

## Mapping the Path to Excellence in Student Teaching: Insights from Appreciative Inquiry

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### ABSTRACT

The teaching practicum is an important aspect of teacher education because it lays the bedrock upon which good teachers are made. This current research pursues an investigation of effective practices student teachers during their teaching practicum in order to further enhance the entire student teaching experience. In this respect, the 4D model of appreciative inquiry by Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros (2008) is utilized with the purpose of finding the best practices, creating a vision of ideal ways of implementation, and further developing strategies for action plans that can be realizable and sustained. Participants consisted of one education expert from the Adventist HEI in Luzon, Philippines, and 11 student teachers from an Adventist HEI in Mindanao, Philippines. Data were collected through appreciative interviews for six student teachers and focus group discussions for five. From the findings, best practices can be noted to involve effective management of teaching responsibilities, character and attitude development, collaboration, and reflective practices. The ideal practices identified in the study include stimulating teaching methods, positive attitude among pre-service teachers, supportive teamwork, and an emphasis on professional growth. For this to be undertaken, the proposed strategies for ideals are comprehensive preparation, collaborative educational programs, varied experiences, systematic reflection and evaluation, and effective management of resources and workload. The study underlines the fact that an enabling environment is important to enhance the teaching practicum. Effective implementation and sustainability of these practices are characterized by an enabling environment, continuous assessment and improvement, and congruence of the curriculum and practices. These strategies would therefore contribute much to enhancing the quality of the teaching practicum, coupled with reinforcement of best practices.

**Keywords:** *Teaching Practicum, Pre-service teachers, Appreciative Inquiry*

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher education plays an important role in the development of individuals, institutions, and even an entire nation, suggesting that enhancing the quality of teacher education will directly influence societal development in all aspects. In this context, the teaching practicum is regarded as one of the most vital components of teacher education for prospective teachers (Tekin & Tunaz, 2023). This has consistently held significant importance within the realm of teacher education programs, allowing pre-service teachers to apply their knowledge in real classrooms (Koksai & Genc, 2019). Its essential purpose lies in preparing the prospective teachers for the world of teaching, given that these aspiring educators are

primarily tasked with engaging in reciprocal interaction with students within the actual classroom settings during the practicum period.

During this period, student teachers have the opportunity to immerse themselves in real-world classroom settings, engage with students, and apply the teaching strategies they have learned in their academic coursework. As mentioned by Haigh et al. (2013), the effectiveness of a teaching practicum serves as an indicator of the overall success of teacher education programs. In this century, educators and policymakers around the world are greatly concerned about the education and training of capable teachers. As a result of the study conducted by Koksal and Genc (2019), aspiring teachers are mandated to undergo practice teaching in real schools as part of their teacher training programs. Therefore, Tekin and Tunaz (2023) emphasized that it is essential to thoroughly examine teaching practicum to enhance the quality of teacher education.

In the Philippine context, all higher education institutions require teacher education students to complete practicum teaching as a mandatory requirement for graduation. Pre-service teachers gain classroom experience in public schools or on-campus basic education departments to prepare them for becoming qualified educators. Moreover, to maintain the quality of pre-service teacher education in the country, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education (DepEd) jointly issued Memorandum Order No. 39 of 2005, which outlines guidelines for the deployment of student teachers, including the responsibilities of student-teachers, the duties of cooperating teachers, the selection of cooperating schools, and the roles of teacher education institutions and the school division superintendents in practice teaching (Ulla, 2016). Based on the study by Mangila (2018), which involved 64 respondents consisting of pre-service teachers at J.H. Cerilles State College-Dumingag Campus, Dumingag, Zamboanga Del Sur, it is recommended that pre-service teachers be actively involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating the teaching practicum program.

This study explored and understood the best practices of student teachers during their teaching practicum. Employing the appreciative inquiry approach, it uncovered the meaningful experiences of these student teachers, focusing on their teaching practices, which help them in appreciating experiences during practicum, fostering a more holistic understanding of their professional journey. In the end, the study intended to develop plans for enhancing the practicum experience for pre-service teachers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Student Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Internship.** Ranjan (2013) mentioned that student teachers perceive teaching practice as an important aspect of preparing to be a teacher for it connects their student experience with becoming a professional teacher. They value and emphasize its importance. Dacanay et al. (2019) supported this by emphasizing that they acknowledge practice teaching as crucial for getting prepare to be a teacher. It is like the real connection between their student life and being a teacher. Because of this, student teachers feel a mix of expectations, nervousness, excitement, and worry as they start their teaching practice.

**Importance of Practice Teaching.** Practicum is an important part of teacher education because it gives future teachers valuable experience and insights into real-life teaching situations (Tekin & Tunaz, 2023). Student teachers are sent to various schools to apply their

knowledge of the subject under the guidance of knowledgeable instructors (Aldabbus, 2020). Amankwah (2017) elaborated on the benefits of teaching practice, which include the development of the positive attitudes among student teachers toward teaching, the discovery of their own strengths and weaknesses, and exposure to actual classroom experience.

**Teaching Practicum in Philippine Context.** According to Mangila (2018), in the Philippines, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have a big responsibility. They prepare future teachers for both primary and secondary education. The Practice Teaching Program is a team effort involving the Department of Education, public and private Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), cooperating school officials, teachers, and college supervisors (Mazo, 2015).

**Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers.** The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) is a public statement outlining what teachers should know, value, and have the capacity to do in their profession. The PPST was established as a framework of teacher quality (D. O. No. 42, 2017). It has seven domains, including the (1) Content, Knowledge and Pedagogy; (2) Learning Environment; (3) Diversity of Learners; (4) Curriculum and Planning; (5) Assessment and Reporting; (6) Community Linkages and Professional Engagement; and (7) Personal Growth and Professional Development. (Espiritu, 2021).

**Roles of Student Teachers.** According to Collantes (2021), student teachers need to accomplish tasks in the classroom, such as making lesson plans, checking test papers, preparing visual materials, recording test results, and teaching the class. Then, in addition to those tasks, they also do extra things if asked to, such as filling in for a teacher who is absent, labeling books, and decorating bulletin boards. Unlike that of the instructor, the student teacher's job within the teaching practice is transient and mostly determined by the cooperating teacher (Lojdova, 2020).

Student teachers often feel a combination of nervousness and excitement because they view their practice as an essential link between their academic experiences and future careers. In addition to helping to develop good attitudes and self-awareness, the practicum offers crucial insights into real-world teaching. Effective teacher preparation in the Philippine environment necessitates cooperation between cooperating schools, the Department of Education, and higher education institutions. These results highlight the importance of mentorship and organized support networks during the practicum, since these are critical to improving the quality of the teaching experience and guaranteeing that student instructors successfully apply their theoretical knowledge to the classroom.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings**

The exploration of best practices among student teachers during their teaching practicum can be effectively framed through a comprehensive theoretical framework that integrates multiple perspectives emphasizing mentorship, pedagogical practices, and emotional dynamics. Central to this framework is the Teacher Practice Model proposed by Teig et al. (2024), which highlights the interconnectedness of content coverage, teaching quality, and assessment practices and their combined impact on student learning outcomes. This model serves as a foundational basis for understanding effective teaching practices during practicum.

Additionally, Suhandra and Ariawan (2023) underscore the pivotal role of mentorship, emphasizing how effective guidance from experienced teacher mentors fosters professional growth and helps student teachers address the challenges of the practicum experience. Reflective practice is also crucial, as Yoon (2024) points out the common gap between

theoretical knowledge and practical application, necessitating continuous reflection to navigate and overcome these obstacles.

Emotional factors also play a significant role; Pasaribu and Lestari (2023) identify teaching anxiety as a major barrier and suggest that positive thinking and thorough preparation can help alleviate these emotional challenges. Finally, Weerakoon (2022) highlights the value of collaborative partnerships between schools and universities, as well as the implementation of innovative pedagogical strategies, to enhance the practicum experience.

Overall, this integrated framework highlights the importance of mentorship, reflection, emotional resilience, and innovative teaching practices in optimizing the practicum experience, while also recognizing that individual and institutional factors can influence how these best practices are realized.

## METHODS

This section gives a thorough explanation of the methods used in the study, providing sufficient details to evaluate the validity and trustworthiness of the conclusions and enabling more knowledgeable researchers to conduct a similar investigation.

**Research Design.** The researcher selected the Qualitative-Appreciative Inquiry design as it appropriately aligns with the study's objectives that seeks to discover the best practices of student teachers on their teaching practicum. Appreciative Inquiry was developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987). It is an approach that focuses on strengths in the realms of learning, change, planning, and implementation. **Population and Sampling Technique.** The study was conducted at an Adventist HEI in Mindanao, Philippines. It is a private Christian institution owned and operated by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. The participants were the fourth-year students in Teacher Education Department who were undergoing teaching practicum. Approximately, this study involved six participants for Appreciative Interviews and five participants for Focus Group Discussion. In addition, one education expert from an Adventist HEI in Luzon, Philippines was also interviewed to support the shared experiences of the pre-service teachers, acting as basis for what is ideal. Purposeful sampling was used in this study where participants were intentionally selected as they possess characteristics that align with the purpose of the study. The snowball sampling technique by Creswell and Poth (2018) was also utilized to get in touch with more participants after identifying a few who meet the requirements. This was done by asking for recommendations from the people who were initially identified. **Data Collection.** This study utilized a semi-structured interview format involving narrative exploration, wherein participants shared their experiences and stories about their teaching practicum. Focused Group Discussion was also utilized, participated by five participants who were also Teacher Education Students undergoing teaching practicum. In this study, the portfolios and reflective journals of the participants were studied upon the participants' consent. **Data Analysis.** The qualitative data of this study was analyzed using Creswell and Poth's (2018) Data Analysis Spiral Model, which involves an iterative process of moving in analytic circles rather than a rigid linear approach. The Data Analysis Spiral Model describes a non-linear approach where researchers engage in continuous cycles of organizing, reading, memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, and visualizing data. This process emphasizes the fluid movement between these steps, allowing for deeper understanding and refinement of findings throughout the analysis. It includes comprehending, coding, organizing, and interpreting data continuously, culminating in its representation, as illustrated in Figure 1.

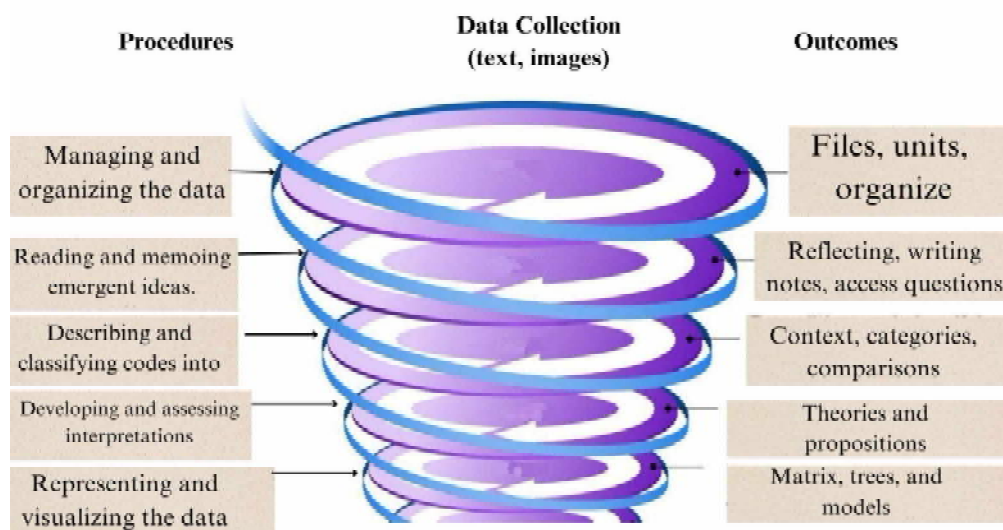


Figure 1. Data Analysis Spiral Model (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings on pre-service teachers' practicum experiences, structured into four phases: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny. The Discovery Phase identifies current best practices, while the Dream Phase explores the ideal practices envisioned by pre-service teachers. The Design and Destiny Phases focus on practical improvements and sustaining these ideal practices, highlighting a comprehensive approach to enhancing the practicum experience.

### Discovery Phase: Best Practices of Pre-Service Teachers on their Teaching Practicum

Based on the analysis of the data as presented in Table 1, four emerging themes on the best practices of the student teachers were identified; Practicing Efficient Teacher's Responsibilities, Character and Attitude Building, Collaboration, and Reflecting Practice.

**Table 1**  
*Best Practices of Pre-Service Teachers on their Teaching Practicum*

Categories	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced Classroom Management Approach</li> <li>• Learner-Centered Lesson Planning</li> <li>• Dynamic Lesson Delivery</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Practicing Efficient Teacher's Responsibilities (PPST Domain 6)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence Building</li> <li>• Practicing Adaptability and Resilience</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Character and Attitude Building (PPST Domain 2)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnering with Cooperating Teachers</li> <li>• Teamwork of all Student Teachers</li> <li>• Cooperative Engagement with Students</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Collaboration (PPST Domain 6)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Assessment</li> <li>• Evaluation and Gaining Insights</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Reflecting Practice (PPST Domain 7)</b>

**Practicing Efficient Teacher’s Responsibilities.** In the interview and focus group discussion, the informants shared their best practices during the teaching practicum. They mentioned that they were able to practice several responsibilities in the best way possible, including balanced classroom management approach, learner-centered lesson planning, and dynamic lesson delivery.

**Character and Attitude Building.** One of the best practices that pre-service teachers did during their teaching practicum was involving in the activities and experiences that shaped their character and attitude. They faced some teaching challenges directly and learned how to handle them. During their teaching practicum, they were motivated to become more self-aware, understand their students better, and build skills in addressing teaching challenges (Mazo, 2015).

**Collaboration.** During teaching practicum, collaboration is a best practice for the student teachers, creating connections with the cooperating teachers, colleagues, and students. Beyond mastering lesson preparation, planning, and delivery, the practicum provides student teachers with an opportunity to have interaction with students and teachers in daily activities

**Reflecting Practice.** As stated by the participants’, reflecting practice is also a best practice for them during their teaching practicum. They were able to engage in self-assessment, evaluate their experiences and gain insights. Pre-service teachers thought carefully about what they did, learned from their experiences, and figured out what it all meant.

**Core Aspects:** Commitment to Excellence, Growth Mindset, Collaboration

**Dream Phase:** Ideal Practices in the Teaching Practicum

Based on the data gathered from education experts and pre-service teachers, their ideal practices in the teaching practicum were grouped into the following themes: Engaging and Effective Teaching Practices, Fostering Positive Attitudes and Behavior, Supportive and Synergistic Environment, and Professional Growth.

**Table 2**  
*Ideal Practices in the Teaching Practicum*

Categories	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive Classroom Devotionals</li> <li>• Effective Classroom Management</li> <li>• Comprehensive Lesson Planning</li> <li>• Student-Centered Teaching</li> <li>• Integration of Technology</li> <li>• Inclusive Teacher’s Practices</li> <li>• PPST Integration</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Engaging and Effective Classroom Practices (PPST Domain 4)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrating Professionalism with Confidence</li> <li>• Dedication and Commitment</li> <li>• Flexibility and Innovation</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Fostering Positive Attitude and Behavior (PPST Domain 3)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent and Collaborative Assistance</li> <li>• Solid Support from Professional Learning Communities</li> <li>• Unity and Harmony among Student Teachers</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Supportive and Synergistic Environment (PPST Domain 5)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular Reflection and Continuous Learning</li> <li>• Structured Feedback and Evaluation</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Professional Growth (PPST Domain 7)</b>

**Engaging and Effective Classroom Practices.** The study revealed that engaging and effective teaching practices are ideal for pre-service teachers during their practicum. Categories under this theme include interactive classroom devotionals, effective classroom management, thorough lesson planning, student-centered teaching, integration of technology, inclusive teaching methods, and the use of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). The aspirations of the pre-service teachers align with those of the education experts.

**Fostering Positive Attitude and Behavior.** The findings show that fostering positive attitudes and behaviors in pre-service teachers is considered an ideal practice. Throughout the teacher education program, which prepares them for inclusive classrooms, pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward teaching are developed. It is essential to nurture a positive mindset and behavior during the practicum.

**Supportive and Synergistic Environment.** Cooperating teachers play a vital role in guiding and supervising pre-service teachers, contributing to their professional growth. To foster a supportive and synergistic approach, constant monitoring and direction by experienced teachers are necessary (Alemdag & Simsek, 2017).

**Professional Growth.** Pre-service teachers enhance their teaching skills through regular reflection and continuous learning. Incorporating reflective practices into their teaching practicum can lead to significant improvements in teaching effectiveness (Suphasri, 2021).

**Core Aspects:** Commitment to Excellence, Growth Mindset, Collaboration

**Design Phase:** Suggested Plans for the Development of the Practicum Experience

Based on the data gathered from the participants, their suggested plans for creating the ideal practicum experience were grouped into the following themes: Comprehensive Preparation, Programs for Educational Collaboration, Diverse Experiences and Exposure, Reflection and Evaluation, and Resource and Workload Management.

**Table 3**  
*Suggested Plans for the Development of the Practicum Experience*

Categories	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Practicum Orientation</li> <li>• Digital Literacy Training</li> <li>• Skills Development Seminars and Workshop</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Comprehensive Preparation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Collaboration and Support</li> <li>• Collaborative Practicum Supervision</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Educational Collaboration Programs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure to Varied Educational Setting</li> <li>• Action Research and Projects</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Diverse Experience and Exposure</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular Reflection and Journaling</li> <li>• Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Systems</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Reflection and Evaluation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manageable Practicum Schedules</li> <li>• Workload Management</li> <li>• Resource Allocation</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Resources and Workload Management</b>

**Comprehensive Preparation.** The better prepared pre-service teachers are, the more they will get out of the practicum experience. Pre-practicum activities can help them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the classroom. The informants offered

strategies for the development of pre-service teachers' practicum experience throughout the interview and focus group discussion. The Pre-Practicum Orientation, Digital Literacy Training, and Skills Development Workshops and Seminars are a few of these suggestions, which emphasizes comprehensive preparation.

**Educational Collaboration Programs.** As emphasized by the informants during the interview, peer collaboration and support is essential in preparing future educators as it provides pre-service teachers with the chance to share ideas, learn from one another, and forge better support networks. Collaboration among pre-service teachers demonstrated to offer a more encouraging and cooperative environment for teacher education than the usual single placement, student-cooperating teacher model (Gardiner et al., 2011).

**Diverse Experience and Exposure.** Pre-service teachers can gain a greater knowledge of the complexities of teaching and learning as well as the cultural and social factors that influence students' experiences by participating in a variety of educational settings. Their capacity to create and deliver good education may ultimately be improved by this exposure, which may ultimately help their future students.

**Reflection and Evaluation.** One of the Teacher Education Standards for Teaching is the capacity for self-reflection on the methods of teachers. This has been highlighted in the answers given by the informants during the interview as stated by Alger (2006). Pre-service teachers highlighted the value of reflection and evaluation during their interviews, emphasizing the need for dedicated time to analyze their teaching practices and identify areas for improvement.

**Resources and Workload Management.** It is essential to always prioritize the needs and the well-being of pre-service teachers in order for them to excel in their professional growth. The informants stated that they usually find out about their class schedule at the last minute, leaving them with less time to get ready. They consequently felt under pressure, ineffective, and received unfavorable feedback. According to Smith et al. (2018), providing teachers with adequate time to prepare for their classes can boost their effectiveness as a teacher, improve lesson planning, increase student engagement, and boost teacher confidence.

### Destiny Phase: Implementing and Sustaining the Ideal Pre-Service Teaching Practices

The strategies to implement and sustain the ideal pre-service teaching practices centered on three themes identified by those who participated in the study. The themes are as follows: Effective Support Systems, Continuous Improvement and Evaluation, and Aligned Curriculum and Practices.

**Table 4**  
*Implementing and Sustaining the Ideal Pre-Service Teaching Practice*

Categories	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative Support and Leadership</li> <li>• Scheduled Conferencing and Meeting</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Effective Support Systems</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching Performance Monitoring and Evaluation</li> <li>• Attendance Policy</li> <li>• Evaluating Programs and Policies</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Continuous Improvement and Evaluation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening and Integration of PPST and ICT</li> <li>• Policy for Structured Practicum Program</li> </ul>	➤ <b>Aligned Curriculum and Practices</b>



**Effective Support Systems.** With effective supportive systems, ideal pre-service teaching practices will be applied and continued. It ensures that student teachers have the guidance, materials, and mentorship they need to achieve success in their chosen fields. This as well entails establishing established objectives, rendering paths, and creating a good environment for learning in which student teachers are able to excel. Administrative engagement and support are essential to a school’s performance, which means the administrator has the power and duty to provide many sorts of support student teachers, making regular tasks and practices far more effective and productive (Taylor, 2019).

**Continuous Improvement and Evaluation.** The ideal teaching practices of student teachers can also be implemented and sustained with continuous improvement and evaluation. Continuous improvement pertains to the ongoing process of individuals assessing and refining the teaching methods through self-reflection or student assessments. It is also referred to as program modification or teacher improvement (Taylor et al., 2020). According to the participants, continuous improvement and evaluation involves teaching performance monitoring and evaluation, attendance policy, and evaluating programs and policies.

**Aligned Curriculum and Practices.** Having an aligned curriculum and teaching practices is very important for training future teachers as it ensures that all teaching programs provide the same high quality of training and meet educational standards. Meng (2023) highlighted that aligning practices with education quality standards enhances teaching and learning outcomes. Therefore, aligning curriculum and practices will help implement and sustain ideal pre-service teaching practices, improving the practicum experience for student teachers. This alignment helps create well-prepared, effective teachers who can continue to grow and succeed in their careers.

## Synthesis

The findings reveal a clear relationship between the best practices of pre-service teachers and their vision for an ideal teaching practicum experience, both of which inform strategies for planning and implementing a sustained, excellent practicum program.

First, the theme of Practicing Efficient Teacher’s Responsibilities—including balanced classroom management and learner-centered planning—directly connects with the ideal of Engaging and Effective Classroom Practices. This relationship indicates that pre-service teachers not only practice these strategies but also see them as essential for improving practicum outcomes. To improve the practicum program, comprehensive preparation, such as digital literacy training and lesson planning workshops, would be essential. This preparation phase ensures that student teachers are well-equipped to implement these best practices consistently.

The focus on Character and Attitude Building, which fosters resilience and adaptability, aligns with the ideal of Fostering Positive Attitudes and Behavior. Planning should prioritize mentorship programs and reflective practices that guide pre-service teachers in managing real-world classroom challenges, helping them grow both professionally and personally.

Collaboration, a central best practice, is reflected in the ideal of a Supportive and Synergistic Environment. To implement this, practicum programs should integrate peer collaboration and ongoing mentorship to promote professional growth. Cooperation among pre-service teachers, supervisors, and schools would lead to a supportive network.

Lastly, the Reflective Practice theme links to Professional Growth as an ongoing process. Regular reflection and self-assessment should be embedded into the practicum design, ensuring continuous evaluation and improvement, leading to sustained teaching excellence.

Together, these findings suggest that aligning best practices with ideal experiences can guide planning and implementing strategies to enhance and sustain an effective teaching practicum program.

## CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATIONS

**Conclusion.** This study identified the best practices of pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum and the ideal practices they envision for a successful experience. Key themes such as practicing efficient teaching responsibilities, character and attitude building, collaboration, and reflective practice were found to be fundamental in shaping the practicum experience. The alignment between these best practices and ideal practices—such as engaging classroom methods, fostering positive attitudes, and cultivating a supportive environment—highlighted areas for future improvement in practicum programs. By incorporating comprehensive preparation, professional collaboration, and continuous self-reflection, the practicum program can be further developed and sustained, ensuring a positive impact on future educators.

**Implications.** The findings of this study imply that pre-service teachers benefit from an integrated approach to their practicum, where efficient teaching strategies and reflective practices are coupled with strong mentorship and collaboration. Implementing these strategies into the planning and design of practicum programs may lead to the development of more competent and confident educators. Additionally, school administrators and teacher education programs should focus on providing continuous support systems, structured reflections, and diverse teaching experiences to better prepare pre-service teachers for real-world challenges.

**Suggestions.** For future research, examining the long-term effects of implementing reflective practices and collaborative approaches in the practicum experience could provide deeper insights into how these strategies impact teaching careers. Researchers might also explore how varying educational environments influence the success of practicum programs and whether the findings are applicable across different cultural contexts.

**Limitations.** Several limitations may affect the validity of the results. First, the study's reliance on self-reported data from pre-service teachers and education experts may introduce bias, as participants may have overestimated their abilities or idealized their experiences. Second, the focus on a single educational setting limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the sample size was small, which may not fully capture the diversity of practicum experiences across different contexts. Future studies could address these limitations by using larger, more diverse samples and incorporating longitudinal data to assess the long-term impact of practicum improvements. Methodological concerns, such as the absence of direct classroom observations, may also limit the ability to accurately gauge the effectiveness of certain practices. These limitations highlight the need for more robust, multi-method approaches in future research to validate these findings further.

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