
Technology Matters, Are Pre-service Teachers Ready in Online Teaching Practicum?

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Abstract

The transition to online teaching has chaotic consequences for teachers and students, as many candidates are not ready for teaching duty. Unfortunately, several previous studies did not investigate pre-service teachers' readiness to teach in online practicum. Additionally, the studies examining readiness, particularly on foreign language education programs through practicum, are limited. Therefore, the present study intends to investigate the pre-service foreign language program's readiness to carry out teaching and learning processes in online practicum, especially in the ICT aspect. The study employs a qualitative research methodology. The setting of the study is an online practicum in a teacher education program in Semarang, Indonesia. The study participants are pre-service teachers taking online practicum, an estimated 130 participants based on the total population of the department selected. The data collection technique adopts an open-ended online survey conducted via Google Forms® and synchronous/asynchronous interviews. The data collected from the questionnaire and interview is then analysed utilising a thematic analysis. The results of this research are supposed to contribute practically. All participants stated they were ready to have an online teaching practicum since they had already used it. They often use technology both for their daily needs and their studying needs.

Keywords: Online practicum, pre-service teachers, technology

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 epidemic has impacted education in several ways, most notably teacher preparation. It has prompted educational institutions to stop teaching and studying at school and on campus and replace them with online distance learning systems (Watrianthos, 2020). Closing universities and schools have the unintended consequence of making professors and students more receptive to online learning. In this situation, teacher education is necessary to meet the demands while fostering an environment in which future educators can prepare for their teacher education. These preparations entail decisions, selections, and adjustments anticipated to satisfy not only student expectations but also requirements for teacher preparation and environmental factors that affect universities and institutions.

Practicum is a university-based teacher education program that prepares prospective teachers with teaching skills. So far, teacher education has been the party which is responsible for assessing prospective teachers and deciding whether they are ready to teach or not. The assessment discusses the future of the practical experience to evaluate whether prospective teachers are prepared to teach independently in their classrooms. This program requires attention from all parties because prospective teachers have provided valuable time, energy and money by involving teacher preparation programs, supervising teachers and university supervisors. They all have significant consequences and responsibilities to prospective teachers, the profession, and prospective teacher candidates.

These consequences and responsibilities are even more significant as most teaching-learning processes are forced online during the Covid 19 pandemic. The transition to online teaching has chaotic implications for teachers and students because online learning is not yet clear and operationally defined. In addition, this condition gives a shred of evidence that there is limited good learning practice that guides the online teaching transition. Furthermore, in many cases, teachers do not have knowledge of online pedagogy or how to support online learning because, so far, these aspects have not been widely accommodated by teacher training programs. Howard et al. (2020) reported that many school teachers have limited knowledge and experience regarding online learning and teaching. With this fact, it is vital to assess the readiness of prospective teachers to teach in online practicums.

Teacher candidates' readiness includes pedagogical capability, professional competence, and teaching media /mastery, including technology. Studies on teacher readiness have been reported in different aspects, such as mentor judge readiness to teach, readiness for computer-assisted language learning and teaching, and readiness for online teaching in secondary education (Howard et al., 2020). The second study is by Park and Son (2020), which examines EFL pre-service teachers' experiences and self-efficacy regarding evaluating the current English teacher education curriculum for CALL and factors affecting their acceptance and willingness to use CALL. The study was undertaken at a university in Hong Kong. The findings report that the success of technology integration should be supported by mandatory

technology-related courses offered in the teacher education program. The following study is by Cutri, Mena, and Whiting (2020), which reports the mix-method measuring and elaborating constructs of faculty online readiness from pre- COVID-19 pandemics literature. The findings indicate that the participants' or teacher educators' experience in transitioning online twists normal longitudinal perceptions of preparation and readiness in a context of a crisis. The new sense of temporary found was closely related to unexpected benefits that guided them to build stronger cooperation with students. Unfortunately, these studies did not investigate pre-service teachers' readiness to teach in online practicum. Additionally, the scholarship examining readiness, particularly in foreign language education programs through practicum, is limited. To fill the void, the present study intends to investigate the pre-service foreign language programs' readiness to carry out teaching-learning in online practicum.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

The study employs a qualitative research methodology. The adoption of a qualitative approach is in line with the perspective of phenomenology, intending to obtain knowledge "by understanding the direct experience of others" (McMillan & Wergin, 2006, pp. 5–6). The study is epistemologically critical and interpretive in nature. The present study endeavours to understand the extent of foreign language pre-service teachers' readiness regarding what it means to be ready to teach online practicum during the Covid-19 pandemic. The readiness components of the online practicum program focus on pedagogical capability, professional competence, and learning media mastery, including technology.

2.2. Setting and Context

The setting of the study is an online practicum in a teacher education program in Semarang, Indonesia. A practicum course is a requirement for graduation and is a required course. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the practicum is conducted online, and the pre-service teacher is responsible for finding a school to complete their teaching practice.

2.3. Participants/ Subject of the Study

We limit only participants from the Department of English Education. Then, we distributed the questionnaire online, and the students could fill it out online as well. Because this is an online practicum, we cannot communicate with the pre-service teachers directly. Therefore, we started with a description and a consent form in the questionnaire.

2.4. Research procedures

The data collection technique adopts an open-ended online survey conducted via Google Forms® and synchronous/asynchronous interviews. The method aims to reveal foreign language pre-service teachers' readiness for online teaching practicum. Additionally, a semi-

structured individual interview is used to seek and gather further data for individual participants who are recruited purposefully. The interview data collection technique is considered appropriate as it could reveal participants' readiness as indicated in their actions, feelings and attitudes.

2.5. Data Collection Method

Several methods are used to gain this research's empirical data, including online questionnaires, reflections, and interviews.

2.5.1. Questionnaire

Questionnaires were used to examine pre-service teachers' initial readiness covering information and technological aspect. This questionnaire becomes the basis for the other data collection methods, including interviews and reflection. The questionnaire is collected through a google form. The questions focused on how ready pre-service teachers using information and technology in online learning, such as designing online learning materials, designing online learning media, designing online learning assessment and evaluation, implementing online learning, Utilizing various platforms to facilitate online learning, and designing online learning activities utilising various platforms.

2.5.2. Interview

The interviews become the verbal justification of participants' answers regarding their readiness for online practicum, especially in online questionnaires distributed previously. The interview is conducted after they agree on a consent form and done asynchronously due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The participants are contacted by phone as they have given their phone number in the consent form. The questions are related to their readiness to conduct online learning, such as what platforms they used to facilitate online learning and why they used them.

2.6. Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire and interview is then analysed using thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). This thematic analysis becomes an analytical tool to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data (p.79). The study is subjected to identifying the themes, particularly readiness, under pedagogical, professional, and technological use criteria. These criteria will be extended to rich the insights as it further investigates participants' attitudes, experiences, feelings and values (May, 2001).

3. Finding and Discussion

3.1. Designing online learning materials

The online class is quite different from an offline class. The media and techniques used in online classes should suit the situation. Therefore, it is necessary to know how ready students in preparing the online material for teaching.

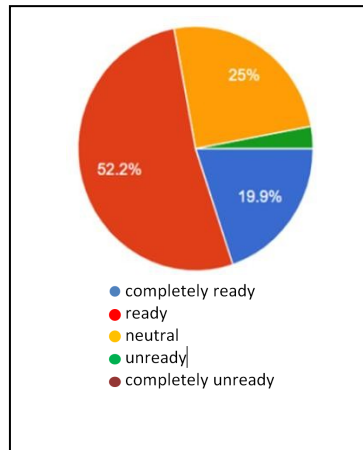


Figure 1. *Percentage of pre-service teachers in designing online learning materials*

In figure 1, it can be illustrated that as many as 62 students stated that they were ready with the online class material. If the percentage calculates, 52.2% of students feel prepared with the online class material. At the same time, as many as 35 students (25%) were prepared enough with the online class material. Then as many as 29 students, or 19,9%, were well-prepared with the material they would teach. Next, as many as ten students or 2,9 %, stated they were not ready with the online class material. And finally, no students were completely unready with the online learning materials.

According to the findings, most participants, or more than 70%, felt prepared to confront the online teaching practicum in designing online learning materials. Many students interviewed said that before they had an online practicum, they had used technology in preparing some teaching materials. They have designed some teaching materials in the form of PowerPoint slides and several videos. Some of them found it difficult in the beginning. However, as time goes on, they can manage it well. They also concern with learning theories and learning principles so that they can integrate theories and practice. In designing effective online learning materials, perhaps the most important first step is to create a role for the teacher as one of coaching and scaffolding as an alternative to the more commonly used didactic forms of teaching. Novices frequently fail to achieve this in the online learning designs (Herrington & Oliver, 2002). In this case, respondents tend to implement student-centred learning while teaching in the class, which is crucial to make students more active. It is also valuable for developing their critical thinking and self-reflection. Besides, it helps students learn how to set and achieve personal and educational goals. Respondents also maximise their communication skills by practicing them every day before class begins so that they can communicate effectively, emphatically, and politely in teaching.

3.2. Designing online learning media

Media use in online class teaching should be suitable for the students and the online situation. Therefore, knowing how ready students are to prepare the media for an online class is necessary.

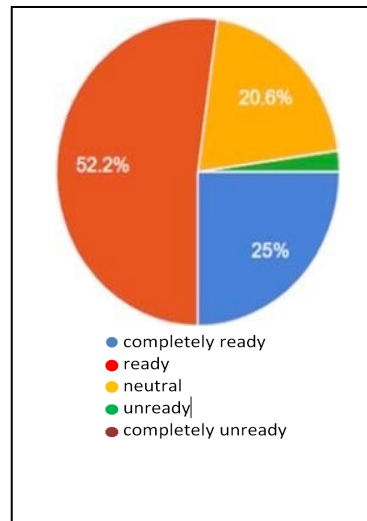


Figure 2. Percentage of Preservice Teachers' Readiness in Designing online learning media

Figure 2 shows the percentage of preservice teachers' readiness to design online learning media. 52,2% or 69 participants are ready to prepare the media for the online class. At the same time, 33 participants (25%) stated they were ready to design online learning media. Further, 30 students, in the percentage of 20,5% of participants, are in a neutral situation. On the other hand, 3 students (2,2%) are unready to design online learning media due to some conditions. Lastly, only one student (0,7%) feels completely unready for the situation.

From the data above, more than half participants were ready to face practicum in designing online learning media. Online learning media are tools for cooperation, collaboration, and communication. These devices allow for the provision of individual amounts of teaching presence, structure, learning and technology support, orientations to new roles, and process and interaction (dialogue) with tutors and others (Fahy, 2008). Many interviewed participants said that even before they had an online practicum, they had used technology in preparing some teaching media. They tend to use popular media such as zoom, google classroom, or WhatsApp. However, students need time to adapt to this situation. Further, some of them find it difficult to gain the students' attention since they cannot control them directly. They combine the media used in teaching learning to maximise the learning output. Meanwhile, the impact of this online learning makes it easier to do virtual learning. They can deliver material through visual, audio, and even audio-visual, so it is not only based on the textbooks.

3.3. Designing online learning evaluation and assessment

Evaluation in online classes should be constructed based on the online situation. Therefore, knowing how ready students are for online assessment is necessary.

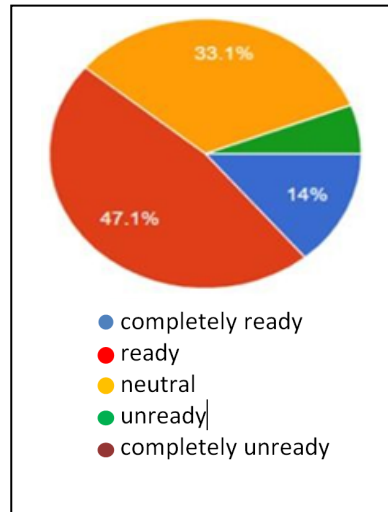


Figure 3. Percentage of pre-service teachers' readiness in designing online learning evaluation and assessment

The percentage of pre-service teachers' readiness to design online learning evaluations and assessments can be seen in figure 3. 47,1% (67 respondents) are ready to develop online learning evaluations and assessments. At the same time, 33,1 % or 53 respondents stated neutral in facing the conditions. Moreover, 30 people or 14 % of respondents, are completely ready to design evaluations and assessments to conduct online learning. At the same time, as many as 6 respondents (4,4 %) feel unprepared to develop online learning evaluations and assessments. Last but not least, only one respondent feels completely unprepared to face the given condition.

Fauziati (2007) stated that teachers play an important role in the teaching-learning process, especially in the classroom management system. Moreover, different teachers have different assumptions and perspectives on classroom management, also in the view of the student's assessment. Because of that, teachers should create conducive classroom management. There are some crucial factors to consider for the success of the management including teacher talk, teacher talking time, physical presence, and feedback. Feedback is an important thing in assessment because it helps students learn from their mistakes. From the reflection that has been done through the interview, it is known that respondents have realized the importance of evaluation and assessment in the teaching-learning process. However, some of them did not find the proper method to evaluate and assess the student's learning outcomes. On the other hand, many students believed they had used appropriate methods to evaluate and assess

students' learning outcomes, such as online interviews, quizzes, forum posts, game-type activities, etc. Preparing evaluation and assessment in online learning challenges respondents since they have to make sure the materials are delivered well as they don't have the opportunity to meet the class directly.

3.4. Implementing online learning

Technology is one of the most important things today. Further, we face the condition where students and teachers cannot meet in one location due to the pandemic of covid 19. This situation forces teachers to take action to keep the learning process going well. One of the solutions is online learning. Here, preservice teachers should be ready with this condition. However, we provide this question to measure how ready preservice teachers are to conduct online learning.

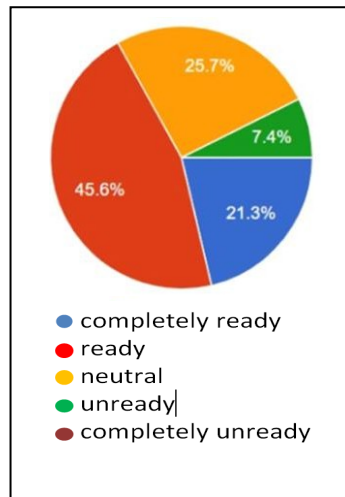


Figure 4. Percentage of pre-service teachers' readiness in implementing online learning

Figure 4 presents the percentage of pre-service teachers' readiness to implement online learning. 45,6 %, or 71 participants, are ready to implement online education. At the same time, as many as 28 participants (25,7%) are neutral in facing this situation. on the other hand, four respondents or about 7,4 % of participants, feel unprepared to implement online learning. Further, no participants were feeling unready.

The reflections showed that more than 50% of participants were prepared to implement online learning since they had used technology before practicum. They also concern with learning theories and learning principles so that they can integrate theories and practice. While teaching in the class, respondents tend to implement student-oriented learning; it is crucial to make students more active in the class. Some participants believed that offline teaching is more interesting than online as they can put what they learned in college to the

best possible use. Others concluded that online education is more interesting than offline teaching because they can put what they learned in college to the best possible service. It is in line with Thoms and Eryilmaz (2014). They argued that students had higher interactions when using online learning media, including sharing it with their social communities and a high level of satisfaction. This makes digital learning more interesting than face-to-face learning. This confirms that online learning is proven to influence students positively. By joining social media, students not only attend lessons but also interact with fellow users, including their school friends. However, that opportunity allowed them to apply all of their technological knowledge to assist them in having the online teaching practicum. Some participants also stated that they felt ready to teach the students online since they were pretty confident with their technological capability.

3.5. Utilising various platforms to facilitate online learning

In conducting online learning, we need some platform to support us. Some platforms may be familiar, but some may not. We, as a teacher, should know how to use these platforms correctly. This is provided to measure pre-service teachers' readiness to use some media to facilitate online learning.

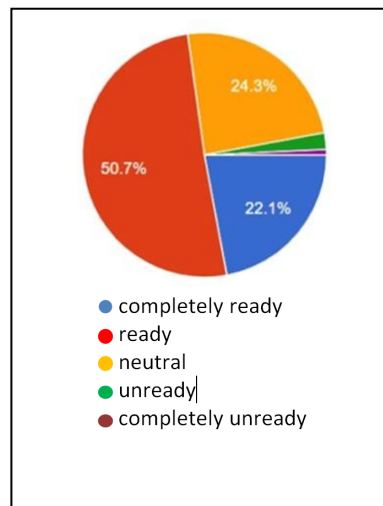


Figure 5. Percentage of pre-service teachers' readiness in Utilizing various platforms to facilitate online learning

In figure 5, it can be illustrated that 71 participants (50,7%) are ready to utilise various platforms to facilitate Online learning. At the same time, 24,3 % or 34 participants are neutral on their perceptions. However, as many as 28 participants are ready or if we put it in percentage is 22,1 %. Meanwhile, only 3 participants (2,9%) were unprepared for their situation. And no one feels incompletely ready.

Abuhassna and Yahaya (2018) claimed that the current technologies in education play an essential role in providing a complete online learning experience close enough to a face-to-face class despite the physical separation of the students from their educator, along with other students. Online learning platforms lend themselves toward a less hierarchical methodology in education, fulfilling the learning desires of individuals who do not approach new information linearly or systematically. Platforms of online learning are additionally the most suitable ways for autonomous students. After conducting some interviews, it can be drawn that more than 75% of participants are familiar with online learning platforms and have used them before. Some popular platforms they mentioned are Moodle, Google Classroom, Quizzes, Wordwall, etc. Some participants said that students, on the other hand, feel interested in these brand-new platforms since their teachers have never proposed them before. By using these various platforms, students can be more enthusiastic and well-participated in learning, quickly understand the material given, and the class is not monotonous.

3.6. Designing online learning activities utilising various platforms

A lesson plan is a teacher's daily guide for what students need to learn, how it will be taught, and how learning will be measured. Lesson plans help teachers be more effective in the classroom by providing a detailed outline to follow each class period. To know how ready a pre-service teacher in arranging a lesson plan, we provide this type of question.

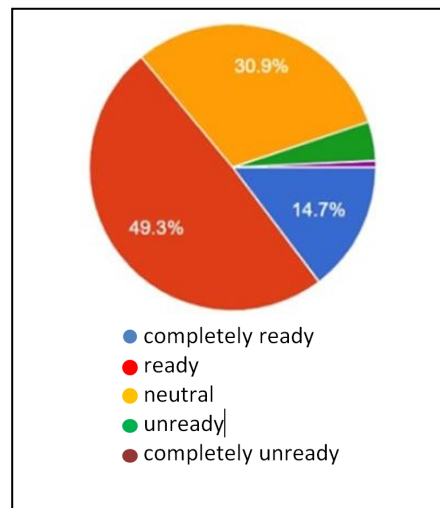


Figure 6. Percentage of pre-service teachers' readiness in Designing online learning activities utilising various platforms

Figure 6 shows whether pre-service teachers were ready to design online learning activities utilising various platforms. 49,3 % or 64 participants are prepared to develop online learning activities through lesson plans. Further, 45 participants, or we can say in percentage 30,9%, are neutral in doing so. At the same time, as many as 19 participants (14,7 %) feel

entirely ready to face the situation. On the other hand, 5% or eight respondents are unready to design online learning activities utilising various platforms. And last but not least, no participants are unready to arrange a lesson plan.

Designing lesson plans is one of the essential things in teaching-learning. The lesson plan is intended to increase the quality and efficacy of graduates' skills by paying attention to the growth of new technologies and society's needs in the modern global age (Anggraeni & Akbar, 2018). Further, according to Coenders and Verhoef (2019), teachers will use lesson plans to interpret them as a guide to what students need to do and do it successfully through Class instruction. The reflection supports the questionnaire data regarding the pre-service teacher ready to develop online learning activities utilising various platforms. In the interview session, some respondents felt it was difficult initially since what they got in their previous lecture was offline learning. Otherwise, respondents think it is their responsibility to conduct online learning activities supported by the attractive platform. They keep learning how to arrange the lesson plan that fits their students, creating a digital ebook, using discord and quizzes on their learning process, and using audiovisual are one of their ways.

4. Conclusion

All in all, this study revealed pre-service teachers' readiness regarding their skills in ICT used for online practicum. The findings unpack pre-service teachers' readiness in an online setting that is quite different from what the university prepares for them. The conclusion of the readiness impact on teaching practicum done by the participants may be drawn as follows, based on the reflection done after the research. From designing online learning material, all participants stated that they were ready to have an online teaching practicum since they had already used it. Respondents tend to implement student-centred learning in their teaching materials design which is crucial to make students more active. The second aspect is designing online learning media. It can be concluded that most of the participants are ready to design learning media since they tend to use popular media in conducting the teaching-learning process. Further, from designing online learning evaluation and assessment aspects, more than 75% of respondents are ready as they used appropriate methods to evaluate and assess students' learning outcomes. At the same time, from implementing online learning aspects, most participants stated that they felt ready to teach the students online since they were pretty confident with their technological capability. They often use technology for their daily and studying needs. Utilising various platforms to facilitate online learning is one of the biggest challenges in conducting an online learning practicum. However, more than 75 % are ready with this since they are already familiar with online learning platforms and have used them before. Further, from the designing lesson plan aspect, it can be concluded that the pre-service teacher is ready to develop online learning activities utilising various platforms.

Despite this research significance, some further research requires to be investigated, such as pre-service teacher experience and attitude in online practicum, teacher educators as mentor

and field supervisor perception need to be investigated to gain a more profound perspective of their practice in online practicum. Additionally, it is urgent to investigate how the pre-service teachers design the instructional procedures for online practicum as it will inspire and give more inspiration for classroom practice.

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