

PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' ADAPTATIONS IN KAMPUS MENGAJAR PROGRAM

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman guru prajabatan dalam mengajar Bahasa Inggris selama mengikuti program Kampus Mengajar yang diselenggarakan oleh Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data diperoleh dari sepuluh partisipan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, kuesioner terbuka, dan deskripsi reflektif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para guru prajabatan menerapkan metode pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa seperti diskusi dan praktik langsung untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa. Dalam keterbatasan fasilitas, mereka menunjukkan kreativitas dalam merancang media pembelajaran seperti audio, permainan, dan video. Bahan ajar yang paling banyak digunakan adalah buku teks, namun dimodifikasi agar sesuai dengan kemampuan siswa. Tantangan seperti rendahnya motivasi belajar siswa, keterbatasan waktu mengajar, dan minimnya sumber daya mendorong peserta untuk bersikap adaptif dan reflektif. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa program Kampus Mengajar memberikan pengalaman transformatif bagi calon guru untuk menerapkan teori dalam praktik nyata dan meningkatkan kompetensi pedagogis mereka. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat memberikan implikasi positif terhadap pengembangan kurikulum pendidikan guru di Indonesia.

Kata kunci : *guru prajabatan, Kampus Mengajar, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, metode pengajaran, media pembelajaran*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the experiences of pre-service teachers in teaching English during the Kampus Mengajar program initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. A qualitative case study approach was employed, involving ten participants through semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and reflective narratives. The findings reveal that pre-service teachers applied student-centered methods such as discussions and hands-on practice to enhance student engagement. Despite limited facilities, they demonstrated creativity by designing instructional media such as audio recordings, games, and videos. Textbooks were the most frequently used teaching materials, which they often modified to suit students' proficiency levels. Challenges including low student motivation, limited instructional time, and lack of resources prompted the participants to be adaptive and reflective. The study concludes that the Kampus Mengajar program serves as a transformative learning experience that enables pre-service teachers to connect theory with practice while enhancing their pedagogical competence. The findings have implications for the improvement of teacher education curriculum in Indonesia.

Keyword: pre-service teachers, Kampus Mengajar, English teaching, teaching methods, instructional media

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia is undergoing major transformation through the implementation of the The Freedom to Learn Program or *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)* initiative, which aims to bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world practice. One of its flagship programs *Kampus Mengajar*, places university students in under-resourced primary and secondary schools across the country, particularly in frontier, outermost, and underdeveloped (3T) areas, with the goal of improving the quality of education while simultaneously offering practical teaching experiences for pre-service teachers (Kemdikbud, 2021).

In the context of English language education, this program provides valuable opportunities for English education majors to apply pedagogical theories in actual classroom settings. Teaching practicum is widely recognized as a crucial component in teacher education because it enables student-teachers to engage directly with students and gain insights into the teaching profession (Gebretinsae and Karvinen, 2018). During such practicums, pre-service teachers collaborate with experienced educators and face real-life teaching situations that challenge them to adapt, innovate, and reflect (Massod et al., 2022).

Previous studies have examined the general outcomes of the *Kampus Mengajar* program, particularly in terms of its impact on student literacy and numeracy (Fayza et al., 2024; Sulistyanto et al., 2024). Other research has explored pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding the Independent Curriculum and their level of preparedness for field assignments (Adita, 2024). However, few studies have focused specifically on how pre-service English teachers implement methods, media, and materials in real classroom contexts especially in 3T areas. This limited exploration suggests a need for more focused investigations that highlight how pre-service teachers adapt their instructional strategies to diverse and resource constrained environments.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific examination of how pre-service English teachers manage the teaching of English in marginalized schools through adaptive instructional decisions. It draws attention to the creative and reflective practices these future educators employ, which are often overlooked in conventional teacher training.

This article aims to explore the experiences of pre-service teachers in teaching English during the *Kampus Mengajar* program, particularly focusing on the methods they used, the instructional media they employed, and the types of teaching materials they developed or adapted. The research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical choices and challenges encountered by pre-service teachers and offer insights that could inform the development of more practical and contextually relevant teacher education programs.

METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative research approach with a case study design to examine how pre-service teachers implemented teaching methods, instructional media, and teaching materials during the *Kampus Mengajar* program. The case study design was chosen to allow an in-depth exploration of specific teaching practices applied in real-world contexts (Creswell, 2014).

Participants in this study included ten pre-service teachers from a university in Bogor who had completed their teaching assignments in the *Kampus Mengajar* program. All participants had experience teaching English in under-resourced elementary schools, many of which were located in 3T (frontier, outermost, and underdeveloped) areas. They were selected through purposive sampling based on the relevance of their teaching roles to the research focus.

Data were gathered through three primary instruments: open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and reflective accounts. The open-ended

questionnaires were distributed using Google Forms and asked participants to describe the methods, media, and materials they used while teaching English. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore responses in more detail and allow participants to elaborate on their teaching strategies. Although direct classroom observation was not possible due to the post-program timing, participants' reflective narratives provided meaningful insights into the teaching context.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data, following the procedures outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). The process began with transcription of interview data, followed by coding and categorization based on recurring themes: teaching methods, instructional media, and materials. The coded data were then interpreted in relation to the research objectives. Triangulation across data sources ensured the credibility and consistency of the findings.

While this study focuses on teaching strategies, contextual information such as challenges related to classroom conditions and student engagement was also noted as background data to enrich understanding of how pre-service teachers adapted their practices during the *Kampus Mengajar* program.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teaching Methods Used by Pre-Service Teachers

Pre-service teachers in the *Kampus Mengajar* program applied various teaching methods to address student needs, particularly in remote and under-resourced schools. Based on questionnaire results, the most frequently used methods were discussion and hands-on practice, each employed by four out of ten participants. Other methods included flashcards and games, each used by one participant. These findings are consistent with data from interviews with participants, where the most frequently used method was discussion. This can be seen from the statements of participants 1 and 5, who mentioned the same thing:

"I most often use the discussion method when teaching English. I implement it by dividing students into small groups,

then giving them simple topics or questions in English that are relevant to the material. After that, they discuss and present their findings in front of the class. I believe this method is quite successful because students become more active and engaged." (P1, P5)

Participant 4 explained their choice of hands-on practice, stating:

"I tried the telling method at the beginning, but students seemed unfocused and easily bored. Therefore, I replaced it with a method that involves students more actively. They tend to be kinesthetic and like to learn through activities." (P4)

Teaching Media Used by Pre-Service Teachers

In terms of teaching media, participants demonstrated creativity in using both digital and non-digital tools. The most frequently used media was audio, employed by four participants. This was followed by games (three participants), videos (two participants), and pictures (one participant). Participant 1 explained the use of audio media:

"The media I use are English songs. I make this media myself, not provided by the school. In my opinion, this audio media really helps students become more enthusiastic and excited to learn English." (P1)

Participant 4 highlighted the impact of video content:

"I used English anti-bullying campaign videos as my media. The effective moment was probably when I showed a short campaign video about stopping bullying from YouTube; the students were really focused. They seemed more emotional." (P4)

Teaching Materials Used by Pre-Service Teachers

Teaching materials used by the participants included textbooks (6 participants), teaching modules (2 participants), environmental materials (1 participant), and student worksheets (LKS) (1 participant). Textbooks were most commonly used, often supplemented with modified or contextualized content. Participants 1 and 3 emphasized the importance of adapting materials:

"I use a combination of materials from school books and my own. I usually modify the materials to suit the students' level of understanding and the conditions in the classroom." (P1, P3)

And for additional information throughout the program, participants encountered several challenges that significantly influenced their teaching approaches. These included limited facilities such as lack of projectors, audio speakers, or internet access, particularly in 3T areas. In addition, low student motivation and limited instructional time were frequently mentioned. Instead of being discouraged, participants adapted by creating their own media, simplifying lesson plans, and incorporating contextual elements to maintain engagement. These challenges served as valuable learning experiences, prompting participants to reflect on their teaching and grow as adaptive educators.

This study shows that pre-service teachers in the *Kampus Mengajar* program successfully applied theoretical knowledge in practical settings, particularly through student-centered methods like discussion and hands-on activities. These strategies align with Bruner's (1966) as cited in (Arsyad et al., 2024) emphasis on active and contextual learning, as well as Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which highlights learning through experience and reflection (Kolb, 1984).

In using instructional media, participants demonstrated creativity despite technological limitations. The use of songs, games, and self-made videos reflects Mayer's (2009) theory that multimedia combining audio and visual elements enhances comprehension. Emotionally resonant media, such as campaign videos, also supported student engagement, consistent with Kearney and Kelly's (2022) findings on affective learning.

Although textbooks were the most common teaching material, participants adapted them to students' levels and contexts, in line with Tomlinson's (2001) differentiated instruction. Some also used local resources to support contextual learning, echoing Bruner's (1966) theory on differentiated instruction.

Challenges like limited facilities, low student motivation, and time constraints pushed participants to be more adaptive and reflective. These experiences align with Korthagen (2017), Kelchterman (2015), and Jaelani & Umam (2021) views that real-world teaching helps shape professional identity and fosters resilience. Thus, *Kampus Mengajar* not only enhanced pedagogical skills but also contributed significantly to the participants' growth as future educators (Masood, Siddiqui, & Arif, 2022; Fayza et al., 2024).

Compared to prior studies like Sulistyanto et al. (2024), which focused more on perception, this research provides a deeper look into the practical strategies employed. The inclusion of direct participant voices also enriches the understanding of how *Kampus Mengajar* prepares pre-service teachers to meet real classroom challenges through experience-driven teaching.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore the experiences of prospective English teachers in teaching during the *Kampus Mengajar* program. The findings show that participants applied various student-centered methods such as discussions and hands-on practice based on the needs and characteristics of students in schools with limited resources. They demonstrated creativity in using simple media such as songs, videos, and games, as well as adapting learning materials to suit students' skill levels. These actions reflect their ability to apply pedagogical theory in real teaching contexts. Challenges such as limited facilities and low student motivation did not become obstacles but rather opportunities for growth, encouraging participants to develop resilience, flexibility, and reflective thinking. These results indicate that experience-based teaching programs such as *Kampus Mengajar* are crucial in shaping the professional identity and competencies of prospective educators. For teacher education institutions, these findings highlight the importance of equipping prospective teachers with the ability to adapt teaching, utilize diverse media, and respond to contextual challenges. Further research could explore how collaboration with mentor teachers or community engagement can enrich teaching

experiences. Additionally, expanding the study to include diverse regions and disciplines could provide a broader understanding of how national teaching programs can promote educational equity and teacher development in Indonesia.

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