

Bridging theory and practice: Mentorship from practicing teachers in microteaching for preservice English teachers

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Abstract

This study examines the role of practicing teachers in a microteaching course and its impact on developing student-teachers' skills at an Indonesian public university. This study specifically aimed to 1) identify student experiences in microteaching sessions involving practicing teachers, 2) analyze the influence of this involvement on their teaching skills, and 3) explore the meaning of this collaboration from the students' perspectives. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research involved third-year student-teachers, four lecturers, and ten practicing teachers from secondary schools in Yogyakarta. Data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and reflection notes, then analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis with source triangulation and member checking for validation. First, regarding student experiences, practicing teachers' presence created an authentic and reflective learning environment where student-teachers engaged in microteaching that closely simulated real classroom situations. Second, concerning the influence on teaching skills, this collaboration significantly enhanced student-teachers' abilities to design realistic lesson plans, conduct interactive teaching, manage classrooms effectively, and provide reflective assessment through direct guidance, modeling, and professional feedback. Finally, from the students' perspective, practitioners were viewed not merely as technical mentors but as mediators between theory and practice and as professional role models who helped shape their teaching identity and self-reflection. The study concludes that collaborative microteaching effectively bridges academic learning and practical pedagogy. Sustained implementation within teacher education curricula is recommended to strengthen university-school partnerships and prepare future-ready educators.

Keywords: *Microteaching, pedagogical competencies, phenomenology, practicing teachers, student-teachers*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education plays a critical role in preparing competent and professional future educators. A key strategy used in these programs is microteaching, which aims to train students' teaching skills in a controlled setting before they face

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real classroom situations (Iliasova et al., 2025). This kind of practice lets future teachers rehearse and improve specific teaching methods in a low-stakes setting. Microteaching has become a basic method in pre-service teacher education since it was developed by Dwight W. Allen at Stanford University in the 1960s. This method breaks down the complex teaching process into smaller, manageable parts, allowing future teachers to practice certain teaching skills within a controlled, low-stakes setting. The basic “Teach-Re-Teach” cycle, which includes planning, teaching, observing, giving feedback, re-planning, and re-teaching, creates a clear structure for improving skills step by step (Feng, 2020; Reddy, 2019). The ideas behind microteaching come largely from Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, which stresses learning through watching and copying others, while its reflective parts match Schön’s idea of the reflective practitioner, allowing for careful analysis of teaching practice.

Recent large reviews by Iliasova et al. (2025) show changing trends in microteaching research, with the number of published studies peaking in 2021 and a clear concentration of research in Turkey, Indonesia, and South Korea. Mapping of research works identifies two main clusters: one focusing on teacher education strategies and language skill development, and another stressing the use of technology through technology-enhanced microteaching and Web 2.0 tools (Iliasova et al., 2025). This focus on technology reflects the growing use of digital tools, including online video feedback systems and virtual microteaching platforms, which have made microteaching more accessible and allowed for more detailed analysis of performance (Ledger & Fischetti, 2020; Murphy Odo, 2022). The effectiveness of microteaching in building key teaching skills is well shown across many studies. Iliasova et al.’s (2025) review of 36 studies found 48 different teaching skills developed through microteaching, grouped into professional and personal areas. Professional skills that are most clearly improved include lesson planning and material development, teaching delivery and the ability to explain clearly, and assessment methods along with the ability to give reflective feedback (Danday, 2021). These technical skills form the core of good teaching practice and are built step by step through structured microteaching cycles. At the same time, microteaching helps develop important personal qualities including classroom management strategies, communication and interaction skills, and self-belief along with confidence building (Arsal, 2015; Bakır, 2014). These personal aspects contribute greatly to the growth of professional identity and teacher presence, which are essential for successful teaching in the classroom.

However, even with its known benefits, the effectiveness of regular microteaching often faces serious problems. The main limitation is that students lack real teaching experience, because they usually practice only with their peers who act as students. This fake setting can create a gap between the theoretical knowledge gained in university courses and the complex, changing realities of teaching in actual schools (Özcan & Yüksel, 2023). This problem is also relevant in Indonesia, where teacher education programs are always looking for new models to improve the practical readiness of graduates. As a result, pre-service teachers may finish their studies feeling unprepared for the real demands of the job. Despite its known benefits, putting microteaching into practice faces several documented challenges. Pre-service teachers often feel

anxious about their performance during microteaching sessions, and the artificial nature of the setting often lacks the complexity of real classroom dynamics (Bakır, 2014; Ögeyik, 2016). In addition, the fact that proper microteaching cycles take a lot of time creates practical problems for teacher education programs with already full course schedules. Research limits include the concentration of studies in certain geographic areas, language biases in literature reviews, and not enough long-term data on how microteaching skills carry over into real teaching settings.

To address this gap, involving practicing teachers in university-based microteaching has come up as a promising strategy (Iliasova et al., 2025). Practicing teachers, who have direct and current classroom experience, can give student-teachers very helpful insights (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012). Their contributions go beyond theory to include practical knowledge about classroom management, the use of different teaching strategies, and effective ways to handle common classroom problems. Through direct interaction and guidance, pre-service teachers can receive feedback that is more relevant, realistic, and based on actual experience (Pattison-Meek, 2024). This exposure helps them not only to understand teaching concepts but also to see how they are applied in practice, thereby supporting a more connected and strong development of their teaching abilities. Recent studies show that involving practicing teachers in microteaching gives major benefits to pre-service teachers. These benefits include the improvement of teaching skills; students who receive guidance from practitioners tend to show greater self-confidence and a stronger ability to carry out effective teaching strategies (Frouda et al., 2022). Furthermore, pre-service teachers develop a deeper understanding of classroom management. Practicing teachers can share first-hand experiences in dealing with real classroom dynamics, thereby better preparing students for real-world challenges.

Mentor teachers serve many roles in inspiring and motivating pre-service teachers, acting as role models, coaches, and partners. They inspire mainly by showing effective teaching strategies and professional attitudes, thereby giving a clear example of good practice. This modeling is often combined with shared involvement in classroom tasks, which gradually builds the pre-service teacher's confidence and practical skill (Nikoçeviq-Kurti & Saqipi, 2022). Furthermore, mentors provide a key base of emotional and professional support, creating a caring environment that keeps up motivation through difficulties and recognizes progress in development (Mok et al., 2023). The main mechanism that mentors motivate is by giving specific, useful, and ongoing feedback. This feedback not only helps with immediate teaching improvement and encourages creative lesson planning but also directly raises self-esteem and self-belief (Lin et al., 2019). By engaging pre-service teachers in guided practice and structured reflection, mentors systematically build their belief in their own abilities. This process of careful analysis, together with setting goals, encourages essential reflective practices and contributes to long-term professional growth (Farrell, 2020). In the end, mentors help pre-service teachers connect theoretical knowledge with practical skills, while also building positive professional values such as empathy, flexibility, and a growth mindset. Through this multi-faceted support system, mentors deeply motivate pre-service teachers and get them ready for the challenges of their future careers.

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Even though involving practicing teachers is widely believed to be helpful, there are still very few in-depth studies that look at how student-teachers themselves see and make sense of this partnership (Iliasova et al., 2025). Understanding the personal experience of the participants is crucial for judging the true impact of this approach. Specifically, there is a need for research that looks into the detailed ways in which this partnership helps develop specific teaching skills from the students' point of view.

Therefore, to fill this research gap, this study will use a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of pre-service teachers in microteaching sessions that involve practicing teachers. This research seeks to answer the following questions: 1) what are the experiences of pre-service teachers taking part in microteaching that involve practicing teachers? 2) how are pre-service teachers influenced by the presence and involvement of practicing teachers within the microteaching setting? and, 3) how do pre-service teachers see the collaboration between pre-service teachers and practicing teachers?

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative phenomenological approach (van Manen, 2016) to explore the lived experiences of pre-service teachers within a microteaching context that actively involved practicing teachers. Phenomenology was chosen as it seeks to understand the essence and meaning of a shared experience from the perspective of those who have lived it, moving beyond simple description to interpretive understanding. The investigation was conducted over a three-month period in the English Language Education Program at a public university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, an institution with a strong focus on teacher preparation.

Respondents

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had direct and relevant experience with the phenomenon under study. The participant groups included twelve preservice teachers enrolled in the Microteaching course who had actively participated in sessions involving practicing teachers, ten in service English teachers from local secondary schools who collaborated in the microteaching sessions as guest practitioners, and four university lecturers responsible for teaching and coordinating the Microteaching course.

Procedures

The research followed a structured, multistage procedure over the three-month period. First, a comprehensive literature review was conducted on microteaching, practitioner involvement, and reflective practice, which informed the development of semi structured interview protocols for all participant groups and participatory observation checklists. The protocols were piloted with one nonparticipant preservice teacher and one lecturer to refine question clarity and flow. Data collection then proceeded through two primary methods. Individual, semi structured interviews lasting 45 to 75 minutes were conducted with all 26 participants, exploring their experiences, perceptions, and beliefs regarding the presence and role of practicing teachers in microteaching. Concurrently, the research team observed six microteaching sessions, each two hours long,

focusing on preservice teacher-practitioner interactions, types of feedback provided, and classroom dynamics; detailed field notes were taken to capture nonverbal cues and contextual details. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized.

Data analysis

Data analysis followed the systematic, iterative steps of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as outlined by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2022). Each transcript was read and re-read multiple times to gain deep familiarity with the participant's account, with researchers actively bracketing their own preconceptions to remain open to emergent themes. Detailed exploratory notes were then made on the transcripts, noting semantic content, language use, and contextual elements, and significant statements, emotions, and repeated ideas were highlighted. These initial notes were transformed into concise emergent themes that captured the psychological essence of what was said, and connections between themes within a single transcript were mapped. The process was repeated for each transcript, respecting the uniqueness of each case. Subsequently, themes from all transcripts were compared, contrasted, and clustered into superordinate themes that represented shared patterns of meaning across participants. Finally, these thematic categories were synthesized into a coherent, interpretive account that presents the essential meaning of the microteaching experience as lived by the participants. The interpreted findings were then organized into a comprehensive feasibility study report, with draft documentation prepared for potential intellectual property protection.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the quality and rigor of the qualitative inquiry, several strategies were employed. Credibility was established through member checking, where a summary of interpreted themes was returned to three preservice teacher participants and two practicing teachers to verify resonance with their experiences, as well as through triangulation of data sources (preservice teachers, practitioners, lecturers) and methods (interviews, observations). Transferability was supported by providing thick descriptions of the research context, participants, and processes to allow readers to assess the applicability of findings to other settings. Dependability and confirmability were maintained by keeping an audit trail that included raw data, analysis notes, and the development of themes, alongside regular research team debriefings and peer scrutiny of the analytic process to minimize bias and ensure findings were grounded in the data. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's research ethics committee prior to data collection. All participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights; written informed consent, including consent for audio recording, was obtained. Participants were assured of confidentiality, in which pseudonyms are used in all reporting, and of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Results**

The analysis of the qualitative data, following Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), revealed that the integration of practicing teachers into the microteaching course constituted a profoundly impactful pedagogical intervention. The central finding is that the presence of these practitioners fostered a learning environment characterized by authenticity, reflection, and contextual richness, which student-teachers perceived as transformative. Three overarching themes emerged from the analysis: (1) authenticity and the bridging of the theory-practice gap, (2) comprehensive development of core teaching competencies, and (3) professional identity formation and emotional transformation. Within these themes, the meaning of the practitioners' presence was experienced by pre-service teachers across four interconnected dimensions: professional (as role models), academic (as translators of theory), reflective (as facilitators of critical self-examination), and emotional (as sources of validation and confidence).

Authenticity and Bridging the Theory-Practice Gap

Student-teachers consistently reported that microteaching sessions guided by practicing teachers felt qualitatively different from traditional peer-based simulations. Whereas conventional microteaching was described as a "safe but fake" environment, the inclusion of practitioners introduced an element of genuine professional stakes. One student (S1) articulated this distinction vividly: "When my peers role-played students, it felt like a simulation. But when the practicing teacher gave me feedback on how a real Grade 10 class would react, it suddenly felt real. I was no longer just performing; I was practicing." This authenticity was not merely a matter of atmosphere; it was actively constructed through the practitioners' direct modeling of classroom routines, their use of authentic instructional language, and their capacity to provide feedback grounded in actual school realities. Another student (S2) elaborated, "She didn't just tell me my lesson plan was good; she showed me how to tweak the opening to immediately 'hook' a distracted class. That's a nuance you don't get from a textbook."

From the phenomenological perspective of the student-teachers, practitioners were perceived not as additional evaluators but as essential mediators between the abstract theories of their university courses and the messy, unpredictable world of real teaching. One student (S4) captured this expressively: "In our lectures, we learn about Vygotsky and scaffolding. The practicing teacher was the living example of that. She showed me what the 'Zone of Proximal Development' actually looks like in a busy classroom." This bridging function was explicitly recognized by the practicing teachers themselves. One practitioner (T2) stated, "My job was to translate. I take the theory the students learn and show them how it works or sometimes doesn't work on the ground. I'm a reality-check and a coach rolled into one." Another practitioner (T4) added, "Students come with beautiful lesson plans full of educational jargon. I help them see which parts survive first contact with real adolescents and which parts need to be abandoned or adapted." This translational work was experienced by pre-service teachers as a profound cognitive shift: theory ceased to be an abstract requirement and became a practical tool.

Furthermore, the authenticity of the experience was reinforced through what participants called “honest feedback.” Unlike peers who might soften criticism to maintain social harmony, practicing teachers were perceived as offering professionally honest, sometimes challenging, evaluations. A student (S5) noted, “When the practitioner told me my instructions were confusing, she didn’t sugarcoat it. But she also showed me exactly how to fix it. That honesty made me trust her more, not less.” This combination of high standards and actionable support created a learning environment where student-teachers felt pushed to improve without feeling defeated.

Development of Preservice Teachers’ Core Teaching Competencies

Participants experienced significant and measurable growth across multiple teaching competencies, including lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, and assessment practices. Unlike traditional microteaching where feedback often remains generic, the presence of practitioners provided immediate, context-specific, and highly applicable guidance. In terms of lesson planning, students reported that their plans became more realistic and student-centered after practitioner input. One student (S6) explained, “I used to pack my lesson with activities because I thought more was better. The practitioner told me, ‘Choose two things and do them well.’ Now my plans are leaner but actually work.” Another student (S7) shared, “The practitioner taught me to write objectives that I can actually see and measure, not just theoretical statements.”

Classroom management emerged as the area of most dramatic improvement, likely because it is the competency least accessible through peer simulation. One student (S3) shared, “My biggest growth was in classroom management. The teacher gave me specific phrases to redirect off-task behavior without disrupting the flow of the lesson. I finally felt in control.” Another student (S8) added, “I learned how to scan the room, how to use my voice and proximity, how to give a ‘the look’ that stops misbehavior before it starts. These are things you cannot learn from a PowerPoint.” The practitioners’ lived experience equipped them to offer granular, situational advice that addressed the subtle art of maintaining learning momentum while handling disruptions.

Instructional delivery and student engagement also improved substantially. Students adopted concrete techniques modeled by practitioners, such as varying question types, using wait time effectively, and incorporating movement and gestures to maintain attention. One student (S9) reflected, “The practitioner showed me how to check for understanding without just asking ‘Any questions?’ She taught me to use mini-whiteboards, think-pair-share, and exit tickets. Now my teaching feels interactive, not just me talking.” Assessment practices likewise matured, as students learned to design formative assessments that genuinely diagnose learning difficulties. A student (S10) noted, “I used to give a quiz at the end and call it assessment. The practitioner taught me to embed checks throughout the lesson—quick writes, thumbs up/down, even just observing body language. Now I can adjust my teaching in real time.”

Importantly, the development of these competencies was not linear or uniform but occurred through an iterative cycle of action, feedback, and

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refinement. Students described how they would teach a segment, receive targeted feedback from the practitioner, immediately adjust their approach in a subsequent teaching trial, and then receive further fine-tuning. This loop created rapid skill acquisition that students contrasted favorably with the slower, less contextualized feedback from peers or even from university supervisors. As one student (S11) put it, “With peers, the feedback is polite but shallow. With the practitioner, it’s deep and immediately usable. I could see myself getting better session by session.”

Initial Professional Identity Formation

Crucially, from the phenomenological perspective of the student-teachers, the value of practitioner integration extended far beyond technical skill transfer. The practitioners were experienced not merely as coaches but as representatives of a desired professional future. They served as living role models whose demeanor, ethical stance, and professional habits shaped how pre-service teachers imagined themselves as future educators. One practicing teacher (T1) reflected on this role: “It’s about more than skills. I try to model the demeanor, like how to talk to a parent, how to collaborate with a colleague. They are learning to be a teacher, not just do teaching.” A student (S12) echoed this, saying, “When I watched her handle a difficult situation with patience and humor, I thought, ‘I want to be that kind of teacher.’ It gave me a concrete image of my future self.”

This identity work was facilitated by the practitioners’ willingness to share their own struggles and vulnerabilities, which paradoxically strengthened the pre-service teachers’ sense of professional possibility. One practitioner (T5) explained, “I tell them about my disastrous first year, about the lessons that bombed, about the student I couldn’t reach. They realize that becoming a good teacher is a journey, not a birthright. That makes their own stumbles feel normal and survivable.” Students reported that hearing such stories reduced their perfectionism and fear of failure. A student (S13) noted, “Before, I thought I had to be perfect from day one. Now I understand that I will make mistakes, and that’s okay as long as I reflect and improve.”

University lecturers independently observed a marked shift in their students’ reflective quality and professional stance. Lecturer L1 observed, “The students’ reflections became deeper and more critical. They moved from asking, “Was my lesson good?” to ‘How could I have differentiated that activity for the struggling learner in the back?’ The practitioners brought a concrete referent for their theoretical knowledge.” Another lecturer (L2) added, “You could see their confidence and professional identity solidify week by week. The practicing teachers provided a bridge to the real world that we, as university faculty, cannot fully replicate.” A third lecturer (L3) commented, “The transformation was most visible in students who had been shy or uncertain. By the end, they were volunteering to teach first, asking thoughtful questions, and advocating for their instructional choices. They had begun to own their identity as teachers.”

The emotional dimension of this transformation was equally significant. Student-teachers described feelings of validation, reduced teaching anxiety, and growing self-efficacy. One student (S14) shared, “Before the microteaching with

practitioners, I was terrified. But after the first session, the practitioner told me three specific things I did well. That gave me permission to believe I could do this.” Another student (S15) explained, “The anxiety is still there, but now it’s manageable. The practitioner taught me that nerves are normal; they mean you care. The key is to channel them, not eliminate them.” Practitioners were acutely aware of this affective impact. T3 emphasized, “It’s about building their self-efficacy. When they try a strategy, I suggested and it works, you can see the belief in their own ability ignite. That’s the most rewarding part.”

For many student-teachers, the presence of a credible, experienced practitioner signaled that they were being taken seriously as emerging professionals, which in turn motivated deeper engagement and risk-taking in their teaching practice. One student (S16) stated, “Having a real teacher watch me and take me seriously made me take myself more seriously. I stopped going through the motions and started really preparing, really caring.” In essence, the practitioners did not merely teach skills; they nurtured the disposition, confidence, and identity of becoming a teacher. The lived experience of pre-service teachers in this integrated microteaching model was not one of acquiring isolated techniques but of undergoing a holistic transformation, including intellectual, practical, and emotional, that prepared them not only to perform teaching tasks but to inhabit the role of a teacher with authenticity, resilience, and professional commitment.

Discussion

The findings of this study, which highlight the transformative role of practicing teachers in creating authentic, reflective, and contextual learning experiences, resonate deeply with the established theoretical foundations of microteaching while addressing its well-documented limitations. The core principle of microteaching, as conceptualized by Allen, is to deconstruct teaching into manageable components within a controlled (Reddy, 2019). The present study affirms this principle but crucially demonstrates that the quality of the feedback providers within this cycle is paramount. The “Teach-Re-Teach” loop is significantly enriched when the observation and feedback stages are facilitated by a practicing teacher, who embodies the “model” in Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. As the findings show, student-teachers valued not just abstract advice, but the direct modeling and coaching from a professional who could demonstrate what specific strategies look like in a real classroom, thereby bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

This research directly confronts one of the primary challenges in microteaching identified in the literature: its artificiality and disconnect from the complexities of actual classroom dynamics (Ögeyik, 2016). The participants’ reports that the sessions “closely simulated real classroom situations” and provided “contextual feedback” suggest that the involvement of a practitioner is a powerful antidote to this limitation. While traditional peer-based microteaching can feel like a “simulation,” as one student noted, the inclusion of a practicing teacher infused the environment with a necessary dose of authenticity. The authenticity gap has long been a concern in teacher preparation, and the present study demonstrates that collaborative models involving experienced practitioners can effectively bridge this divide by

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grounding simulated practice in the realities of school-based teaching contexts (Wang et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the findings corroborate and provide a qualitative depth to the large-scale bibliometric findings of Iliasova et al. (2025). Their systematic review identified clusters of research focused on skill development and technology integration. This study contributes to the first cluster by detailing the mechanisms through which key professional skills, such as lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional delivery, are enhanced. The development of these skills, as compiled by Iliasova et al., was not a passive outcome but an active process mediated by the mentors' specific, actionable feedback and collaborative involvement (Lin et al., 2019; Nikoçeviq-Kurti & Saqipi, 2022). Recent research supports this, demonstrating that structured mentoring relationships significantly improve pre-service teachers' pedagogical competence through targeted guidance and reflective dialogue (Sudrajat et al., 2024). The iterative cycle of teaching, receiving feedback, and revising practice, facilitated by practitioners, allows student-teachers to refine their instructional approaches in ways that peer-only feedback cannot achieve.

Moreover, the study extends the understanding of microteaching outcomes beyond the technical domain into the psychosocial dimensions of teacher development. The finding that the experience was "transformational" for students' professional identity and self-reflection underscores that effective microteaching does more than build skills; it builds the teacher. This aligns with literature showing that mentors foster self-efficacy and reflective practice (Farrell, 2020; Izadinia, 2015). The perception of practicing teachers as "mediators between theory and practice" and "role models" highlights a critical function that moves beyond simple coaching. Recent scholarship emphasizes that professional agency, referring to the capacity to act intentionally and reflectively in teaching contexts, is cultivated through collaborative experiences that provide both support and autonomy (Kroeger et al., 2024). The present study demonstrates that when practicing teachers scaffold student-teachers' learning while gradually releasing responsibility, they foster the independence and confidence necessary for professional growth (Heikonen et al., 2020). Furthermore, the identity transformation observed in participants resonates with research on how collaborative mentoring shapes pre-service teachers' self-concept and commitment to the profession (Lewis, 2024; Trent, 2023). The emotional dimension of this process is also significant; recent studies indicate that supportive mentoring relationships help student-teachers navigate the anxiety and uncertainty inherent in initial teaching experiences, thereby promoting resilience and long-term professional well-being (Fan & Xie, 2025; Mochizuki et al., 2022). By addressing both the cognitive and affective domains of teacher development, the collaborative microteaching model presented here offers a comprehensive approach to preparing future-ready educators (Mok et al., 2023).

This study argues for a reconceptualization of the microteaching environment from a controlled simulation into a collaborative, practice-based learning community. The integration of practicing teachers directly addresses the historical weaknesses of the model by enhancing authenticity, providing clinically rich feedback, and supporting the development of a professional

identity. By doing so, it powerfully fulfills the original intent of microteaching to effectively prepare teachers for the classroom while leveraging the irreplaceable expertise of those currently in the field. Future iterations of microteaching should, therefore, formally institutionalize the role of the practicing teacher as a core component of the “Teach-Re-Teach” cycle.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study addressed its three main objectives. First, regarding student experiences, the findings revealed that pre-service teachers experienced the microteaching program as an authentic and reflective practicum, moving beyond a simple simulation to engage with real classroom dynamics. Second, in analyzing the influence on teaching skills, the results demonstrated that interaction with practicing teachers led to the significant development of high-leverage competencies, including realistic lesson planning, interactive teaching methods, classroom management, and reflective assessment. Third, from the students’ perspectives, the meaning of this collaboration was multifaceted in that they perceived the practicing teachers not merely as evaluators, but as essential mediators between theory and practice and as role models who were critical in helping them construct their professional self-concept.

While this study provides strong evidence for the value of practitioner involvement, it also opens several avenues for future research. First, a longitudinal study tracking the graduates of this enhanced microteaching model into their first years of in-service teaching would be invaluable. Such research could determine the long-term impact on teacher retention, efficacy, and instructional quality in actual classrooms, addressing a current gap in the literature. Second, future work should employ a mixed-methods approach to further elaborate the connection of the qualitative experiences documented here with quantitative measures of teaching skill growth, using standardized observation instruments to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of outcomes. Finally, research could explore the optimal structural models for this collaboration, investigating factors such as the ideal frequency of practitioner interaction, the most effective training for the practicing teachers themselves, and the potential of hybrid models that blend in-person mentorship with digital video analysis and feedback.

AUTHOR STATEMENTS

All authors have contributed equally to this study. **Nunik Sugesti** conceptualized the study, designed the methodology, conducted the formal analysis, supervised the research activity, and contributed to the writing, reviewing, and editing of the original draft. **Amrih Bekti Utami** collected the data and performed the analysis and was a major contributor to the writing of the original draft. **Ihtiara Fitriyaningsih** and **Nuriska Noviantoro** were involved in the investigation, resources, and data collection, assisted in the formal analysis, and participated in the writing, reviewing, and editing process.

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