






Critical Reflection on ELT Practicum: Stimulating Preservice Teachers' Pedagogical Competence for Transformative Learning

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Abstract. In the teaching practicum programs, stimulating ESL/EFL preservice teachers' (PSTs) pedagogical competence is essential in the transformative learning (TL) framework. This paper discusses stimulating PSTs' pedagogical competence (PC) for TL through critical reflection on ELT practicum. Critical reflection on the teaching practicum experiences can stimulate PSTs in enhancing PC for their professional development in preparing for future teaching careers. Through critical reflection on the teaching practicum experiences, PSTs learn from the reflective practices to stimulate their PC, which is very influential in undergoing the teaching and learning process to achieve successful learning and improve students' learning achievement. In the process of critical reflection, PSTs' PC can be reflections toward better practices as the PC taxonomy shows its role in developing PSTs' PC. A design of intervention for the change of PSTs' beliefs of teaching and learning during the teaching practicum leads them to transform PC into practices. Critical reflection value becomes essential for teacher educators, and it would emphasize teacher education programs. It positively contributes to training and creating PSTs' habits of mind for continuous growth, and they would develop and advance in carrying out their teaching profession. Thus, critical reflection on the teaching practicum of the English education programs in the Indonesian EFL context becomes a stimulus for PSTs' professional development, particularly in stimulating PC for TL to frame their identity as professional teachers.

Keywords: Critical Reflection, EFL Preservice Teacher, ELT Practicum, Stimulating Pedagogical Competence, Teacher Professional Development, Transformative Learning.

1 Introduction

Recently, there has been a dramatic increase in reflective practices in teaching practicum within teacher education programs. Teacher reflection always occurs in teaching practices, not just in teaching practices [1]. The interest in reflective practices occurs in teaching practicum experienced by preservice teachers (PSTs) in the teaching profession as reflective practitioners [2] [3] and for stimulating PSTs in professional development (PD) [4]. There was a trend in research on PSTs' reflections on ELT practicum for PD practice in the last two decades [5]. However, in practices of the

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ELT practicum program, stimulating pedagogical competence (PC) development which is vital to foster ESL/EFL PSTs' transformative learning (TL) in today's innovative approach [6] [7] needs a highlight to discuss. Therefore, critical reflection on the ELT is applied as an alternative and potential strategy or tool to stimulate PSTs' PC development [8] [9] [10] [11].

It is now well established that critical reflection on ELT practicum can stimulate PSTs' PC. The PSTs' PC plays a key role in stimulating PC [12] [13] and fostering TL during teaching practicum [6] [7]. Empirical evidence indicated that PSTs' critical reflection on the teaching experience recalled their stimulation to frame and reframe their PC such as understanding and implementing in the next lessons [13]. In this matter, each PST requires reflection in learning through the process of individual PC. PC is urgent for PSTs since it is often associated with the science or art of teaching [14]. PC is conceptualized at the individual and organizational levels [15] [16] [14] and discussed in learning, training, and competitive advantage in human resources [17]. Each individual becoming a teacher (e.g., PSTs) should have a PC to succeed in teaching and learning practices [17]. Additionally, PSTs would create an effective teaching and learning environment for all students using their PC [11]. However, the depth substance is that PC could be comprehensively constructed and possessed by PSTs, including their professional knowledge and situation-specific cognitive skills, such as perceiving, interpreting, and making decisions toward the observation in a classroom [18]. Thus, the importance of PC for PSTs to enhance is a basis for fostering TL within teaching practices.

Critical reflection on ELT practicum is believed as a stimulation that can stimulate PSTs' PC [12] [13] to foster their TL [7] for their PD [4] in preparing for future teaching careers. The PC development has effectively demonstrated and emerged from reflections on PSTs' teaching practicum experiences [12] [13]. In the reflection practices, their individual PC is stimulated and developed during teaching practicum, which can enhance their teaching and learning quality [12]. However, in teaching practices, PSTs' experience reflecting on teaching practices in developing a frame of reference on cultural and environmental learning classroom fostered their TL during teaching experience [7]. Furthermore, in fostering TL, PSTs practiced the change of understanding their identity as classroom innovators and reflective teacher educators or practitioners to stimulate their PD in preparing for future teaching careers [4].

The current conceptual paper aims to extend the concept of stimulating PC for PSTs' TL through critical reflection on ELT practicum within English teacher education programs by discussing the essence of PC for PSTs, focusing on the stimulation of PSTs' PC, and critical reflection on ELT practicum in stimulating PSTs' PC. It also seeks to elucidate the PSTs' PC in fostering their TL by discussing the TL framework, the TL practice in ELT, and fostering TL in ELT practicum. Thus, the questions are formulated as follows: (1) what is the concept of stimulating PC for PSTs' TL through critical reflection on ELT practicum? and (2) what is the idea of PSTs' PC in fostering TL through critical reflection on ELT practicum?

2 Stimulating PC for PSTs' TL through Critical Reflection

To comprehend the concept of stimulating PC for PSTs' TL through critical reflection on the ELT practicum, the discussion covers: the essence of PC for PSTs; focusing on the stimulation of PSTs' PC; and the critical reflection on ELT practicum in stimulating PSTs' PC.

2.1 The Essence of PC for PSTs

The essence of PC for teachers has long been discussed in various higher education literature since the 1980s [11] [12] [19]. The PC role is very influential for PSTs in undergoing the teaching and learning process to achieve successful learning [11] and improve students' learning achievement [12] [19]. Empirical studies showed researchers developing different conceptualizations and taxonomies of PC (e.g., [18] [20] [17] [12] [19]. [20] reported that the concepts of PC and taxonomies could be organized into efficient education for PSTs' individual development and societal changes. PC becomes essential for PSTs to enhance through lesson planning as stimulating tasks they master [18] and through teaching portfolios [12] in the teaching and learning process for the teaching profession. Furthermore, PC plays a crucial role in portraying PSTs' attributes and behavior for effective teaching and learning activities [17]. Hence, understanding the essence of PC for PSTs in the current discussion should be taken as well-prepared action to develop PSTs for their future teaching career.

The PC taxonomy by [21] can reflect better practices [12]. Research has explored the PC taxonomy through the ways for PC development (e.g., [18] [11] [22] [12]. Using the PC framework [21] through developing a teaching portfolio becomes essential for teachers to apply a teaching approach, to develop five PC elements – *subject-matter knowledge*, *pedagogical method knowledge*, *course management capability*, *classroom management capability*, and *student management capability* – and to present the used teaching approach effectiveness. A design intervention for the change of PSTs' beliefs of teaching and learning led them to transform PC into practices [22]. Similarly, even with limited knowledge previously obtained in the teaching practice, PSTs experienced the analysis of the student's learning to be ready to use their PC in multicultural classes in the future [11]. Furthermore, [18] found that declarative PC can be assessed as the predictor of PSTs' PC dealing with lesson planning skills for their instructional process. For this matter, PC taxonomy could clearly and specifically lead PSTs to understand the five PC elements by [21] to enhance continuously [12]. The essence of PC for PSTs lies in a distinctive competence that will distinguish them from other professions and determine the success level in the learning process and student outcomes. Thus, the current discussion adopts the PC taxonomy of [21]. The summary of the five components of PC is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the five components of PC.

Components of pedagogical competence (PC)	Description
Subject-matter knowledge	PSTs require subject-matter knowledge to be competent and transformational teachers. The subject-matter knowledge includes theory, conceptual frameworks, and analytical methods for the teaching profession.
Pedagogical method knowledge	It is the PSTs' knowledge of pedagogical approaches such as teaching planning, teaching methods, technology-mediated teaching methods, experiential projects, scenario lesson planning, reflective teaching, and teaching management projects. PSTs can decide better when and how to apply them in classes.
Course management capability	It refers to the PSTs' abilities of lesson management, including course planning and preparation, resource exploration, syllabus development, meeting preparation, monitoring and evaluating student works, and assessing student work and course action.
Classroom management capability	It deals with the PSTs' classroom management abilities in managing the class collectively according to the atmosphere and students' needs. The abilities are more concerned with adapting instructions to the class size and level, student level, presentation format, and the use of technology in teaching.
Student management capability	This capability concerns how PSTs handle the student effectively to shape the student's behavior in the teaching and learning process. It covers assessing student learning achievements and reactions, motivating, advising, and guiding students to build good relationships with students.

Source: [21]

2.2 Focusing on the stimulation of PSTs' PC

Stimulating PSTs' PC is essential during the teaching practicum within the teacher education programs [23]. Some studies showed that stimulating PSTs' PC development can be conducted through reflection on the motivation model or pedagogical practice model as a self-determination theory-based model [24], reflection on lesson planning as stimulating teachers' tasks for the teaching profession [18], and reflection on environmental complexity experience [25]. However, following the five elements of the PC framework [21], [26] recommends that PSTs might reflect on involving knowledge into three kinds of knowledge – *know-why*, *know-how*, and *know-what* – to develop each of the five elements of PC.

First, through reflection on learning by analysis, PSTs' *know-why* can be enhanced [26]. Their *know-why* theoretically teaches why doing something can accomplish the given task, and it is for competence building. PSTs can enhance subject-matter knowledge through reflection on learning by analyzing subject matter in textbooks

and academic publications. PSTs can build up their *know-why* by observing master teachers or teacher mentors when conducting the instructional process in the class and analyzing the learning process. Likewise, they can build their *know-why* about other PC elements [17] [26]. Second, through reflection on learning by doing, PSTs' *know-how* can be built up [26]. Their *know-how* brings into the practice of consistently doing the given task. Learning by doing is the potential way when PSTs are consistently and effectively referred to using pedagogical approaches such as teaching methods, experiential projects, scenario lesson planning, etc. Hence, their *know-how* is pivotal in individual competence development [26]. Last, PSTs might reflect on exploring new thoughts using their abilities with the *know-what*. PSTs' teaching practices are more efficient and effective due to the instructional and pedagogical innovations resulting from their *know-what*.

In short, reflecting on the three kinds of knowledge discussed earlier are significant to improving PSTs' PC through contributions to each of the five elements of PC [21] [17] [12]. Hence, PSTs are suggested to get well prepared to engage them in teaching activities and discover the problems. PSTs can critically reflect on their teaching practices to cope with the arising problems and stimulate their PC development to reflect on their engagement in the three kinds of knowledge dealing with the five elements of the PC framework.

2.3 Critical Reflection on ELT Practicum in Stimulating PSTs' PC

Critical reflection is believed to be a key element in teacher professional development in the study of teacher education. The critical reflection process includes, among other things, analyzing, questioning, and criticizing the assumptions that have been set on an ongoing basis and applying changes to previous actions that have been supported by the assumptions [27]. The essence of critical reflection pertains to identity in teacher development (see [28] [4] [29] [30]). Critical reflection on PSTs' personal and professional problems becomes fundamental in teaching and learning practices such as ELT practicum [31]. If critical reflection is not practiced systematically, the PD of PSTs will stagnate, and their PC will not improve [32]. Furthermore, critical reflection stimulates PSTs' PC and supports the development of their growth competencies which they can develop professionally based on individuals internally directed to teaching and learning practices [33]. Through techniques or tools uses such as journals, videos, blogs, and portfolios [34] [35] [36] [37] in reflective practice, PSTs can understand and evaluate the ELT practicum to stimulate their PC development. PSTs understand the beliefs and assumptions that underlie their teaching experiences [33] [36]. Thus, critical reflection occurs when PSTs present behavior from the ELT practicum experience and what will be done for the following teaching [38].

Research studies have reported many benefits of critical reflection in stimulating PSTs' PC development in the teaching and learning process of teacher education programs [39] [8] [40] [34] [9] [41] [30] [42] [43]. The reflections made by EFL PSTs through the teaching practicum experience phase in schools resulted in their PC and behaviors that occurred in the school environment [8]. Still, it was more oriented toward language awareness, metacognitive development, and PC [9]. PSTs' critical reflection on classroom individual problems is more in line with disciplinary problems and language competence. It is essential in classroom learning [40]. In addition,

the critical reflection instilled in PSTs can show direction to stimulate the critical development of each individual [41]. When PSTs reflect on teaching practicum experiences to evaluate their attitudes, behavior, mentality, and competencies, it leads to new understandings and meanings for further development in PD [39] [43]. Furthermore, [34] and [30] reported that presenting content knowledge could not maximally provide PSTs as a problem-solving strategy. Still, they entail critical reflection practice to critically analyze, evaluate and fix problems for an ongoing process in stimulating their PC. In facilitating better reflection actions, it is useful through the planning process so that PSTs can better identify and evaluate problems [9]. It makes PSTs critical individuals and equips them for life-long education practice [42] Thus, it is necessary to cultivate PSTs in the practice of critical reflection to stimulate their PC development within teacher education programs, particularly in the EFL context.

3 The PSTs' PC in fostering TL

To understand the PSTs' PC in fostering their TL during ELT practicum, the discussion covers: the TL framework, the TL practice in ELT, and fostering TL in ELT practicum.

3.1 TL Framework

As a constructivist orientation, the TL theory is developed with an important role in leading PSTs to interpret and reinterpret their experiences as a learning center oriented to make meaningful learning [44]. In its application, this theory consists of two basic concepts – *instrumental* and *communicative learning* [45]. *Instrumental learning* deals with a way of learning focusing on problem-solving, oriented to PSTs' tasks, and determining causal relationships. Meanwhile, *communicative learning* centers on PSTs' engagement to have contact in communicating their existing feelings, learning needs, and desires for development [45].

In addition, in TL theory, there are meaning structures – *perspective* and *scheme meaning* – which are the main component [44]. The *perspective meaning* is an individual's view of the world as a whole resulted from psycho-cultural assumptions to determine expectations [44]. Meanwhile, the *scheme meaning* or the smaller components include knowledge, values, and beliefs about the experience. The perspective meaning of an individual is generated from a collection of *scheme meaning* [46].

[44] asserts that the meaning structure can be understood and developed through critical reflection because there is a critical assumption to determine whether the past beliefs will function in the present. Furthermore, critical reflection has the same meaning as problem-solving [44], discussing how PSTs reflect on the content and solve the problems. PSTs can understand themselves and how they learn through critical reflection [45]. Reinterpretation of collected data through direct communication is the essence of making a perspective meaning and TL. Learning materials from textbooks and the internet of other people's perspectives is not enough. Therefore, the PSTs' TL requires direct encounters and experiencing the object target directly, and building from their own experiences to make teaching and learning meaningful [45].

3.2 The TL Practice in ELT

The TL practice in education, such as ELT, mainly focuses on the student-center learning approach [47]. In practice, the PSTs act as initiators and facilitators, guiding and directing students in the learning process. After the meeting, PSTs and their students evaluate the learning process to be effective learning [48]. [47] augmented that TL practice should include how to manage, cope with challenges, and see the potential for better following acts. Additionally, in detailed practice and function, TL is handed over to all teachers, such as PSTs, who have experience with the learning practice in ELT [47]. Similarly, [47] highlights that TL in practice can be applied in various ways by providing PSTs with support and direction to develop their past experiences. Hence, the description of TL in the education field, such as ELT, has been explained in theory and practice [44] by applying a core component called the essential components framing TL practice in teaching.

On the TL practice in ELT, PSTs should implement it by referring to the framework of the TL theory [47]. The process of making meaning in learning begins with an experience and understanding it and then interpreting the experience; that is the essence of all learning, particularly in TL [49] [44]. In writing learning, for instance, students have experienced a process of learning to write when they have experience with the writing process. The students then reflect on their writing experience for improving their writing to be better than the previous ones for their learning [49].

Furthermore, in the process of learning, there are three different goals: *instrumental*, *communicative*, and *emancipatory knowledge* [44]. For technical knowledge, the expected learning outcomes are *instrumental learning* results as students' most common learning objectives [49] [47]. Meanwhile, *communicative learning* is a tool for understanding each other through spoken and written language [49]. It is carried out in collaborative groups where students can share ideas and knowledge and interpret their experiences to build new and common understandings [47]. Furthermore, *emancipatory learning* is building emancipatory knowledge through a critical question-and-answer process with oneself and others in the social system [44]. Various kinds of knowledge might be acquired simultaneously in a learning process [49]. In implementing learning in writing class, for instance, teachers such as PSTs can learn to teach writing strategies or techniques simultaneously, the so-called *instrumental knowledge* in training or practice of teaching writing. They can discuss with peers to understand various writing methods in good quality, the so-called *communicative knowledge*. Hence, through writing activities, students trust themselves as skillful writers, the so-called *emancipatory knowledge* [49]. In this teaching practice, PSTs should train their writing skill to be skillful writers, and the students will believe in PSTs' competence in language teaching, such as writing teaching.

3.3 Fostering TL in ELT Practicum

The TL theory has implications for PSTs in teaching practices. They participate in the teaching and learning process by carrying out problem-solving projects during the teaching practicum oriented towards the teaching profession career [46] and reflecting on the teaching experiences in fostering TL [23]. In TL practice, PSTs benefited from

intercultural learning transformed during the teaching practicum experience [23]. PSTs engaged in the learning process in the TL practices within school social activities to empower PC and foster TL [46]. Therefore, it is pivotal for TL to engage PSTs globally, especially in ELT practicum within the English teacher education programs [23].

Furthermore, [46] augmented that PSTs get new knowledge of TL from their perspective while fostering TL in the classes to be useful for successful teaching activities. Through TL, PSTs' professional capabilities, such as teaching methodology, can be built up [46]. In fostering TL, the core components that should be applied include *individual experience, critical reflection, discussion or dialogue, holistic orientation, context awareness, and authentic and supportive relationships* [47] [50]. The components have a close relationship that can be conducted in ELT practicum. However, the application should refer to the theoretical framework of TL as a lens to direct learning practices to be meaningful learning [48]. Hence, when PSTs engage in reflective practice through critical reflection on the ELT practicum, the critical reflection can stimulate their PC development while fostering their TL. Table 2 gives a summary of the six components of TL.

Table 2. Summary of the six components of TL.

Components of transformative learning (TL)	Description
Individual experience	The core component becomes a starting point for PSTs' guides to evaluate normative assumptions critically to undergo the learning process. In this context, PSTs provide support and direction for students to develop past experiences and reflect on the experiences for motivation and understanding.
Critical reflection	This component is highly encouraged in TL, which pertains to reflections on knowledge content, how to receive and elaborate on it, and the conditions behind both. In this case, PSTs express themselves in accurate writing, such as reflective journals, when discussing problems.
Discussion or dialogue	The experience of PSTs' critical reflection takes place in discussion or dialogue with oneself and others. Interaction with others is very important in this situation even though the TL occurs individually.
A holistic orientation	The learning orientation that should be emphasized in TL includes cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. In this context, rational argumentation and critical reflection must be a priority as a tendency to show types of understanding and insight to PSTs.
Context awareness	PSTs tend to change their lives when facing new experiences about their critical incidents. The essential contextual condition helps PSTs appreciate and understand deeply the personal and socio-cultural conditions inherent in them.

Authentic and supportive relationships	The relationship between PSTs and students is necessary for TL to control their emotions for the same point of view in the teaching and learning process. There should be trust among them to determine the TL dimensions.
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Source: [47] [50]

4 Conclusion

The current conceptual paper extends the concept of stimulating PSTs' PC development for their TL, and it seeks to elaborate on the idea of PSTs' PC in fostering their TL through critical reflection on ELT practicum. It would be donated for the researchers to comprehend the concept of critical reflection on ELT practicum, which becomes a stimulus in stimulating PC for fostering PSTs' TL during the teaching practicum within the English teacher education program.

The essence of PC development for PSTs in the teaching practicum is very influential for them to undergo the successful teaching and learning process and enhance student achievement. The PSTs' PC plays a key role in portraying their behaviors for effective teaching and learning to prepare them for their teaching profession career. Using the PC taxonomy, PSTs can reflect better practices of the ELT practicum. Their distinctive competence distinguishes them from other professions. Through critical reflection on the pedagogical practice during ELT practicum, PSTs could stimulate their PC as stimulation of PC is essential during the teaching practicum. Following the five components of the PC framework, PSTs are recommended to consider reflecting on involving three types of knowledge – *know-why*, *know-how*, and *know-what* – to enhance each component of their PC. As a key element of PD and the fundamental in ELT practicum, critical reflection offers benefits in stimulating PSTs' PC development, including the five elements of PC development, their effective teaching behaviors, the school atmosphere, and the identity in teacher development.

The idea of PSTs' PC fostering TL through critical reflection follows the TL framework. The PSTs' TL practices could be developed with the critical role of guiding PSTs in reinterpreting their ELT practicum experience to make meaningful learning. PSTs could reflect on the content to solve the rising issues and to understand how they practice TL through critical reflection. In TL practice during ELT practicum, PSTs act as initiators and facilitators to guide and lead students in learning. It includes managing the classes, coping with challenges, and seeing the potential for better acts. In addition to those practices, it highlights TL practices that are applied in various ways by supporting PSTs directing to develop their previous experiences. TL practice offers advantages from intercultural learning transformed during the ELT practicum. PSTs engage in the learning process in the TL within school social activities to empower PC and foster TL. Through TL, PSTs get new knowledge of TL from the changes in their perspectives and build their capabilities, such as teaching methodology. In fostering TL, PSTs are recommended to apply the six components of TL that have a close relationship in conducting ELT practicum to direct learning practices to be meaningful learning.

It is fundamental in TL to engage PSTs globally, especially in ELT practicum within the English teacher education programs. Through the PSTs' engagement in critical reflection on the ELT practicum, the critical reflection can stimulate their PC development while fostering their TL. Significantly, English teacher education programs involve PSTs in critically reflecting on the ELT practicum to stimulate their PC development and foster their TL to frame their identity as professional teachers.

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