



IAE Journal of Research and Development (IJORED)

Vol. 1, Issue 1 August 2025, pp. 206-228,

eISSN: 3088-5515, pISSN: 3088-5523,

Published by IAE.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61408/ijored2025v01i01.11>

Rising the Curtain: Practicum Experience from Pre-Service Teachers' Lens in Tanzania

Anathe R. Kimaro

Institute of Adult Education, Tanzania

Email: anathe.kimaro@iae.ac.tz

Abstract

The study aimed to ascertain pre-service teachers' perceptions about their training programme while in school and their ability to apply the knowledge gained in teaching. Specifically, this study sought to answer three questions, i.e. how do pre-service teachers perceive their training programmes? What is the capacity of pre-service teacher in linking theory and practice in their teaching? And what are the potential challenges faced by pre-service teachers in the practicum? The study adopted a mixed-method approach guided by an explanatory case study design. The population of the study consisted of pre-service teachers, mentors and supervisors from the University of Dodoma. A simple random and purposive sampling procedure were employed to obtain a sample size of 20 participants, i.e. 15 pre-service teachers, three mentors and two supervisors. Data were collected using an interview guide, a reflective essay and an open-ended questionnaire. The data were analysed through thematic analysis and descriptive analysis. Research findings indicated that pre-service teachers felt that university courses did not prepare them enough to perform all teaching roles effectively. They also demonstrated low ability to apply the knowledge acquired into actual teaching, as most of them did not manage to put into practice the nitty-gritties of teaching effectiveness. The conclusions drawn from this research may be of benefit to teacher educators in their review of organisational

processes and practices for pre-service teacher learning during their school experience. It is recommended that preparing teachers who are capable of applying evidence-based strategies in their practice, while constantly reflecting on their teaching, should be a priority on the teacher education agenda in Tanzania.

Keywords: Practicum, pre-service teachers, teacher education

Introduction

The practicum is a crucial element in teacher preparation programmes, serving as an essential bridge between theory and practice. This paper examines the views of pre-service teachers on their training, highlighting how a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application can leave them feeling unprepared for real classroom environments. The practicum is not just an additional requirement; it is a transformative experience that allows aspiring educators to gain hands-on skills and refine their teaching techniques (Abongdia, Adu & Foncha, 2015; Genç, 2019). In authentic classroom settings, pre-service teachers can implement engaging learning activities and assess student progress effectively, which builds their confidence and competence. Ultimately, the practicum is more than a necessity; it is vital for shaping the next generation of teachers and empowering them to thrive in the challenges of a dynamic educational landscape (Al-Momani, 2016; Vumilia & Semali, 2017). Investing in this experience is essential for the future of education, equipping teachers to inspire and nurture their students.

Teacher development is a complex process involving various trajectories influenced by initial training, goals, and societal expectations (Alemdag, 2017; Barahona, 2019). Teaching requires both practical action and reflective practice planning and adjusting activities based on curricular requirements and student needs. This reflection relies on experience and critical feedback to address challenges (Myalla, 2014; Dann, 2018; Mgeni, 2017; Erksson, 2017). Typically, this reflective practice follows an iterative cycle of reflection and action, which may become second nature for

experienced educators. Field experiences allow student instructors to test different teaching methods while receiving guidance from seasoned professionals, supplemented by university classes or seminars for reflection on these experiences concerning educational theory.

Integrating theory and practice in university courses and fieldwork is essential for developing effective educators (Alsarawi, 2024; Ebrahim, 2017; Meutia et al., 2018). While methods like field experience reports, interactive seminars, and reflective writing can connect theoretical knowledge to real-world application, the sources of information that students rely on can vary widely, leading to different interpretations among individuals. Shulman (1987) identified seven key sources that inform teaching practices: (i) academic or subject-specific knowledge, (ii) general pedagogical knowledge, (iii) Pedagogical content knowledge, (iv) curriculum knowledge, (v) knowledge of students, (vi) knowledge of educational contexts, (vii) knowledge of educational goals. Expanding on this, Abongdia (2022) categorised knowledge into five groups: (i) knowledge from practice, shared as advice and experience, (ii) academic knowledge, simplified from scientific research, (iii) prescriptive knowledge from institutional guidelines, (iv) scientific knowledge from rigorous inquiry, (v) popularised information from mainstream media. This framework emphasises the need to blend various sources of knowledge to create more engaging and effective learning environments that resonate with students.

Pre-service programmes aim to equip future teachers with skills and knowledge that enhance their professional practice. However, a significant disconnect often exists between the curriculum and the realities of the classroom (Mannathoko, 2013; Mangope et al., 2013; Aldabbus, 2020; Baluyos et al., 2024). This raises important questions about the relevance of educational theory in actual teaching situations. These theory courses often face criticism from school principals and new teachers, who report that assignments frequently lack practical value (Alsarawi, 2014; Bernard,

2015; Ankonga, 2018). A re-evaluation of pre-service training is essential to ensure that it better aligns with the real-world challenges teachers encounter, leading to a more effective and prepared workforce.

Pre-service teachers must strengthen their understanding of educational theories, teaching methods, and strategies, demonstrating the skills acquired during training before starting their teaching practicum (Jita & Munje, 2021). This practicum is essential for developing competent and confident educators (Junaid et al., 2024). To succeed, pre-service teachers need a strong foundation of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences (Jusoh, 2013; Kabilan et al., 2020). Despite the importance of training qualified teachers, many feel unprepared for the school system (Wang, 2018; Pourdavood & Yan, 2021). The theoretical knowledge from their programmes often proves inadequate when confronting the diverse needs of students (Nzilano, 2013; Komba & Kira, 2013). We must address these gaps in training to ensure that future educators are equipped to meet the challenges of their profession.

In Tanzania, teacher education is primarily provided by teachers' colleges and universities. Universities offer a range of programmes, including diplomas, bachelor's degrees, and postgraduate qualifications, while teachers' colleges focus on non-degree pre-service education (URT, 1995; Kitta & Fussy, 2013; Luwavi, 2012). Over the last decade, the Government of Tanzania has implemented significant reforms through the Educational Sector Development Programme (ESDP) to enhance educational quality and outcomes. These reforms emphasise the importance of effective teacher education as a foundation for meaningful learning. In collaboration with the private sector, the government is dedicated to preparing educators with the necessary skills to promote student success (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training [MoEVT], 2010b; United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 1995, 2000, 2005, 2007). However, challenges persist in ensuring the quality of teacher production, particularly given the limited research on pre-service teachers' perceptions

of their learning during teaching practice (TP). Addressing this gap is essential for improving teacher education and enhancing student achievement.

The effectiveness of contemporary pre-service teacher programmes in equipping students for the real challenges of teaching practicums is increasingly being scrutinised, despite the widely acknowledged significance of professional learning experiences. Research consistently reveals troubling gaps between the theoretical training offered by teacher education institutions and their practical application in actual classrooms (e.g., Nzilano, 2013; Majani, 2022; Mpate, Campbell-Evans & Gray, 2023; Kimaro et al., 2022). Consequently, many pre-service teachers report feeling ill-prepared to navigate the complexities of diverse student populations and demanding teaching conditions. This lack of readiness not only undermines their confidence but also heightens stress levels during the practicum. In light of these critical issues, this study seeks to explore the following research questions: (i) How do pre-service teachers perceive their training programmes? (ii) How well do pre-service teachers apply their knowledge learned to teach? and (iii) What are the potential challenges faced by pre-service teachers in the practicum?

Methodology

This investigation utilised a primarily qualitative research approach, enhanced by some quantitative elements, through an explanatory case study design involving several schools. The study was conducted in three public secondary schools and Dar es Salaam University. The University of Dar es Salaam was selected because it is one of the largest and oldest universities in Tanzania. The study used a sample of 20 participants, i.e. 15 pre-service teachers, three teachers and two pre-service teacher supervisors. A simple random procedure was used to obtain 15 pre-service teachers during their practicum. Once the participating secondary placement schools were confirmed, the researcher extended an invitation

to the pre-service teachers assigned to those selected three secondary schools to engage in this study. A robust group of fifteen pre-service teachers comprising six males and nine females volunteered from diverse social science disciplines, including Swahili, Geography, History, English, and Civics. To ensure a comprehensive perspective, I purposefully selected one dedicated pre-service teacher mentor from each of the three participating secondary schools, creating a strong mentorship framework. Furthermore, two experienced university field supervisors, designated as supervisors for this study, were purposefully selected to evaluate the participating pre-service teachers, providing valuable insights into their development. In total, data were meticulously gathered from 20 diverse participants, enriching the findings and implications of this study.

Data collection took place over eight weeks during the teaching practice of pre-service teachers in secondary schools. The data gathered was obtained through interviews, closed-ended questionnaires, reflective essays, observations, and document analysis. Each pre-service teacher participated in two interview sessions, one at the beginning and another at the end of their teaching practice. These interviews enabled the author to gain insights into the pre-service teachers' perspectives on three key questions: (i) How do they perceive their training programmes? (ii) How do they apply their knowledge in teaching? and (iii) What challenges do they encounter? Additionally, each mentor teacher and field supervisor were interviewed once towards the end of the placement period.

The course outline for the university's teacher education programme served as a valuable tool to uncover critical information about the diverse courses that pre-service teachers engaged with before their teaching practice. By examining their schemes of work, lesson plans, and lesson notes, I gained meaningful insights into their readiness and capacity to prepare these essential documents based on their university training. Furthermore, the document analysis extended to supervisors' assessment and feedback forms, alongside the relevant subject textbooks and

supplementary resources available in each school. This thorough examination of documents was conducted after individual interviews, observations, and focus group discussions, ensuring a robust validation of the participants' self-reported behaviours. By cross-checking these documents against other data collection methods, I strengthened the credibility of our findings (Bryman, 2016). This comprehensive analysis not only highlights the effectiveness of the teacher education programme but also illuminates areas for improvement, directly impacting the quality of future teaching practices.

The study followed a comprehensive research protocol. Informed consent was obtained from all participants using consent forms before they took part in the study. During this process, the purpose of the study was explained to participants prior to their signing the consent form. To ensure confidentiality, the researchers created a special encrypted folder to store all collected data. Anonymity was upheld by using letters and pseudonyms instead of the actual names and schools of the participants. The collected data were analysed thematically. Initially, data from interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed. The transcripts, along with reflective essays and relevant documents, were read multiple times to gain an overall understanding. Three coding cycles were conducted, resulting in the creation of a data map. Various categories emerged from the data, and key concepts were identified and analysed in light of Shulman's (1986) knowledge categories. From these categories, the findings were interpreted, discussed, and contextualised within current literature.

Findings

Pre-service perceptions of their training programme

The first research question aimed to explore pre-service teachers' perceptions of their training programmes before gaining real-world teaching experience. The researcher sought to determine how satisfied

trainees were with their preparedness to practice their profession, based on the content and professional skills taught in school. Table 1 provides a summary of the pre-service teachers' responses.

Table 1: Pre-service Teachers' Perception about their Training Programmes (N=15)

S/No.	Items	N	%
1	Before teaching practice, we have already learned to monitor and assess students' learning progress during the period	3	20
2	Before practicum, we have sufficient knowledge on how to make students participate in the lessons	3	20
3	Before teaching practices, we have already covered sufficient content on teaching methods	3	20
4	Before teaching practices, we have already taught how to prepare lesson notes	2	13.3
5	Before teaching practice, we have already practised different classroom management techniques	3	20
6	Before teaching practice, we have already taught and practised how to prepare and use instructional materials	5	36
7	Before teaching practices, we were exposed to the ethics of the profession	6	40
8	Before teaching practice, we were taught how to state specific objects	2	13.3
9	Before the practicum, we had already received adequate instructions on the sequential and logical presentation of lessons	2	13.3

Source: Field data, 2024

The data in Table 1 reveal that most statements indicate pre-service teachers' responses, grounded in their university education and school experiences, suggest their preparatory programmes were inadequate. Out of the 9 items measuring this variable, only one achieved a percentage of

42%, which is below the 50% threshold. This largely indicates that pre-service teachers were dissatisfied with the quality of training and exposure they received before beginning their teaching practice.

Prospective teachers must undergo specialised intellectual training to succeed in their roles. The teacher education programme aims to provide a comprehensive curriculum to prepare future educators effectively. Content knowledge is particularly crucial for teachers, as it encompasses their beliefs, ideas, theories, and understanding of specific disciplines (Abongdia et al., 2015). Mastery of this foundational knowledge is essential for enhancing teaching and learning (Genç, 2016). Shulman (1986) emphasised that content knowledge is vital for the development of the teaching profession. He introduced the concept of pedagogical content knowledge, which represents a specialised knowledge base for teachers. One of the most significant decisions educators make in the classroom is choosing the appropriate teaching style. Methodology, often referred to as pedagogy, refers to how knowledge, concepts, facts, and theories are delivered to students. However, respondents indicated that they felt inadequately equipped with knowledge about teaching methodology. This study revealed that pre-service teachers seemed poorly prepared for teaching practices, especially in this area. A solid understanding of teaching methodology is essential for developing basic teaching skills, delivering lessons systematically and coherently, devising strategies to encourage student participation through interactive methods (Jita & Munje, 2021), and selecting appropriate methods based on learning objectives and the nature of the topics to ensure effective lessons (Junaid et al., 2024).

A close examination of the data revealed that only a small percentage of pre-service teachers (13%) indicated they had received adequate instruction on the sequential and logical presentation of lessons before their teaching practice. This suggests that many pre-service teachers are not well-equipped with the knowledge necessary to develop essential teaching skills, present lessons to learners systematically and coherently,

and employ strategies that encourage student participation through interactive teaching methods (Jusoh, 2013). Additionally, they may struggle to choose the appropriate methods based on the objectives and nature of the topics being taught, which is essential for effective lessons (Kabilan et al., 2020). Manasia et al. (2020) emphasise the importance of lesson planning, stating that it illustrates how pre-service teachers translate learning theories into practice. Furthermore, planning allows pre-service teachers to thoughtfully consider what they teach, how they teach it, and how to assess their teaching (Mannathoko, 2013). However, student teachers often lack experience in planning and organising teaching activities (Meutia, 2018). Understanding pre-service teachers' perceptions of how lesson plans guide their teaching will provide insights into their thought processes and decision-making regarding their pedagogy.

Assessment is a key component of teacher education programmes, playing a vital role in the teaching and learning process. It provides valuable insights into student learning, guides instructional decisions, and motivates students. Effective assessment helps teachers understand what students know, identify areas needing support, and adjust teaching strategies accordingly. Data from the study reveal that many pre-service teachers lacked adequate preparation in monitoring and assessing student learning, with only 3 out of 15 (20%) reporting prior training in these areas. When integrated into the learning process, assessment enhances student progress and supports lifelong learning skills. In a learner-centred approach, assessment is viewed as essential to both teaching and learning, as emphasised by John Biggs' constructive alignment theory. Jita and Munje (2021) noted that assessment not only monitors but also promotes learning. By clarifying goals, assessment fosters motivation and a sense of achievement among students, helping to reignite their desire to learn. Ultimately, the assessment methods employed can significantly impact how and what students learn.

Pre-service teachers' capacity to link theory and practice

The second research question aimed to measure pre-service teachers' ability to integrate what they learned in their courses into real-world classroom practice. All 15 pre-service teachers who participated in the study reported having difficulty with lesson preparation. Effective lesson preparation is essential for ensuring a systematic and impactful presentation. In the preparatory stage, pre-service teachers need to consult the syllabus and scheme of work, relevant textbooks, gather teaching and learning materials, and ultimately prepare their lesson notes. Many pre-service teachers found this stage particularly challenging during their practicum, as they struggled with writing lesson notes and creating lesson plans. A critical component of a lesson plan that influences almost every stage of its development is the "statement of lesson objectives." Lesson objectives need to be measurable and observable. Instructional objectives are statements that articulate the expected capabilities of learners. These objectives are typically specific, measurable, and achievable, and they are often phrased using behavioural language (Junaid et al., 2024). They indicate what teachers expect learners to do or demonstrate by the end of the instruction or course of study (Manasia et al., 2020). Instructional objectives help teachers develop teaching and learning activities, select appropriate materials, and summarize key points in their lesson preparations (Ankonga, 2018). Additionally, Baluyos et al. (2024) note that these objectives assist teachers in selecting the content to be studied and help maintain focus on the lesson's main goals, preventing distractions from the material being taught. During an interview, one pre-service teacher shared her experiences related to this topic:

In the university, they can tell you that, in theory, this or that should happen. But each class is different, and not all strategies work. Look at my class...it is a very big class and I don't even have enough English textbooks...I try to teach reading aloud skills, but I have failed...because of the nature of the classroom, and many students don't pay attention. Unfortunately, during the coursework were taught only how to teach

reading aloud skills to students without considering the real situation in our classroom (Respondent A, interview, August 2024).

The university training provided to pre-service teachers equipped them with both theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching strategies. However, it did not adequately address the real classroom context in Tanzania. This finding contrasts with the conclusions drawn by Alemdag and Simsek (2017) and Ahmed (2019), which highlighted the importance of training pre-service teachers to use motivational skills and understand external factors that influence student motivation. Participants in this study indicated that their confidence needed to be bolstered before they could effectively motivate their students. In essence, rather than focusing solely on external tactics to inspire students, pre-service teachers need to build their confidence first.

A review of 15 lesson plans found significant deficiencies: none included clear, specific, and measurable objectives that could be achieved within the lesson's duration. Pre-service teachers also struggled to create engaging activities that effectively guided student learning, indicating a lack of focus on objectives, student activities, and appropriate teaching materials. Competence indicators, crucial for assessing mastery of essential skills, were often missing. The plans did not align with secondary school syllabus guidelines, complicating the evaluation of student learning outcomes. As noted by Adams (2016), successful lesson plans should include specific objectives, engaging activities, and assessment strategies. Abongdia et al. (2015) emphasised the need for systematic organisation in lesson planning to create enjoyable learning experiences. Pre-service teachers felt that developing lesson plans differed greatly from their university training, leading many to imitate mentors' plans or rely on lesson notes instead. While some educators reported slow improvement, a disconnect between their university education and classroom realities remained evident. During the focus group discussion, the message was accepted by many pre-service teachers:

...we think they are out of touch with reality. They say one thing, but it happens differently in a classroom. They just don't have the experience. "Lecturers must try and get themselves into schools because most of them ... come straight from studying their honours or master's to become lecturers," stated another respondent..... (Focus group discussion in secondary school C, 2024).

The study finding demonstrates that many pre-service teachers inadequately followed the lesson plan. Out of 15 pre-service teachers interviewed and observed, only four effectively introduced their lessons, maintained an appropriate pace, assessed student progress, and provided constructive feedback. The remaining six failed to articulate the lesson's purpose or review students' prior knowledge, both of which are critical for successful teaching. Abas (2016) emphasises that communicating objectives is essential for guiding learners, while Wang et al. (2018) assert that reviewing prior knowledge is a necessary teaching technique for effective learning. Prior knowledge is an indispensable component of cognitive development, acting as the foundation for new learning, much like stacking building blocks to create complex structures.

The study demonstrates that pre-service teachers struggle to assess whether lesson objectives are achieved, a critical factor in determining teaching effectiveness. Observations indicate that these teachers often fail to evaluate the knowledge students have gained, neglecting to ask summative questions needed to measure the acquisition of competencies. Summative assessment, known as "assessment of learning" (Vumilia & Semali, 2017), is essential for evaluating learning after instruction and can be implemented through various methods such as tasks and oral questioning. The primary goal is to ensure that lesson objectives are met. According to Scott et al. (2014), an effective lesson achieves its desired learning goals. As a result, pre-service teachers should prioritise reinforcing key concepts through summaries, exercises, and assignments rather than concluding their lessons abruptly.

Challenges Pre-Service Teachers Encounter during Practicum

To effectively tackle the crucial question of what challenges pre-service teachers' encounter during their teaching practice, we thoroughly analysed and categorised the gathered data into three significant themes. These themes highlight the obstacles faced in schools, the issues arising with supervisors, and the difficulties experienced by student teachers themselves. Understanding these challenges is vital for fostering a more supportive environment for future educators, as illustrated below:

Challenges related to school

Many pre-service teachers who were interviewed expressed that many subject teachers doubt their ability to perform the job effectively and are concerned about their ability to complete the syllabus. Additionally, schools tend not to change the teachers for Form Two and Form Four since those students are preparing to sit for the national exams, which consequently impacts their learning. Furthermore, the data revealed that pre-service teachers did not receive the anticipated support from their mentor teachers. For instance, pre-service teachers expected their mentors to demonstrate how to prepare schemes of work and lesson plans. Unfortunately, most mentor teachers did not prepare these documents for their own teaching, leaving pre-service teachers without valuable examples to learn from. One pre-service teacher reported:

I expected that the mentor teacher would have his scheme of work and lesson plan, where I could see an example to start with. Unfortunately, he did not have a lesson plan, and he said he never prepared one because he has enough experience and he knows where to start and finish during the lesson (Respondent G, interview, August 2024)

A pre-service teacher from another school shared a concern:

I asked my mentor for the necessary documents, but she didn't provide a scheme of work or lesson plan, so I had to rely on my college knowledge to prepare my lesson plan and scheme of work." Mentor teachers explained that their extensive classroom experience allows them

to teach without planning documents. One mentor said, after almost twelve years of teaching, I don't need a lesson plan every day.

Pre-service teachers anticipated strong support from their mentor teachers during their classroom teaching. However, twelve out of fifteen reported that the feedback they received was inadequate and inconsistent. Mentor teachers frequently failed to observe their lessons adequately, often leaving after only a few minutes instead of staying for the duration. One pre-service teacher pointed out:

In the beginning of my teaching practice, my mentor teacher used to come, watch me while I was teaching. But as time went on...he never visited my class again...something which put me in a difficult situation when students misbehave (Respondent C, interview, August 2024).

Supervisors reported that pre-service teachers are consistently left without assistance, which is unacceptable. The school fails to provide the necessary equipment and materials, often leaving them locked away. This problem is not isolated; Vumilia and Semali (2017) have highlighted that many schools lack adequate facilities and allowances for effective teaching practice. School management must ensure that pre-service teachers receive the support they need to maximise their teaching experiences (Myalla, 2014).

The findings of this study demonstrate that school teachers often interfere with the teaching process. One pre-service teacher pointed out, "In one instance, the schoolteacher was at the back of the classroom, marking assignments and translating the lesson into Kiswahili while I was teaching, which directly hindered my ability to deliver the lesson as planned." Additionally, other pre-service teachers observed that while they successfully built a rapport with the students, this negatively impacted their relationships with the subject teachers, especially when students insisted on continuing to work with them until the end of the semester.

Challenges Related to Supervisors

Pre-service teachers rely on constructive feedback from supervisors to improve their skills (Komba & Kira, 2013). However, many express concerns about receiving insufficient feedback. Supervisors often leave without comments or provide vague observations, as found by Genc (2016), who noted that some supervisors lack the time to engage in meaningful discussions with student teachers. Out of fifteen pre-service teachers surveyed, seven reported that some supervisors only briefly review lesson plans and quickly leave the classroom. Additionally, some impose unrealistic expectations, not recognising that this is a formative training period. Conflicting feedback and a lack of standardised methods further complicate the situation, forcing pre-service teachers to seek help from subject teachers who face their challenges.

A challenge related to supervisors was identified regarding the assessment forms used during evaluations. These forms outline specific indicators to assess and provide comments on while observing the teaching practices of pre-service teachers. As a result, many supervisors tended to focus more on commenting on these indicators rather than observing the actual teaching of pre-service teachers. One supervisor affirmed that:

The assessment forms are so comprehensive. There are so many aspects to be evaluated while observing a pre-service teacher. Most of us, we focus on commenting on those aspects while ignoring the ongoing lesson. Therefore, we miss the important points to comment on (Respondent E, interview, August 2024).

The findings indicate that supervisors fulfilled their responsibilities in terms of assessment and providing feedback. However, the way assessments and feedback were conducted offered minimal opportunities to enhance the learning of pre-service teachers. There was a noticeable absence of regular formative assessments to monitor progress throughout the teaching practice. This lack of ongoing assessment hindered supervisors from identifying the challenges faced by pre-service teachers

and offering appropriate guidance to help them overcome these obstacles. Consequently, pre-service teachers experienced dilemmas, unresolved issues, anxiety, and frustration due to the irregular and inconsistent assessment. One pre-service teacher recounted:

My supervisor was supposed to talk and correct me when I faced difficulty soon after the assessment. Unfortunately, he assessed me and left... then the following week, he came and gave me feedback (Respondent D, interview, August 2024)

This suggests that pre-service teachers had limited opportunities to learn from their supervisors. Other studies indicate that to promote professional growth among pre-service teachers during their teaching practice, supervisors should engage in continuous assessment and provide regular feedback (Myalla, 2014). Additionally, the prevalence of grade-oriented assessment creates a conflict regarding the overall purpose of evaluation, which, in turn, instils fear in some pre-service teachers. Both of these issues negatively impact their learning experiences. Therefore, supervising teaching practice must be regarded as a critical responsibility (Eriksson, 2017). Furthermore, there is an ongoing debate between the programme coordinator and some supervisors regarding the supervisor's role: Should the supervisor act as a guide, a trainer, or merely assess whether the trainee passes or fails?

Challenges related to student teachers

Both supervisors noted that some participants struggle to create well-organised lesson plans that meet all required elements, possibly due to insufficient training and feedback (Ankonga, 2018). One supervisor mentioned that some pre-service teachers lack the necessary competence for effective teaching. They often feel shy, remain stationary, use a single tone of voice, and rarely employ teaching aids to illustrate concepts. Additionally, they make various presentation errors and have difficulty maintaining an appropriate pace, which can confuse students.

Another key issue observed is poor classroom management. Supervisors reported instances where pre-service teachers lost control of their classes, resulting in chaos. They tend to dominate discussions and do not encourage participation from lower-level students or foster collaborative learning. This matches the findings of Alsarawi (2024), who identified classroom management as a significant challenge for pre-service teachers. Two pre-service teachers shared their narratives about these challenges:

I can say, because this was my first time teaching students in a real classroom context...adaptation was the major challenge for me...I had difficulty adapting to the school and classroom environment, but now I am improving. This means we must be prepared for the situation we face at the time... (Respondent H, interview, August 2024)

Another pre-service teacher said:

To me, I remember the first two weeks of my teaching, I was very nervous whenever I entered the classroom...I was sweating for no reason at all. Thus, it made my voice uncontrolled... Many times, I even skip some subject steps, including using teaching aids to demonstrate...I go with them in the classroom, but I forget to use them... (Respondent J, interview, August 2024)

The findings of this research indicated that pre-service teachers encountered challenges related to adaptation. They often felt nervous when teaching, as it was their first experience in a real-life classroom setting. It is common for pre-service teachers to struggle with adjusting to a new environment (Yunus et al., 2010). Additionally, they lacked prior teaching experience in an actual classroom, making this their inaugural teaching experience.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The primary goal of the study was to understand pre-service teachers' perceptions of their training programmes and their ability to apply the knowledge gained in real teaching situations. Data collected regarding the pre-service teachers' views on various aspects of the study revealed that

most were dissatisfied with the preparatory programmes they received before entering the teaching profession. This dissatisfaction hindered their ability to effectively execute their teaching duties. Furthermore, the pre-service teachers showed a limited capacity to apply the knowledge they had acquired. Many struggled to implement the essential components of effective teaching in actual classroom settings. Despite these negative perceptions about their training programmes and the challenges they faced in demonstrating expected teaching competence, they encountered obstacles that need to be addressed to help them maximise the benefits of their teaching practice. Although this study involved a small sample size, the findings can provide insights for other teacher education contexts with similar characteristics. The varied experiences and outcomes of the stakeholders involved offer opportunities for evaluating initial teacher education across different programmes and countries. The conclusions drawn from this research may assist teacher educators in reviewing the organisational processes and practices related to pre-service teacher learning during their school experiences. It is recommended that the preparation of teachers who can effectively apply evidence-based strategies and engage in continuous reflection on their teaching should be a priority in Tanzania's teacher education agenda. The results of this study demonstrate that well-designed and implemented practicum experiences provide significant opportunities to encourage the integration of theory and practice during training, moving toward this important goal.

References

- Abas, M. C. (2016). Difficulties in Field-Based Observation among Pre-Service Teachers: Implications for Practice Teaching. *International Journal of Evaluation Research in Education*, 5(2), 101-112. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v5i2.4528>
- Abongdia, J. A., Adu, E. O., & Foncha, J. W. (2015). Pre-service teachers' challenges during teaching practice in one University in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Int J Edu Sci*, 11(1), 50 – 56.

- Abongdia, J.A., Adu E.O., & Foncha, J.W. (2015). Pre-service Teachers' Challenges during Teaching Practice in One University in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Int. J. Edu. Sci*, 11(1): 50-56.
- Adams, P. (2016). Preparing learning teachers: The role of collaborative inquiry. *Canadian Journal of Action Research*, 17(1), 20-35.
- Adeyanju, D. (2012). Reflective Teaching Practice Among Student Teachers: The Case in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. *Australian Journal of Teaching Education*, 31(2)1-11.
- Ahmed, I. (2019). Impact of microteaching on prospective teachers' performance. Department of Education, Hazar University, Dhodial, Pakistan. *WALLA journal* 35(1):33-38,2019 ISSN1026-3861
- Aldabbus, S. (2020). Challenges encountered by student teachers in practicing Teaching. *British Journal of Education*, 8(7), 1-8.
- Alemdag, E., & Simsek, P. O. z. (2017). Pre-Service Teachers' Evaluation of Their Mentor Teachers, School Experiences, and Theory-Practice Relationship. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 13(2), 165-179.
- Ali, S., & Khalid, M. I. (2015). Assessment of teaching practice: Perceptions of pupil teachers towards supervisors and cooperating teacher's practices'. *The Dialogue*, 10(4), 424-434.
- Al-Momani, F. (2016). Challenges of practicum at College of Education: Supervisors & students' teachers' perspective. *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences* 3, (3), 45–52.
- Alsarawi, A. A. (2024). Managing and learning from the practicum challenges of graduate entry pre-service teachers of students with learning disabilities: A case study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 145(104636), 104636. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104636>
- Ankonga, A. K. (2018). Teachers' perceptions of pre-service teacher training in Namibia: A case of pre- and junior primary teachers teaching through mother tongue in multilingual classroom. University of Eastern Finland Tiedekunta.

- Baluyos, G. R., Clarin, A. S., Bazar, J. S., Enerio, A. T., Jr, & Edullantes, M. P. (2024). Uncovering the challenges of cooperating teachers in shaping pre-service teachers: A case study of Zenodo. Retrieved at <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.10608903>
- Barahona, M. (2019). What matters to supervisors and is this reflected in what they do? Analysing the work of university supervisors of the practicum. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2019.1599509>
- Bernard, M. (2015). *The good teacher: An investigation of the core competencies and attributes of an effective educator*. University of Toronto.
- Dann, C. E. (2018). Enhancing learning and assessment of pre-service teachers on practicum placements using mobile technologies with video capture. Retrieved from WorldCat.org database. Edith Cowan University, Edith Cowan University, Research Online, Perth, Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia.
- Ebrahim, A.; Eyadat, W and Alshammari, F. (2017). Challenges in Teaching Practice at the College of Education based on the Perceptions of Pre-Service Teachers: The Case for Kuwait University. <http://www.educationalrev.us.edu.pl/e49/a20.pdf>
- Eriksson, A. (2017). Pre-Service Teachers' Questions about the Profession during Mentoring Group Conversations. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(1), 76-90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2016.1251901>
- Genç, Z. S. (2016). More practice for pre-service teachers and more theory for in-service teachers of English language. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232, 677-683.
- Jita, T., & Munje, P. N. (2021). Preservice teachers' mentorship experiences during teaching practice in a south African teacher preparation program. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 11(1), 140. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v11n1p140>
- Junaid, M., Mahamud, A., Maruf, G. A. A. H., & Joseph, B. T. (2024). Empowering Future Educators: Navigating Challenges in the

Teaching Practicum for Prospective Teachers and Supervisors. Al-Qanṭara.

- Jusoh, Z. (2013). Teaching practicum: Student teachers' perspectives. *Research, renovation and reinforcement: Enhancing quality in language education*, 886-874.
- Kabilan, M. K., Ramdani, J. M., Mydin, A. A., & Junaedi, R. (2020). International teaching practicum: challenges faced by pre-service EFL teachers in ESL settings. *Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 13(1), 114–126.
- Komba, S. C., & Kira, E. S. (2013). The Effectiveness of Teaching Practice in Improving Student Teachers' Teaching Skills in Tanzania. 4(1), 157–164. Where is the name of the Journal? Re-check
- Manasia, L., Ianos, M. G., & Chicioreanu, T. D. (2020). Pre-service teacher preparedness for fostering education for sustainable development: An empirical analysis of central dimensions of teaching readiness.
- Mangope, B., Otukile-Mongwaketse, M., Dinama, B., & Kuyini, A. B. (2018). Teaching Practice Experiences in Inclusive Classrooms: The Voices of University of Botswana Special Education Student Teachers. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 14(1), 57–92.
- Mannathoko, M. C. (2013). Does Teaching Practice Effectively Prepare Student-Teachers to Teach Creative and Performing Arts? The Case of Botswana. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 2(2), 115–121. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v2n2p115>
- Meutia, P. D., Elyza, F., & Yusnila, Y. (2018). Pre Service Teachers' Performance Post Microteaching Class in Field Experience Program. *Englisia Journal*, 5(2), 102. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v5i2.2889>
- Mgeni, P. L., & Anangisye, W. A. L. (2017). The Roles of Experienced Teachers in Inducting Novice Teachers in Tanzania. *Huria Journal*, 24(3), 126–149.
- Myalla, P. P. (2014). Assessing the Impact of the Duration of Pre-Service Training on Teachers Work Performance and Teaching Competences in

Tanzania: The Case of Nyamagana Municipality
<https://doi.org/10.16526/j.cnki.114762/tp.2014.11.051>

- Nzilano, J. L. (2013). Pre-Service Teachers' Teaching Competencies: The Experience of Practising Teaching in Secondary Schools and Teacher Colleges. *African Journal of Teacher Education*, 3(1), 1–21.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>
- Pourdavood, R.G., & Yan, M. (2021). Preparing pre-service and in-service teachers to teach mathematics and science using an integrated approach: The role of a six-week summer course. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 20(1), 64-85.
- Scott, L. A., Gentry, R., & Phillips, M. (2014). Making preservice teachers better: Examining the impact of a practicum in a teacher preparation program. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 9(10), 294–301.
<https://doi.org/10.5897/err2014.1748>
- Vumilia, P. L., & Semali, L. M. (2017). Ways To Improve “Btp Quality” and the Extent Teaching Practice Contributes To Teaching Effectiveness. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 5(10), 1082–1131.
<https://doi.org/10.21474/ijar01/5629>
- Wang, W., Schmidt-Crawford, D., & Jin, Y. (2018). Preservice teachers' TPACK development: A review of literature. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 34(4), 234-258.