



## “Walking in their shoes: emotional and professional identity transformation of pre-service teachers through student perspective-taking”

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores pre-service teachers' emotional and professional identity transformation during their Field Teaching Practice (PPL), with particular attention to the emergence of student-centered teaching approaches. Using a descriptive qualitative design, data were gathered through in-depth, open-ended interviews with five participants who had completed their PPL. The findings reveal a clear shift in the participants' emotional responses, from initial nervousness and uncertainty to growing confidence, fostered by daily student interactions. The pre-service teachers developed greater empathy, patience, and awareness of student diversity through these interactions, encouraging them to adapt their teaching strategies toward more inclusive and engaging practices. Reflection played a critical role in reshaping their perceptions of teaching, moving from idealistic expectations to a more grounded and relational understanding of the profession. The study concludes that PPL offers technical training and a vital space for emotional growth and identity formation. Therefore, teacher education programs should emphasize reflective practice, student-centered pedagogy, and strong mentorship during practicum to better prepare pre-service teachers for the classroom realities.

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching practice is not merely about delivering subject matter in front of a class, but rather reflects a complex social and emotional interaction process between teacher and students. Learning itself is the process of acquiring knowledge over a period, leading to personal growth and change (Tandikombong et al., 2025). The learning process is essentially an interaction between teachers and students, making the role of teachers indispensable as they function as facilitators, directors, and assessors in the classroom (Abin & Suryadi, 2024). Within this process lie communication, empathy, emotional regulation, and an understanding of students'

backgrounds and needs (Ji et al., 2022). This is often overlooked in the initial perceptions of pre-service teachers, who tend to focus more on the cognitive or technical aspects of teaching. From the author's personal experience observing and mentoring students during their Field Teaching Practice (PPL), it is evident that many pre-service teachers enter the world of education carrying a sense of idealism, whether a romanticized view of the teaching profession or confidence in teaching methods learned theoretically in university. However, when faced with real-life classroom settings and direct engagement with students, idealism is challenged by a far more dynamic, complex, and often unpredictable reality.

In this context, the implementation of PPL becomes a crucial moment, frequently a turning point, in how students perceive the teaching profession. They begin to understand the real pedagogical challenges and realize that being a teacher means becoming a good listener, a sensitive learning facilitator, and a figure capable of building emotional bridges with students. PPL itself is a formal process for students to apply the fundamentals of the teaching profession in educational settings, whether in schools or madrasahs. As part of the intramural curriculum, PPL includes teaching practice and involvement in various academic activities such as administrative tasks, classroom management, and social interaction within the school community (Maharani & Fithriani, 2023). Its main goal is to provide real-life experiences that strengthen students' professional competencies as future educators. Kaswari (2016) emphasizes that PPL is designed to comprehensively prepare students cognitively, affectively, and socially through direct involvement in school life. Anyone who wants to become a teacher must prepare themselves mentally, physically, and intellectually to fulfill their role effectively (Mujahidin et al., 2023).

In addition to affective development and the adoption of student-centered approaches, the Field Teaching Practice (PPL) also plays a vital role in shaping pre-service teachers' professional identity. Professional identity refers to how individuals see themselves as future educators, including their values, beliefs, and sense of responsibility toward the profession. This identity is not fixed but continuously shaped through experiences, reflections, and interactions in the school environment. During PPL, many pre-service teachers question their prior assumptions about teaching and reconstruct their understanding of being a teacher. These experiences, such as interacting with students, managing classrooms, and responding to challenges, become important in forming their professional identity. Including professional identity as part of the research focus allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how PPL influences the development of teaching skills and the more profound transformation of the self as a teacher.

In many cases, these interactions lead pre-service teachers to realize that each student has different learning styles, motivations, and backgrounds. They begin to understand the importance of adapting teaching strategies to meet students' needs better. The student-centered learning (SCL) approach becomes increasingly relevant in this context. SCL positions students as active participants in the learning process, not merely recipients of information from the teacher, but as individuals

encouraged to seek knowledge independently, build understanding through experience, and develop a sense of responsibility for their learning (Hadi, n.d.). In line with this, Wijayanti (2011) adds that the SCL approach allows students to utilize technology and various learning resources in the digital age to broaden their horizons and train their critical thinking skills.

Some previous studies have explored the experiences of pre-service teachers in teaching practicum (Ardi et al., 2023; Astuti & Drajadi, 2022; Ji et al., 2022; Lei, 2023; Lestari et al., 2024; Li et al., 2023; Prastikawati et al., 2022). Reflective practice is increasingly frequent in teacher education and educational studies. It is generally agreed that reflective practice includes the individual's experience in comprehending the learning and teaching processes and the process of professional development as a teacher. However, there is still a limited number of studies that focus on how pre-service teachers' emotional responses and awareness of students' perspectives contribute to shaping their professional identity. Most existing research highlights classroom challenges or teaching strategies. Still, it lacks in-depth exploration of how student interaction fosters empathy, patience, and the reflective transformation of the self as a future teacher.

Moreover, as Li et al. (2023) argue, it may be challenging to fully understand pre-service teachers' learning-to-teach experiences using conventional knowledge-learning perspectives. This is because they often teach in classrooms that are not their own, work with unfamiliar students, and rely on their coping strategies when facing challenges. These situations require a deeper and more contextual understanding of their journey, considering emotional development and identity formation.

This study aims to address that gap and enrich previous studies by exploring how direct interaction with students, followed by reflection, helps pre-service teachers grow emotionally and professionally. Unlike earlier studies such as Ji et al. (2022) and Zhu (2017) that focus more on emotional changes like anxiety or declining motivation, this study highlights how moments of connection and care during the practicum lead to greater awareness, empathy, and a clearer understanding of teaching. Participants moved from viewing teaching as a task to seeing it as a responsibility that involves listening, guiding, and understanding learners. This shift indicates the formation of professional identity through meaningful teaching experiences. The findings also bring practical value to teacher education programs, especially in designing reflection activities that support emotional readiness and help student teachers recognize who they are becoming.

To address these issues, this study explores how pre-service teachers reflect on their emotional and professional growth through their interaction with students during the Field Teaching Practice. The focus is on how they make meaning of their teaching experiences, how they begin to see themselves as future educators, and how reflection plays a role in that transformation. By examining their narratives, this study seeks to provide deeper insight into pre-service teachers' emotional and identity development and offer practical implications for teacher education. The

research is guided by two key questions: (1) How do pre-service teachers reflect on their emotional and professional growth during their Field Teaching Practice (PPL)? and (2) How does their interaction with students contribute to the development of their professional identity?

## **METHOD**

This study adopts a qualitative approach using a reflective narrative method to explore the subjective experiences of pre-service teachers during their Field Teaching Practice (PPL). This approach was chosen because it enables a holistic understanding of identity formation and professional transformation through the personal stories shared by participants (Barkhuizen, 2011). In addition, qualitative research effectively captures the complexity of human experiences within the dynamic and contextual field of education (Nowell et al., 2017).

The reflective narrative method emphasizes that participants' stories are not merely records of events, but meaning-making constructions that reflect their values, attitudes, and shifts in perception toward education. Through narrative sharing, participants describe and reflect on their experiences, allowing them to negotiate and construct their professional identities as future teachers (Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010).

The participants in this study consisted of five students from the Indonesian Language Education Study Program who had completed their PPL at various junior high schools in Kupang City. They were selected purposefully based on the diversity of their PPL placements and individual backgrounds.

Although the sample size in this study is small, the five participants were chosen carefully to ensure a variety of experiences and backgrounds. Each student was placed in a different junior high school in Kupang City, with differences in school environment, student characteristics, and available resources. This helped show how different teaching contexts influenced their learning and development as future teachers.

In addition to diverse placements, the participants also came from different personal backgrounds. Some had prior teaching experience, while others did not. They also varied in terms of academic performance, socioeconomic status, and reasons for becoming teachers. These differences allowed the study to explore how personal and contextual factors shaped their teaching experiences and professional identity.

Even with a small number of participants, the variety in placement and background provided rich and meaningful data. In qualitative research, the goal is to gain deep understanding, not to generalize, so a small but diverse sample is appropriate for this type of study.

This purposive sampling strategy was chosen to obtain rich, detailed, and contextually grounded data (Palinkas et al., 2015). Data were collected through

semi-structured interviews to encourage open and reflective responses related to participants' teaching experiences and interactions with students. This interview technique provides flexibility while focusing on the study's core themes (Kallio et al., 2016). The interviews were conducted face-to-face in a relaxed and informal setting to create a safe space for participants to share their stories. Each session lasted approximately 5 to 10 minutes and was recorded with a voice recorder, supported by note-taking for accuracy.

The interview protocol included questions on key areas such as initial interactions with students, identification of learning difficulties, understanding student characteristics, emotional responses, classroom challenges, and shifts in teaching perspectives, especially regarding student-centered learning. After the interviews, the recordings were fully transcribed, and follow-up discussions were conducted for clarification and data enrichment when necessary.

All data were analyzed using open coding techniques to identify significant themes and patterns across participants' narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher listened to audio recordings and read the transcripts repeatedly, highlighting important words and phrases that reflected the participants' experiences and emotions. These initial codes emerged inductively from the data, without using pre-set categories. Similar codes were then grouped into broader themes related to emotional responses, classroom challenges, student interactions, and shifts in teaching perspectives. This method helped reveal the emotional, pedagogical, and professional transformations experienced by pre-service teachers during their PPL. To enhance the credibility of the findings, member checking was conducted by allowing participants to review and verify the interpretations of their interviews. This step helped minimize researcher bias and ensured the accuracy of data representation (Birt et al., 2016). Ethical procedures were strictly followed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their identities and personal information were kept confidential.

## RESULTS

This section summarizes the key findings from five pre-service teachers' reflective narratives during their Field Teaching Practice (PPL). The results emphasize essential topics linked to emotional growth, student-centered teaching, and professional identity formation. Based on the interviews collected and analyzed in depth, a range of experiences and reflections emerged from the five pre-service teachers during their Field Teaching Practice (PPL). These findings illustrate their initial feelings when interacting with students, the challenges of addressing student learning difficulties, and a shift in attitudes and teaching methods toward a more student-centered approach. The tables below summarize key findings from each participant, capturing their subjective experiences during PPL:

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**Table 1: Interview Summary – R1**

| No. | Question  | R1's Response   |
|-----|---|---|
| 1.  | What did you feel when first interacting with students in the classroom?                                | Nervous and tense, but calmed down seeing the students' enthusiasm.                           |
| 2.  | Have you encountered students with learning difficulties? What did you do?                              | Yes, gave extra explanations and used visual aids.  |
| 3.  | Was there a moment you felt you understood a student's emotions or mindset?                             | When a quiet student became active, I understood how they learn.                              |
| 4.  | What did you learn about yourself as a future teacher from facing challenging situations with students? | I learned to be more patient and creative.  |
| 5.  | Do you think it's important to see from the student's perspective? Why?                                 | Very important to adjust methods and help students learn more effectively.                    |
| 6.  | What's the most significant change in your view of teaching after PPL?                                  | Teaching is more than delivering material; it's about relationships and classroom atmosphere. |

|     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 7.  | How did PPL help you become more patient or empathetic with students?  | I learned not to give up easily and to try various methods to help.        |
| 8.  | What was the most memorable experience during PPL that made you genuinely feel you "understood" your students?       | When a quiet student suddenly became active in class.                      |
| 9.  | After PPL, do you feel your teaching has become more student-centered? Explain.                                      | Yes, I involve students more in discussions and use active methods.        |
| 10. | If you return to the classroom as a real teacher, what lesson from your student interaction would you carry forward? | The importance of empathy and patience with diverse student personalities. |

**Table 2:** Interview Summary – R2

| No  | Question   | R2's Response  |
|-----|--|--|
| 2.  | Have you encountered students with learning difficulties? What did you do?   | Yes, tried different approaches, like real-life examples or discussions. |
| 3.  | Was there a moment you felt you understood a student's emotions or mindset?  | When students got bored with lectures, I realized the need for variety.  |
| 4.  | What did you learn about yourself as a future teacher from facing challenging situations with students?              | I realized the importance of flexibility and adaptation.                 |
| 5.  | Do you think it's important to see from the student's perspective? Why?  | Essential to make learning more relevant and enjoyable.                  |
| 6.  | What's the most significant change in your view of teaching after PPL?   | Teaching must be flexible and responsive to student diversity.           |
| 7.  | How did PPL help you become more patient or empathetic with students?  | I learned to listen and give students opportunities to participate.      |
| 8.  | What was the most memorable experience during PPL that made you genuinely feel you "understood" your students?       | When a bored student became engaged with interactive learning.           |
| 9.  | After PPL, do you feel your teaching became more student-centered? Explain.  | Yes, I adapt methods to suit student needs and characteristics.          |
| 10. | If you return to the classroom as a real teacher, what lesson from your student interaction would you carry forward? | Teaching flexibility and variety in instructional methods.               |

**Table 3: Interview Summary – R3**

| No. | Question   | R3's Response  |
|-----|--|--|
| 1.  | What did you feel when first interacting with students in the classroom?   | Nervous, but motivated to help struggling students.                            |
| 2.  | Have you encountered students with learning difficulties? What did you do?   | Yes, gave personal support and patiently re-explained.                         |
| 3.  | Was there a moment you felt you understood a student's emotions or mindset?  | When helping a student with personal issues, I felt the importance of empathy. |
| 4.  | What did you learn about yourself as a future teacher from facing challenging situations with students?              | I learned to be a good listener and more empathetic.                           |
| 5.  | Do you think it's important to see from the student's perspective? Why?  | Very important for building empathy and a supportive learning environment.     |
| 6.  | What's the most significant change in your view of teaching after PPL?   | Teaching requires patience and empathy, not just academic results.             |
| 7.  | How did PPL help you become more patient or empathetic with students?  | Supporting a student with personal issues made me more empathetic.             |
| 8.  | What was the most memorable experience during PPL that made you genuinely feel you "understood" your students?       | Supporting a student through personal struggles emotionally impacted me.       |
| 9.  | After PPL, do you feel your teaching has become more student-centered? Explain.                                      | Yes, I give space for students to express their opinions.                      |
| 10. | If you return to the classroom as a real teacher, what lesson from your student interaction would you carry forward? | Empathy and emotional support are integral parts of teaching.                  |

**Table 4:** Interview Summary – R4

| No. | Question   | R4's Response  |
|-----|--|--|
| 1.  | What did you feel when first interacting with students in the classroom?   | Surprised by the diversity of student personalities and emerging challenges. |
| 2.  | Have you encountered students with learning difficulties? What did you do?   | Yes, I explored the cause of difficulty and provided motivation and support. |
| 3.  | Was there a moment you felt you understood a student's emotions or mindset?  | When students shared their struggles, I saw the value of open communication. |
| 4.  | What did you learn about yourself as a future teacher from facing challenging situations with students?              | I discovered inner motivation to stay calm in challenges.                    |
| 5.  | Do you think it's important to see from the student's perspective? Why?  | Essential to understand students' emotional and learning needs.              |
| 6.  | What's the most significant change in your view of teaching after PPL?   | I now see the importance of communication and a personal approach.           |
| 7.  | How did PPL help you become more patient or empathetic with students?  | I learned to manage emotions and understand diverse student feelings.        |
| 8.  | What was the most memorable experience during PPL that made you genuinely feel you "understood" your students?       | Helping students resolve classroom conflict and seeing their change.         |
| 9.  | After PPL, do you feel your teaching became more student-centered? Explain.  | Yes, I prioritize student needs and interests in planning lessons.           |
| 10. | If you return to the classroom as a real teacher, what lesson from your student interaction would you carry forward? | Open communication and attention to students' individual needs.              |

**Table 5: Interview Summary – R5**

| No. | Question   | R5's Response  |
|-----|--|--|
| 1.  | What did you feel when first interacting with students in the classroom?   | Mixed feelings—nervous but curious about teaching effectively.                             |
| 2.  | Have you encountered students with learning difficulties? What did you do?   | Yes, closely observed and adapted methods for better comprehension.                        |
| 3.  | Was there a moment you felt you understood a student's emotions or mindset?  | When students eagerly asked questions, I understood the importance of two-way interaction. |
| 4.  | What did you learn about yourself as a future teacher from facing challenging situations with students?              | I realized teaching is about building relationships, not just delivering content.          |
| 5.  | Do you think it's important to see from the student's perspective? Why?  | Important for a humanistic approach where students feel respected.                         |
| 6.  | What's the most significant change in your view of teaching after PPL?   | My perspective shifted from theoretical to practical and humanistic.                       |
| 7.  | How did PPL help you become more patient or empathetic with students?  | I now understand that patience is key to successful teaching.                              |
| 8.  | What was the most memorable experience during PPL that made you genuinely feel you "understood" your students?       | When a typically passive student showed interest due to my approach.                       |
| 9.  | After PPL, do you feel your teaching became more student-centered? Explain.  | Yes, I emphasize approaches that encourage independent and active learning.                |
| 10. | If you return to the classroom as a real teacher, what lesson from your student interaction would you carry forward? | A humanistic approach and active learning experiences for students.                        |

Based on the findings from interviews with the five pre-service teachers who completed their Field Teaching Practice (PPL), it can be concluded that real classroom experiences serve as pivotal moments in shaping their professionalism and pedagogical sensitivity. Initially, the participants felt nervous, awkward, or emotionally pressured when interacting with students, but gradually developed confidence and adaptability.

### **Emotional Shifts: From Nervousness to Confidence, from Uncertainty to Empathy**

It was clear from the beginning that most participants entered PPL feeling unsure and anxious. R1, for example, mentioned being tense and nervous during the first interaction, while R3 admitted he was intimidated but driven by the desire to help students. This emotional vulnerability is something many pre-service teachers experience, and it is an essential part of the learning process. What stood out, however, was how these early feelings gave way to a deeper emotional awareness and a sense of purpose.

R3's experience with a student facing personal challenges became his turning point. That moment taught him that teaching isn't just about content but about presence. Similarly, R4 began to listen more closely to students' emotional cues and started to see how important it is to be emotionally available. Through such experiences, the participants gradually learned to sit with discomfort, to be more patient, and to meet students with understanding.

Some participants reflected that while they were not directly dismissed, students often saw them as temporary figures rather than full teachers. One shared, "It felt like they were still waiting for the real teacher." This unspoken perception subtly shaped their experience and made them question their place in the classroom. As Maharani and Fithriani (2023) also found, pre-service teachers often face this challenge, which can shape how they see their role in the classroom. Although difficult, this experience prompted reflection on how teacher identity is built and how trust must be earned, especially when the role is not fully recognized.

### **Teaching with the Students, Not at Them**

Another major shift that emerged was pedagogical. All five participants described how their teaching methods evolved throughout their practicum. In the beginning, most relied on structured lesson plans and lecture-style delivery. But real students challenged those plans. R2 noticed his students becoming disengaged during lectures, prompting him to switch to examples from real life and student-led discussions. R1 tried visual aids and group activities. R5 emphasized two-way interaction and letting students ask more questions. These weren't just strategies but signs of deeper pedagogical sensitivity.

### **Rethinking What It Means to Be a Teacher**

One of the most meaningful themes to emerge from the interviews was how the participants' understanding of what it means to be a teacher started to change. Many began their PPL with idealistic or simplified notions about teaching. Some

thought that being a teacher meant delivering good lessons, being in control, and following plans. But the classroom had other lessons to offer.

R5, for instance, realized that teaching is less about performing and more about building relationships. R4 learned that clear communication and openness made students more cooperative. R3 spoke about how being a good listener helped him respond to students' needs. Through the unexpected, the challenging, and the deeply human teaching moments, their sense of professional identity began to shift. It became more grounded, more relational, and more real.

### **Moments That Stayed with Them**

Each participant recalled at least one crucial moment, which stayed with them even after the teaching ended. R1 remembered the quiet student who slowly became more active. R5 spoke about how a slight adjustment in his approach helped a passive student finally participate. These stories may seem simple, but they are significant. In them, we see how teaching is not only about impact on students, but also about how students shape their teachers.

These are the kinds of moments that give teaching its emotional weight. They are reminders that growth happens in relationships. Empathy, patience, and openness can turn hesitation into confidence and fear into care. These reflections show that identity is not formed in a single moment, but in repeated acts of trial, reflection, and connection. It is shaped by both struggle and success. The PPL context gave them a safe but challenging space to experience that.

This shift toward more student-centered learning was not because someone told them to do it. It came from paying attention to what students needed, how they responded, and what made them feel involved. When a quiet student suddenly spoke up or a bored class started to show interest, those were the indicators that change was working. The pre-service teachers weren't just applying techniques. They were learning to listen with intention and teach responsively.

### **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study highlight how the Field Teaching Practice (PPL) becomes a powerful experience that contributes to the emotional and professional transformation of pre-service teachers. The shift from anxiety to confidence was one of the key patterns emerging from the participants' narratives. Initially, most felt nervous, uncertain, or awkward when entering the classroom. However, as they engaged with students, they gradually found their voice and grew in confidence. Previous studies also found that pre-service teachers often lacked confidence and uncertainty regarding their practical teaching ability, particularly during their initial practicum experience (Ardi et al., 2023; Lestari et al., 2024; Seo, 2022). This supports the findings of the present study, where participants also described similar emotional challenges in the early stages of their PPL. This also aligns with previous research by Seo (2022), who found that pre-service teachers commonly experience anxiety, fear of failure, and concern about being judged during their initial teaching practicum.

As the practicum progressed, the participants shifted their focus from themselves to their students. This emotional shift allowed them to engage more meaningfully and reflectively. The development of empathy was one of the most notable emotional outcomes. As participants listened to their students' struggles and adjusted their responses, they internalized a more humanistic understanding of teaching. This finding is supported by TAŞDEMİR & SEFEROĞLU (2022), who emphasized that empathy is closely linked to pre-service teachers' attitudes toward students. Teachers with higher levels of empathy are more likely to form positive, respectful, and supportive relationships with their learners.

This emotional engagement became the foundation for a more profound transformation in their professional identity. Instead of viewing teaching as a set of tasks or performance goals, participants started to see it as a relational and responsive act. Through reflection, they began to understand themselves as learners of teaching methods and as future educators responsible for their students' learning and well-being. This supports earlier studies emphasizing the importance of affective engagement in teacher identity development (Zhu, 2017; Ji et al., 2022). However, this study focuses on how student-centered reflection leads to identity formation.

What makes this study different from previous research is its emphasis on how emotional connections and responsiveness to student needs contributed directly to professional growth. While other studies have discussed emotional tension and confidence building (Lestari et al., 2024; Lei, 2023), this study shows how empathy, patience, and relational awareness became guiding principles for the participants' teaching approach. R3, R2, and R1 mentioned that they began designing lessons that actively involved students through discussions, quizzes, games, and open dialogues. Even though Alosius felt that his teaching approach had not changed significantly, he still noted improved student interaction. R4 expressed that she became more aware of student characteristics and considered them in planning her teaching. These findings suggest a shift from a teacher-centered paradigm toward a more dialogical and contextual student-centered approach.

Professional identity transformation is further seen in how participants redefined their roles. Initially, many of them focused on managing the class and delivering lessons. Over time, however, they began to express a sense of care, responsibility, and emotional presence. One participant described a change from "just teaching the material" to "helping students learn in a way that makes sense to them." R1 shared her experience as a mediator during a student conflict, R2 encouraged a quiet student through group work, and R3 emphasized the importance of open communication and personal attention to build trust. These experiences show participants developed a more holistic and relational view of teaching. This view resonates with Harahap & Fithriani (2024), who state that empathy grows through meaningful teacher-student interaction and is essential in building emotionally safe and engaging learning environments.

Reflections on their classroom interactions also revealed that participants felt

more prepared to take on the role of a teacher in the future. Many of them expressed a desire to carry forward key lessons, such as building joyful relationships (R1), adapting teaching approaches based on student needs (R2), and creating open, supportive spaces for student expression (R3). These reflections show that PPL not only equipped them with technical teaching skills but also helped them develop a stronger sense of identity as emotionally responsive and student-oriented educators.

This study offers several practical suggestions for teacher education programs based on these findings. First, teacher education should provide structured opportunities for reflection during and after PPL. This may include journaling, small-group discussions, or guided mentoring, all aimed at helping student teachers process their experiences and emotions. Second, programs should emphasize the emotional and relational aspects of teaching, not just the academic or technical components. Pre-service teachers need to be prepared not only to teach content but also to build positive classroom relationships. Third, teacher education programs should encourage pre-service teachers to listen actively to students and reflect on their learning from those interactions. These practices support the formation of a strong, student-centered professional identity.

In short, this study concludes that Field Teaching Practice (PPL) is essential in shaping pre-service teachers' emotional, pedagogical, and professional development. Through real classroom experiences, participants shifted from initial nervousness and idealistic views to greater confidence and deeper awareness of students' needs. These experiences helped them develop core teaching competencies such as empathy, patience, adaptability, and reflective thinking, essential for becoming effective and responsive educators.

## CONCLUSION

This study affirms that the Field Teaching Practice (PPL) plays a central role in shaping pre-service teachers' professional identity in emotional, cognitive, and pedagogical aspects. Through a reflective narrative approach, this research provides in-depth insights into the dynamics experienced by Indonesian Language Education students during their PPL in various educational institutions in Kupang City. Initial experiences marked by nervousness and awkwardness developed into reflections that fostered confidence and teaching readiness.

The pre-service teachers demonstrated growing awareness of students' diverse learning styles and began to adopt more adaptive and student-centered teaching approaches. They learned that teaching is not merely about delivering content, but also involves understanding students' thinking processes, backgrounds, and emotional states. This was evident in their various strategies to reach their students, including modified teaching methods, personal attention, and creating enjoyable and interactive classroom environments.

Empathy, patience, and relational skills emerged as key affective competencies developed during the practice. Participants learned that being a teacher also means

being a listener, a guide, a conflict mediator, and a motivator. This awareness arose through direct interaction with students, reflection on challenges, and evaluation of their teaching practices. Such reflections triggered a transformation in their view of the teaching profession, shifting from an initially idealistic perception to a more realistic and socially responsible one.

Beyond honing technical teaching skills, PPL provided ample opportunity for participants to develop professional attitudes and pedagogical sensitivity. They recognized the importance of building closeness with students, prioritizing open communication, and creating a safe and inclusive learning space. Thus, PPL is not merely an academic requirement but a transformational platform that allows pre-service teachers to internalize the core values of education, such as empathy, reflection, active participation, and humanistic learning.

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