

## In Search of Teaching Quality of EFL Student Teachers through Teaching Practicum: Lessons from a Teacher Education Program

SITI NURUL AZKIYAH<sup>1</sup> AND AMIRUL MUKMININ<sup>\*2</sup>

☞ This study was intended to investigate the teaching quality of student teachers when they conducted their teaching practicum. Teaching quality is conceptualised based on eight classroom factors (orientation, structuring, modelling, application, questioning, building classroom as a learning environment, assessment, and time management) of the dynamic model, which have previously been found to affect student outcomes. The study used a mixed-methods design: a survey on students' perceptions of the teaching quality of their teacher (student teachers) and classroom observation. The study was conducted in Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia, involving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student teachers in the English Education Program, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia and 199 students of three different schools. The findings revealed that the student teachers did not yet practice the classroom factors of the dynamic model. Some recommendations include incorporating the classroom factors of the dynamic model in the curriculum or syllabus related to pedagogical skills to better prepare teachers in the future. It is also beneficial to study the possibility of sending student teachers to school earlier not only for the teaching practicum but also for other relevant purposes.

**Keywords:** English teacher education program, Indonesia, student teachers, teaching practicum, teaching quality

1 Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia.

2 \*Corresponding Author. Faculty of Education, Jambi University, Indonesia; amirmuko6@gmail.com.

## V iskanju kakovosti poučevanja prihodnjih učiteljev angleščine kot tujega jezika med pedagoško prakso: program izobraževanja učiteljev

SITI NURUL AZKIYAH IN AMIRUL MUKMININ

☞ Raziskava je nameravala preučiti kakovost poučevanja bodočih učiteljev, ko so izvajali pedagoško prakso. Kakovost poučevanja konceptualizirano temelji na osmih razrednih dejavnikih (orientacija, strukturiranje, modeliranje, aplikacija, spraševanje, vzpostavitev razreda kot učenega okolja, ocenjevanje in upravljanje časa) dinamičnega modela, za katere je že bilo ugotovljeno, da vplivajo na učne dosežke učencev. Raziskava je uporabila pristop mešane metode: anketo o predstavah učencev o kakovosti poučevanja njihovega učitelja (bodoči učitelj) in opazovanje v razredu. Raziskava je bila izvedena v mestu Tangerang Selatan, Indonezija, in je vključevala bodoče učitelje angleščine kot tujega jezika v programu angleškega izobraževanja na Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonezija, in sto devetindevetdeset učencev iz treh različnih šol. Rezultati so pokazali, da bodoči učitelji še niso uporabljali razrednih dejavnikov dinamičnega modela. Nekaj priporočil podaja vključevanje razrednih dejavnikov dinamičnega modela v kurikulum oziroma učni načrt izobraževanja učiteljev v prihodnje. Prav tako bi bilo koristno raziskati možnost, da bi bodoče učitelje bolj zgodaj pošiljali na šole, in to ne le za opravljanje pedagoške prakse, ampak tudi zaradi drugih pomembnih vidikov njihovega izobraževanja.

**Ključne besede:** program izobraževanja učiteljev angleščine, Indonezija, bodoči učitelji, pedagoška praksa, kakovost poučevanja

## Introduction

A large number of studies have focused on the importance of the teaching profession and the quality of teaching. Those conducted by Creemers (1994), Darling-Hammond, (1997), Fullan (2001), Harris, (2002), Harris and Muijs (2005), and Van Der Werf, Creemers, De Jong, and Klaver (2000) for instance have shown that teachers are key players in any educational innovation. In other words, teachers facilitate the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and value for the rewarding lives of their students (Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012; Kyriacou, Hultgren, & Stephens, 1999; Lortie, 1975; Low, Lim, Ch'ng, & Goh, 2011; OECD, 2005; Richardson & Watt, 2006). Additionally, Richardson and Watt (2006) and the OECD (2005) address the fact that teachers play a key role in developing future generations who are expected to be self-directed learners, able and motivated to continue learning over their lifetimes. Therefore, it is crucial to pay attention to student teachers especially concerning their pedagogical or teaching competencies (to be referred to as 'teaching quality') because they are future teachers. In addition, compared to other factors, such as teachers' beliefs, teachers' teaching experience, and teachers' knowledge, teaching quality has been found to explain differences in student achievement (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008; Muijs & Reynolds, 2010). Thus, investigating this competence is significant, also because it provides a fundamental basis for determining some recommendations especially for teacher training institutes to better prepare their graduates, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student teachers.

Moreover, existing studies on student teachers focus more on professional identity (e.g. Cattle, 2007) and student teachers' beliefs, attitudes and expectation (e.g. Chan, 2004; Garmon, 2004; Shinde & Karekati, 2012; Zheng, 2009). In line with classroom activities, previous studies on student teachers have emphasised the strategies of assessment such as the promotion of reflective teaching (e.g. Astika, 2014; Lee, 2007). Thus, information on the teaching quality of student teachers remains unclear. However, based on systematically search internet resources, abstracts and databases including ERIC, academic Search Elite, Libris, Google Scholar, and journal sources such as Emerald, Sage, Science Direct, and Open DOAR, to date, in Indonesian contexts, not much research effort has been devoted to examine the teaching quality of student teachers, especially when they take teaching practicum except for Sulistiyo, Mukminin, Abdurrahman, and Haryanto (2017) who found that teaching practicums 'provided suitable but limited experience for student teachers to translate their knowledge learnt at university into the real practice of teaching at school levels' (p. 712).

Additionally, Zeichner (2010) pointed out that the teaching practicum is one of the most critical components of teacher education that affects the quality of teachers. The teaching practicum is important for bridging the gap between what student teachers have learnt in the program and the reality of teaching practice in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching quality of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student teachers when they conducted their teaching practicum.

### **The Context of the Study**

Indonesia, as the context of the study, adopts a 6-3-3-4 school-based education system consisting of six years of primary, three years of junior high, and three years of senior high school, and four years of tertiary education (undergraduate degree). As stated in MoNE (2013), the Indonesian government has declared a system of a nine-year basic education since 1994, which stipulates that all children aged between 7 and 15 years should obtain a basic education containing primary and junior secondary school education. Senior secondary schooling and tertiary education have two paths: general and technical/vocational school education, while higher education is an extension of secondary education consisting of academic and professional education.

To be a teacher, senior high school students, after finishing their studies, should enrol in faculties of education or teacher training institutes, both state and private. All successful candidates will be trained for four years for undergraduate programs (Jalal, Samani, Chang, Stevenson, Bagatz, & Negara, 2009; Mukminin, Kami, Muazza, & Haryanto, 2017; Mukminin, Rohayati, Putra, Habibi, & Aina, 2017). The candidates, who are often referred to a 'student teachers', have to take various courses, some of which are related to pedagogical competence. In semester eight, after taking and passing prerequisite courses such as curriculum development and analysis, lesson plan, testing and evaluation, and micro-teaching, student teachers are required to have teaching practicums in schools for one semester. They can select a junior high school (12/13–14/15 years old) or a senior high school (15/16–17/18 years old); the department will approve their selection. In each school, they can be grouped into three up to five student teachers.

The teaching practicum is intended to build student teachers' pedagogical competence by providing opportunities for them to apply knowledge, skills, and values they have learned in the classroom. In the first two to three weeks, they are normally asked to observe teaching and learning processes to understand both the students and situation of the class that they are responsible for

teaching. Afterwards, they have their own instruction in the classroom for one semester. During the teaching practicum, one lecturer from the teacher training institute and one teacher from the school are assigned to supervise each student teacher. The teacher is assigned to supervise the student teachers on a daily basis while the lecturer is assigned to provide further assistance, the schedule of which is based on the appointment. The lecturers are obliged to observe their student teachers teaching in schools three to six times.

Furthermore, both the teacher and the lecturer must assess and grade the student teachers at the end of the program. Nevertheless, the results of the assessment have been thus far used more to serve administrative purposes, namely to fill in the scoring form, which students need before they graduate. To date, it is difficult to find research that examines the teaching quality of student teachers, especially in their teaching practicum. It is in this context that this study was conducted, i.e. to understand the teaching quality of student teachers, the findings of which are expected to offer recommendations on how to improve the teaching quality of student teachers.

### **Literature review on teaching quality**

Although it is not a simple concept, it is essential to start the discussion by defining teaching quality, which in some literature is also considered to be effective teaching. There are many variables and experts involved in defining teaching quality (Needels & Gage, 1991). Concerning the concept, according to Hanushek (2002), teaching quality is represented by good teachers, 'who get large gains in student achievement for their classes; bad teachers are just the opposite' (p. 3). Similarly, using the term 'effective teaching', Anderson (1991) stated that '[...] an effective teacher is one who quite consistently achieves goals which either directly or indirectly focuses on the learning of their students' (p. 18). In addition, Ko, Sammons, and Bakkum (2013) consider that effective teaching focuses on teacher behaviours and classroom processes that promote better student outcomes.

Furthermore, with respect to the variables studied, they also vary, starting from teachers' beliefs, teachers' knowledge, and teachers' actions in the classroom, or teachers' instructional roles (Harris, 1998; Muijs, 2006). Another factor is the methods used to measure or examine teaching quality such as students' and teachers' perception on factors influencing teaching quality (Money, 1992), classroom observation (Hills, 1991), and a process-product paradigm that refers to teachers' instructional roles and their relationship with student achievement (e.g., Antoniou, 2009; Borich, 1992; Brophy, 1981).

In this study, the process-product paradigm was used as a conceptual framework in defining teaching quality. This is because the indicators of teaching quality resulted from this method have been empirically proved to have a positive relationship with student achievement. This empirical information could serve as a fundamental consideration in deciding what teachers should do to improve their teaching quality, which in the end is expected to have positive effects on student achievement.

Following the process-product paradigm, this paper defines teaching quality as teachers' instructional activities which lead to effective learning, which in turn means the thorough and lasting acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values that have been set up. In other words, teaching quality refers to teachers' instructional activities that are positively related to student outcomes. In this case, it is necessary to highlight that 'student outcomes' refer to both cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes. This could be the reason why teaching quality is often referred to as effective teaching, which is concerned with teachers' behaviours that lead to better student outcomes. Therefore, the term of teaching quality and effective teaching in this paper was interchangeably used to avoid repetition.

In this context, numerous studies, especially teacher effectiveness research, have identified various teachers' behaviours that have been empirically proven to positively affect student outcomes. In their review of studies conducted during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Muijs and Reynolds (2011), for instance, found almost 60 different teacher behaviours that are associated with student outcomes. They include the emphasis on setting high expectations and reaching academic goals (Cotton, 1995). Setting high expectations for students is expected to make teachers focus on academic activities to facilitate students in achieving the goals.

In addition, Ko, Sammons and Bakkum (2013) conducted a comprehensive review of effective or good teaching and found that effective teachers were clear about instructional goals, knowledgeable about curriculum content and the strategies to teach the content, communicate to their students what is expected of them. Furthermore, Ko, Sammons and Bakkum (2013) acknowledged that effective teachers were knowledgeable about their students and were able to adapt instructions according to students' needs. The conclusion of this review is that in order to achieve teaching quality, good subject knowledge is required and skilful use of well-chosen questions to engage and challenge learners is an important feature, as is the effective use of assessment for learning. In line with this conclusion, effective teachers are found to provide sufficient practices and appropriate feedback (Bohn, Roehrig, & Pressley, 2004). According to

Creemers and Kyriakides (2008), this practice aims at providing students the opportunity to immediately exercise the lesson material. Concerning feedback, it was found that effective teachers encourage especially low-Socio Economic Status (SES) and low-achieving students more frequently in terms of student effort (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2006).

Effective teachers also organise their materials in a step-wise manner, starting with the easy aspects and/or review of previous lessons (Brophy & Good, 1986; Muijs & Reynolds, 2011; Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, 2000). In addition, effective teachers guide classroom discussions through questioning (Muijs & Reynolds, 2000). In reading, for instance, Kane, Taylor, Tyler, and Wooten (2011) found that questioning had generated higher achievement rates. The questions should vary in terms of the types (process vs product), in which product questions require specific answers whereas process questions require the use of analysis (Muijs & Reynolds, 2011). Next, the questions should also vary in terms of difficulty level: 75% of the questions are expected to be answered correctly by the students (Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1982 as cited in Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008). Therefore, teachers should include 25% of high-level questions in each exercise. In addition, classroom management and teachers' effort in engaging students in the process of teaching and learning have also been found to positively affect student achievement (Muijs & Reynolds, 2000, 2011). Furthermore, to contribute to the development of the concept of teaching quality, Creemers and Kyriakides (2008) have developed a dynamic model, which was actually conceptualised for a broader context, namely educational effectiveness. The model has four levels: policy, school, classroom, and student levels. In this model, all levels are argued to have effects on student achievement. However, the emphasis is on the classroom level, and the higher levels are expected to provide necessary conditions for the effectiveness of the classroom level. In this paper, the classroom level is used as the reference in defining teaching quality.

There are eight classroom factors defined in the model to determine teaching quality: 1) orientation, 2) structuring, 3) modelling, 4) application, 5) questioning, 6) assessment, 7) time management, and 8) creating the classroom as a learning environment (CLE) (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008). Orientation is about the provision of objectives, which is expected to help students understand the importance of their learning activities. Structuring concerns teachers' explanations of the series of activities of the lesson. Next, teachers are expected to help students use strategies and/or develop their own strategies through modelling. This activity should be completed with application, which is the provision of immediate exercising of the topics taught during the lesson.

With respect to questioning, research has determined that effective teachers raise numerous questions and engage students in class discussion (Muijs & Reynolds, 2000). Question difficulties vary with context and teachers should promote questions that encourage students' critical thinking.

Furthermore, teachers should identify their students' learning needs through assessment, which should also enable them to improve their teaching. The seventh is time management, which is essential for maximising students' engagement and ensuring that they are on tasks throughout the lesson. Finally, CLE includes 1) teacher-student interaction, 2) student-student interaction, 3) students' treatment by teachers, 4) competition among students, and 5) classroom disorder (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008).

For several reasons, these factors are used to conceptualise teaching quality in this paper. Firstly, the above factors involve several teaching approaches, such as constructive and direct or mastery learning. Orientation, for instance, is the main element of the constructive approach, intended to raise students' motivation in developing their meta-cognitive skills. In addition, collaboration, which is another element of the constructive approach, is also emphasised through teachers' roles in creating the classroom as a learning environment. Furthermore, structuring and questioning are essential aspects of direct instruction. In the Indonesian context, the above factors are in line with the scientific approach introduced in the 2013 curriculum. The provision of modelling, for instance, is very similar to the process of observation in the scientific approach, in which students see the model before they do some exercises during the application period.

Secondly, in the last decade, several studies were conducted to examine the validity of the dynamic model especially in Cyprus. In 2004, a longitudinal study was conducted to support the validity of the model at both the school and teacher/classroom levels (Antoniou, Demetriou, & Kyriakides, 2006).

Finally, an experimental study was conducted using the classroom factors of the model showing improvement of teaching quality and student achievement (Antoniou, 2009). In other words, the study of Antoniou (2009) showed that when teachers applied the classroom factors of the dynamic model, their students' achievement improved. Thus, this concept has been validated and proved to be effective in improving both teaching quality and student achievement. Therefore, in this paper, the eight classroom factors of the dynamic model were used as indicators to indicate the teaching quality of student teachers.



## Method

As previously indicated, this study was intended to aid in understanding the teaching quality of student teachers. For this purpose, the study used a mixed-methods design, in which both classroom observation and a students' questionnaire were used to gather the data. Seven student teachers of the English Education Program of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia and 199 students of three different schools participated in the study. They were three junior secondary schools (students aged between 12 and 15 years) in the district of South Tangerang, Indonesia. The student teachers were conducting their teaching practicum when this study was carried out. Each student teacher was rated by different numbers of students, which ranged from 25 to 30.

Both the classroom observation instrument and student questionnaire were developed based on the classroom factors of the dynamic model (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008). There were two types of observation instruments used in the study. The first one was a high inference observation instrument, which consisted of 52 items and were provided on 1 to 5 (minimum to maximum) points of a Likert scale to indicate the frequency of each activity in the observation instrument. The second was a low inference observation instrument, which was used to note activities taking place during the teaching and learning process with respect to the classroom factors of the dynamic model. The data gathered in this low inference observation instrument were used to answer the items in the high inference observation instrument and provide descriptive information on what happens during the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, similar to the high inference observation instrument, the student questionnaire was also provided in the form of a Likert scale and consisted of 34 items.

Both instruments, especially the high inference observation instrument and student questionnaire, were previously piloted and validated for the Indonesian context (Azkiyah, 2013). The pilot study resulted in good reliability ( $\alpha > .90$ ) for both instruments. Factor analysis was performed in the pilot study especially for the student questionnaire but not for the observation instrument due to the limited number of participants ( $N < 15$  teachers). The results of the factor analysis of the student questionnaire revealed four instead of eight factors. Three out of these four factors represent the factors of the dynamic model: namely, orientation, questioning, and creating classroom as a learning environment (CLE). The items in the fourth factor were the combination of several factors, i.e. modelling, application, and structuring and thus referred to instruction. Therefore, following the study of Azkiyah (2013), this study used

the four factors (scales) of the student questionnaire: orientation, instruction, questioning, and CLE.

Concerning the classroom observation, only one observer rated the student teachers; she was well-trained in using the instrument. She participated in the study of Azkiyah (2013), in which five observers were present and the inter-rater reliability was good (generalised kappa = .72). During the practicum, she observed the student teachers three times, and the findings presented in this paper were the final observation, because the first two observations were intended to provide feedback.

Furthermore, to improve the analysis, referring to the four scales of the student questionnaire, in this paper the items in observation instruments were also grouped into four scales. The items in three scales (orientation, questioning, and CLE) remained the same as they are in the original instrument while the remaining items were included in the instructions. Finally, all data from both the student questionnaire and the high inference observation instrument were input into SPSS, and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. The data from the low inference observation instrument were descriptively analysed to provide further details of the observation.

## Findings and Discussion

The findings in this study are presented in three parts. The first describes the picture of teaching quality of student teachers in general (the mean score of all items in both instruments). The second demonstrates the quality of the four factors as explained in the research methods. The last part explains the teaching and learning process based on the observation data.

### *The general picture of teaching quality*

In terms of the general picture of teaching quality, which was the mean score of all items in both instruments, Table 1 shows that there was a different perception between the observer and the students. Although the number of items in the student questionnaire and the high observation instrument was different, both instruments measured teaching quality and, therefore, the results could be compared. This comparison was intended to provide a general overview of teaching quality.

It is clear from Table 1 that the students rated that student teacher higher than the observer did. Out of five scales, the mean score of teaching quality resulted from the student questionnaire was 3.24 whereas that from the observer

was 1.94. There was an indication that the observer considered the teaching quality of student teachers to be low. Differently, the students perceived that the teaching quality of their teachers (the student teachers) to be good enough.

**Table 1**

*The mean score of teaching quality of student teachers according to the students and the observer*

Sources of Data	Mean Score	The Standard Deviation
Student	3.24	.53
Observer	1.94	.40

This finding could be influenced by the Indonesian tradition in which teaching is considered to be a good profession that should be highly valued and respected. This is in line with the statement of Maulana, Opdenakker, Den Brok, & Bosker (2011) that many teachers in Indonesia received respect from both students and parents. This finding is not surprising since a similar previous study conducted by Azkiyah (2013) indicated the same findings. Measuring 59 teachers participating in an experimental study, Azkiyah (2013) found that the mean score and the standard deviation of teaching quality in the first observation out of three were 1.87 and .31, respectively. The last two measurements were not compared since they were taken after the experiment was started. With respect to students, Azkiyah (2013) revealed that they rated their teacher as high as 3.30 with a standard deviation of .47.

Therefore, it is likely that the students might be hesitant to give lower scores to their teachers. In contrast, the observer could be considered to be more independent because she did not have such a power relation as the students and the student teachers did. In addition, it could be argued that the observer had better relevant knowledge than the students did in examining the quality of teaching.

### *The factors in teaching quality*

As indicated in the method section, referring to the factor analysis of the student questionnaire and to ease the analysis, four factors were presented in this section: orientation, instruction (the combination of structuring, modeling, and application), questioning, and creating the classroom as a learning environment (CLE). The mean score of each factor resulting from both the student questionnaire and the observer is described in Table 2.

**Table 2***The mean score of each factor of teaching quality*

Factor	Mean Score and Standard Deviation (SD)			
	Student Questionnaire		Observer	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Orientation	3.5	.65	1.8	.55
Instruction	3.1	.61	1.8	.48
Questioning	3.3	.53	2.3	.21
Creating Classroom as a Learning Environment (CLE)	3.2	.55	1.9	.33

As mentioned previously, students rated the teaching quality of student teachers higher than the observer did. Consequently, they also rated the four factors higher, as shown in Table 2. For each factor, the students gave ratings higher than 3 whereas the observer rated the factors below 2, except questioning.

Table 2 provides other interesting information. First, concerning the findings from the student questionnaire, the difference of the score among the four factors was relatively small. Second, although the students and the observer gave different ratings, they had significant similarities. For instance, they scored the factor instruction the lowest in comparison to other factors. This finding indicates that both the students and the observer thought that teachers were likely to have difficulties in delivering structuring, giving modelling, and providing application. Consequently, this finding implied that students' learning opportunity, which is a crucial part of the teaching and learning process, did not proceed optimally.

Furthermore, another factor that both the students and the observer scored quite similarly was questioning. In this factor, the observer regarded questioning to have the highest score in comparison to other factors, and the students rated the same factor to be the second highest. Nevertheless, both the students and the observer also had different perceptions concerning the direction of the score for each factor. Table 2 shows that they had very different perceptions on viewing orientation. The students rated this factor the highest compared to other factors whereas the observer scored this factor as the lowest. There could be different reasons for this difference, one of which is students' reluctance to give a bad mark to their student teachers.

### *The teaching and learning process*

The question then was how did the student teachers teach in the classroom? To answer this question, the data of low observation instruments were presented descriptively, starting from orientation, instruction, questioning, and CLE. Although the dynamic model does not prescribe that orientation should be presented at the beginning of the lesson, it is considered good to start the lesson by providing orientation activities, which are intended to facilitate students' awareness of the importance of the lesson and motivate them to learn by connecting the lesson to students' daily and/or previous lesson. Therefore, orientation begins the explanation in this section.

To begin the lesson, it is common in Indonesian culture for teachers to greet and call for students' attentions. In the observation, this was exactly what happened in the seven observed classrooms. This means that student teachers started their lesson with routine activities as have been practiced by real teachers. Unfortunately, the following activities did not show student teachers' efforts in connecting the lesson to students' daily life or previous lesson. However, it is necessary to explain that two student teachers reviewed what students learned in the previous lesson. When they explicitly explained the connection between the day's lesson and previous lessons the results were very good. Consequently, it is possible that students did not really understand the importance of the lesson for their lives. It is also possible that the students learned the lesson only because it happened to be discussed.

Concerning instruction, there were several issues. The first concerns structuring activities intended to make the goals and the activities to make the goals clear for the students. The observed structuring activities were limited to asking the students to open their books and providing a brief explanation about the topic of the lesson. More meaningful information such as the explanation of the goals of the lesson or the competencies that the students had to master was not observed. Second, the student teachers did not provide relevant examples and sufficient modelling to students. For example, in teaching reading comprehension, the old strategy by asking students to read and translate the text and then answer questions provided in the text was dominant. When teaching reading comprehension, several strategies, such as semantic mapping (Pittelman, Heimlich, Berglund, & French, 1991), text structure, timeline/sequence (Grabe, 2009), could be introduced to facilitate better comprehension.

Nevertheless, the student teachers started to introduce group work although they had to learn how to maximise students' work in the group. It was apparent that only several students seriously worked in their groups whereas

the student teachers did not really give appropriate reactions to this. In addition, some of the student teachers gave too much time for the students to work in the group and some divided the groups without considering students' background characteristics. It was also observed that one student teacher gave only one sheet of work in each group, which consequently required only a few students in the group to work.

Furthermore, concerning questioning, the student teachers raised questions to lead the discussion during the lesson. This activity was even observed in the very beginning of the lesson. The student teachers, for instance, raised some questions to discuss students' homework and or to review previous materials. However, the questions did not promote students' critical thinking. The questions raised, for instance, were related to *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where*, the answers to which could be easily found in the text. Questions concerning *why* and *how*, which are expected to encourage students' critical thinking, were not really introduced. In addition, the response of the student teachers towards the students' answers should be improved. Several student teachers forgot to praise students who could answer the questions correctly, while others tended to move to other students when one could not answer the questions correctly. Effective teachers are expected to provide hint or clue so that the students could find the correct answers.

Finally, in terms of Creating Classroom as a Learning Environment (CLE), it was recognised that the classroom situation was noisy, and not all students were on task during the lesson. Knowing that their student teachers were not their real teachers, it was possible that the students did not seriously pay attention to their teachers. Moreover, a few student teachers had very soft voices, which likely made students in the back row unable to clearly listen to their teachers' explanations. The good aspect, however, was that almost all student teachers introduced competition among the students, which to some extent motivated students to learn.

## **Conclusion and Policy Implications**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching quality of student teachers. Classroom observation was conducted, and a questionnaire on students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching quality was distributed to collect data on teaching quality. However, our small sample size may not be representative of Indonesian student teachers across the country, and the generalisability of our findings to other Indonesian student teachers should be undertaken with caution. To conclude the findings of the study, however, it should

be previously noted that only the data of the observer were considered. This was because the observer was regarded to be more knowledgeable and, therefore, professional in judging the teaching quality of student teachers.

Based on the observer data, the teaching quality of student teachers was low (1.94 out of 5). This conclusion is not very surprising because it is similar to the situation of the real teachers, not only in the distant past but also in recent years (e.g. DeRee, Al-Samarrai, & Iskandar, 2012; Kaluge, Setiasih, & Tjahjono, 2004; Utomo, 2005). Old studies conducted by both Kaluge, Setiasih, and Tjahjono (2004) and Utomo (2005) showed that teachers were not able to create active, joyful learning and used whole-class styles of teaching. Recently, the findings of a large-scale study of the World Bank (DeRee et al., 2012) shows that certification has made the teaching profession more attractive but has not yet improved the teaching quality and the student outcomes (DeRee, Al-Samarrai & Iskandar, 2012). Another interesting study, particularly related to EFL student teachers' ability to write a final paper, done by Mukminin, Ali, and Ashari (2015), found that although English education student teachers had taken four courses in writing and had done teaching practicum, their ability to write and to teach writing was still low due to the lack of various supports.

Regarding the low teaching quality, specifically to the student teachers in this study, there are some possible explanations, which could be considered as institutional and individual. Institutionally, it is possible that the teacher training institute may not yet provide student teachers with enough training especially concerning pedagogical competences. Therefore, examining curricula or syllabi related to pedagogical skills should be conducted to ensure that student teachers have sufficient training before they undergo teaching practicums at selected schools. It is also beneficial to study the possibility of sending student teachers to school earlier not only for the teaching practicum but also for other courses related to their teaching profession so that they will know the real situations at school, such as student-teacher relations, curriculum, classroom management, and teaching materials.

Individually, it is possible that the student teachers were nervous when the observer was in their classroom. In her study, Astika (2014) recognised that nervousness was a common problem for the student teachers due to their first experience in teaching. In addition, she found that student teachers tended to have infrequent interactions with both the supervising lecturer and/or teacher mentor due to personal issues such as their feelings when teaching or when being assessed by lecturers and teachers. Therefore, a mechanism to create an opportunity for the student teachers, the lecturer, and the teacher mentor is essential.

In Indonesia, student teachers have just one teaching practicum (about four months) at selected schools, and they have more theories through the courses offered by the programs. This kind of practicum might be insufficient to prepare them to be real teachers after graduation. Educational policymakers at the research site, starting with the head of the program, the head of the department, and the dean should work together to evaluate and redesign the teacher education curriculum particularly how many theoretical courses should be taken and how long teaching practices should be done by student teachers in order to provide them strong foundations to be better future teachers.

The findings of this study should be considered in view of some limitations. Despite the fact this study will potentially contribute the sort of evidence necessary for examining the teaching quality of student teachers; there may be differences of student teachers' teaching quality from one programme to another or from one university to another. Future studies should include larger samples and various teacher education programs and compare between the real (permanent) teachers and student teachers in the same classrooms with the same students, and they should be rated with the same two instruments (observation and questionnaire).

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## Biographical note

**SITI NURUL AZKIYAH** is a faculty member at Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia. She earned her bachelor degree in English Education from State University of Malang, Indonesia. She also earned her master degree from the University of York, UK and completed her doctoral degree at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. She is currently the head of the Language Centre at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Indonesia. Scientific Interests: student teachers, teacher education, and English language teaching.

**AMIRUL MUKMININ**, PhD, is a faculty member at Faculty of Education, Jambi University, Indonesia. He holds a PhD from Florida State University, USA in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and MS in educational sciences from Groningen University, the Netherlands. He received a Fulbright scholarship to pursue his PhD and an Erasmus Mundus postdoctoral researcher, University of Groningen, the Netherlands. He received a 2016-2017 Fulbright Senior Research at Claremont Graduate University, California, the USA. Scientific Interests: research and teaching focus on Pre-K to higher education in Indonesia and other countries, student teachers, teacher policy reforms, Islamic schools and pesantren, the standardized exam policy reforms, and English/Indonesian language policy reforms.