

## **EFL Pre-Service Teachers’ Perception in the Implementation of the *Program Kampus Mengajar* toward The Pedagogical Competence**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores EFL Pre-service teachers’ perception in the implementation of the *Program kampus Mengajar* toward the pedagogical competence. Using descriptive qualitative method, three participants from Universitas katolik Santo Agustinus Hippo (*Program Kampus Mengajar* Batches 6 and 7) were purposively selected. Data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews, then analyzed through thematic analysis namely data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and source triangulation. The results showed significant improvements in five pedagogical aspects: content knowledge, knowledge of pedagogical approach, classroom management skills, student management skills, and subject management ability. The participants also reported improved adaptation of teaching strategies in 3T schools, pedagogical creativity, reflective practice, and professional skills (communication, creativity, adaptability) through authentic experiences. The study concluded that the *Program Kampus Mengajar* effectively bridges the theory-practice gap in disadvantaged areas, recommending a structured mentor framework, locally-appropriate 3T training modules, and longer practicum duration to optimize outcomes.

### **Keywords**

EFL Pre-service Teachers, Pedagogical Competence, *Program Kampus Mengajar*

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## INTRODUCTION

Pedagogical competence, encompassing lesson planning, instructional delivery, and classroom interaction, is essential for effective EFL Pre-service teachers. In Indonesia, where English is a foreign language, this competence demands methods aligned with students' needs.(Hardiyanty et al., 2021). Kampus Mengajar program, initiated by Indonesia's Ministry of Education, addresses this by placing pre-service teachers in underserved (3T) schools. However, limited research examines its direct impact on pedagogical development. This study fills that gap by investigating how the program shapes EFL pre-service teachers,According to Madhavaram & Laverie 2010, pedagogical competence consists of several main components: content knowledge, knowledge of pedagogical approach, classroom management skills, student management skills, subject management ability.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesia faces many problems that impact on the quality of learning. Foreign language learning differs from second language learning in that exposure to the target language is very limited and occurs only in a formal classroom setting. Therefore, teacher evaluation and training are crucial in teaching English as a foreign language. Using Indonesian wisely in the EFL Pre-service teachers classroom not only helps students understand the material better, but also supports the development of their English skills. To ensure effective teaching methods, teachers should be well trained and evaluated regularly (Kusumaningsih. Et al 2024).

Program kampus Mengajar is an integral part of the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020. This program is specifically designed to provide practical learning experiences to students by placing them in schools located in 3T areas (Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged areas). The experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984) is the basis of this program. This theory emphasizes that the cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Student teachers have the opportunity to experience field learning through Program Kampus Mengajar. They can reflect and integrate their field knowledge with the theoretical knowledge they learn on kampus.

Operationally, Program Kampus Mengajar has four main objectives: (1) providing students with opportunities to improve the quality of learning in schools in 3T areas, (2) improving students' soft skills through off-campus learning experiences, (3) enhancing cooperation between schools and universities to improve the quality of education, and (4) preparing students to become reliable agents of change. Program Kampus Mengajar has been in operation for a number of years, but research specifically examining the program's influence on EFL Pre-service teachers pedagogical skill building is limited. Most of the existing research focuses on the general aspects of the program, without considering the challenges of EFL learning in Indonesia.

Previous research conducted by Hardiyanty et al. (2021) identified various challenges faced by EFL Pre-service teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, but has

not explored how field experience programs such as the kampus Mengajar can overcome these challenges. Meanwhile, studies conducted by Apriliani et al. (2024) and Wijaya et al. (2024) provide an overview of the positive impact of Program kampus Mengajar, but do not specifically focus on the pedagogical competence of EFL Pre-service teachers. This gap is significant given the urgent need to prepare competent EFL Pre-service teachers in Indonesia, particularly for remote areas that often lack qualified teaching staff. According to data from the ministry of education and culture (2020), around 40% of schools in 3T areas still lack adequately qualified English teachers. In addition, Hasballah et al (2024), pointed out that the need to improve pedagogical competence in Indonesian schools is critical, especially in areas where teaching personnel are still urgently needed, remains a challenge. However, there is limited research on how Program Kampus Mengajar specifically contributes to the development of pedagogical competence among EFL Pre-service teachers, especially in 3T areas. Through the Program Kampus Mengajar, the government aims to improve the quality of education while enhancing students' skills. This study focuses on how Program kampus Mengajar impacts the pedagogical competence of EFL Pre-service Universitas katolik Santo Agustinus Hippo, thereby addressing the gap in understanding the effectiveness of the program in preparing EFL Pre-service teachers to face challenges in the real world.

Based on the identified gaps, this study aims to explore EFL Pre-service teachers' perception in the implementation of the Program Kampus Mengajar toward the pedagogical competence. Specifically, this study will examine five aspects of pedagogical competence: (1) content knowledge, (2) knowledge of pedagogical approaches, (3) classroom management skills, (4) student management skills, and (5) subject management ability. These five aspects were selected based on the theoretical framework developed by Madhavaram & Laverie (2010) which has been proven relevant in the context of higher education and the formation of professional competencies of prospective educators. These aspects are also in line with the teacher competency standards set out in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2007 concerning Standards for Academic Qualifications and Teacher Competence. This research is important for teacher education policy development, particularly in designing better field experience programs for perception EFL Pre-service teachers.

This research is important for teacher education policy development, particularly in designing better field experience programs for prospective EFL Pre-service teachers. In addition, the results are expected to help higher education institutions in optimizing the implementation of the MBKM policy and the government in assessing and improving Program kampus Mengajar.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### EFL Pre-Service Teachers

EFL pre-service teachers are students who are studying to become English teachers. Their professional identity is formed through the internalization of values gained from social interactions during teaching practice (Ardi et al., 2023). The challenges often faced in this process include classroom management, the gap between theory and practice, and the lack of guidance during teaching practice (Maharani & Fithriani, 2023); (Astuti & Drajati, 2022). On the other hand, reflection on the teaching practice experience is helpful in shaping creativity, skills, and understanding of students' needs (Khunaivi et al., 2023).

### Program Kampus Mengajar

Program Kampus Mengajar is an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) policy. Students are placed for 1 semester (12-16 weeks) in primary/middle schools in 3T areas (Frontier, Outermost, Disadvantaged) to assist the learning process. They focus on 3 main areas: Literacy-numeracy assistance for students, technology adaptation for teachers, school administration development.

Program connects kampus theory with field practice, concretely improving students' social, collaboration, and leadership skills (Apriliani et al., 2024). On the other hand, the presence of university students is proven to increase 72% of student learning motivation (Wijaya et al., 2024) through creative learning methods. Non-teaching contributions such as digital training and library management also enrich students' professional experience while supporting the improvement of local education quality (Shofia et al., 2023; Wardhani & Supriyanto, 2023).

Studies show that students' involvement in the Program Kampus Mengajar has a positive impact on their academic and social competencies (Suwanti et al., 2022); (Vanessa et al., 2024). Through this activity, students not only assist teaching and learning activities but also support school administration, digital literacy, and extracurricular activities (Wijaya et al., 2024).

### Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence refers to the teacher's ability to plan, implement, and evaluate the learning process effectively (Law No. 14 of 2005). This competence includes subject Content knowledge, Knowledge of pedagogical approaches, Classroom management skills, student management skills, Subject management ability.

#### Aspects of pedagogical competence

To explore pedagogical competence, aspects are needed as guidelines. Aspects of pedagogical competence (Madhavaram & Laverie, 2010) are as follows:

1. Content Knowledge is an educator's deep understanding of the material or field of study being taught.
2. Knowledge of pedagogical approaches is an understanding of various effective teaching methods, strategies, and techniques to deliver material to students.

3. Classroom management skills is the teacher's ability to create a conducive learning environment, including organizing classroom layout, managing student interactions, maintaining discipline, and creating an atmosphere that supports the learning process.
4. Student management skills in understanding, guiding and supporting students' development, both academically and socially-emotionally.
5. Subject management ability is the ability to systematically design, organize, and manage curriculum or subject matter.

Based on the five aspects of pedagogical competence above, it can be concluded that Program Kampus Mengajar has a positive impact on developing the teaching skills of prospective EFL teachers. Thus, this Program Kampus Mengajar not only improves students' pedagogical competence in theory, but can also add to their experience in teaching practice in the field, so that they are ready to become professional, competent and adaptive educators the

Teachers with good pedagogical competence are able to create a learning atmosphere that is fun, inclusive, and encourages active student participation (Sudargini & Purwanto, 2020); (Moreira et al., 2023). Research shows that teachers who have high pedagogical competence are better able to use various methods, such as group discussions and educational games, to improve students' understanding (Cahyana & Agustin, 2024). In the context of the Program kampus mengajar, EFL Pre-service teachers gain real-life experiences that help them understand and apply pedagogical strategies contextually.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used a qualitative approach to explore prospective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of the impact of Program kampus Mengajar on their pedagogical competence. Three participants were selected through purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) having participated in Program Kampus Mengajar batch 6 or 7; (2) students who had taken micro teaching courses and those who had not.

Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was used to identify participants' experiences related to five aspects of pedagogical competence (content knowledge, teaching approach, classroom management, learner management, and course management), and formed the basis of an interview guide. Interviews (30-45 minutes) explored questionnaire answers and participants' unique experiences, with recordings transcribed and translated into English.

Data analysis utilized qualitative techniques (Kalpokaite & Radivojevic, 2019) data reduction by focusing on relevant information, data presentation in the form of narratives and tables, conclusion drawing based on emerging themes.

This study adhered to ethical principles through the provision of informed consent, guaranteeing the right to withdraw without consequences, anonymizing

participants' identities, secure data storage, and conducting interviews that respected participants' comfort and cultural values.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on student data obtained from questionnaires and interviews, it can be concluded that all respondents reported that the Program Kampus Mengajar helped them deepen their content knowledge and implement pedagogical competence strategies. They were also able to manage the classroom more confidently, build stronger relationships with students, and adapt lesson plans effectively. These findings are in line with previous research highlighting the benefits of experiential teaching programs (Wijaya et al., 2024); (Husein La Ede et al., 2022). To protect the privacy of students' identities, each participant was given initials corresponding to numbers 1-3.

**Table 1. Perceived Improvement Across Pedagogical Competence Dimensions**

Responden	Content Knowledge	Pedagogical Approach	Classroom Management	Student Management	Subject Management
SRT	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
ES	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
SAE	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree

Based on the questionnaire and interview data, the impact of the program kampus mengajar on the pedagogical competence of EFL teacher candidates can be seen in the following five aspects:

1. Content Knowledge

Program Kampus Mengajar proved to help participants improve their teaching skills as well as develop contextual delivery skills. Respondents ES and SAE (Strongly Agree) stated that the field experience enabled them to translate linguistic theory into meaningful practice, as SAE expressed: *"I initially only mastered linguistic theory, but in this program I learned how to explain tenses with simple analogies so that students in 3T areas understand."* Meanwhile, although Respondent SRT (Agree) acknowledged increased confidence in mastery of the material, she recognized the need for further strengthening in pedagogical ability to transfer knowledge. This finding is in line with Madhavaram & Laverie (2010) emphasis that mastery of academic content must be balanced with pedagogical competence for effective learning.

2. Knowledge of Pedagogical Approaches

The implementation of student-centered approaches such as group projects and educational games significantly increases student engagement, as

adopted by respondents ES and SAE after observing their impact on learning motivation. ES explained: *"I use role-play to teach speaking. Students who were initially passive become enthusiastic because they feel involved,"* demonstrating the transformation of student participation through interactive methods. On the other hand, although SRT has shifted from conventional lecture methods to interactive discussions, its strategy development is still constrained by the limited variety of teaching techniques. This phenomenon reinforces the findings of Cahyana & Agustin (2024) who asserted that collaborative approaches not only encourage active engagement but also empirically improve students' conceptual understanding.

### 3. Classroom Management Skills

Program Kampus Mengajar consistently trains students how to manage a classroom, especially in the context of schools with limited resources. Through the use of practical techniques, SRT showed significant transformation: *"I learned to manage a crowded class with the reward system technique."* Now, *I can manage without being harsh,"* indicating the use of positive discipline strategies. In contrast, ES and SAE developed complementary skills as a way to efficiently manage the class and adjust the learning schedule. All of this supports Sudargini & Purwanto's (2020) research, which states that the effectiveness of classroom learning, especially in challenging environments, depends on consistent interdisciplinary cooperation and flexibility in methodological adaptation.

### 4. Student Management Skills

In the development of student management, both ES and SAE showed significant improvement in the ability to recognize and understand personal needs, especially for students who have difficulties in learning, as demonstrated by SAE: *"I realize that some students lack concentration because they are hungry. Nowadays, I always try to break the ice after meals by preparing ice breakers"*. On the other hand, SRT highlighted the importance of understanding different teaching methods, especially in meeting students' needs. This difference in mastery level confirms the findings of Moreira et al. (2023) who stated that effective student management is essential for students' understanding of the socio-economic, cultural, and psychological context of learners as the foundation of strategies.

### 5. Subject Management Skills

In developing subject management skills, respondents ES and SAE demonstrated competence in designing lesson plans that are adaptive to the local context and limited resources, as ES explained: *"I replaced the textbook with material from YouTube so that the learning process is not monotonous"*. On the other hand, SRT still follows the pamong teacher's guidance in developing lesson plans, indicating a different stage of development. This variation in response confirms Wardhani & Supriyanto's (2023) finding that the Program

kampus Mengajar effectively trains EFL teacher candidates to be creative under limited conditions - although the level of mastery is influenced by mentoring factors and individual field experience

Program Kampus Mengajar proved to be an effective tool to improve the pedagogical competence of EFL teacher candidates, especially in the five aspects of kumci: Content Knowledge, Knowledge of Pedagogical Approaches, Classroom Management Skills, Student Management Skills, Subject Management Ability. (Wijaya et al., 2024) that direct teaching experience in the field, especially in the 3T areas, facilitates the transformation of theoretical knowledge into practical skills.

## CONCLUSION

The findings Program Kampus Mengajar consistently improved the pedagogical competence of prospective English teachers based on participants' perceptions, with “agree” and “strongly agree” responses. Participants in the “strongly agree” category (2 out of 3) confirmed the program's success in developing five pedagogical aspects: Content knowledge, knowledge of pedagogical approaches, classroom management skills, student management skills, and subject management skills.

Effectiveness of the program was achieved through the contextual application of learning theory, reflective practice, and the development of professional skills: Communication (adaptation of collaborative lesson plans), Creativity (utilization of YouTube in schools with limited resources), and Adaptability (ice-breaker for student engagement). Thus, the program not only strengthens academic competencies but also shapes adaptive, reflective, and contextual teacher professionalism.

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