school might influence the mentor teacher role.

### **Previous research on teaching practicum**

A longitudinal study conducted by a research team from University of Nottingham England revealed that school-based experience can leave not only positive impacts but also negative impacts on student teachers (Hobson et al, 2006). The student teachers felt positively about their school-based experiences when they could talk with their mentor or peer who was concerned with their progress, and were able to engage in dialogues which helped them to think about their practice as teachers. On the other hand, student teachers might feel negatively about their experience when they found difficulties dealing with the school ethos and in building good relationship with the mentor teacher.

Another study highlighted multiple challenges faced by Asian pre-service teachers in doing their practicum in Australian schools (Spooner-Lane et al, 2009). Among the challenges were language barriers, cultural differences, relationship with mentor teachers, and limited time in learning. Language was a hindrance because the student teachers did not feel confident about their spoken English fluency. Their accent was also considered as a barrier when communicating with the students, explaining the lesson, and even in trying to manage misbehaving students. Cultural differences exist because the student teachers came from other country and might not be familiar with the school culture in Australia. Problems with the mentor teacher occurred when the student teachers felt inferior and undermined about their ability, and not given enough assistance and time to consult about their practice.

### **Optimizing teaching practicum**

There have been some concerns to the teacher education program, particularly related to the output quality. For instance, Raihani and Sumintono (2010) criticized that pre-service teacher education in Indonesia has too much emphasis on the theories and overloaded materials, which make the graduates not well-prepared. The graduates just start learning the real situation once they enter the workplace, and once they become teachers, they just wait for the directives from the superior. Another critique is forwarded to the implementation of teaching practicum, which only fosters prescriptive paradigm, being routine, recipe oriented, encouraged imitation, as student teachers were required to assume assigned teaching duties and replicate the teaching practices of the supervising teacher (Etscheidt et al, 2012).

Therefore, to optimize teaching practicum, scholars proposed that student teachers be given more opportunity to reflect on their practices (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Grossman et al, 2009; Richards & Farrell, 2011). Such opportunities for reflection can take the form of journal writing, written evaluations, pre and post teaching conference with mentor teacher, or discussion forum with their peers and supervisors, in which they could discuss and analyze problems they encounter in their classroom, seek alternatives, and try out new ideas and strategies. The process of reflecting is believed to make teachers be inclined to utilize appropriate methods for student learning, and result in the development of new practical knowledge (Minott, 2011).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research applied a qualitative approach with a case study design. Qualitative approach is a type of educational research in which the researchers rely on the views of the participants, ask broad questions, collect data consisting largely of words from participants, then describe and analyze these words for themes (Creswell, 2008). Furthermore, Creswell (2008) defined case study as “an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g. an activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection” (p. 476). Similarly, Punch (2009) defined case study as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The case can be an individual, a role, a small group, a community, an event, a policy, or a process. Case study is often used to reveal a story of something unique, special, or interesting, which can be used to highlight a success of a program, or to bring attention to a particular challenge or difficulty of a project or a program (Neale et al, 2006).

The participants of this research were the student teachers of English Department Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training IAIN Antasari Banjarmasin. As the nature of qualitative research is to gain a vivid, detailed data from a small number of participants, the writer decided to select *Al Istiqamah* boarding school as the school site, where she also acted as the supervisor of the student teachers who practiced there. There were 5 student teachers as the research participants, respectively 2 student teachers at MA *Al Istiqamah* and 3 student teachers at MTs *Al Istiqamah*.

### **Research instruments**

#### a). Field notes

Field notes are “text recorded during an observation in a qualitative study” (Creswell, 2008, p.224). Field notes can be descriptive or reflective. Descriptive field notes record a description of events, activities, and people, while reflective field notes record personal thoughts that the researchers have that relate to their insights or board themes that emerge during the observations (Creswell, 2008, p. 225). The researcher used both types of field notes (descriptive and reflective) during the observation of the teaching practicum.

#### b) Interview protocol

Interview protocol is a form design by the researcher that contains instructions for the process of interview, the questions to be asked, and space to take notes of responses form the interviewee (Creswell, 2008, p.233). The researcher prepared a set of questions to be asked during the interview with the student teachers.. The result of the interviews was believed to be the most important source of data as

“data generated spontaneously, even from small numbers of research participants, can often be more revealing of actual lived experiences” (Hobson et al, 2006, p.12).

c) Documents

Documents include the lesson plans and the journal entries written by the student teachers. The student teachers were asked to write a reflective journal after each practice. The data about condition of the schools have also been collected as secondary data.

## **FINDINGS**

After the data from classroom observations, journal entries, and interviews were gathered and analyzed, the writer found emerging themes related to the experience of student teachers at their teaching practicum, which are divided into four major categories below:

### **Lesson Plan, Implementation, and Teaching Techniques**

The first issue is regarding lesson plan, implementation, and techniques applied by the student teachers during teaching practicum. Based on classroom observations and lesson plans, student teachers implemented various skills focus and teaching techniques on their classes. As the supervisors, the writer came to observe each student teacher at their respective school sites.

At MA *Al Istiqamah*, there were 2 students teacher who practiced, and each had their own mentor teacher as they were assigned to teach at different grade. On the first class observation, the student teacher (ST) 1 at MA *Al Istiqamah* conducted a listening activity for grade XI on a topic of narrative text. The material was taken from LKS in which there was a listening practice. Unfortunately LKS is not supplemented with cassette or CD, so ST 1 had to record his own voice. The students were asked to complete the text with the words they heard from the recorded voice. In LKS the words to fill the blank were not provided, so ST 1 modified the exercise by providing the options of answers because he thought that students would have difficulties in answering questions if it was just filling the blank as most of students were lack of vocabulary. Toward the end of the lesson he played a song as an additional listening exercise. The lesson ran quite well. The only ineffective thing was ST 1 spent too much time writing the options on the blackboard. It would have been better if he provided handouts for students or prepared a caption.

On the second observation, ST 1 improved his teaching technique and taught more effectively by preparing a caption where he wrote the expressions used when feeling pain. He used more time for drilling the students on the expressions, which is good, as the skill focus was speaking. This time he was quite successful in implementing communicative approach. Despite students' problem in pronunciation and vocabulary, by the end of the lesson the students were able to perform a role play of expressing pain in particular situation.

Communicative approach was also used by ST 2 when she taught expressions of showing sympathy. She used captions and paper slips as media. The paper slips was used to elicit expressions in which students gave responses to her questions. She also drilled the students on the expressions used and assigned the students to create a short dialog where they had to show sympathy. Another good thing was she remembered her students' names and often interacted with them by calling out their names. On the second observation, ST 2 used

grammar translation method as the lesson focus was the use of imperative sentence in writing instruction.

The following table is the summary of lessons conducted by student teachers at MA *Al Istiqamah*.

**Table 3.1. The result of class observation at MA Al Istiqamah Banjarmasin**

Date	Student teacher	Grade taught	Lesson/ Topic	Skills focus	Technique
Oct 3, 2013	ST 1, male	XI (girls class)	Narrative text	Listening	CLT
Oct 30, 2013	ST 1, male	XI (girls class)	Expression of pain	speaking	ALM
Nov 4, 2013	ST 2, female	X (girls class)	Expression of sympathy	speaking	CLT
Nov 11, 2013	ST 2, female	X (girls class)	Giving instruction	writing	GTM

\* ST = student teacher

CLT = communicative language teaching

ALM = audio lingual method

GTM = grammar translation method

Meanwhile, at MTs *Al Istiqamah*, there were 3 students teachers, who were supervised under the same mentor teacher. They were assigned to teach grade VII and VIII. On the first observation, ST 3 taught about reading descriptive text. He provided pictures of school facilities and handouts as teaching media. However, he struggled to make students understand the meaning of vocabulary. He also spent too much time on drilling student pronunciation, which is actually more suitable if the skills focus is speaking. As a result, by the end of the lesson, it could not be seen clearly that the objective of the lesson, i.e. comprehending the text, was achieved. On the second observation, with the skills focus on writing, ST 3 had to struggle again to familiarize students with text elements such as orientation and reorientation as an example of text that students had to write later on. The technique he used seemed unable to make him reach the objective of the lesson, besides he had to spend more time disciplining the students as the students did not pay much attention on the lesson which partly because it was the last period.

ST 4 was more successful in conducting the lesson on writing postcard as he combined communicative approach with grammar translation method. He provided slips of paper where there were sentences students had to arrange in groups. He also gave reward to the groups who finished first. The lesson ran well although the result of postcard writing could not be seen directly as the students would do it as a homework. On the second observation, ST 3 did not teach as successfully as the previous practice, as the technique he

used in teaching grammar seemed boring for the students. He spent a considerable time explaining the formula of simple past tense, but it was not clear whether students could master it or not.

Meanwhile, ST 5 was quite successful in conducting the lesson on both observations. She had various techniques in teaching speaking from drilling, guessing games, and singing together. The only weakness was her soft voice, which might be difficult for her when teaching a noisy class.

The following table is the summary of lessons conducted by student teachers at MTs Al Istiqamah.

**Table 3.2. The result of class observation at MTs Al Istiqamah Banjarmasin**

Date	Student teacher	Grade taught	Lesson/ Topic	Skills focus	Technique
Oct 10, 2013	ST 3, male	VII (boys class)	Descriptive text	reading	GTM
Oct 10, 2013	ST 4, male	VII (boys class)	Postcard	writing	CLT & GTM
Oct 10, 2013	ST 5, female	VII (girls class)	Thanking & apologizing	speaking	CLT
Nov 11, 2013	ST 3, male	VII (boys class)	Family life	writing	GTM
Nov 11, 2013	ST 4, male	VIII (girl class)	Simple Past tense	grammar	GTM
Nov 11, 2013	ST 5, female	VII (girl class)	School Life	speaking	ALM & TPR

\* ST = student teacher  
 CLT = communicative language teaching  
 ALM = audio lingual method  
 GTM = grammar translation method  
 TPR = total physical response

Generally, the student teachers had no problem in preparing the lesson plan, the lesson materials and the teaching media as they had done it before in microteaching class (PPL 1). In their lesson plans, it is evident that the student teachers have understood well the components of lesson plan, such as the lesson focus, the lesson objectives, the classroom procedures, as well as the evaluation. The student teachers stated the lesson they designed was based on the syllabus and the guidance given by the mentor teacher. The students at each school which the writer observed were using LKS (student worksheet), and for the additional exercises, the student teachers often had to create their own exercise or modify the exercises in the LKS.

*“LKS is not enough, so I develop the material and add another exercise. In LKS only English words, so I made the Indonesian translation because the students are*

*lack of vocabulary. I also make some multiple choice exercise if the exercise in LKS is only fill in the blank to help students understanding, The option in multiple choice can help them little by little.*" (ST 1, male, practiced at MA Al Istiqamah)

Prior to doing teaching practicum, student teachers had taken up the course on teaching methodologies, and have been familiarized with different methods and strategies in teaching. During the observation, it is found that the student teachers were actually able to implement various interesting activities, which they have learned during microteaching. Most of the student teachers prefer to use communicative approach, where students are required to use English more actively during the lesson. One of the benefits of using communicative approach is stated during an interview with one of the student teacher.

*"If we don't teach communicatively, students will get bored. If students are involved (in the activities), they give attention to me"* (ST 1, male, practiced at MA Al Istiqamah)

However, due to the class condition, the student teachers often ended up with form-focused instruction (GTM) despite their struggle to apply communicative approach. This was admitted by most of the student teachers that they needed to use grammar translation method to make the students understand the lesson.

*"When I teach reading, I have to translate the text, or the students will not understand. They lack of vocabulary."* (ST 3, male, practiced at MTs Al Istiqamah)

Besides, student teacher did not implement much group work, which is actually an important part of communicative approach. Instead, they prefer students do the task individually. When asked whether they had ever shifted away from what had been written in the lesson plan and tried something spontaneously, almost all the student teachers responded that they did make some modifications, and they needed to do that because the situation in the classroom required them to do so. For example, because of limited time they had to skip some planned activities, or in other time a student teacher spent more time in reviewing the previous lesson because the students had not yet understood the material. In other case, mostly because of the limited time, some exercises had to be done as homework, as written by a student teacher in her journal.

*"Something that is not running well is in evaluation section. I think that my questions can be given in class activity, but the time is over, so the questions become homework."* (ST 2, female, practiced at MA Al Istiqamah, journal entry)

There were also times when student teachers run out of the activities and had to find ideas and create activities for the class on the spot because it was not written in the lesson plan. For example, in one of her lessons, ST 5 added a singing together activity or a guessing game because there was still time left whereas all planned activities had been finished.

What interesting was the lesson plans prepared by the student teachers have no specific form. The student teachers admitted that they sometimes get confused with the format they should make, particularly when the mentor teacher from the school just leave it to them the kind of lesson plan they have to prepare. Therefore, it would be better if the English department has a specific form for lesson plan which student teacher should follow.

Apart from their ability in implementing lesson plan and varying teaching techniques, during the observation of their practice, the writer found that there are a few weaknesses regarding the student teacher language skills such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. It is important that student teacher practice their language skills so that when they teach a class they would not make any error.

An obvious example of error made during teaching was when a student teacher explained the vocabulary of “aula” as “aula” as it is written that way in LKS. He did not check that “aula” is not English. So, when he drilled the student pronunciation of saying the vocabulary of school facilities, the student just simply followed after him and repeated “aula”. This student teacher also failed to explain the meaning of ‘lodgment’ correctly as mentioned as one of school facilities at LKS. Another example was a wrong explanation of Simple Past Tense when a student teacher wrote the formula of simple past tense in negative and question form using verb-2, while it should be using verb-1. From this experience, it is important that student teachers have sufficient knowledge of the material and be well-prepared before they teach a topic. Student teachers also need to realize that the material in LKS is not always 100% reliable and suitable with certain school context.

### **Mentor Teacher Role**

The second issue is regarding mentor teacher role. Placed at a school for two months, the student teachers were required to teach 12 times at the assigned classes. However, some students could teach more than 12 meetings, as they sometimes were asked to become the substitute teacher when the class teacher did not come.

Based on the interview result, the student teachers had quite positive relationship with the mentor teacher. However, the support from mentor teacher varied from one class to another. In this school, it seems that the student teacher did not get maximum support from the mentor teacher. For example, at MA Al Istiqomah there are two mentor teachers based on the grade taught. ST 1 who practiced at grade XI found that his mentor teacher did not give much suggestion regarding the lesson plan as well as the practice. Even during the practice the mentor teacher did not attend the class.

*“Our relationship is very well. He doesn’t expect much, he just asks me to teach well. But the communication is not very well. He always leaves everything to me, for example lesson plan, I just imitate previous lesson plan from my seniors. He only came during middle test and final test. For daily teaching he didn’t come, he just trusted my lesson plan. So, most of the time I learn autodidactly [by myself]”* (ST 1, male, practiced at MA Al Istiqamah).

Limited amount of time mentor teacher spent with the student teachers also occurred at MTs Al Istiqomah, where the student teacher did not get much chance to consult because the mentor teacher was busy and only came to school if she has her own class to teach.

*“My relationship with mentor teacher is okay, but not too close. She’s rather difficult to find, only came to school when she has schedule in school. I only consult once. She always said okay with my lesson plan.”* (ST 4, female, practiced at MTs Al Istiqamah)

*“My mentor teacher only comes when she has class, so I seldom meet her. I feel shy when I have to come to her to consult my lesson plan” (ST 3, male, practiced at MTs Al Istiqamah)*

In an informal conversation with the mentor teacher during a class observation, the mentor teacher admitted that there was less communication with the student teachers and she felt regretful about that. It happened because her schedule at school was only four days a week from Monday to Thursday and she had to help with administrative matters outside her teaching hours.

Actually most of the student teachers prefer to get guidance and suggestions, as stated by the student teachers that they could learn more about his strengths and weaknesses from their mentor teacher.

*“Of course I need feedback so much because my experience is less. I need his suggestion to be input for my teaching, but it doesn’t happen...but if I need I can come to him for consultation, I’m sure he’ll do it, but I learn autodidactly [by myself] because I’m ashamed to consult” (ST 1, male, practiced at MA Al Istiqamah).*

From these student voices, it is evident that mentor teacher role as a practical advisor, provider of constructive advice, role model, provider of support, and assessor as suggested by Hobson et al (2006) has not yet been implemented optimally. The mentor teacher is responsible for reviewing the lesson plan, observing the teaching process, and giving guidance and feedback to the student teachers. However, in practice it seems that these roles cannot all be realized due to certain circumstances.

Sim (2011) in her research on supervisory practices revealed that the issue of “power” and “the great burden” of the supervising teacher cannot be neglected. On one hand, supervising teacher or mentor teacher has a responsibility in assisting the less experienced teacher or the candidate teacher to improve their professional skill. On the other hand, mentor teacher also might find a difficult supervisory experience. The difficulties emerged as the mentor teacher had no control over the timing of supervision or the personalities of the student teacher that they will supervise. They had no input about the previous practicums of these student teachers. The student teachers have come from university coursework and have experienced different school supervisors. Sim’s research showed that school supervisors or mentor teachers might experience a conflicting identity as they worried that they would fail in doing their job as supervising teacher (Sim, 2011, p.147). This research, however, had different finding, as in part of the mentor teachers, they did not see the student teacher as the burden. Rather, the issue of lack of consultation was caused by the heavy workload at school.

### **Challenges Faced and Benefits Gained**

The third issue which becomes challenges in teaching practicum is limited facilities and student misbehavior at each school sites. The limited facilities can be seen from the students who only used LKS as their learning material. They could not afford to buy textbook. LKS is cheaper, and the students are supported by BOS (school operational fund) to buy them. There were no technological tools such as computer or LCD to be used

for teaching and learning activities, so for certain activities such as listening practice, student teacher had to bring their own laptop and speakers to the classroom.

At other time, the student teacher faced difficulties in teaching when the books which should be used for learning were not available.

Apart from limited facilities, handling student behavior seems to be the most challenging circumstance for student teachers. During their practicum nearly all student teachers had to deal not only with low competent but also with unmotivated, disruptive students.

*“They don’t have dictionary... They think English is too difficult. They got a doctrine from school that English is not important... so I have to struggle extra hard to teach them... one of the way to get their attention is by using loud voice.”* (ST 1, male, practiced at MA Al Istiqamah)

*“The students are noisy. Even there are some students who stand on the table”* (ST 3, male, practiced at MTs Al Istiqamah)

*“The class is chaotic. The students throw chalks and other things or just talking outloud even if I warn them...”* (ST 4, female, practiced at MTs Al Istiqamah)

These problems have obviously hampered the smooth flow of the lesson that the student teachers intended to implement. The time which was supposed to be used for maximizing learning then turned into the time for maintaining disciplines of the students. This mostly happened when the mentor teacher did not come to observe the class. The students’ background that comes from low socio economic status had been viewed as the factor. These students have low motivation in learning English and feel that English is not useful for them.

In dealing with this problem, the student teachers have tried various ways to make the lesson more interesting such as playing games, using pictures, or listening to songs, or even giving a reward such as candy. But sometimes they also had to give punishment and reprimand to troublemakers who disturbed the lesson.

*“I think the lesson in this class was not really effective because in the middle of the lesson one of the students was yelling when I explained. At that time the class little not conducive, finally as a teacher I give the punishment to the stubborn boy”* (ST 3, male, practice at MTs Al Istiqamah, journal entry)

*“Almost all students like to scream, so I just call their names and ask questions. Boys are even more rebellious, they don’t want to do what I ask. Sometimes I just keep quiet, or say if you don’t want to study, you go out.”* (ST 4, female, practiced at MTs Al Istiqamah)

From these student teachers’ views, it can be seen that classroom management is an issue that cannot be taken lightly. The skill in managing a classroom is very important for effective teaching. Wubbels (2011) has highlighted some issues related to classroom management skill such as disciplining the students and creating a learning environment that promote student motivation and positive social interaction. Furthermore, he suggested six approaches of classroom management which focus on external control of behavior, on

internal control, on classroom ecology, on discourse, on curriculum, and on interpersonal relationship (Wubbels, 2011, pp. 115-116). Behavioral approach as the oldest type proposed that teachers can try one of the ways to shape student behavior by giving stimulus or reward to the students. Interpersonal approach suggests that teachers should establish positive relationship with the students through non-verbal strategies such as eye contact and gestures. Teachers should also know when they need to show “high affiliation” (such as being friendly) and when they need to be in “high control” (being strict) to the students (Wubbels, 2011, p.118).

From the experience of teaching practicum at school where there are multiple issues and challenges, student teachers found a number of benefits. Among the benefits are stated by the student teachers below.

*“I should know the characteristics of my students whether they are low, intermediate, or advance, so that I can adjust my teaching strategy. I have to be more sensitive to the condition and class atmosphere so that I become someone who can handle the situation”* (ST 1, male, practiced at MA Al Istiqamah)

*“The experience makes me feel more confident talking in front of the class.”* (ST 4, female, practiced at MTs Al Istiqamah)

Student teacher admitted that the experience of teaching practicum is very beneficial because it will prevent them from the feeling of shock when later they enter the real teaching job. Through school-based teaching practicum they understand that students have different characters, and they should use various techniques in teaching.

## **CONCLUSION**

Manifold issues are found during student teachers’ practicum, implying that learning to teach is a challenging and highly emotional experience for student teachers. The conclusions are:

1. Despite multiple challenges faced during teaching practicum, student teachers have positive perception towards the practice. Generally, with some efforts student teachers from English Department are able to implement the theoretical knowledge such as how to use appropriate media and use various techniques in teaching, although there are still areas to improve such as their language skills and classroom management skill.
2. The student teachers admit that they do need the guidance of the mentor teachers while doing their teaching practicum. It is so since the mentor teachers are those who have already known the students’ behavior and class condition. In contrast, the mentor teacher is usually influenced by workload and not having sufficient time in school which makes the time of consultation is not as much as expected by the student teachers.
3. Student teachers could feel the benefits of real classroom experience as they could learn how to vary the teaching techniques and how to adapt to various classroom situations. This will prepare them in dealing with a real job as a teacher. Some constraints that are faced by student teachers are in dealing with low competent,

unmotivated, and disruptive students, limited school facilities, and lack of consultation time with mentor teacher.

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