# Teaching Practicum Current Practices: Challenges and Opportunity

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**Abstract**

The aims of this study is to explore the practicum implementation in order to see barrier occurs and to suggest off possible solution to issues occur into the below specific objectives: (a) to explore form of PPL implementation from several points of view: school partners, supervisor-lecturer, and teacher-student, (b) to overview the actual work of the students in the school, viewing from workload and timing, (c) to describe supervision from school partner teacher, types of supervision and partnership pattern in the classroom. The approaches employed samples from four schools, a university and related research participants all of whom are probed for detail individual and group interview. There is also a look for document review applied for better comprehension of the practice. The selected schools are; two SMPs and two SMAs, all of which lie in Pekanbaru. Then, the university reviewed at was Universitas Islam Riau. The research sees that the currect practice is running well, however, there are few wrong doing happening on the ground that school management and PPL unit need to review about, such as workload of the students, supervision, and illegal request from schools that related to financial or non-financial. The timing of the practicum variation need some unified approached and the university need to delegate supervisor-lecturer for initial talk with schools regarding the timing, at about 2 months period. On the other hand, the preparation of the students is in need of revision in term of their self awarenes for experience-based learning. And post practicum reflection process is strongly suggested for better practice and indivdual strengthening learning process.

**Keyword**s*: teaching practice, barriers, schools*

## Pelaksanaan Terkini Program Praktek Mengajar: Tantangan dan Kesempatan

**Abstrak**
Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk untuk mengkaji pelaksanaan PPL untuk melihat tantangan yang muncul dan untuk menyajikan solusi yang sesuai dan semua ini terangkum dalam tujuan berikut ini: (a) untuk meneliti bentuk pelaksanaan PPL dari sudut pandang: sekolah, dosen pembimbing, dan mahasiswa, (b) untuk mengkaji bentuk pelaksaan yang sebenranya terjadi di sekolah, dilihat dari beban tugas dan penjadwalan, (c) untuk memberikan gambaran bimbingan dan sekolah, bentuk bimbingan dan pola kerjasama di kelas. Pendekatan yang terhadap empat sekolah, satu universitas, dan peserta penelitian

lain yang terkait. Dan ada juga kajian dokumen untuk mendapatkan gambaran yang menyeluruh tentang pelaksana. Sekolah yang dipilih adalah dua SMP dan dua SMA yang semuanya ada di Pekanbaru. Universitas yang direview adalah Universitas Islam Riau. Penelitian ini mendapatkan bahwa pelaksanaan PPL ini sudah berlangsung dengan baik, namun, ada beberapa kesalahan pelaksanaan di lapangan yang tidak tepat yang dengan ini pihak sekolah dan unit PPL untuk melihat hal-hal seperti beban tugas, bimbingan dan permintaan diluar perjanjian seperti permintaan dalam bentuk uang dan selain uang**.** Waktu praktik memerlukan pendekatan yang terpadu dan universitas perlu mendelegasikan dosen pengawas untuk menyampaikan sejak awal dengan sekolah mengenai waktunya yakni 2 bulan. Di sisi lain, persiapan siswa juga perlu ditinjau dalam hal persiapan diri untuk pembelajaran berbasis pengalaman. Dan proses refleksi praktik akhir sangat disarankan untuk latihan dan proses penguatan pembelajaran.

**Kata kunci***: praktik mengajar, hambatan, sekolah*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching practicum reownedly called in Indonesia as PPL, *Praktik Pengalaman Lapangan*, is compulsary subject for all pre-service teachers attending their final year at universities. Each university delegates practicum working unit named as different call all over Indonesia and equips the unit with particular policy, working system and evaluation.

Considered as an important part in teacher preparation, this project has been widely implemented by the involvement of universities and partner schools. Part of its unique framework, the students undertaking this subject which takes up more than two credits in most universities have to go through somekind of intership at schools. The supervison of this practicum is mandated to assigned lecturer and teachers.

Looking into the recent practices, it emerges that each university applies different approaches in its implementation, despite of the existence of framework guidelines. These differences covers time length, liason, supervison, and pre-departure preparation.

However, there is absentee of attention to look into stress of student teachers in the field, the amount of workload, sharing responsibility with teacher supervisor and the impact of curriculum achievement due to the deployment of the student teachers. And other the other hand, new look or strategy on how to address any issue appear is looked as opportunity to create mutual relationship between university and its partner school.

It is believed that learning and improving the practice will lead to better education service for students since in common believe that student teachers has been placed for the PPL program for different length of time from two months at the minimum to whole one semester. Various

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activities and level of responsibilities are different from one student to others, at worrying level where the students have to literally replace the supervisor teacher at all. Yet, there is no formal discussion of this occurances effect to the education of pupils in the class and the degree of teacher students involvement in the school has been overlooked.

In further development of this research an idea on the involvement of technology support system might be emerged to accomodate issue arose during practicum avoiding overlooking of essential things that might lead to better preparation and mutual relationship of all people involve including students in classroom. And to entail all lesson-learned for better implementation is the signinature nature of this research.

Major focus of this research takes aim of making best lesson-learned of current practices and to subdue of possible challenges so that universities meet the best opportunity for their students professional life as future educators and build mutual partnership with schools.

In brief, this study is designed to explore the PPL program at schools in Pekanbaru areas, entwining the barriers, policies, practical work, perspectives of partner school and possible approach to support for better services for any party involved.

Here are two research questions proposed for this study:

a. How does the implementation different from the *PPL* handbook?
b. How the teaching practicum intercept curriculum implementation?

c. What form of supervision work take place during practicum?

In accordance with the research questions, the aims of this study were to explore the practicum implementation in order to see barrier occurs and to suggest off possible solution to issues occur into the below specific objectives:

a. To explore form of *PPL* implementation from several points of view: school partners, supervisor-lecturer, and teacher-student
b. To overview the actual work of the students in the school, viewing from workload and timing
c. Supervision from school partner teacher, types of supervision and partnership pattern in the classroom.

## 1.1 Practicum in Teacher Pre-Service Education

Teaching practicum is one of final class that students at Bachelor program need to attend, in preparation of the student teacher candidates to practice of putting into practice theory alongside with an experienced teacher at partner schools.

It includes preparation in predeparting to schools, follwed by certain time full-day placement at schools, which usually applied through various extended time. At the initial of placement, the focus is shifted gradually from school settings to acclamation period that shifts to the challenges of increasing teaching load and added duties or responsibilities.

Despites of different practices all over the globe, common understanding believe of the application is that the students teacher

should be equipped themselves with the following aspects as mentioned by Dwyer (1998, p. 259):

a. Theory of pedagogy, individual learning and human development
b. Teaching strategy, technique and technologies
c. Critical, collaborative and teamwork skill development
d. Lesson and course design, including the preparation of teaching
e. Instrument of assessment on students work

Given its significance of preparing teacher education, successful practicum program is seen to meet essential criteria ( Anderson, Broud and Cohen, 2000), all of those to encourage experience-based learning:

a. Learning result that support meaningful lesson for students teacher
b. Importance of student teacher personal engagement with the learning taking place
c. Involvement of reflective process
d. Acknowledgement of involvement whole individual capacities of the past and current experience
e. Recognition of previous experience
f. Ethical stance of respect and concern toward learning

Practicum may fail once there is absentee of processed learning, through which knowledge and learning perceived. Thus, the learning proccess cannot be simply derived from the experience, as suggested by Criticos ( 1993, p. 157)

Since student teachers are given certain amount of autonomy within practicum, this allows them to value

and support self-directive potential as learner. Therefore, in the preparation prior to placement, it is essetial to emphasize on how much the importance of practicum and its learning process for the students professionalism in the future.

## 1.2. Indonesian University Regulation on Practicum

Each universities has different guidelines for practicum, commonly known as *PPL*. Most all universities in Indonesia produce *PPL* handbook as manual instructions, which generally have the same content. Looking through the content, all universities has similarity of focusing on the aspect of administration, steps in registering, mechanism of application, roles of supervisor lectures and supervisor teachers and students responsibility and evaluation and its template and form. But the application on the ground is different in term of timing, evaluation and also focuses of each universities and schools.

It can be seen there is total neglect of experience-learning with the books. There has been no records on the revision process of the guidelines and the process on constructing the book, research based decision or rewritng existing ones with minor changes. The design should incorporate aspect of nature of experiential learning to boost the benefit of the program for teacher students learning process and pupils in the classroom.

## 1.3 Challenges in Practicum

In implementing practicum, there have been issues high likely overlooked by either administration at university and school level in

performing better impact, issues of students preparedness to face literal challenges during placement vis-a-vis new curriculum, amount of autonomy and workload and possible of mistreatment of school management, both of academic and psychological related matters. Furthermore, the very crucial aspect of bringing up their awareness on how to perform self-directed learning during the program and building up a processed learning may have not been deemed as essential part of the program, therefore as anticipated, this may lead to failure of nature of the program per se.

Three challenges have been under spotlight of undergoing practicum, namely pedagogy and knowledge preparedness and autonomy and workload, psychological and leadership aspects. Furthermore, for a country like Indonesia where curriculum and policies in education has been repetivively changed overtime while the universities curriculum seems of not going alongside with the changes, this is another challange for teacher students in the country. However, there is no relevant research have been found to figure out this implication to student teacher and ongoing learning process at school level.

Research on this challenges may be varied from country to country, however, it appears of similar pattern regarding out of the result building up communication and continous changing challenge on the ground. Al Momani (2016) also releases the same particular challenges faced by students teacher in Saudi Arabia, where practical issue from large classroom, workload to

isolation at school and fear of teaching, classified in psychological aspect. While in Turkey, Mutlu (2014) found in her research that several challenges deemed as crucial challenges for students were mistreament and ineffective guidance from supervisor teacher and the place od practicum per se within existing curriculum.

Considering of pressure in curriculum and certain objectives to achieve at the end of learning process, this has never been under scrutiny as a consiquency of novice teacher presence in the class and how much the material achievement obtained. Furthermore, students reaction to 'new' teacher in class affect the learning process even at some point halt the process. Policy need to look into these aspect as well to bulid classified pattern of the practicum implementation.

Therefore, there are literally issues occour in this practicum through which constant policies reviewing at school and universities level is contingent.

## 2. METHOD

### 2. 1 Research Design

In its way to to reflect of the current implementation of PPL in partner schools and universities, this research entailed qualitative descriptive design. Looking at the research question, with the inclusion of wide range of resaerch information resources, the design allows accurate accounting entwined for comprehensive summary in which contains of emepirical relationship and possible causal explanation and descriptive validity ( Sandelowski, M, 2000).

The approaches to the study employed samples from four schools, a university and related research participants all of whom are probed for detail individual and group interview. There is also looking for document review applied for better comprehension of the practice.

At the final part of the research, the data are interpreted by incorporating mixed method (Tashakori & Teddlie, 1998) – narrative analysis, comparison, and phenomenological reflection- may be applied as commonly assumed that descriptive qualitative could possibly overtone the research.

## 2.2 Sampling

As foresaid in the previous subheading, the application of descriptive qualitative design narrows down appropriate sampling technique, in which deliberative sampling ( Kothari, CR, 2004) – commonly known as purposively sampling is judged as fitted sampling.

The selected schools are four schools; two SMPs and two SMAs, all of which lie in Pekanbaru. Then, the universityreviewed at was Universitas Islam Riau.

### *Purpose of Study*

This study is accompany with the intetion to closely look into current implementation and its effect to all parties involved in *PPL*. Further to this, this study is also directed to see opportunities on how technology could be involved to help support the practice.

## 2.3 Research Instrument

This research was incoporated some research instruments for further comprehension, that are enlisted as the following:

1. Documentation
   Documentation process are taken into account as the process through which several information on policies, practical aspects of implemation and assessment and supervision takes place in *PPL*.
2. Interview and FGD
   This instruments takes aim to research individual participanta; school partner, supervisor lecturer, supervisor teacher and student teacher. FGD is applied to validate certain information and responses.

## 2.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Steps of the aftermath of data collection are forwarded to data analysis and interpretation. The final forms of the report is narrative and comparison and reflection whenever the data fits in, derived from documentation and interviews to get comprehensive picture of the summary.

Strong narrative analysis emerge from the result of the research. The analysis is based on Tuval - Maschiah and Zilber ( 1998) types, incorporating the analysis of Holistic and and Categorical and content of the interview and data.

# 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Upon the interview and FGD conducted, the information was carefully observed and linked to one another and they are presented in the following form of information. The data of interview from individual and group respondents are designed in headings based on information derived.

a. To explore form of *PPL* implementation from several points of view: school partners, supervisor-lecturer, and teacher-student

## School-partner

### Model of Partnership

There is detailed platform or agreement designed. An official assignment letter, often callled as *Surat Keputusan(SK)* is issued by the university and this formally lists the name school-partner principal, curriculum manager, supervisor-lecturer and students. The initial visit from university was carried only for basic talk of deciding of the school acceptance to the arrival of students and some other administration related to formality of the task between the two organizations.

However, it appeared that there is one or two specific policies in the *SK* might be breached by any of the party involved. Supervisor-lecturer were found missing the examination day of the student-teacher, despite there is clear statement that the lecturer-supervisors have to attend examination day. The issue appeared from the lecturer side that mismatched schedule at the university activities while on the other hand, there is fixed term of the

student-teacher at respected schools. Therefore, where the case appear, they decided to carry on the examination even if the supervisor-lecturer is not present.

Other cases appear as well regarding timing and workload which are discussed in the foresaid sub headings.

### Students arrival arrangement

As previously said that there is initial talk between *PPL* unit and school-partner and later further discussed by the assigned supervisor-lecturer about the exact timing of arrival and finishing dates of the task. Regarding this, the main consideration by school is to arrange the schedule of the *PPL* timing from different universities, preventing the overlap arrivals.

### Avoiding distraction of curriculum

Out of the interview with all participants, there is little attention is paid on this issue. Notwithstanding, in one school interview, there appeared worrisome from few teachers that they are not comfortable to be supervisor-teachers due to some curriculum responsibilities, targets which do not allow them to share their teaching time with teacher-student. No clear information was collected regarding the curriculum achievement. However, it is assumed that there is likely of curriculum distraction happens in all schools and this can be observed from the arrival schedule, workload of the student-teacher, and timing.

It is common practice that three universities; Universitas Negeri Riau, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarief Kasim and Universitas Islam

Negeri Riau- appear to keep working together with schools and there were shifts on the students arrival which takes in turn one another. As the consequence of this - at certain degree- the impact to curriculum is inevitable.

The common practice approach by school administration is that the student-teachers are only placed for other than final year students as they suppose the students are attending graduation examination. The final year students of schools are believed to get distracted from the graduation exam in the case of practicum conducted in.

## Specific regulation – dress/school manner

Regarding the specified regulation in the schools for practicum program, individual school arrange different rules in term of schedule, dress code, school and classroom regulation.

Generally, it is commonly observed by many schools and universities that students who attend practicum wear black-white attire. In the recent practice, some school notice different impact on the ground to this uniform. Students in the classroom might pay less attention to the student-teacher due to the uniform. Therefore, some schools waive the students uniform rule which as the result, students give a more positive response in the classroom.

There was also different regulation in determining numbers of meetings to attend and practicum examination time from one school to other schools, it ranges from 6 – 8 meetings. As soon as it reaches 6 or 8

meetings the students-teachers are allowed for practicum examination.

## Workload

Regarding this particular, there are also differences in each schools, but the typical practices are that the students-teacher must attend every school day, support assigned school activities., develop lesson plan, other than teaching practices for 6 – 8 meetings.

In addition to this, there are few of unexpected works assigned in the field. Few supervision-teacher assign the student-teacher to work in most of duty classes and need to work on lesson plan for a subject that he or she is not majoring. The research found this fact from long probe as the student-teachers are not willing to expose the wrong doing by supervisor-teacher.

It is suggested by to the *PPL* unit to really evaluate certain supervisor-teacher that deliberatelty misconduct their responsibilities.

b. To overview the actual work of the students in the school, viewing from workload and timing

## Students-workload and timing

As previous set forth, the form of workload is seen from the attendance to school, teaching practicum and paper work. And the entire work in the school takes about 2 months, according to the latest regulation from the Faculty.

The teaching practicum itself takes about 6 – 8 meetings, varies from one school to another. Some

students-teacher, however, may get more that these time allocation -even at certain degree-replacing the supervisor-teacher duty. This could happen due to strong trust and the capacity of the student-teacher and they are believed to be able to work well even without close supervision. But, unexpectedly, there are few teacher who misused the student-teacher by delegating all his or her work without any clear reasoning, breaching school and university agreement.

At the above example of practice form, the failure of failing to meet curriculum objectives is very likely. This research suggests any on involve to carefully and wisely evaluate the supervisor-teachers to create desired outcome of the practicum ,yet, on the other hand, no serious issue arise from.

Relating to the timing, most school apply two-month-program but there are few which insist to carry it for over 4 months. This study look that lecturer-supervisor need to carry out talk with respected schools regarding the timing. This is seen as unfair approach to the teacher-students and besides, the schools need to consider of the arrival from the students from other universities as well.

c. Supervision from school partner-teacher, types of supervision and partnership pattern in the classroom.

### Partner-teacher supervision and types of supervision

In major schools, the most common practice supervision is mainly from the schools. There are few supervisor-lecturers managed to closely supervise the students. This leads to certain issues happen on the ground that the supervisor-lecturers were not aware off. Therefore, this research proposes the using of technologies to bridge communication and supervision to the classroom level.

In general, there are two main supervison ways approached;

a. Teaching practicum
b. Document

Beside the attendance to schools, the main focus of supervison is directed on teaching practice and document based work such lesson plan or reports.

### Partnership pattern in the classroom

In most work pattern, at the intial meetings, supervisor-teacher teaches his or her classes by themselves. Then, the teacher-students are asked to teach with close supervision with 15 to 30 minurtes, depending on individual supervisor.

In the following meetings, the student-teacher work on their own without any close supervision. And based on the interview, the student-teacher have to totally replace the real teacher until the end of the term assigned.

Apart from the entire points above, there were serious financial issues rose from the practices and preparation aspects to reconsider. The students, not clear the real percentage, admitted that they have to collect some budget for additional request from individuals; ranging from food to school equipment. Due to heavy financial burden, some students said that they were not brave enough to

report about it and they could not openly talk to supervision-lecturer.

As this lead to unwanted illegal payment, the university need to evaluate the students about the case and reconsider schools for further partnership or to have serious talk with school management, as it appears, the school management may not aware about the situation as well.

The preparation of the students prior to the practice at schools is strongly in need of revision. The recent practice of preparation in UIR was just short predeparture training without looking to significance of individual learning in the school. Successful practicum criteria (Anderson, Broud and Cohen, 2000) that encourage experience-based learning may not entirely happened.

Out of the following points:

a. Learning result that support meaningful lesson for students teacher
b. Importance of student teacher personal engagement with the learning taking place
c. Involvement of reflective process
d. Acknowledgement of involvement whole individual capacities of the past and current experience
e. Recognition of previous experience
f. Ethical stance of respect and concern toward learning

The reflective process seems to be overlooked by tall parties. This research suggests of small discussion after the practicum should be carried out by supervisor-lecturer or individual student-teacher. Or the form of report should be based from the individual learning rather that thick docyument attachment.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

There are some conclusion and susggestions that could be lesson-learned for better future practice of teaching practicum in all universities.

The research sees that the currect practice is running well, however, there are few wrong doing happening on the ground that school management and *PPL* unit need to review about, such as workload of the students, supervision, and illegal request from schools that related to financial or not.

The timing of the practicum variation need some unified approached and the university need to delegate supervisor-lecturer for initial talk with schools regarding the timing, at about 2 months period.

On the other hand, the preparation of the students is in need of revision in term of their self awarenes for experience-based learning. And post practicum reflection process is strongly suggested for better practice and indivdual strengthening learning process.

For better supervison, responding to mismatched scheduling, the using technology is viewed by this research as advantageous. At the simple of using social media is helpful -at certain degree. To create best learning venue for eveyone, university could create certain online learning or website from which students can accessed and be accessed faster.

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