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"Early Exposure" Course and Its Affect in Post-graduate Students' Teaching Ability

Christian Anggraini[1], Lailatul Musyarofah[2], Kani Sulam Taufik[3]
[1,2,3]*STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo, Indonesia*
renyanggraini131@gmail.com, Ibulaila7810@gmail.com, sullamtaufik@gmail.com

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the post-graduate students at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo's perceptions of the Early Exposure (EE) Subject for the academic year 2021/2022. The subjects of this descriptive qualitative method study were 20 students from Batch 7 of the Master of English Education (MPBI) program at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo in the academic year 2020/2021, who were in their third semester at the time of the research. As the research instruments, the adapted questionnaire and the open-ended interview were used. The total mean result showed that the mean score of each statement was classified as Agree (A) or Strongly Agree (SA). The total mean showed 3.78 (94.8%). As a result, the post-graduate students' perception of the EE subject was classified as Strongly Agree (SA) on an interval scale and was positive attitude. It also demonstrated that the post-graduate students at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo were enthusiastic about the EE subject and had improved their teaching abilities. The post-graduate students who completed the EE subject confirmed that it was a positive experience that helped them improve their teaching abilities consent to take part in teaching practice at the university level, and they expressed gratitude for the opportunity. As a result, they place a high value on the role of the EE subject in their academic achievement.

I. Introduction

The quality, commitment, and expertise of the educator are all important factors in the success of any educational process. Many believe that teachers are born, while others believe that they are made (Srivastava, 2017). In either case, the services of effective teachers are critical to the advancement of society. Teachers' interactions in the classroom are extremely important, and they can be improved through teaching practice. One of the most important aspects of teacher education is the opportunity to put theory into practice. It is an exercise designed to expose student-teachers to the practical aspects of the teaching profession and to provide them with the opportunity to put into practice the theoretical knowledge they have gained through their interactions with their academics in the classroom. In universities, teaching practice is usually divided into two phases, with each phase lasting six weeks and requiring students to participate in every aspect of school life, including teaching, testing and examining as well as participation in academic societies and co-curricular activities (Oluwatayo & Adebule, 2012). However, this teaching practice focuses on teaching based on six criteria: lesson plan, use of teaching aids/devices, lesson conduct, subject knowledge,

class management, and teacher personality. It is reasonable to expect that the teaching performance will be rated as poor to fair, good to excellent to very good to excellent depending on the individual's commitment to the exercise. This deficiency arises due to the lack of attention of educational personnel printing institutions that pay attention to these skills (Waluyandi, 2020). Pohan (2020) states that at school, from elementary to secondary school or even college, students undergo, practice, and experience the learning process of various knowledge and skills. Learning is essentially a cognitive process that has the support of psychomotor functions (Arsani, 2020).

Basically, the term 'teaching' refers to activities that are planned and carried out with the goal of bringing about a change in the behaviour of students or students' classmates where to be a successful educator, it is necessary to possess a diverse range of complex and simple teaching abilities (Saban & Coklar, 2013). The ability to teach can be defined as a collection of interconnected component teaching skills that include the following: It will be possible to meet specific instructional objectives by exhibiting specific behavioural responses. Teaching and learning are a continuous process, which reinforces the fact that teachers should always be learning themselves, and that it is only then that students will learn in a different way. In teacher education, we are talking about the process of preparing future teachers with the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful in the classroom. Increasing the quality and standard of education is a major source of concern in the field of education, and it is one of the top national priorities for all countries worldwide (Rama & Reddy, 2013). In the field of education, 'microteaching' has been demonstrated to be a research-based strategy and an important innovation that contributes to the improvement of the quality of trainee teachers.

Aside from developing lesson planning skills, microteaching allows pre-service teachers to practice drawing students' attention, speaking in front of groups, asking questions and managing time effectively (Bilen, 2015). In the literature, it has been demonstrated that microteaching is beneficial, and that pre-service teachers may benefit significantly from the use of microteaching, as well as that their perspectives on teaching may significantly improve as a result of microteaching (Saban & Coklar, 2013). Aspects of microteaching that are critical for prospective teachers' learning are highlighted in Fernández's (2010) research including active learning involving meaningful discussion, planning, and practice, support from a knowledgeable advisor, collaborative deliberation-in-process, and the opportunity to try, analyze, and revise. In many ways, microteaching has made these lecturers feel like their work and methods are worth a lot of attention. This has led to more critical reflection and peer discussions and has resulted in increased self-awareness and confidence in participants, despite the fact that it initially caused anxiety in some participants (Hussain & Masrur, 2011). The Microteaching sessions provided an opportunity for the lecturers to gain insights into their teaching role, engage in dialogue, and become more reflective about their practice.

Microteaching plays an important role in all education training programs, and it helps students gain a better understanding of the teaching process and its complexities to a significant extent. It aids in the development of novice teachers' abilities as well as the comparison of the efficacy of different variations of microteaching (Amobi & Irwin, 2009). Several studies have been conducted to evaluate the performance of student-teachers and their attitudes toward teaching-practice which is also known as 'microteaching' in the classroom. Teaching practice, according to Marais & Meier (2004), provides student-teachers with hands-on experience in the actual teaching and learning environment, and as such, it is an important component of the process of becoming a teacher. Furthermore, microteaching is widely used in most pre-service teacher education programs, and it has been shown to be an effective method of achieving significant improvements in the instructional experiences of students (Ismail, 2011). When it came to four teaching skills - induction, questioning,

explaining, and blackboard summary - microteaching lessons performed significantly better than other traditional teaching techniques that had been taught to students (Fernández, 2010). The fact that microteaching has been identified as a good approach of assisting teachers in their professional development indicates that this aspect of it should be given more attention, especially in universities level.

STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo, one of Sidoarjo's private universities, has implemented a course called -Micro Teaching', or more commonly referred to as 'Early Exposure'. The course is a component of one of the special courses in which STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo's background is in the field of education. Master of English Education (MPBI which stands for Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris), one of the departments which is available at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo, has implemented 'Early Exposure' subject in its curriculum. The learning objectives articulate what the lecturers hope students will acquire in terms of skills, knowledge, and comprehension. Early Exposure (EE) exposes student teachers to a real-world teaching and learning environment. The following principles underpin the EE concept, based on learning theories: (1) When deciding what to teach, it is necessary to consider the learner's capabilities. In accordance with this principle, the student is given the opportunity to choose a lesson topic in his or her area of greatest competence in order to feel at ease with the subject matter. (2) Effective instructors are frequently proud of their positive interactions with students both in and out of the classroom, their prompt feedback, and their encouragement of student teamwork. (3) Teachers must prioritize the material they cover to ensure that it meets the course's learning objectives.

In MPBI, EE is done in the third semester academic year in which the post-graduate students are expected to have and implement their teaching skills to undergraduate students in real contexts. EP has three phases: knowledge acquisition, skill acquisition, and transfer. Preparatory, pre-active phase where the teacher is taught teaching skills and components through lectures, discussions, illustrations and advisor demonstrations. This is where the teacher plans a micro-lesson to practice the demonstrated skills. They can act as constructive evaluators and modify their own teaching-learning practices. The goal of teaching is to change students for the better (Ryan & Couver, 2007). However, the ability to teach in EE is acquired through training and practice. A teacher is presumed to be at their best if they can impart knowledge and change students' behaviour and attitude. But meaningful teaching requires so much of a teacher's attention that an important element of the teaching-learning process is lost. A meaningful lesson involves an engaging introduction, an organized presentation that engages and motivates students, and clear learning objectives. It also involves using respectful language and diction, and asking questions that challenge the learners' curiosity. The lesson should also involve active student participation. Furthermore, the primary goal of EP is to provide a clear understanding of the EE technique, teaching skill, feedback process, lesson observation, lesson plan preparation, and aid in other aspects of teaching.

Since EE is one of the requirements subjects taken at MPBI, it is important what the impacts towards the post-graduate students' skill in teaching. So, it is important to gain this kind of research which is mainly discuss about EE and its impact. On the other hand, when it comes to evaluating the EE, the post-graduate students at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo are evaluated on all of the items, including their ability to relate their lesson plan prepared to the overall objectives and structure of the scheme of work and syllabus, their ability to arouse and maintain interest throughout the lesson, their capability of promoting full participation of all students through group work or other procedures, and their capability of arousing and maintaining interest throughout the lesson. The teaching practice to undergraduate students in real contexts during EE taken in one semester. This research concentrated on the subject learned; the researchers were only allowed to conduct research in the EE subject, and the

scope of the research was limited to discovering post-graduate students' perceptions of the EE subject and how the EE subject can support their teaching skills in the teaching practice program. The participants in this study added to the limitations of the study. Among the current participants, only post-graduate students of MPBI at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo who were enrolled in the EE subject during their third semester of the academic year 2020/2021 were selected by the researchers for this study.

II. Research Methods

The researchers applied a descriptive qualitative method to investigate the perceptions of the post-graduate students at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo about the Early Exposure (EE) Subject for the academic year of 2021/2022. They were 20 students from Batch 7 of the Master of English Education (MPBI) program at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo in the academic year 2020/2021, who were in their third semester when the research was conducted. In order to select the data set, the researcher used a technique known as total sampling. Using a total sampling strategy, which is one of the most common sampling strategies, participants are grouped according to pre-selected criteria that are relevant to a specific research question. A questionnaire and an open-ended interview were used as research instruments. The questionnaire's questions were indeed toward the post-graduate students' perceptions of the EE subject. Meanwhile, the interviewer used a semi-structural interview technique, which allowed the interviewee to use the question guideline while also providing clarification and elaboration on the questions that were asked during the interview (Arikunto, 2013). This type of interview, also known as an in-depth interview, is more flexible in terms of structure than the structure interview, which is why it is more popular (Sugiono, 2015).

The purpose of the questions in the questionnaire and interview was to gather information about the post-graduate students in the electrical and electronic engineering subject that they had studied as well as to determine what kind of skills they had acquired as a result of their studies. During the data collection process, respondents were scored in order to obtain quantitative information from the questionnaire items. The questionnaire used a modified Likert scale to indicate one of the numbers from 1 to 4 based explanations for the numbers, which were: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The researchers then selected 5 post-graduate students to be interviewed at random from the entire sample of the research to represent the perceptions of the entire sample of the research. After the researchers calculated the percentage distributions of the questionnaire. Based on the data, the researchers described each statement. The researchers also interviewed the participants. As part of the interview, the researcher used a mobile phone to record the responses. The recording was used to transcribe the interview. The researchers summarized the interview's key points.

III. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the post-graduate students' perceptions of the Early Exposure (EE) subject and its components. Each respondent was required to complete a questionnaire in order to participate in the study. According to the results of this aspect, which were broken down into statements and then followed by explanations and their respective categories, were presented in the following table.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions towards Early Exposure (EE) Subject

No	Indicator	Score	Percentage
1	Teaching competence and actual lessons are being developed	3.68	92.0%

	in order to prepare students for future learning opportunities.		
2	To provide a valuable opportunity for people to apply the teaching abilities.	3.82	95.5%
3	To assist in identifying one's own teaching strengths and weaknesses.	3.80	96.0%
4	To assist students in organizing their time and managing the class.	3.76	94.0%
5	To provide a hands-on opportunity to teach a lesson, assists in predicting classroom problems, and improves lesson preparation	3.88	97.0%
6	To provide opportunities for teachers to evaluate their own performance in teaching skills in EE subject	3.78	94.5%
Mean		3.78	94.8%

Adapted from Mutmainnah (2019)

According to the results of Table.1, the first indicator received a score of 3.68 (92.0%), indicating that the majority of the post-graduate students strongly agree with the statement; the second indicator received a score of 3.82 (95.5%), indicating that the majority of the post-graduate students also strongly agree with the second statement; and the third indicator received a score of 3.80 (96.0%), indicating that the majority of the post-graduate students strongly agree and agree with the third statement. The fourth indicator received a score of 3.76 (94.0%), indicating that the post-graduate students strongly agree with the statements, the fifth indicator received a score of 3.88 (97.0%), indicating that most of the post-graduate students strongly agree and agree, as well as a few of the post-graduate students disagree with the statements, and the final indicator received a score of 3.78 (94.5%), indicating that the majority of the post-graduate students strongly agree with the statement.

As well as a total average based on the number of statements, the grand mean of the post-graduate students' perception was determined by looking at the data, which revealed that the mean score of each statement was classified as agree or strongly agree. The grand mean, calculated by dividing the total average by the number of statements, is 3.78 (94.8%). Therefore, the post-graduate students' perception toward the EE subject was classified as Strongly Agree (SA) on the interval scale and had a positive perception. It also demonstrated that the post-graduate students at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo were interested in the EE subject and had improved their teaching skills.

In order to gain the deeper understanding about the post-graduated students at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo regarding to their perception on the implementation of the EE subject, the interview to the 5 chosen subjects randomly was done by the researchers. According to the first question, the EE subject is important because the post-graduate students learned about teaching practice and how to be a good teacher in this subject. Many things were learned from the EE subject by the post-graduate students, including how to create a lesson plan, how to manage a classroom later on, and how to interact with undergraduate students before participating in teaching practice at the university level. In this way, EE subject is extremely beneficial to the post-graduate students while also serving as a useful resource for teachers to improve their skills. The findings were supported by previous research. According to the Tlokweng College of Education teaching practice handbook (2011), "the primary goal of teaching practice is to assist the student teacher in developing competencies, personal characteristics, understanding, knowledge, and skills necessary to be a professional teacher..." In order to improve his or her teaching competence, it is intended to provide the student teacher with the opportunity to learn skills, strategies, and techniques.

As can be seen from the second question, post-graduate students gain knowledge in a variety of areas, including how to manage a class, whether online or offline, how to recognize

a syllabus, how to plan a lesson plan, how to create engaging learning methods for students so that they do not become bored while studying, and how to maintain discipline while teaching or educating students. In addition, the students have the opportunity to practice teaching. After participating in teaching practice, post-graduate students gained valuable experience, such as increased confidence and feedback from lecturers, which allowed them to identify their own teaching strengths and weaknesses. There are some research findings that corroborated the findings of this investigation, first, student teachers generally agreed that microteaching has positive merits in terms of planning skills, personality, and teaching competences, according to the study "Effects of Microteaching Skills on Student Teachers' Performance on Teaching Practice", conducted in 2013 by Ajileye. When J. B. Kupper (2001) examined the "The Microteaching Experience: Students Perspectives Education" he came to the conclusion that the microteaching component is an effective training tool in teacher education programs, and he discovered that general students have a positive attitude toward microteaching.

In the third question, it was revealed that the post-graduate students were pleased with their EE subject after receiving it because they gained valuable experience, knowledge about teaching practice that they would need later and be able to apply it, thereby improving their overall quality in the teaching process. They thought the EE subject was enjoyable because the lessons did not bore them, and because the lessons were more practical, they found them to be easier to comprehend. They were also ecstatic to have the opportunity to work as a lecturer before engaging in real teaching practice at the university level. These findings were supported by other previous research, students and teachers can apply their knowledge through experiential activities like role playing, case studies, cooperative group work, and discussion questions. Instructors can help students retain information by ensuring assignments address and contribute to major outcomes. Inquiry (small group learning) and critical reflection can also be used to foster maximum learning (Lynch, 2008). This term refers to an instructor's response to their students' needs and concerns. Students respond better to instructors who are sociable, intelligent, objective, and supportive (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzik, 2005).

According to the last question, how does EE subject support the post-graduate students teaching skills, it indicated that after receiving knowledge related teaching practice such as how to manage the class, time, students, begin a class and close a class, how to deliver material, how to face a student, recognize a syllabus, made a lesson plan, tried teaching practice, received feedback from the lecturer, and had an opportunity to be a teacher before the real teaching practice It also assisted the postgraduate students in developing their teaching skills because they already had some experience and could learn from their mistakes as well as what they would need in the future to be a good lecturer through a step-by-step approach.

In a similar manner, Sarsani & Ananthula (2008) come to similar conclusions where training in microteaching skills aids in the development of self-confidence, and the trainees consistently express a positive attitude toward the practice. In their study, Ajileye & Ajibola (2013) found that student teachers who participated in Microteaching gained self-confidence and learned how to provide constructive criticism on their fellow students' lesson plans. Hussain & Masrur (2011) discovered that selected Microteaching skills had a positive impact on the performance of in-service primary school teachers who had been trained. Ghafoor, Kiam A, & Kayani S (2012) discovered that the respondents of both groups agreed that Microteaching was sequential and that reasoning was encouraged when selecting a topic for discussion. The different skills of Microteaching and the different components within it are viewed largely in the same way by both deputed and new trainees, with some differences. It's possible that the difference in exposure between the two locations is the cause of the problem.

Consequently, the importance of Microteaching or EE subject for post-graduate students in order to increase the self-confidence of teachers is well understood as a result of the current study.

After analyzing the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that the majority of the post-graduate students at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo agreed that their attitude and teaching skill, particularly in timing, lesson planning, asking questions, managing class, using different materials, as well as their physical appearance during the teaching process, had improved as a result of participating in the EE subject. EE subject for post-graduate students, according to the findings, effectively prepared them for their future teaching careers, particularly in the areas of lesson planning, managing a classroom, managing time, and managing students in taking part in learning activities at the university level. All of these are critical components of EE because they enable students to support and improve their own teaching abilities.

IV. Conclusion

In accordance with the findings of the study, the researchers discovered some conclusions that represent in this study, which primarily discussed about the post-graduate students' perception at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo towards the Early Exposure (EE) subject as follows: First, the six statements of the questionnaire categorized as Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA) revealed the post-graduate students' perception towards the electrical engineering subject. As can be seen from the grand mean, the total average divided by the number of statements is 3.78 through interval scale 94.8% of the students agree with the statements. According to the results of the survey, post-graduate students were most interested in and strongly agreed with the subject of electrical engineering to improve their teaching skills. Second, based on the interviews that were conducted, the researchers were able to conclude that post-graduate students had a positive perception of the EE subject because it allowed them to improve their teaching skills, particularly in the areas of lesson planning, peer teaching, and providing feedback to the lecturer through the subject. After completing the EE course, the post-graduate students reported that it was a positive experience that helped them improve their teaching abilities before participating in teaching practice at the university level. As a result, the role of the EE subject is extremely important to them.

EE is a specialized learning opportunity that can be used to practice essential teaching skills. When it comes to teaching and learning, the most important quality of EE participants is the ability to openly give and receive constructive feedback with an open mind. In addition, it boosts the self-esteem of an educator in a friendly environment. In this way, the study emphasized the significance of EE as a stepping stone in the development of a technically sound lecturer. Mentors can use EE subject as a part of pre-service education systems and in-service teaching methods, and more research should be done to find out if this is possible.

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