



RHIZOMATIC EXPLORATIONS OF PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS IN THE TEACHING PRACTICUM

Nizar Ibnu

English Language Teaching Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, Indonesia

E-mail address: nizaribnus@uinssc.ac.id

article info

Article history:

Received: 15 April 2025

Accepted: 27 May 2025

Available online: 01 June 2025

Keywords:

Pre-service teachers

Rhizomatic approach

Teacher professional development

abstract

Pre-service teacher professional development is dynamic rather than linear. During their participation in a real-life teaching practicum, pre-service teachers dealt with a variety of elements that formed an assemblage, including unexpected condition such as curriculum revision. Accordingly, the purpose of this phenomenological research is to investigate pre-service teachers' professional growth experiences during the teaching practicum as they adjust to the changed curriculum. The study included seventeen EFL pre-service teachers who completed a two-month teaching practicum in fourteen different schools. The teaching practicum took place in the same semester when *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Emancipated Curriculum) was adopted in schools. Interviews, observations, and field notes were used to obtain the data in the settings. The data were examined using thematic and situational analysis in accordance with Lian's rhizomatic system, which consists of an intellectual framework, operational space, and support structure. The findings show that the teaching practicum acted as a macrosimulation, allowing pre-service teachers to experience non-hierarchical operational history change, resulting in personal learning outcomes. Throughout the program, they were helped by technology and social networks. The teaching practicum enabled them to hone their teacher-related skills and shape their professional identity. These findings indicate the necessity for a teacher professional development program that focuses on increasing their sense of self-direction and agency.

INTRODUCTION

Pre-service teachers benefit much from teaching practicums. It enables them to apply theory to practice in a real-world teaching environment. They have the opportunity to analyze and assess what they have studied at university during their teaching practicum (Mudra, 2018). Percy (2012) argues that theories can both inform and be informed by their actions. Furthermore, Genç (2016) notes that during teaching practicum, pre-service teachers can exchange their experiences and ideas with in-service teachers, feel more autonomous and dedicated while planning and implementing instruction in a real classroom, and develop a sense of professionalism and community.

Despite its predetermined program objectives, a teaching practicum is a complex and dynamic process with many interacting elements rather than a straightforward linear progression (Hordvik et al., 2021). This viewpoint is based on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) Rhizomatic theory, which stands in stark contrast to hierarchical thinking. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome challenges traditional notions of structure and order by emphasizing connectedness, heterogeneity, multiplicity, signifying rupture, mapping, and decalomania (Masny, 2017). Leander and Rowe (2006) address the concept of Representation vs. Rhizomatic, emphasizing the contrast between fixed representations and the fluid, dynamic

character of rhizomes. This contradiction highlights the philosophical basis of the rhizomatic approach, which prioritizes mobility, connectedness, and plurality over static representation.

The rhizome, which resembles a ginger bulb and grows wildly in all directions, is always changing and evolving, as opposed to the hard tree, which is stable, hierarchical, and supports linear reasoning. Lines connect all of the heterogenic sites on a rhizome. Even if rhizomes rupture, new lines are always created. Because rhizomes are viewed as maps rather than tracings, their structure is always changing because they are always open to entrance (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

A rhizomatic viewpoint emphasizes the ongoing and dynamic learning process in which the teacher self is built and re-produced, rather than the knowledge and skill acquisition required to progress from novice/beginning to expert/experienced teacher (Hordvik et al., 2021). According to Ovens et al. (2016), the metaphor of 'becoming' teacher invites exploration of a complex, non-linear, and ever-changing professional self and related identities that take into account the social, cultural, and material conditions in which becoming occurs. The process of 'becoming' varies by program, in-service teacher, and location (Hordvik et al., 2021).

The becoming process is influenced by numerous elements that the pre-service teacher encounters, which in Rhizomatic theory are referred to as 'assemblages' and can be human, material, or non-tangible (Hordvik et al., 2019). The assemblage in teaching practicum consists of pre-service teachers' knowledge, experiences, and beliefs; students' knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and investments; physical space, such as the sport hall, equipment, and room environment; and discourses, which include the pre-service teachers' expectations of the students and vice versa (de Freitas, 2012). The concept of 'orchestration' is introduced, arguing that teacher education is a collaborative undertaking. This metaphor depicts how to deal with the uncontrollability and conflicting forces that come with practice, while also conveying the idea that many iterative changes in teaching are unmanageable (Hordvik et al., 2020). The notion of 'orchestration' is presented, arguing that teacher education is a collaborative undertaking. This metaphor depicts how to deal with the uncontrollability and opposing forces that come with practice, while simultaneously conveying the concept that many iterative changes in teaching are unmanageable (Hordvik et al., 2020).

These 'assemblage' and 'orchestration' concepts may be seen in a more practical context. Lian (2004, 2011; Lian & Pineda, 2014), drawing on Deleuzian thinking, presents the Rhizomatic system, which consists of three layers: a guiding intellectual framework, an operational space, and support structures, as well as linked conceptual and physical resources and tools. The underlying conceptual framework was developed with the understanding that all meaning is subjective, distinctive, and adaptable to personalized intervention (Lian & Pineda, 2014).

Pre-service teachers create a virtual home for themselves in a long-term simulation called a macrosimulation operational space. As a result, one advantage of employing a teaching practicum as a macrosimulation is that it provides pre-service teachers with a high level of autonomy, allowing them to participate actively in tasks and problem solving (Lian, 2011). Support structures can take several shapes. They might include literature, in-service instructors, and external contributions. The primary sources of support, however, are social networks comprised of fellow pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, lecturers, school administrators, and other interested parties, as well as technology-based aid systems built on multimedia databases (Lian & Pineda, 2014).

The most important component of assembling in the current condition of teaching practicum is adherence to the existing national curriculum. Following the COVID-19 epidemic, the primary purpose of adopting *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Emancipated Curriculum) is to

reconstruct Indonesia's educational system (Nugraha, 2022; Supartinah et al., 2023). The implementation of the Emancipated curriculum represents a change from traditional instructional approaches. It needs significant changes to educational tactics, assessment systems, and class dynamics. According to Rohmah et al. (2024), Emancipated curriculum has various advantages, including a greater emphasis on essential themes including literacy and numeracy, as well as the ability for teachers to tailor lesson plans to meet the requirements of individual students. Emancipated curriculum also includes the Pancasila Students Profile as a final aim, which is meant to help students develop their soft skills and personalities.

There have been few studies that look into pre-service teachers' experiences with the implementation of Emancipated curriculum. Sudimantara (2023) analyzes pre-service English teachers' experiences and perspectives on designing digital learning tools that are consistent with the nature of the Emancipated Curriculum. The research emphasizes the difficulties they had in designing and implementing digital learning tools. Furthermore, Achadiyah and Azmi (2024) found that pre-service teachers struggle to implement Emancipated curriculum because they lack the ability to design learning objectives, practice differentiated learning, and incorporate the Student Pancasila Profile into classroom instruction. The lack of Emancipated curriculum instruction at their institution prior to the teaching practicum significantly adds to this issue. Nonetheless, Mutmainah and Widhiatama (2024) reveal pre-service teachers' effectiveness in adopting the Emancipated Curriculum throughout their classroom practicum. They were acquainted with the curriculum by researching it on the internet, having discussions, and practicing. However, differentiated learning was the primary issue they encountered.

The number of studies on pre-service teachers' professional development undertaken utilizing the rhizomatic framework is likewise quite small. Strom (2014, 2015) analyzes how three science teachers navigate their pre-service learning in their first-year teaching setting while developing their practices. These studies illustrate that integrating pre-professional learning is a difficult undertaking impacted by the interplay of numerous components found in a school setting, suggesting that teaching is a cooperatively negotiated activity. The findings call for an ontological shift in teacher education research, focusing on teaching processes rather than just outcomes, with consequences for teacher preparation practice and policy. Similarly, Hordvik et al. (2019, 2020, 2021) support the ontological shift in teacher education research by applying the Rhizomatic approach. Hordvik's study focuses mostly on pre-service physics teachers' negotiations to become professional teachers, with an emphasis on the assemblages involved. The assemblages consisted of both human and non-human components that affected and shaped pre-service teacher professional development. The metaphor of orchestration captures the intricate and dynamic interplay of assemblages.

In conclusion, various research has investigated pre-service teachers' experiences during their professional development in Indonesia and other countries. However, there has been little to no study on the rhizomatic exploration of pre-service English teachers throughout the implementation of the Emancipated curriculum in Indonesia. As important as using multiple perspectives to understand the process of becoming a professional teacher, a rhizomatic framework is as essential. Therefore, the current study was carried out to address that gap.

The current study investigates the use of Lian's (2011) rhizomatic system during the teaching practicum, which includes intellectual framework, operational space, and support structure. For this reason, the researcher investigates the issue 'How do pre-service English teachers negotiate their professional development experiences during the teaching practicum in implementation of the Emancipated curriculum?'. This research presents an overview of how English teacher education occurs in a dynamic and complicated process, with the goal of providing greater assistance to pre-service English teachers as they apply the new curriculum.

Furthermore, it is believed that such information would help to improve the quality of English teacher education and guarantee that pre-service English teachers can deliver teaching in accordance with the Emancipated curriculum.

METHOD

Research design

This research was grounded in phenomenology interpreted through Rhizomatic thinking (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that is concerned with the pre-service teachers experiences of pre-professional teacher development during the teaching practicum in the context of the implementation of Emancipated Curriculum. The research's phenomenological approach was used since it entailed a close analysis of the pre-service teachers' subjective professional development during their practicum by utilizing their own perspectives, opinions, and interpretations (Kabilan, 2013). In addition, teacher education is perceived as an interrelated and complex process which is appropriately examined by Deleuzian non-linear Rhizomatic view.

Research site and participants

The research involved 17 EFL pre-service teachers (14 females and 3 males) joining a teacher training program in 8 middle schools and 6 high schools in Cirebon. The participants were selected by purposive sampling under the criteria that the school where they practiced implemented Emancipated curriculum. The practicum was held from August 22 to October 17 2022, only six months after Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology released Emancipated curriculum. Thus, the schools were in transition from previous curriculum to Emancipated curriculum in which this phase referred as Emancipated Learning (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). It was evident by the existence of Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) and the use of a specific learning module. This curriculum has only recently been established in the first academic levels, namely grades 7 and 10.

Prior to joining *Pengenalan Lapangan Persekolahan* (teaching practicum) course, the pre-service teachers had taken Micro-teaching I and Micro-teaching II courses and other pedagogical courses preparing them to deliver English lessons but none of them were exploring Emancipated Curriculum. This was due to the fact that the curriculum had not been released yet. The teaching practicum was their very first encounter with the curriculum

Data collection and analysis

The data were generated through interview, observation, and fieldnotes. Semi-structured interviews were employed to ask each of pre-service teacher the aspects of Lian's (2011) rhizomatic system comprising intellectual framework ("What had you learned during the teaching practicum?", "Had you experienced a change in perspective after the teaching practicum? If so, what was it?"), operational space ("How did you implement the independent curriculum when you only got to know it during the teaching practicum?", "How did you navigate instructional tasks from the school and the university?"), and support structure ("How did you seek help to complete the tasks?", "What were the institutional support system roles in during the teaching practicum"). The interview lasted around 30 minutes for each participant and their responses were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Codes were then elicited from the participants' responses to the aspects asked.

In addition, observations and fieldnotes were also carried out to triangulate the data. The pre-service teachers were observed during their teaching activities and other activities outside classroom. The researcher was permitted to sit in some classes of each participant and take

some notes when needed. Observation was not only limited to classroom activities as the pre-service teachers not only require to deliver lessons, but also to complete administrative and supervision tasks, for example grading students' works and facilitating Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) activities mandated by Emancipated curriculum. The observations were carried out in three periods: at the beginning, in the middle, and at the last of the program. The first observations, which took place during the first two weeks, were meant to see how they adjusted to the real school environment. The second observations, which took place from the third to the sixth week, were intended to document how they managed to navigate school assignments with university requirements or tasks. The final observations, which were conducted during the seventh and eighth weeks, were crucial as they were meant to see how their professional development changed.

Thematic analysis and situational analysis were carried out to interpret the data. The interview transcripts and observation notes were coded and visualized using NVIVO 12 application. The visual aids were generated in the form of hierarchical charts to assist generating themes (Creswell, 2017). In addition, rhizomatic mapping was generated using Inspiration 10 application as situational analysis to show relationships, interactions, and processes among elements (Hordvik et al., 2020; Strom, 2014; Waterhouse, 2008). Thematic analysis provides more personal and reflective insights from participants, while situational analysis assists the researcher to explore multidirectional relationships among elements. Both analysis results were interpreted to gain comprehensive understanding on pre-service teachers' experiences in the implementation of Emancipated curriculum.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The pre-service teachers' experiences in negotiating their professional development in the implementation of Emancipated curriculum were explored within five themes including teaching practicums as macrosimulations, challenges and attitudes toward Emancipated curriculum, support systems, and non-hierarchical teacher pre-professional development. The teaching practicum serves a significant role to shape their viewpoints and professionalism. Despite no prior training on the Emancipated curriculum, the pre-service teachers find their way to comprehend and practice it by personal and technological supports.

The teaching practicum as macrosimulation

The teaching practicum was designed as a required course for all Faculty of Education and Teacher Training students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world teaching scenarios. It was also envisioned that this training would help them improve their teaching professionalism.

According to the observations, the pre-service teachers spent two months completing instructional duties assigned by the schools for both curricular and co-curricular activities. Throughout the curriculum, one in-service teacher monitored and evaluated each pre-service teacher. The supervisor teacher assigned them to prepare lesson plans, create learning materials and media, instruct students, assess learning outcomes, and organize co-curricular activities known as the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). The tasks varied from one school to the next depending on the institution's state. Elisa (a pseudonym) was assigned to teach five classes in one week, whereas Salim only had one.

Excerpt 1

Elisa: "Teaches five classes (grade XI) where every week there are 4 class hours for English lessons."

Salim: “The school gave me the task of teaching one class.”

Non-instructional tasks included tasks unrelated to their subject area. They were requested to supervise the scout club, work as librarians, and serve as standby teachers.

Excerpt 2

Nuri: “Apart from that, we were also asked to take part in every scouting activity at school.

Elisa: Maintain the school library when there are free hours.”

Amina: “Assigned to be a standby teacher (filling in teacher attendance, controlling noisy classes, attending empty classes, etc.)”

During the teaching practicum, the participants said they had complete freedom to construct their teaching strategy, materials, and media. This is evident from the extracts of Dina and Nur provided below.

Excerpt 3

Dina: “Yes, I felt that my cooperating teacher has given me freedom in teaching but I still consulted her first when I wanted to do something new in class, for example when I wanted to hold a project-based learning using greeting card.”

Nur: “I was freed to look for sources of teaching materials to be taught to students but according to the materials in the syllabus.”

These diverse exercises appear to have sparked their interest and engaged their emotions (both positive and negative) in teaching. Positive feelings manifested themselves as a strong desire to become a professional teacher. Dina stated that their close relationship with students, cooperating teachers, and fellow pre-service teachers was what made the teaching practicum so emotionally engaging. In contrast, Salim felt differently. Salim claimed he was not emotionally involved in teaching because the students did not show him respect.

Excerpt 4

Dina: “Yes, I was very involved emotionally because after all I taught for two months at that school. I felt that I was already familiar with students, as a teacher I wanted students to understand the material that had been presented, I wanted them to do the assignments I gave, and wanted the best for them. When those did not happen, I had to mobilize my mind, found ways and strategies so that the class situation and student understanding became better. I also felt familiar with cooperating teachers, students, and other teaching practicum friends. It was hard to end the teaching practicum period because maybe I was already emotionally involved with these people.”

Salim: “No, because the students did not develop the slightest character and did not respect me during the lesson.”

The data are presented in an NVIVO-generated hierarchy chart. The size of the box symbolizes the size of the data, and the usage of different colors is designed to distinguish one data cluster from another.

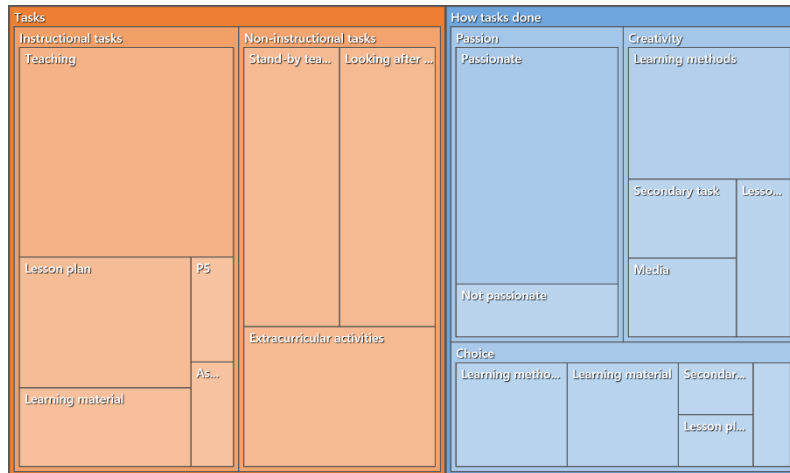


Figure 1. Macrosimulation

The teaching practicum is consistent with the concept of macrosimulation, in which participants construct an interactive living environment, establish identity, and perform full responsibilities (Lian, 2011). The whole program allows them to feel and act like real teachers in a real situation. This macrosimulation also fosters (a) creativity, in order to deal with the complicated and unexpected actions that may occur; (b) passion, it provides wonderful possibilities for participants to engage in activities that truly matter to them; (c) choices; the environment, by nature, requires people to make the decisions about what activities to engage in and how (Lian, 2011).

Furthermore, the teaching practicum was demonstrated utilizing a teacher coaching model, in which supervising teachers served as coaches, observing pre-service teachers' instruction and providing feedback to help them improve. This methodology was proved to be an effective teacher professional development tool because it is designed to be individualized, intensive, sustained over the length of a semester or year, context-specific, and focused on distinct abilities (Kraft et al., 2018). Every participant has one-on-one sessions intensively for extended period of time on teaching practice.

Upon completion of the tasks, the participants became emotionally invested in the program, indicating that their professional identity as teachers expanded within them. They were more involved with 'becoming' professionals rather than 'being' professionals. Professional becoming includes not just acquiring knowledge and skills in formal educational environments, but also forming a multidimensional identity that encompasses individual and collective identities, provisional identities, and an ever-changing professional self (Hordvik et al., 2021; Scanlon et al., 2022).

Challenges and Attitudes toward Emancipated Curriculum

The teaching practicum, which served as a macrosimulation, involved a real-world setting in schools. Emancipated curriculum was initially established during the program, therefore pre-service teachers struggled to adjust to and learn about it. The most difficult aspect is the lack of Emancipated curriculum instruction at the university prior to the teaching practicum. Pre-service teachers were more comfortable with the lesson plan style in the 2013 curriculum, making it tougher to create lessons under the new curriculum. The lack of a standard format for teaching modules, which is supposed to provide teachers more flexibility when creating lesson plans, confuses pre-service teachers and makes it difficult to identify examples.

Excerpt 5

Nuri: "To be honest, I did not really understand the concept of Emancipated Curriculum yet.
Debita: At university I studied 2013 curriculum while at school I directly used Emancipated curriculum."

Syam: "I didn't find the teaching module template; nothing is the same. So confused about which one to follow."

Regarding classroom management, the pre-service teachers reported that the English subject time allotment was so short that proper project-based learning as mandated by the curriculum could not be conducted properly. Furthermore, the lack of confidence and engagement among students made project-based learning more difficult to execute.

Excerpt 6

Umi: "In its application, sometimes it is not easy to make students active in class, the only students who are active are those students. For the type of students who are quiet and lack self-confidence, extra effort is needed so that they are willing to express what they know."

Dina: "Time allocation that is too short in the Emancipated curriculum rules makes learning less effective."

In fact, the supervisor teachers faced the same issue in understanding the revised curriculum due to its initial implementation. However, they had more experience with curriculum revision than pre-service instructors, allowing them to adapt more effectively. Pre-service teachers had to be innovative in their search for information and could not rely just on the supervising instructors' direction.

Excerpt 6

Elisa: "Supervising teachers at schools also still experience difficulties in implementing Emancipated curriculum, especially in creating learning plans (teaching modules)."

Umi: "The supervising teacher still did not really understand what Emancipated curriculum was, so I had to look for information from outside."

Eventually, they indicated that they were slowly able to comprehend the Emancipated Curriculum. They saw this revised curriculum as one that requires fewer lesson plans, gives students greater control over what and how they learn, places a strong emphasis on project-based learning, and focuses on building students' characteristics in accordance with the Pancasila student profile.

Excerpt 7

Elisa: "I learned a lot from the Emancipated Curriculum. Merdeka curriculum is a curriculum that is flexible and focuses on essential material."

Dina: "Emancipated Curriculum has a simpler lesson plan than 2013 curriculum."

Najba: "What I learned from Emancipated Curriculum is that this curriculum brings students closer to the character of the Pancasila student profile and has student soft skills development activities."

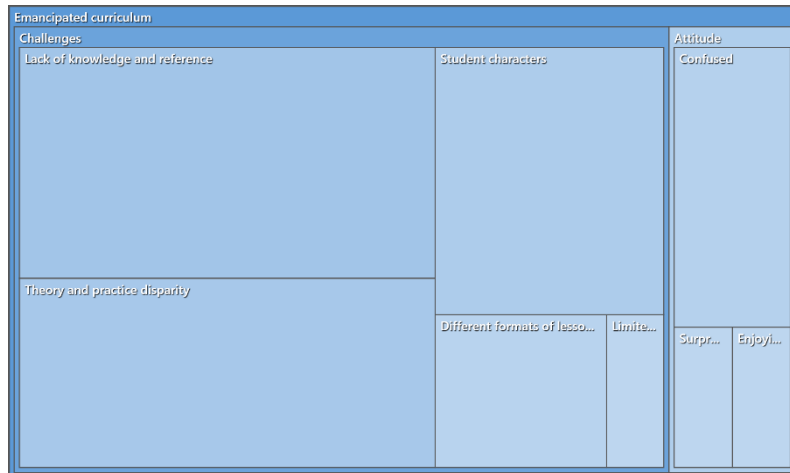


Figure 2. The Implementation of Emancipated curriculum

Pre-service teachers encountered obstacles that were similar to those faced by in-service teachers in general. Emancipated curriculum, which has only lately been formed, requires teachers to take some time to properly implement its contents (Ellen & Sudimantara, 2023). Despite initial implementation issues, the curriculum shows resilience and adaptability (Mustapa et al., 2024). Furthermore, teachers found it difficult to develop teaching tools such as *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran* (learning objective sequence) and teaching modules due to a lack of curriculum training, and they needed to devote more time to preparing creative, innovative, and challenging lessons on a daily basis (Wulandari et al., 2024).

Aside from its effectiveness, project-based learning, which is required by the curriculum, has been deemed challenging to implement, particularly by pre-service teachers. According to Aldabbus (2018), less than one-third of pre-service teachers who participated in a teaching practicum failed to perform project-based instruction due to a variety of challenges. They struggled to manage classroom time and create reliable assessment methods. The students also lacked collaboration skills, which resulted in dominating and imposing opinions on their classmates. The schools also did not provide the necessary facilities and were not prepared to transition to project-based learning due to a variety of obstacles such as restricted time allotment, noise, and a lack of funding.

The challenges instilled in them the ability to study independently and transform themselves. The pre-service teachers had to be creative in their search for information and could not rely just on the supervising teachers' instructions. To become self-governing and self-transforming individuals, teachers must: develop their professional, procedural, and personal knowledge base; analyze learner needs, motivation, and autonomy; recognize their own identities, beliefs, and values; teach, theorize, and dialogize; and monitor their own teaching acts (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Support Systems

During the teaching practicum, pre-service teachers developed their skills as they worked to complete assigned tasks. In that procedure, support systems played a crucial part in determining success. There are two sorts of support: technology and social networks. Both are dependent on the agency of pre-service teachers, as well as their digital and social competencies.

Technology Support

The internet is the rescue. Everything the pre-service instructors wanted to know was right there. Keywords, sources, length, triggers, and Aha! moments are all used to explore this theme. According to the most common keywords they used, they primarily used the internet to look for learning materials such as lesson plans, learning strategies, assessments, and Emancipated curriculum-related aspects such as the Pancasila Students Profile and learning outcomes. The motivation for them to use the Internet was to obtain more relevant and comprehensive learning materials.

Excerpt 7

Rahma: "The information I usually look for is in the form of lesson plans."

Umi: "Look for teaching materials that are not in the textbook because there is no language feature in the textbook."

Syam: "I am looking for learning models and methods that can be used in an emancipated curriculum."

Ina: "We were assigned to make 40 midterm test questions. Some we got from the internet and books."

Umi: "I read on the internet about what students should achieve and what is in line with the target."

Their internet sources include search engines (Google Search and Google Scholar), mobile apps (WhatsApp, Merdeka Mengajar, Ruang Guru, and Quizizz), social media platforms (Youtube, Tiktok, and Twitter), and websites (Kemendikbud, English First, Guru Berbagi, Guru Mengajar, and English Pare). They accessed mostly before the lesson started, and it took them about 2 hours on average.

Excerpt 8

Alia: "I am looking for videos about the material that I will apply in class on YouTube."

Salim: "Once, I looked for it by asking several friends via WhatsApp about learning materials and modules."

Nuril: "Auto base twitter (College Menfess), I often ask or get information related to lectures or teaching practicum there."

Dina: "Many, but more often on the Ministry of Education and Culture's website."

Aha! Moments in this sense allude to the unexpected manifestation of a solution into consciousness after being stuck solving a vexing problem (Kounios & Beeman, 2014) relating to the teaching practicum tasks while conducting an internet search. They noted that they learnt a lot during the process, particularly about teaching and learning strategies, lesson plan design, and learning resources. They recognized that, while the two paradigms are generally different, the lesson plan elements in the Emancipated curriculum are essentially the same as those in the prior curriculum, with the exception of structure and terminology.

Excerpt 9

Umi: "I just discovered the numbered heads together learning model."

Amel: "About interesting learning methods and exciting ice breaking."

Syam: "It turns out that the teaching module components are not very different from the lesson plan in the 2013 curriculum, such as objectives, core components and so on."



Figure 3. Technology-based support

While human help may be location-specific and limited in time, the technological support is ubiquitous, relying on permanently connected networks (for example, the Internet) (Lian, 2011). Furthermore, technology-based help systems offer participants access to rich resources and tools to help them find answers to their questions. These tools provide information and awareness-raising, guidance, and new opportunities for curiosity/serendipity-based learning, as well as other links to other rich resources and support systems, facilitating a profitable journey of discovery for participants (Lian, 2011).

The reliance on technology indicates the teacher students' technology competence which important aspect for becoming a professional teacher. Beyond traditional notions of technical literacy, teachers should understand information technology broadly enough to apply it productively at work and in their daily lives, recognize when information technology can help or hinder the achievement of a goal, and constantly adapt to changes in information technology (Mishra & Koehler, 2008). This, of course, necessitates a deeper, more fundamental grasp and mastery of information technology for information processing, communication, and problem solving than the classic definition of computer literacy.

The participants' hours-long online search yielded a revelation that is applicable to the features of Aha! moments generally. According to Mani (2010), Aha! moments have distinct characteristics: the solution is unexpected; we are never aware of the stages that led to the solution; the solution usually happens after a time of unproductive struggle; and the intense emotional Aha!, Wow!, or Oh! feeling that comes with any Aha! moment.

Social Support

In addition to technology-based help, social networks have emerged as an important component of pre-professional teacher preparation. Supervising teachers is the primary source of social help for pre-service teachers, as they serve as coaches in teacher professionalism. The pre-service teachers were advised on a variety of topics, including creating standard lesson plans for the Emancipated curriculum, classroom management, and selecting learning materials.

Excerpt 10

Rafli: "She teaches me to create modules that comply with Ministry of Education and Culture standards."

Debita: “The supervising teacher plays a very important role, because without her I don’t know the direction in teaching and I am also taught how to teach students with various characters.”

Similarly, supervising lecturers provided considerate amount of help for the pre-service teachers. They coordinated and maintained relationship between the university and the schools. They also discussed challenges and ways to complete tasks.

Excerpt 11

Umi: “The supervising lecturer visited us several times. Each visit, he invited us to share the problems we face during teaching practice and provide input or suggestions.”

Syam: “Providing information about the teaching practicum and guiding the process from start to finish.”

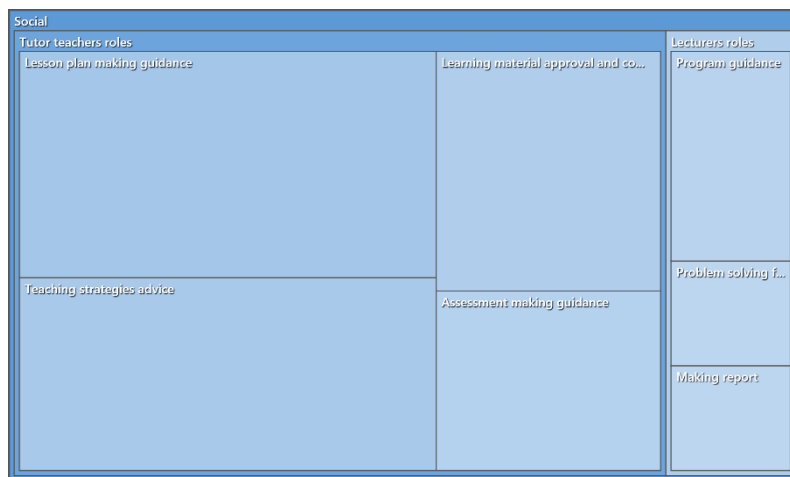


Figure 4. Social network support

The study found that in-service teachers served as coaches rather than mentors to pre-service teachers. Even though the terms 'mentor/mentoring' and 'coach/coaching' are frequently used interchangeably in educational contexts, Fletcher and Mullen (2012) distinguish between their definitions and functions. Mentoring is often viewed as a personal, long-term professional relationship that grows over time, creating a ripple effect and, metaphorically, investing in the next generation. Coaching is typically centered on professional conversation that assists the coachee in developing specific abilities to expand their teaching repertoire.

Pre-service teachers and in-service teachers retain a mutually beneficial connection, demonstrating that the program benefited more than just pre-service teachers. The practicum made the in-service teachers aware of their limits. According to Genç (2016), in-service teachers struggled to create theoretical context for their comments and required additional direction in coaching. As a result, pre-service teachers require additional practice opportunities on their path to becoming language teachers, while in-service teachers must strengthen and update their theoretical knowledge base to reflect current developments in the profession.

In a rhizomatic perspective, soliciting help from others is an important aspect of learning. It appears quite desirable to broaden pre-service teachers' interpersonal ties beyond the helpdesk to include other individuals. These could include fellow pre-service teachers facing similar challenges, in-service instructors who can provide criticism and assistance, and

experts or academics who can chat and interact with pre-service teachers to assist them in unexpected ways (Lian, 2011).

Non-hierarchical Teacher Pre-Professional Development

Prior to the teaching practicum, participants were prepared with information and abilities for teaching English in schools. They had also done micro-teaching at the university with their peers as students. However, teaching real students at school was very different from the campus-based teaching simulation. The teaching practicum, on the other hand, gave them a whole new perspective on teaching and made them aware of their weaknesses which were then justified as what they needed to learn. In other words, they did not realize their own learning needs until they were immersed in real-life teaching and learning circumstances.

The learning needs were identified using the teacher competencies outlined in the Government Regulation on Education National Standard, which include professional competence, pedagogical competence, personality competence, and social competence. During the interview, the pre-service teachers believed that professional and pedagogical competencies were the most developed among the others. They accepted the fact that becoming a teacher requires patience and effort because they must deal with a wide range of student personalities as well as a large number of administrative responsibilities.

Excerpt 12

Salim: "It requires high patience in dealing with students who are difficult to control."

Nuri: "Before the teaching practicum, I thought that the profession of a school teacher was quite simple, just coming and going to class. Apparently, a teacher has a lot of work to do outside of teaching hours. Good at compiling lesson plans, determining media/materials/teaching methods, and others."

Rafli: "Being a teacher requires a very deep dedication to others."

In terms of pedagogical competence, they claimed to have learned a variety of skills, including lesson planning, generating learning content, developing learning media, implementing teaching strategies, classroom management, learning evaluation, and public speaking.

Excerpt 13

Salim: "Teaching practicum improved my public speaking."

Umi: "In making questions, I had to determine which questions students could reach and which cannot, usually each question had a different level of difficulty, and there was already an idea of who could answer the question."

Nuri: "Before joining teaching practicum, I was not very skilled in accompanying teaching and learning activities to my private students. However, after participating in teaching practicum, I learned to become skilled in choosing learning media and fun activities in the classroom."

Personality competence grew mostly as pre-service teachers interacted with students. Interview results suggest that pre-service teachers were also teachers. They must not act like university students; instead, they had to present themselves as true professional teachers to their students. They must dress and behave as teachers. They had to be caring, patient, and serve as role models for their students.

Excerpt 14

Amel: “When I became a teacher, I had to pay attention to ethics, dress, and assignments.”
 Umi: “In teaching, extraordinary patience is needed because not all students have an awareness of what they should and should not do during learning.”
 Nuri: “At school, I learned to position myself as a prospective educator who could be a role model for students wherever I was, for example in the canteen, in class, in the toilet, and so on. It was different when I was on campus. I positioned myself as a student who still needed to learn from lecturers.”

Lastly, social competence was developed through pre-service interactions with students at schools. The teaching practicum helped them increase their capacity to adjust to new situations and people, as well as welcome and befriend a diverse range of students' personalities.

Excerpt 15

Umi: “In order to socialize with students, I feel that I must be fun and relates to their jokes. Socializing with the teachers made me know more about the world of education, they did not hesitate to answer questions asked by me and teaching practicum friends.”
 Debita: “God will, now I understand better and can listen to different characters.”

The entry points for pre-service teacher professional development were diverse. For each individual, learning began at a different point. Their diverse origins and operational history have something to do with this. Each of them seems to have a unique background in terms of teaching experiences. Some had previous teaching experience, while others were teaching for the first time in a school.

Excerpt 16

Umi: “I have been teaching in a private junior high school near my home.”
 Salim: “Never. I never teach before.”

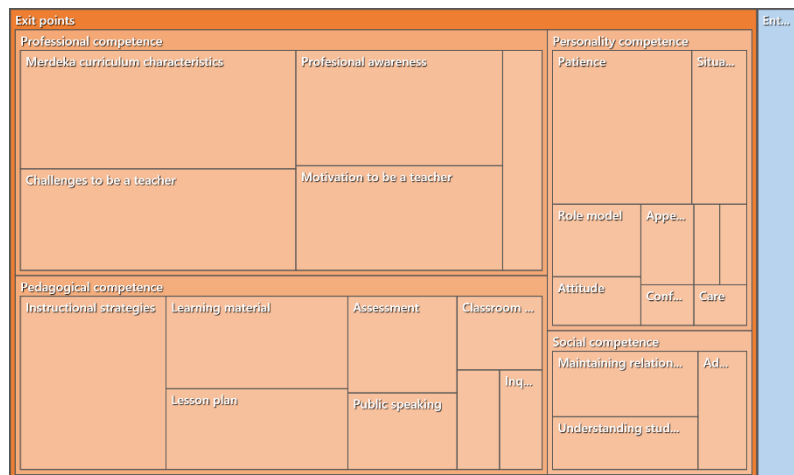


Figure 5. Exit points

Pre-service teachers encountered what Lian and Pineda (2014) refer to as rhizomatic learning. A clash between the tasks and the pre-service teachers' logical and representational systems revealed their shortcomings, resulting in learning needs. Individual and distinctive needs arise as a direct result of their personal operational history. After completing the tasks

with the help of technology and social networks, their operational histories alter, suggesting that learning occurred at that moment. Changes in their operation histories result in changes to their logical and representational systems. This path differs significantly from one another.

Consistent with Ovens et al. (2016)'s idea of teacher becoming, the study demonstrates pre-service teachers' immersion in the multifaceted, non-linear, and continually growing professional self and related identities that take into account the social, cultural, and material settings. They represented the identity of teachers, including dressage, attitude, and knowledge. Dressage is far more complex than what to wear to work. It is a Foucauldian idea that represents compliance, performance, and discipline (Rutherford et al., 2015). How to dress, act, and understand as a teacher involves both personal and professional components of identity construction. The observations suggest that pre-service teachers showed themselves as professional teachers by dressing, talking, and behaving like them. The students, in fact, did not distinguish them as non-professional teachers.

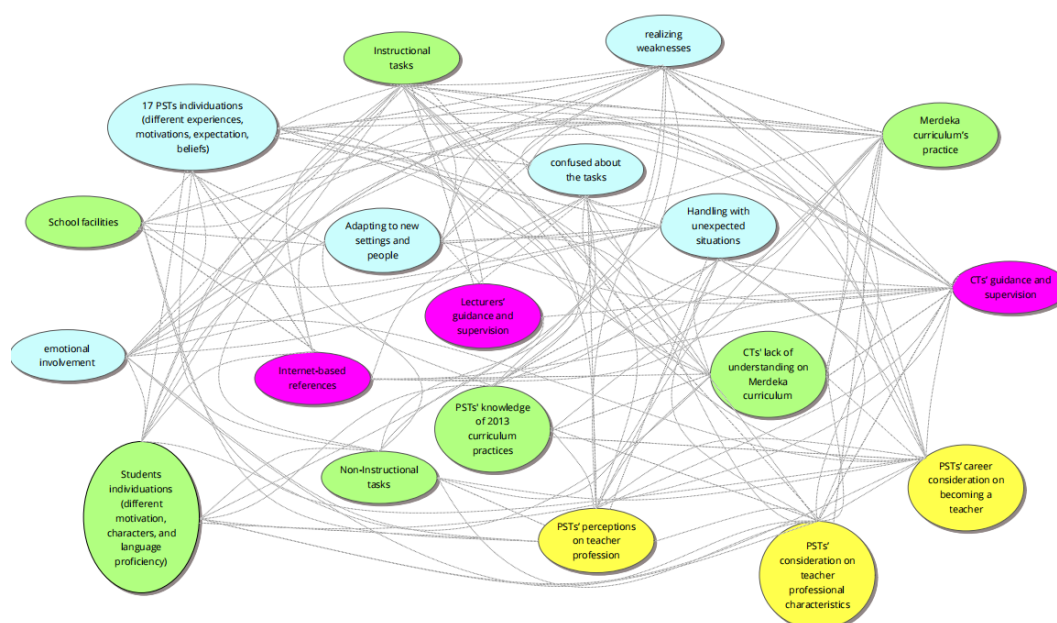


Figure 6. Rhizomatic map of the teaching practicum

Several elements that pre-service teachers encounter during the professional development program influence their identity construction. These aspects were referred to as 'assemblages' in Rhizomatic theory, and they were realized in this study in the form of human, material, and non-tangible elements (Hordvik et al., 2020). Figure 6 depicts the interaction among assemblage elements using a rhizomatic map. As the rhizomatic perspective is not hierarchical, the map lacks linear flow or direction, allowing it to be learned from any point. The map is made up of elements that interact with one another as teachers improved their professionalism. The human elements include pre-service teachers, students, supervising teachers, and supervising lecturers, as well as their individualization (experiences, character, motivation, expectation, and belief). The material elements include school facilities, instructional instruments, and documentation. Non-tangible elements include instructional and non-instructional tasks, curriculum, emotions, confusions, in-service and lecturer assistance and supervision, the internet, learning needs, insights, and viewpoints.

CONCLUSION

The study suggests that the teaching practicum serves as a macrosimulation, providing pre-service teachers with high levels of autonomous practice in real-world teaching situations. This helps develop their teaching skills and professional identity, indicating their capacity as future educators. Technology and social networks are crucial in helping pre-service teachers prepare for their new classroom practice, which requires a shift from traditional lecturing to creative teaching, involving project-centered approaches.

The pre-service teachers face a few difficulties, such as the absence of prepared prior training on the Emancipated curriculum, the need for designing innovative lessons, as well as weaknesses in managing classroom time and student engagement. However, the pre-service teachers shared the growing awareness and positive attitude towards the new curriculum, recognizing its potential to cultivate the desired learning skills as well as reflect the spirit of the Pancasila learner profile.

A teacher professional program designed to enhance the sense of autonomy and agency of the pre-service teachers needs to be considered. This is because the process of becoming a teacher is complicated and depends on students' operational history, pre-service teachers' personal experience, the composition of human and material assemblage they encounter during their preparation, and available resources for support.

Finally, the study contributes to understanding of pre-service teacher education in relation with teaching curriculum reform and it also encourages people to reconsider the existing strategies in teacher education that seem insufficient in preparing pre-service teachers for the complexities of their work. Thus, it emphasizes that efforts must be made towards continuing research intended to enhance the quality of teacher education, focusing on enhancing the pre-service teachers' autonomy and agency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A heartfelt gratitude is extended to the pre-service teachers of the English Language Teaching Department at UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon for their willingness to engage in interviews and observations. The schools' assistance with the teaching practicums is also very appreciated, especially when they permitted the researcher to conduct the observations

REFERENCES

- Achadiyah, R., & Azmi, M. U. (2024). Perception and problem of English pre-service teachers in applying Merdeka Belajar curriculum during teaching practice. *Journal of English Education Program*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.26418/jeep.v5i1.71757>
- Aldabbus, S. (2018). Project-based learning: Implementation & challenges. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 6(3), 71–79. www.eajournals.org
- Creswell, J. W. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- de Freitas, E. (2012). The classroom as rhizome: New strategies for diagramming knotted interactions. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18(7), 557–570. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800412450155>
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press.

- Ellen, K. K., & Sudimantara, L. B. (2023). Examining Emancipated curriculum development in middle schools: A case study. *PANYONARA: Journal of English Education*, 5(2), 165–188. <https://doi.org/10.19105/panyonara.v5i2.8779>
- Fletcher, S. J., & Mullen, C. A. (2012). *Mentoring and coaching in education the SAGE handbook of mentoring and coaching in education*. SAGE Publications.
- Genç, Z. S. (2016). More practice for pre-service teachers and more theory for in-service teachers of English language. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232, 677–683. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.092>
- Hordvik, M., Fletcher, T., Haugen, A. L., Møller, L., & Engebretsen, B. (2021). Using collaborative self-study and rhizomatics to explore the ongoing nature of becoming teacher educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103318>
- Hordvik, M., MacPhail, A., & Ronglan, L. T. (2019). Negotiating the complexity of teaching: a rhizomatic consideration of pre-service teachers' school placement experiences. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 24(5), 447–462. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2019.1623189>
- Hordvik, M., MacPhail, A., & Ronglan, L. T. (2020). Developing a pedagogy of teacher education using self-study: A rhizomatic examination of negotiating learning and practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102969>
- Kabilan, M. K. (2013). A phenomenological study of an international teaching practicum: Pre-service teachers' experiences of professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 36, 198–209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.07.013>
- Kemendikbudristek. (2022, February 25). *Kenali 3 Opsi Ini Sebelum Mendaftar Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Jalur Mandiri*. <https://ditsmp.kemdikbud.go.id/kenali-3-opsi-ini-sebelum-mendaftar-implementasi-kurikulum-merdeka-jalur-mandiri/>
- Kounios, J., & Beeman, M. (2014). The cognitive neuroscience of insight. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 71–93. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115154>
- Kraft, M. A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The Effect of Teacher Coaching on Instruction and Achievement: A Meta-Analysis of the Causal Evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(4), 547–588. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318759268>
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2012). *Language teacher education for a global society: A modular model for knowing, analyzing, recognizing, doing, and seeing language teacher education for a global society*. Routledge. www.routledge.com/education
- Leander, K. M., & Rowe, D. W. (2006). Mapping literacy spaces in motion: A rhizomatic analysis of a classroom literacy performance. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 41(4), 428–460. <https://doi.org/10.1598/rrq.41.4.2>
- Lian, A. P. (2004). Technology-enhanced language learning environments: A rhizomatic approach. *Computer-Assisted Language Learning: Concepts, Contexts and Practices*, 1–20.
- Lian, A. P. (2011). Reflections on language-learning in the 21st century: The rhizome at work. *Journal of Current Science and Technology*, 1(1), 5–16. <http://academicearth.org>
- Lian, A. P., & Pineda, M. V. (2014). Rhizomatic learning: “As... when... and if...” A strategy for the ASEAN community in the 21st century. *Beyond Words*, 2(1), 1–28.

- Peercy, M. M. (2012). Problematizing the theory-practice gap: How ESL teachers make sense of their preservice education. *Eğitimde Kuram ve Uygulama*, 8(1), 20–40.
- Mani, P. (2010, August). Aha! Moments. *Science Reporter*, 29–31.
- Masny, D. (2017). Rhizoanalysis as educational research. In M. A. Peters (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of educational philosophy and theory* (pp. 2043–2048). Springer.
- Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2008). Introducing technological pedagogical content knowledge. *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, 1, 16.
- Mudra, H. (2018). Pre-service EFL teachers' experiences in teaching practicum in rural schools in Indonesia. *Qualitative Report*, 23(2), 319–344. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3115>
- Mustapa, K., Suciati, I., & Mailili, W. H. (2024). Impact of implementing the competency-based Merdeka curriculum in secondary education on enhancing 21st century skills and meeting the demands of the competitive job market. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning (INJOTEL)*, 2(1), 165–178.
- Mutmainah, A., & Widhiatama, D. A. (2024). Unveiling success: Exploring strategies of pre-service teachers in implementing Merdeka curriculum in Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Applied Education (AJAE)*, 3(1), 23–42. <https://doi.org/10.55927/ajae.v3i1.7833>
- Nugraha, T. S. (2022). Kurikulum Merdeka untuk pemulihan krisis pembelajaran. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 19(2), 251–262. <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v19i2.45301>
- Ovens, A., Garbett, D., & Hutchinson, D. (2016). Becoming teacher: Exploring the transition from student to teacher. In *International Handbook of Teacher Education: Volume 2* (pp. 353–378). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0369-1_10
- Rohmah, Z., Hamamah, H., Junining, E., Ilma, A., & Rochastuti, L. A. (2024). Schools' support in the implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum in secondary schools in Indonesia. *Cogent Education*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2300182>
- Rutherford, V., Conway, P. F., & Murphy, R. (2015). Looking like a teacher: Fashioning an embodied identity through dressage. *Teaching Education*, 26(3), 325–339. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2014.997699>
- Scanlon, D., MacPhail, A., & Calderón, A. (2022). A rhizomatic exploration of a professional development non-linear approach to learning and teaching: Two teachers' learning journeys in “becoming different.” *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 115, 103730. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103730>
- Strom, K. J. (2014). *Becoming-teacher: The negotiation of teaching practice of first-year secondary science teachers prepared in a hybrid urban teacher education program*. Montclair State University.
- Strom, K. J. (2015). Teaching as assemblage: Negotiating learning and practice in the first year of teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 66(4), 321–333. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487115589990>
- Sudimantara, L. B. (2023). Perspectives and experiences of Indonesian pre-service English teachers in developing digital learning resources. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 11(3), 609–628. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v11i3.7919>
- Supartinah, S., Prananto, I. W., Kawuryan, S. P., Hastomo, A., & Senen, A. (2023). Assistance in the adoption of the kurikulum Merdeka at Elementary School 1 Padokan Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Pengabdian UNDIKMA*, 4(2), 299. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jpu.v4i2.7071>

- Waterhouse, M. (2008). *Experiences of multiple literacies and peace: A rhizoanalysis of becoming in immigrant language classrooms*.
- Wulandari, Y., S, R., & Ilham, D. (2024). Unleashing student creativity. *International Journal of Asian Education*, 5(1), 21–33. <https://doi.org/10.46966/ijae.v5i1.371>