

# Pre-Service Teachers' Teaching Practice With And Without Ethnographic Lens – A Comparative Study

Dr.A.Pio Albina

**Abstract:** The researcher aimed to undertake this investigation in the light of the two theories (Vonk(1993) and Kagan(1992)) regarding the essentiality of the background knowledge about the taught and the school environment (which comprises teaching through Ethnographic Lens). The researcher used 'qualitative ethnographic case study design' and has selected eight B.Ed. students as a sample for her study. The findings of the research emphasize the need for Teaching through Ethnographic Lens in order to emanate a sweet and acceptable cognitive, affective and psychomotor aroma which would definitely hold the learners attention towards, confidence in and acceptance for the pre-service teachers.

**Index Terms:** Comparative study, Ethnographic Lens, Pre-service Teachers, Pre-service Teacher Education, Teaching Practice

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the greatest assets of any education system. Teachers help in shaping and reshaping the society and determine the quality of life in the community and the nation. They are accepted as the backbone of the education system. Teacher quality is therefore crucial and has been globally accepted to be significantly associated with the quality of education in general and students' learning outcomes in particular. Each nation, therefore, makes some provision for pre- service teacher education in order to help the teachers to contribute towards the growth of society [11]. Kothari Commission begins its report with the remark "The destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms", it is beyond question that a sound programme of education plays a significant role in any nation's development and the quality of teacher education programme is greatly determined by the quality of teachers[12]. Teacher education is an important field for research since, Teacher education is said to be a very significant investment for bringing qualitative improvement in education. If a resolution in education has to be initiated by any nation, it is the teacher-education which can be taken as a starting point. The effort of researchers in the field of teacher education is needed as an eye-opener regarding some neglected areas such as, how best to prepare teachers to reach disadvantaged marginalized children and on how to develop resourceful teachers who know how to teach in challenging contexts. At this juncture, Practice Teaching occupies a key position in the programme of teacher education. It is a culminating experience in teacher preparation. It provides opportunity to beginning teachers to become socialized into the profession [5]. Teaching practice exposes the student-teacher to the real school and class situation where he acquires some practical experiences in the art of teaching, as well as get adapted or acquainted with the social settings of the institution [10]. Hence to attain the objectives of Teaching practice as a threshold for the pre-service teachers to enter into effective teaching, research is a crucial process to be undertaken in teaching practice.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher utilised the work of Vonk (1993) who has developed a model of professional development for beginning teachers. It consists of three dimensions: (1) Personal (2) environmental and (3) knowledge and skills. The personal dimension involves "self-concept by the teacher". It includes the teacher's knowledge of himself and ideas about "good practice". The environmental dimension involves the teacher's interaction with his or her working situation. It includes new responsibilities, and having to adapt to school environment as well as coping with expectations from colleagues. The knowledge and skills' dimension is concerned with pedagogical content knowledge, classroom knowledge and management skills as well as teaching skills[16]. Kagan (1992) says that, Pigge & Marso (1989) found that, "the student teachers became less concerned about themselves and more aware of classroom variables as they progressed through the practical teaching program. Their attitudes about teaching, their future impact on pupils, and their probable success in teaching remained optimistic and unchanged". According to findings of Kagan's review of 40 studies, she indicated that pre-service and novice teachers begin with inadequate knowledge of pupils and classrooms[4]. The researcher aimed to undertake this investigation in the light of the above mentioned two theories regarding the essentiality of the background knowledge about the taught and the school environment (which comprises teaching through Ethnographic Lens).

## 3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Dona M. Kagan says that preservice and first-year teaching appears to constitute a single developmental stage during which novices accomplish three primary tasks: (a) acquire knowledge of pupils (b) use that knowledge to modify and reconstruct their personal images of self as teacher and (c) develop standard procedural routines that integrate classroom management and instruction. In general, preservice programs fail to address these tasks adequately[4]. In this context, Pre-service Teachers' Teaching Practice with Ethnographic Lens will be able to address the above said three tasks. Carolyn R. Frank, Frederick L. conducted a study on "Ethnography for Teacher Education" and the study revealed that preservice teachers are faced with many challenges when observing elementary classrooms and often jump to critical evaluation based on too little evidence. The study found that preservice

• Dr. A. Pio Albina.,Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Alagappa University College of Education, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: pioalbina123@gmail.com ORCID ID - <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8822-1099>

teachers should use observation methods from ethnography and sociolinguistics to delay their evaluations and interpretations of classroom practice and should see from an insider's perspective[2]. Merethe Skaras analyzed how central features of focused ethnography produce knowledge on teaching and learning history in conflict zones. The study advocates that the teachers can use focused ethnography as a methodological approach in conflict zones – specifically, educational research in South Sudan[7]. Andrew Andrew & Kenneth Teitelbaum conducted a study on “Linking theory and practice: the use of ethnographic methodology by prospective teachers” and the study revealed that undergraduates themselves should be given an opportunity to conduct ethnographic research as part of their teacher training experience[1]. A rich harvest of knowledge can be reaped through these related studies, which throw lights on the importance of ethnographic research in teacher education where we need more progress. Hence, the above viewpoints have paved a concrete path for undertaking this comparative study on Pre-service Teachers' Teaching Practice with and without Ethnographic Lens.

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative ethnographic case study design can integrate ethnography and case study in which each methodology contributes philosophical tenants and procedures necessary to ensure academic rigor when conducting scientific research[3]. This justifies the adequacy and suitability of the method chosen by the researcher – ‘qualitative ethnographic case study design’. The investigator has selected eight B.Ed. students studying in Alagappa University College of Education as a sample for her study out of which four B.Ed. students from 2016-17 batch (Batch-I) and four B.Ed. students from 2017-18 batch (Batch-II) and all the eight B.Ed. students had their teaching practice session in Alagappa Model Higher Secondary School. The Batch-I B.Ed. students had their teaching practice without Ethnographic Lens and on the other hand, Batch-II B.Ed. students had their teaching practice with Ethnographic Lens. In other words the investigator gave Orientation on ‘Teaching through Ethnographic Lens’ to Batch-II B.Ed. students before they had gone for teaching practice. In the B.Ed. curriculum of Alagappa University, four months have been allotted for the Internship teaching practice in Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools in and around Sivagangai District. During the Internship period, the B.Ed. students are supposed to observe the teaching of their mentor teachers for the first two weeks. From the third week onwards they start their practice teaching in the respective schools. The four Batch-I B.Ed. students had their teaching practice session in standard VIII and in the very next year four Batch-II B.Ed. students had their teaching practice session in standard IX for the same set of students in the same school.

##### Data collection

During their Internship period, the investigator observed the classroom teaching, the classroom climate, the interaction between teacher and students, the obtained level of teaching competencies, classroom management, student's behaviour in the classroom, etc.

1. In-depth interview with pre-service teachers
2. Observation of class (Teaching Practice Session)  
Rapport between students and pre-service teachers,  
Classroom climate or culture, Classroom

management, Student's behavior in the classroom, Understanding the students, Teaching to the level of students

3. Attitude Scale (Questionnaire)  
Attitude of pre-service teachers towards Teaching, Attitude of pre-service teachers towards students
4. Ethnographic Field Notes:  
School culture, Co-curricular activities in the school, Celebrating Festivals in the school, School Rules and regulations, Organizational set-up, Sanitary conditions, Classroom culture, Infrastructure facilities: Classroom, Library, Laboratory, Play ground etc.

##### 5. Students Bio-data

**Intellectual Factor** : Previous Academic Marks, Prognostic test score to check their Prior knowledge, IQ level

**Physical Factor** : Height, Weight, Medical History, Food Habit, Participation in physical activities, games, Yoga etc.

**Learning Factor** : Learning style, Time of Learning, Learning Capacity, Ability of the learner, Attention span

**Environmental Factor**: Home environment, Parent's occupation, Parent's educational qualification, Parent's annual income, Number of siblings, Area of living

**Social Factor** : Adjustability, Community, Religion, Psychological Factor, Emotional maturity, Mental Health, Motivation, Creativity, Self-concept, Deviant Behaviors if any

**Aesthetic Factor** : Interests, Talents and Hobbies, Co-curricular Achievements

##### Researcher's Self-report

The researcher's role in this research setting is Teacher Educator. The researcher has nine years of teaching experience in the field of Teacher Education and has observed nine batches of pre-service teacher's teaching practice sessions. The research has been undertaken for duration of two years. The researcher had observed (3 days per week x 4 months x 2 years) 96 teaching practice sessions.

#### 5 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used Inductive Analysis for analyzing the data collected from various sources which would allow the researcher to find the broader themes and theories from the information collected during the field investigations, while being guided by the research objective and questions of the study.

#### 6 DATA INTERPRETATION

The researcher compared the two batches of B.Ed. students with respect to the following aspects:

##### Academic Achievement of the school students

The batch II students scored high marks in their examinations than the batch I students. This is because the batch II pre-service teachers have succeeded in building a bridge between what students know and what they need to learn, by conducting a prognostic test to know their previous knowledge before they started their teaching.

##### Co-curricular Achievements

The batch II students have more co-curricular achievements than the batch I students. Since the batch II pre-service teachers have collected data regarding various Talents, Hobbies, Strength and weakness of their students and they have recorded all the co-curricular activities of the school in their Ethnographic Field Notes. So they encouraged their wards to participate in various co-curricular activities with full enthusiasm.

#### **Rapport between students and pre-service teachers**

A good rapport between students and pre-service teacher was well maintained in the batch II classroom. Since Teaching is a social endeavour, and some measure of teaching and learning success rests on recognizing the importance of relationships between students and teachers. The quality of relationships is determined by how much teachers know about their students and students' behaviours and characteristics. The batch II pre-service teachers have worked towards establishing rapport and strived to communicate good will. Every time the teacher interacts with the students, the teacher is making history[15].

#### **Classroom culture**

A positive classroom culture was observed in the batch II classroom. A classroom culture of trust and acceptance is the foundation for establishing a social environment in which students feel empowered and comfortable. The factors that can threaten a positive classroom environment are problems that students bring from home, lack of motivation among students, pressures from testing, and more[6]. Since batch II pre-service teachers have collected the detailed information about their students' family background and their motivation level, they have been able to create a positive and conducive classroom culture or environment which is one of the most important factors affecting student learning.

#### **Classroom management**

Classroom management by teachers can have a major impact on student behaviour and academic achievement. Classroom management is the process by which teachers and schools create and maintain appropriate behaviour of students in classroom settings[14]. There are many factors that affect classroom management, such as students' motivation, behavioural and emotional stability, learning capabilities, family condition, etc.[9]. Since batch II pre-service teachers have collected information regarding psychological factors of the students and it has been easy for the pre-service teachers to create a well-managed classroom thus facilitating a smooth environment where learning can flourish.

#### **Student's behavior in the classroom**

The batch II students behaved well than the batch I students. Effective teachers always understand that students behave well if their particular culture, background and abilities are acknowledged by the teacher in the way they teach. Since batch II pre-service teachers have collected information about students' culture, their abilities and the deviant behaviors of their students, they can encourage a positive Student behavior which plays a major role in academic achievement. A student's behavior can affect their ability to learn as well as other students' learning environment.

#### **Understanding the students**

Inadequate understanding of cultural background of the

students can easily disrupt classroom learning. Good teachers embrace their student's cultural background[13]. The batch-II B.Ed. students have definitely revealed the knowledge, understanding, acceptance and recognition for the students thus providing clear and free air for the students to breathe in. "It is important for the teachers to get to know their students because the more they get to know each student the better they can teach them, in a way that they will learn." [8]. Attitude of Pre-service teachers towards Teaching and Students The vital fact to be recorded is the attitude of batch-II B.Ed students towards Teaching and attitude towards Students are revealed to be more favorable than that of batch-I B.Ed students. This is due to the bridging of the gap between the teachers and the taught by developing mutual understanding.

## **7 FINDINGS**

The batch II students have better result than the batch I students in all the above said aspects. The result reveals that Pre-service Teachers' Teaching Practice with Ethnographic Lens have high and positive impact on the following aspects of their teaching : Academic Achievement of the school students, Co-curricular Achievements, Rapport between students and pre-service teachers, Classroom culture, Classroom management, Student's behavior in the classroom, Understanding the students and Teaching to the level of students. The findings of the research emphasize on the need for Teaching through Ethnographic Lens in order to emanate a sweet and acceptable cognitive, affective and psychomotor aroma which would definitely hold the learners attention towards, confidence in and acceptance for the pre-service teachers.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The present paper is an extended version of my research paper presented in International Conference on Psychology, Language and Teaching (ICPLT) at Philadelphia, USA. This paper significantly expands its research tools such as attitude scale and interview with pre-service teachers. This article has been written with the financial support of RUSA-Phase 2.0 grant sanctioned vide Letter No. F.24- 5112014-U, Policy (TN Multi-Gen), Dept. of Edn, Govt. of India, Dt.09.10.2018.

## **9 REFERENCES**

- [1] Andrew & Kenneth Teitelbaum (2006) Linking theory and practice: the use of ethnographic methodology by prospective teachers, *Journal of Education for Teaching* Volume 9, Issue 3, 2006, Pages 225-234 retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0260747830090303?journalCode=cjet20>
- [2] Carolyn R. Frank, (2004) Ethnography for Teacher Education, *Journal of Teacher Education*, May, 2004 retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022487104263978?journalCode=jtea>
- [3] Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [4] Dona M. Kagan, (1992), *Professional Growth among Preservice and Beginning Teachers*, *Review of Educational Research*, June, 1992 retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/00346543062002129>

- [5] Furlong VJ, Hirst PU, Pocklington K (1988). *Initial Teacher Training and the Role of the School*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- [6] Joan Young, (2014) *Encouragement in the Classroom: How Do I Help Students Stay Positive and Focused?*, ASCD Arias retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/sf114049/chapters/The-Importance-of-a-Positive-Classroom.aspx>
- [7] Merethe Skaras, (2016) *Focused Ethnographic Research on Teaching and Learning in Conflict Zones: History Education in South Sudan*, *Journal-Forum for Development Studies*, Volume 45, 2018 - Issue 2 Pages 217-238, 05 Jul 2016 retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08039410.2016.1202316?journalCode=sfds20>
- [8] Michael Schultz (2015) *The Importance of Getting to Know Your Students*, Edwords, March, 2015 retrieved from <https://www.bamradionetwork.com/edwords-blog/theimportance-of-getting-to-know-your-students>
- [9] Monica Chen (2016) *Classroom Management*, BCTC Sunday School Teacher's Training retrieved from [http://www.bctcnj.org/children/wpcontent/uploads/2013/12/2016\\_02\\_21\\_Monica\\_Classroom\\_Management.pdf](http://www.bctcnj.org/children/wpcontent/uploads/2013/12/2016_02_21_Monica_Classroom_Management.pdf)
- [10] Oluwafemi Bolarfinwa,(2010). *Effects of teaching practice on student teachers in tertiary institutions in Nigeria*, Munich, GRIN Verlag, <https://www.grin.com/document/182582>
- [11] Pany Sesadeba, Mohanty Sankar Prasad., (2013) *Teacher Education in India*, Shipra Publications, New Delhi.
- [12] Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66, National Council of Educational Research and Training 1970 retrieved from [http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/reports/ccr/KC/KC\\_V1.pdf](http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/reports/ccr/KC/KC_V1.pdf)
- [13] Sophie Quinton,(2013), *Good Teachers Embrace Their Students' Cultural Backgrounds*, *The Atlantic*, Education, November, 2013 retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/11/good-teachers-embrace-their-students-cultural-backgrounds/281337/>
- [14] Thomas R. Kratochwill, Rachel DeRoos , Samantha Blair, (2015) *Classroom Management*, Teachers Modules, University of Wisconsin-Madison retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/education/k12/classroom-mgmt.aspx>
- [15] Tom Dyrenforth, (2014), *Classroom Success through Rapport-Building*, Master Teacher Program, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, 2014 retrieved from [https://www.usma.edu/cfe/Literature/Dyrenforth\\_14.pdf](https://www.usma.edu/cfe/Literature/Dyrenforth_14.pdf)
- [16] Vonk, J. (1983) *Problems of the Beginning Teacher*, *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 6, pp. 133-150. retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271943318\\_Problms\\_of\\_the\\_Beginning\\_Teacher](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271943318_Problms_of_the_Beginning_Teacher)