Interdisciplinary Research in Education
Volume 10, Issue 1, 2025: 73-88
DOI: https://doi.org/10.3126/ire.v10i1.86753

Exploring the Roles and Challenges of Pre-Service Teachers in Practicum: Evidence from Tribhuvan University

Bishnu Sharma
Assistant Professor
Tribhuvan University, Central Department of Education, Kirtipur, Kathmandu
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6480-6973

Yagya Prasad Gnawali
Assistant Professor
Tribhuvan University, Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4127-5495
Email: gnawali.yagya@gmail.com

Keywords

Pre-service teachers, teaching practicum, professional development, sample size

Abstract

This study has explored the roles and challenges faced by pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum under the post-positivist research paradigm. A quantitative survey approach was employed using probability sampling to select 85 practicum students at different subjects from M.Ed. level programs at six campuses (Central Department of Education, Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal, Janamaitri Campus, Sano Thimi Campus, Baneshwor Multiple Campus, and Butwal Multiple Campus) constituent and affiliated with Tribhuvan University. Data was collected through Likert-type scale questionnaires, with reliability coefficients of 0.886 and content validity confirmed by educational experts from Tribhuvan University. Statistical analysis was conducted using one-sample t-tests to find effect sizes, to examine perceptions of duties and the extent of challenges encountered. The results showed that preservice teachers are responsible for indispensable tasks such as lesson planning, collaborative instructional design, and fair assessment, all of which contribute to their professional growth. However, these responsibilities are often handled in a theoretical manner due to limited hands-on experience, insufficient collaboration, and a lack of knowledge about inclusive assessment practices. Preservice teachers' struggles with student diversity and professional identity signal the need for improved training in inclusion, reflection, and practical experience. This study suggests that the teaching practicum must be modified to focus on holistic skill development of pre-service teachers beyond the mere completion of fragmented tasks and theoretical instruction.

Introduction

Teaching practicum is a form of experiential learning where students transform their theoretical understanding into real classroom practice. Traditionally, student teaching has been regarded as a professional phase during which aspiring teachers observe and engage in classroom activities over a set period (Buckworth, 2017). Teaching itself is an intentional process involving interactions between teachers and students around specific content to achieve learning objectives (Richards & Farrell, 2011). Moreover, teaching fulfills several important purposes, primarily offering student teachers the chance to implement concepts and strategies learned during their academic and teacher education programs.

The development of teacher education programme in Nepal began in 1948 with the establishment of the Basic Education Teacher Training Centre in Kathmandu, followed by the creation of the College of Education in 1956 (Awasthi, 2010). At present, preservice teacher education is offered through the Faculty of Education (FOE) at Tribhuvan University, which operates both constituent and affiliated campuses at undergraduate and graduate levels (FOE). The Training Centre was originally founded to prepare skilled teachers for Nepali schools (MOE, 1956). After the Centre ceased its activities, the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) in 1954 proposed the establishment of a College of Education (Awasthi, 2010).

Teacher development was formally institutionalized in 1971, when the government mandated a ten-month training programme for all teachers (Shrestha, 2008). The main goal of this practicum is to give students opportunities to become familiar with the requirements of their future teaching careers by crafting an operational calendar, lesson plans, and teaching and learning resources. Students actively participate in the learning process through group work, discussions, hands-on involvement, and competitive classroom practice (Scott, 2015).

In Nepal, teaching practicum is a compulsory course in the faculty of education. Recently the curriculum of teaching practicum has been re-shaped by FOE to enhance the professional development of preservice teacher (FOE). In past, the teacher facilitated just only micro teaching for one week before the practicum teaching but right now FOE has lunched practicum course through preparation of academic calendar to report writing (Personal Interview of Teaching Practicum Head).

Every practicum student faces the new teaching experiences of practicum in front of the students in the classroom. In our context, supervisor sits at the back of the classroom and observe the performance, evaluate the quality of content likewise monitor the motivational factors of them in an assessment form. After the observation, supervisor organize the discussion with the students by suggesting their strength and weakness for further improvement (Ssentamu-Namubiru, 2010).

Several studies have examined teaching practicum and teacher development in both international and Nepali contexts. A scoping review and thematic analysis was carried out on inclusive practices of classroom teachers (Finkelstein et al., 2019). The teaching practicum in Thailand was explored to understand its effectiveness and challenges (Atkinson et al., 2008). A study of Chinese EFL student teachers investigated their perceptions of transferring existing practicum models (Chunmei & Chuanjun, 2010).

Similarly, a systematic review of research on teaching practicum provided a broad overview of the field (Lawson et al., 2015). Evidence from lesson planning demonstrated the role of inquiry-oriented pedagogy in pre-service practicum experiences (Marino & Crocco, 2020). The importance of feedback in bridging the gap between theory and practice during teaching practicum has also been highlighted (Masood et al., 2022).

Previous research in this field reveals significant gaps at both the policy and methodological levels. Despite a considerable number of international and national studies, their findings have not been effectively applied in practice. Although faculties have made various efforts to support the practicum, its outcomes remain unsatisfactory (Masood et al., 2022). In the context of Nepal, studies have examined teacher development, reflective practices, pre-service science teacher education, issues in English education practicum, undergraduate teaching practice policies, and teachers' perceptions of pedagogy and professional development (Shrestha, 2008; Subedi & Rai, 2021; Koirala, 2022; Kadel, 2023; Timsina, 2024; Acharya, 2025). However, these works are largely fragmented and fail to capture the lived realities of graduate-level practicum experiences. Thus, a clear research gap exists in exploring how teaching practicum can be effectively implemented to bridge the divide between what pre-service teachers learn in theory and what they encounter in actual classroom practice.

In this context Experimental Learning Theory was developed by Kolb (1984), who emphasized that learning is a continuous process that grounded in practices and skills. In contrast to traditional learning methods that emphasize passive absorption of information, Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) stresses the value of engaging with real-world situations to build knowledge. Kolb proposed that effective learning occurs through a four-stage cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This process enables learners to first engage in a task, then reflect on the experience, form new insights from that reflection, and finally apply those insights in practical settings.

Kolb's experiential learning theory explains how pre-service teachers develop their professional roles through the cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. Classroom teaching allows them to apply theory in practice, reflect on outcomes, and refine their strategies, showing that their roles evolve as they integrate learning with real-world practice. The theory also helps explain challenges in practicum. Lack of mentoring, feedback, or opportunities for experimentation can disrupt the learning cycle, making it difficult for teachers to improve their practice. This perspective clarifies why pre-service teachers at Tribhuvan University may face obstacles in applying theoretical knowledge. In addition, this model emphasizes connecting theory to classroom realities. By supporting reflection and experimentation, it highlights the need for practicum experiences that allow teachers to test and adapt methods, bridging the gap between preparation and actual teaching.

Teaching Practicum is an Academic opportunity for Novice Teachers

Pre-service teachers are encouraged to take responsibility for their evaluations by engaging in portfolio reflections and actively discussing observation ratings, which fosters a sense of accountability and self-awareness in their professional development (Good & Weaver, 2004). A positive classroom

environment, created by teachers' enjoyment and enthusiasm, greatly impacts students' engagement and satisfaction with learning. In this context, Lawson et al. (2015) emphasize that teaching practicum provides pre-service teachers with valuable opportunities to develop their instructional skills and receive mentorship that helps them shape their professional identity.

While university classrooms provide foundational theories, strategies, and pedagogical knowledge, the true application of these elements takes place during classroom teaching. Atkinson et al. (2008) emphasize that the teaching practicum acts as a vital bridge between theoretical learning and practical implementation. This practical experience enables pre-service teachers not only to utilize what they have learned but also to develop professionally through real-time feedback, diverse teaching methods, and the cultivation of reflective practice. Therefore, the practicum becomes a crucial opportunity for teacher growth, identity formation, and translating educational theory into meaningful classroom actions.

Teachers are fundamentally responsible for fostering mutual respect in the classroom, which creates meaningful opportunities for students to build their pedagogical understanding and teaching skills (Fung, 2005). During teaching practicum, when students occasionally engage in off-task behavior, it becomes an opportunity for practicum teachers to practice and reinforce classroom discipline by taking responsibility for maintaining order and delivering high-quality instruction (Chiu & Chaw, 2011). These moments are not merely challenges, but valuable opportunities to build essential classroom management competencies.

Furthermore, the teaching practicum is a multifaceted experience that fosters the development of instructional, affective, cognitive, and metacognitive skills (Leshem & Bar-Hama, 2008). Additionally, Pfitzner-Eden (2016) emphasizes that practicum teachers build self-efficacy through their use of effective instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and their capacity to engage students. Furthermore, practicum enables teachers to take initiative in the evaluation process, encouraging greater accountability and reflection in assessing student learning outcomes (Seferoglu, 2006). These aspects collectively provide practicum teachers with a valuable opportunity to enhance their confidence, competence, and professional responsibility, making the practicum a transformative phase in teacher development.

The figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of our study. It delivers a pictorial illustration of the crucial variables that clarifies the relationships among them, which presents a circular model of an effective teaching practices, highlighting their interrelated components. The main elements include lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, assessment reflection, collaboration, and professionalism. Together, these dimensions have created a holistic framework that supports teacher effectiveness and enhances students success as further.

The framework also shows lack of practical experience and self-confidence, leading to uncertainty about their teaching capabilities. Other significant obstacles include limited mentorship, delayed or insufficient feedback, and a lack of support that considers students' varying needs and backgrounds. Additionally, time limitations, resource shortages, and a lack of teaching materials pose further barriers to effective instruction. Collectively, these challenges hinder the classroom effectiveness of novice teachers.

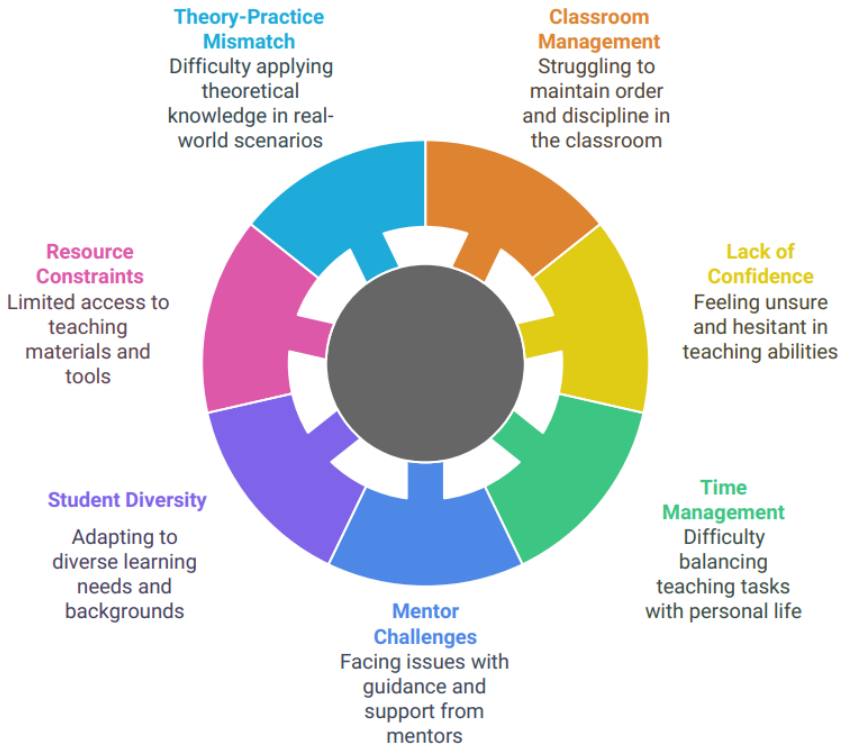


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework*

Methods

This study employed a quantitative survey research design to investigate the roles and challenges faced by pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum, guided by a post-positivist paradigm. Ontologically, the study assumed a single, observable social reality, suggesting that the experiences of pre-service teachers can be universally identified and evaluated, while epistemologically it followed a deductive approach, testing predefined hypotheses and value free axiology. The population consisted of M.Ed. level pre-service practicum students from six campuses Central Department of Education, Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal, Janamaitri Campus, Sano Thimi Campus, Baneshwor Multiple Campus, and Butwal Multiple Campus both constituent and affiliated with Tribhuvan University.

We selected 85 students from sampled campuses using probability sampling. Data were collected through structured five-point Likert scale questionnaires, which were developed based on a comprehensive review of relevant literature, the researchers' personal practicum experiences.

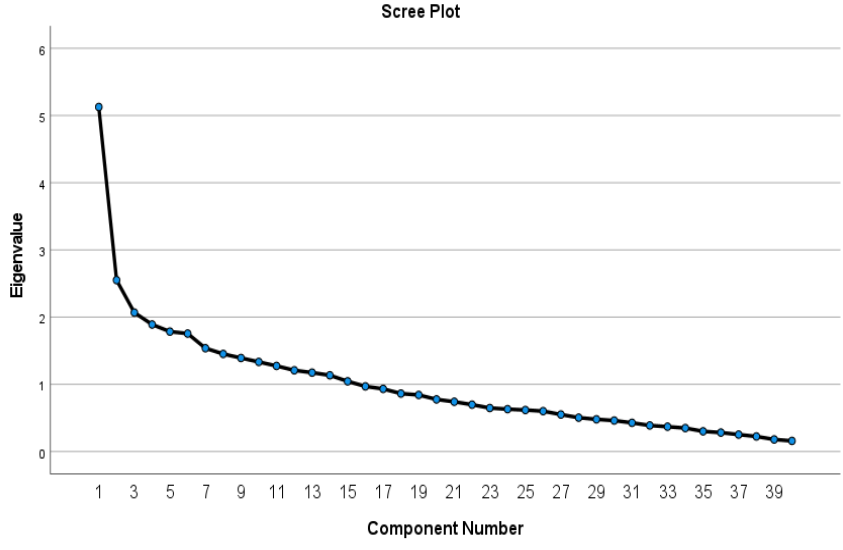
Respondents' anonymity was maintained throughout the study to ensure confidentiality. The objectives of the research were clearly explained, and participants provided their responses voluntarily in their free time. To ensure internal consistency, a pilot test was conducted, and the responses were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.886, indicating a high level of reliability and demonstrating that the questionnaire items consistently measured the intended constructs.

After collecting the data, we cleaned, coded, and entered it into SPSS for analysis. A one-sample t-test was employed to assess the level of agreement or disagreement among respondents regarding the various duties and challenges encountered during practicum, with the population mean of 3 considered as the neutral value. Furthermore, Cohen's *d* was calculated to evaluate the effect size and to determine the magnitude of differences in responses relative to the neutral benchmark.

Results and Discussion

To analyze the results, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on the 40 validated questionnaire items to identify the underlying factor structure. The Scree plot was used to determine the appropriate number of factors to retain. Based on the EFA results, 25 items were chosen for further analysis, as they met key statistical criteria, including factor loadings above 0.4, acceptable communalities, and low cross-loadings. These selected items were then grouped into five distinct categories, each representing a specific dimension within the overall framework of the study.

The coded dataset was entered into SPSS for statistical analysis. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to uncover the underlying structure, identifying five distinct factors reflecting the responsibilities and challenges faced by pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum. Each factor demonstrated acceptable reliability. To analyze responses to the Likert-scale items, a one-sample t-test was applied by comparing the sample mean to the neutral value of 3, assessing whether participants significantly agreed or disagreed with each statement. Furthermore, Cohen's d was calculated to assess the magnitude of the effect size, which provides insight into the practical significance of the findings beyond mere statistical significance (Patton, 2002). Overall, the rigorous use of quantitative tools ensured the validity and reliability of the results, thereby contributing to a better understanding of internal assessment of students in mathematics at the basic level classroom context (Creswell, 2008). The scree plot is given below (Figure3).



Figue3. *Scree Plot*

We listed all five components in Table 1 together with factor loading and reliabilities values (Cronbach's Alpha) for each component related to duty and obstacles encountered by pre-service teachers in their practicum

Table1. *Principal component analysis of duties and obstacles encountered by pre-service teachers in their practicum*

Factor Loading from Rotated Components			
Rotated Component Matrix Items		Factor Loading	Components
1.	I prepare detailed lesson plans before every classroom session.	0.622	Factor-1 *Lesson Planning and Curriculum Alignment,* (Cronbach's Alpha=0.84)
2.	My lesson plan objectives are clearly stated and measurable in my lesson.	0.614	
3.	I structure my lesson plans with a clear introduction, body, and closure.	0.540	
4.	I plan learning activities that promote student engagement.	0.537	
5.	I allocate appropriate time for each part of the lesson.	0.536	
6.	I prepare alternative plans in case of unforeseen classroom situations.	0.533	
7.	I design various approaches to enhance teaching in the classroom.	0.518	
8.	I regularly consult curriculum guidelines while planning my lessons	0.469	
1.	I use a variety of teaching methods to address different learning styles.	0.696	Factor 2: *Instructional Delivery and Pedagogical Skills* Cronbach's Alpha = 0.70
2.	I maintain students' attention and engagement throughout the lesson.	0.602	
3.	I do not use a variety of instructional approaches to address teaching learning styles.	0.565	
4.	I manage classroom time efficiently to complete planned activities.	0.554	
5.	I give constructive feedback to students to support their learning.	0.470	
6.	I explain concepts clearly and at a level appropriate for my students.	0.456	
7.	I facilitate group work and student collaboration during lessons.	0.441	
1.	I assess students' understanding throughout the lesson, not just at the end.	0.668	Factor-3 *Student Assessment and Evaluation* (Cronbach's Alpha=0.667)
2.	I design assessments that align with learning objectives.	0.538	
3.	I provide timely and constructive feedback to help students improve.	0.501	
4.	I use multiple assessment tools (quizzes, observation, peer-assessment, etc.).	0.497	
5.	I modify instruction based on students' assessment results.	0.47	
6.	I evaluate not only academic performance but also student effort and participation.	0.451	
1.	I find it challenging to address the learning needs of students with different abilities.	0.687	Factor-4 *Student Diversity and Individual Needs (*Cronbach's Alpha=0.64)
2.	I struggle to adapt my teaching strategies to accommodate diverse cultural backgrounds.	0.578	
3.	I face difficulty in managing classrooms with students who learn at different paces.	0.577	
4.	When I find it hard to give equal attention to all students in a diverse classroom.	0.540	
5.	I feel the need for more training on handling student diversity and inclusive education.	0.478	
6.	I receive adequate support from mentor teachers in addressing student diversity challenges.	0.475	
1.	I do not see myself as a professional teacher during my practicum experience.	0.620	Factor-5 *Lack of Professional Identity and Self-Reflection.* (Cronbach's Alpha=0.61)
2.	I lack confidence in my ability to make independent decisions in the classroom.	0.594	
3.	I rarely reflect on my teaching practices after completing lesson.	0.561	
4.	I do not regularly evaluate whether my teaching methods are effective.	0.548	

Lesson Planning and Curriculum Alignment

A one-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the mean scores of eight items (LPCA1 to LPCA8) significantly differed from the neutral test value of 3. The results revealed that six of the eight items had means significantly higher than 3, indicating a generally positive perception among participants. Specifically, LPCA2 (M = 3.71, t = 5.364, p < .001), LPCA3 (M = 3.55, t = 3.963, p < .001), LPCA6 (M = 3.49, t = 3.418, p = .001), LPCA7 (M = 3.93, t = 8.489, p < .001), and LPCA8 (M = 3.68, t = 5.589, p < .001) were all statistically significant, with Cohen's d values ranging from moderate to large (0.371 to 0.921), suggesting that these results are not only statistically but also practically meaningful. Among them, LPCA7 demonstrated the strongest positive perception, with the highest mean and the largest effect size (d = 0.921). LPCA1 (M = 3.18, p = .208) and LPCA4 (M = 3.22, p = .105) did not differ significantly from the test value, indicating neutral responses. Similarly, LPCA5 (M = 3.09, p = .502) also failed to reach statistical significance (Table 2). This means that practicum teachers prepare detailed lesson plans, select appropriate instructional techniques, and follow the prescribed curriculum guidelines.

Table1. *Descriptive Statistics and One Sample T-test for the Components in Lesson Planning and Curriculum Alignment*

One Sample t- Test (Test- Value=3), N=80, df=79								
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Factors	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Cohens'd	LCI	UCI
LPCA1	3.18	1.283	1.268	.208	.176	0.138	-.10	.45
LPCA2	3.71	1.213	5.364	.000	.706	0.582	.44	.97
LPCA3	3.55	1.286	3.963	.000	.553	0.430	.28	.83
LPCA4	3.22	1.257	1.639	.105	.224	0.178	-.05	.49
LPCA5	3.09	1.288	.674	.502	.094	0.073	-.18	.37
LPCA6	3.49	1.333	3.418	.001	.494	0.371	.21	.78
LPCA7	3.93	1.009	8.489	.000	.929	0.921	.71	1.15
LPCA8	3.68	1.126	5.589	.000	.682	0.606	.44	.93

Instructional Delivery and Pedagogical Skills

A one-sample t-test was performed to evaluate whether the mean scores of the seven items labeled IDPS1 to IDPS7 significantly differed from the test value of 3, representing a neutral point on the Likert scale. The results indicated that six out of seven items had mean scores significantly higher than 3, reflecting overall positive perceptions from participants regarding these aspects. Specifically, IDPS1 (M = 3.65, t = 5.786, p < .001), IDPS2 (M = 3.60, t = 4.485, p < .001), IDPS3 (M = 3.75, t = 8.441, p < .001), IDPS4 (M = 3.40, t = 8.181, p = .005), IDPS6 (M = 3.34, t = 16.458, p = .021), and IDPS7 (M = 3.54, t = 4.175, p < .001) all showed statistically significant differences with Cohen's d values ranging from small to large (0.254 to 0.712), indicating practical significance as well. The highest mean was observed in IDPS3 (M = 3.75), with a large effect size (d = 0.712), suggesting particularly strong agreement among participants for that item.

However, IDPS5 (M = 2.65, t = 5.101, p = .030) was the only item with a mean significantly below 3, indicating negative perception, and its effect size (d = –0.240) suggests a small but meaningful divergence from neutrality. Overall, the findings suggest that most dimensions of the construct measured under IDPS (which may represent a factor like instructional decision-making, professional support, or a related domain) were positively perceived by respondents, except for IDPS5, which may reflect a concern or an area needing improvement (Table 2). This indicates that teaching methods need to accommodate diverse learning styles, and students require constructive feedback to enhance their learning.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics and One Sample T-test for the Components in Instructional Delivery and Pedagogical Skills*

One Sample t- Test (Test- Value=3), N=80, df=79								
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Factors	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Cohens'd	LCI	UCI
IDPS1	3.65	1.279	5.786	.000	.647	0.506	.37	.92
IDPS2	3.60	1.236	4.485	.000	.600	0.485	.33	.87
IDPS3	3.75	1.057	8.441	.000	.753	0.712	.52	.98
IDPS4	3.40	1.284	8.181	.005	.400	0.312	.12	.68
IDPS5	2.65	1.470	5.101	.030	-.353	-0.240	-.67	-.04
IDPS6	3.34	1.341	16.458	.021	.341	0.254	.05	.63
IDPS7	3.54	1.287	4.175	.000	.541	0.421	.26	.82

Student Assessment and Evaluation

Table 3 presents the results of a one-sample t-test conducted to examine whether the mean scores of six items (ASE1 to ASE6) differed significantly from the neutral test value of 3. The findings reflect students' perceptions of assessment and evaluation related to the challenges and duties of pre-service teachers, likely linked to affective self-efficacy. The results showed mixed outcomes, such as three items ASE1 (M = 3.28, t = 5.786, p < .001), ASE2 (M = 3.21, t = 4.485, p < .001), and ASE4 (M = 3.08, t = 8.181, p = .005) had means significantly above 3, indicating positive participant perceptions.

The corresponding Cohen's d values ranged from 0.312 to 0.506, reflecting small to moderate effect sizes. In contrast, ASE3 (M = 2.85, t = 8.441, p < .001) and ASE6 (M = 2.78, t = 16.458, p = .021) had means significantly below 3, suggesting negative perceptions toward these items, though the effect sizes were relatively small (Cohen's d = 0.254 and 0.712). Interestingly, ASE5 (M = 3.05, t = 5.101, p = .030) was only marginally above the test value and showed a negative mean difference (MD = –0.353), indicating some ambiguity or inconsistency in responses. Overall, while some items demonstrated positive perceptions, others revealed dissatisfaction or uncertainty, suggesting that the affective dimension may not be uniformly strong and might benefit from targeted support or intervention (Table3). It means aligning assessment with learning objectives and making necessary modifications to the assessment system.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics and One Sample T-test for the Components in Student Assessment and Evaluation*

One Sample t- Test (Test- Value=3), N=80, df=79								
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Factors	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Cohens'd	LCI	UCI
ASE1	3.28	1.385	5.786	.000	.647	0.506	.37	.92
ASE2	3.21	1.310	4.485	.000	.600	0.485	.33	.87
ASE3	2.85	1.314	8.441	.000	.753	0.712	.52	.98
ASE4	3.08	1.293	8.181	.005	.400	0.312	.12	.68
ASE5	3.05	1.290	5.101	.030	-.353	-0.240	-.67	-.04
ASE6	2.78	1.294	16.458	.021	.341	0.254	.05	.63

Student Diversity and Individual Needs

A one-sample t-test was carried out to determine whether the mean scores of six items (SDIN1 to SDIN6) significantly differed from the neutral value of 3, representing the midpoint of the Likert scale. The findings reveal that five out of six items showed statistically significant positive deviations, indicating favorable perceptions among participants regarding the socio-cultural aspects of their mathematics learning environment. SDIN1 had the highest mean ($M = 3.96$, $t = 7.125$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.773$), demonstrating a large effect size and strong agreement from students. SDIN2 ($M = 3.55$, $t = 3.935$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.427$), SDIN3 ($M = 3.56$, $t = 3.785$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.411$), SDIN5 ($M = 3.94$, $t = 7.426$, $p = .030$, $d = 0.805$), and SDIN6 ($M = 3.52$, $t = 4.224$, $p = .021$, $d = 0.458$) also reported moderate to large effect sizes, confirming meaningful positive experiences.

However, SDIN4 ($M = 3.04$, $t = 0.228$, $p = .005$, $d = 0.025$) showed no statistically significant difference from the test value, with a negligible effect size and wide confidence interval (LCI = –.27, UCI = .34), indicating that participants were largely neutral on this item. These results suggest that while students generally view socio-cultural factors positively, certain areas like SDIN4 may require further exploration or support to fully engage learners from diverse backgrounds (Table 4). The results show that it is challenging to address students' diverse needs, abilities, and cultural backgrounds; however, practicum teachers are still required to respond to students' cultural diversity and backgrounds.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics and One Sample T-test for the Components in Student Diversity and Individual Needs*

One Sample t- Test (Test- Value=3), N=80, df=79								
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Factors	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Cohens'd	LCI	UCI
SDIN1	3.96	1.248	7.125	.000	.965	0.773	.70	1.23
SDIN2	3.55	1.296	3.935	.000	.553	0.427	.27	.83
SDIN3	3.56	1.375	3.785	.000	.565	0.411	.27	.86
SDIN4	3.04	1.426	.228	.005	.035	0.025	-.27	.34
SDIN5	3.94	1.169	7.426	.030	.941	0.805	.69	1.19
SDIN6	3.52	1.130	4.224	.021	.518	0.458	.27	.76

Lack of Professional Identity and Self-Reflection

A one-sample t-test was conducted to assess whether the mean scores for the four items (LPIF1 to LPIF4) significantly differed from the neutral benchmark value of 3. The results revealed that three items LPIF1, LPIF3, and LPIF4 showed statistically significant positive differences, suggesting that participants positively perceived these aspects of their learning experiences. Specifically, LPIF3 reported the highest mean ($M = 4.32$, $t = 14.092$, $p < .001$) with a very large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.528$), indicating strong agreement and substantial impact of this item on learners' experiences.

Moreover, LPIF1 ($M = 3.75$, $t = 5.584$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.606$) and LPIF4 ($M = 3.51$, $t = 3.476$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.377$) also showed moderate to large effect sizes, reflecting significant positive responses. In contrast, LPIF2 ($M = 2.69$, $t = –1.846$, $p = .068$) did not reach statistical significance at the 0.05 level, with a negative mean difference and a small effect size ($d = –0.200$), suggesting that students were somewhat uncertain or even slightly negative about this particular aspect. Overall, these findings indicate that while students perceived most of the influencing factors positively, LPIF2 may require further investigation or targeted support to enhance its impact on students' learning performance (Table 5). The results indicated that practicum teachers need to recognize their professional role and regularly evaluate teaching methods to ensure effectiveness.

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics and One Sample T-test for the Components in Lack of Professional Identity and Self-Reflection*

One Sample t- Test (Test- Value=3), N=80, df=79								
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Factors	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Cohens'd	LCI	UCI
LPIF1	3.75	1.243	5.584	.000	.753	0.606	.48	1.02
LPIF2	2.69	1.528	-1.846	.068	-.306	-0.200	-.64	.02
LPIF3	4.32	.862	14.092	.000	1.318	1.528	1.13	1.50
LPIF4	3.51	1.342	3.476	.001	.506	0.377	.22	.80

Discussion

Practicum teachers make detailed lesson plans, choose appropriate instructional techniques, and adhere to the prescribed curriculum guidelines. The teaching practicum serves as a vital platform for student-teachers to translate theoretical knowledge into real classroom practice, aligning with Kolb's experiential learning mode. The preparation of detailed lesson plans and clear articulation of objectives reflect concrete experience and abstract conceptualization, as student-teachers translate pedagogical theories into structured teaching practices (Ahmed et al., 2012; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016).

Through active experimentation, they implement diverse strategies to engage students, often adapting to varied classroom environments across urban and rural Nepal. Simultaneously, managing classroom time, addressing unforeseen challenges, and refining approaches based on classroom

feedback demonstrate reflective observation (Subedi & Rai, 2021). Thus, the practicum in Nepal not only embodies the full cycle of Kolb's model planning, acting, reflecting, and improving but also nurtures adaptive, reflective, and contextually responsive teaching practices essential in the diverse educational landscape of the country.

The findings found that teaching methods need to be responsive to different learning styles, while providing students with constructive feedback to support their learning. The teaching practicum facilitates the integration of varied instructional approaches to cater to diverse learners, promote engagement, and optimize the use of instructional time (Acharya, 2025: Brady & Bowd, 2005). It provides clear explanations and constructive feedback, supporting students' understanding and growth (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). It has associated to the Kolb's teaching learning sequence, it offers actual experiences through varied activities promotes classroom reflection, supports deeper conceptual understanding, and encourages active experimentation through participation as well as collaboration.

During classroom teaching, teachers face a range of challenges for pre-service teachers, particularly in lecturing the varied learning needs of students with changeable abilities (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016), adapting instructional strategies to suit different socio-cultural backgrounds, managing classrooms with students who study at different paces, and ensuring equal attention to all students (Pratiwi, 2020; Sulistiyo et al., 2017). Moreover, such challenges often highlight the need for more participatory and collaborative training in inclusive classroom and variety of supervision. However, when we viewed through the lens of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), such difficulties become integral to the learning process itself. Experiential Learning Theory frameworks a continuous cycle of four stages such as concrete experiences, thoughtful reflection, abstract conceptualization, and dynamic experimentation.

It highlighted that pre-service teachers involve in real classroom interactions during their time (concrete experience), reflect on their teaching effectiveness (reflective observation), derive visions and develop new instructional strategies (abstract conceptualization), and implement these strategies in subsequent lessons (Danielson, 2011; Masood et al., 2022). This cyclical process enables pre-service teachers to convert challenges into meaningful opportunities for professional growth. Additionally, guidance and feedback from mentor teachers improve this experiential learning style, nurturing deeper likeness and more actual practice (Subedi & Rai, 2021). Consequently, inside the ELT framework, the practicum converts a powerful platform for cultivating inclusive, responsive, and adaptive instructional competencies of teachers.

The practicum enhances vital role in determining professional identity of teachers, yet it often exposures the limitations of pre-service teacher preparation particularly the lack of confidence in making independent classroom decisions and guiding by the mentor teachers (Buckworth 2017; Hascher & Hagenauer, 2016). While the capability to plan and deliver lessons reflects a initial skill, substantial support on mentor teachers reveals a disconnect between theoretic knowledge and practical autonomy. Such condition replicates a systemic issue within Nepal's MEd programs of different campus of TU, where reflective practice is emphasized

in theory but not always fully supported in implementation by mentor (Becker et al., 2019; Manna & Tattwasarananda, 2018). However, practicum teachers are encouraged to involve in self-evaluation and continuous upgrading, beyond basic constraints such as rigid curricula, exam-focused teaching, and varying mentor teachers engagement limit expressive investigation and professionalism.

Pre- service practicum teachers want to concede their professional responsibilities and consistently assess teaching strategies to confirm their efficacy (Timsina, 2024; Yuksel, 2014). However, while insightful dimensions advance the lack of helpful policy frameworks and flexible class structures can hamper the broader aim of nurturing self-governing and adaptive instructors (Atkinson et al., 2008; Buckworth, 2017). To address this gap, teacher education program in Nepal should transfer beyond policy rhetoric and generate backgrounds in which insightful practice honestly endorses academic freedom, novelty, and professional progress.

Conclusion

This study explored the roles and challenges of pre-service practicum teachers during their teaching practicum, with ratification drawn from the faculty of education, Tribhuvan University. This study found that lesson planning was closely linked to the curriculum and specific learning objectives, with teachers planning learning activities that promote student engagement. Practicum teachers also facilitated group work and student collaboration in the classroom, aiming to encourage active participation. However, pre-service teachers acknowledged that their instructional delivery tended to be traditional, despite efforts to integrate twenty-first-century instructional skills.

Furthermore, the study emphasized the need for supplementary training to efficiently address student diversity and promote inclusive classroom practices. Some challenges were perceived in accompanying impartial assessment and evaluation during examinations. Practicum teachers were attentive to students' diverse abilities and socio-cultural backgrounds, and they engaged in self-assessment to reflect on their own professionalism. These findings advise that while pre-service teachers show awareness of effective teaching practices, ongoing professional progress and support are essential for addressing diversity, assessment challenges, and adopting innovative instructional methods.

References

Acharya, B. (2025). Teacher's Perceptions toward Teaching-Learning Pedagogy and Professional Development: Insights from Nepal. *Acta Educationis Generalis, 15*(1), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.2478/atd-2025-0001

Ahmed, M., Azeem, M., Khalid, P. D. I., Farrukh, P. D. I. A., Ahmed, D. F., & Ahmed, M. S. (2012). Teacher education programme (B. Ed.) in SAARC countries. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance, 2*(1), 134. https://doi.org/10.5296jpag.v2i1.1606

Atkinson, D., Phairee, C., Sanitchon, N., Suphanangthong, I., Graham, S., Prompruang, J., & Hopkins, D. (2008). The teaching practicum in Thailand: Three perspectives. *TESOL Quarterly, 42*(4), 655-659. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2008.tb00154.x

Awasthi, J. R. (2010). Teacher education special reference to English language teaching in Nepal. *Journal of NELTA,*

8, (1-2). 17-28. https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v8i1.3377.

Becker, E. B., Waldis, M., & Staub, F. C. (2019). Advancing students' teachers learning in the teaching practicum through content focused coaching: A field experiment. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 83*, 12-26. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.03.007

Brady, P. & Bowd, A. (2005). Mathematics anxiety, prior experience and confidence to teach mathematics among pre-services education students. *Teachers and Teaching Theory and Practices, 11*(1),37-46. https://doi.org/10.1080/1354060042000337084

Buckworth, J. (2017). Issues on the teaching practicum. In G.Geng, et al (Eds.), *The Challenges of Teaching* (pp 9-17). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2571-6_2

Chiu, M. M., & Chow, B.W.Y (2011). Classroom discipline across forty-one countries: School economic and cultural differences. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology,42*(3),516-533. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022110381115

Chunmei, Y., & Chuanjun, H. (2010). Transferring the existing model of teaching practicum: a study of Chinese EFL student teacher perceptions: Journal of Education for Teaching. *International Research and Pedagogy, 36*(1), 57-73. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607470903462065

Danielson, C. (2011). *The framework of teaching evaluation instrument*. The Danielson Group.

Elizabeth, F. (1998). Student perceptions of satisfaction with practicum learning. *Social Work Education: The International Journal, 17*:2, 173-201. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479811220181

Finkelstein, S., Sharma, U., & Furlonger, B. (2019). The inclusive practices of classroom teachers: A scoping review and thematic analysis. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. *25*(6), 735-762. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1572232

Fung, M. Y. (2005). A philosophy of teaching practicum: Construction of a personal theory of teaching and learning. *Teacher Development, 9*(1),43-57. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530500200240

Good, J. M., & Weaver, A. (2003). Evaluation of preservice teacher's internships: A model to encourage career continuity and program reform. *Journal of Personal Evaluation in Education, 17*(3), 263-275. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-005-2983-9

Hascher, T., & Hagenauer, G. (2016). Openness to theory and its importance for preservice teacher's self –efficacy, emotions and classroom behavior in the teaching practicum. *International Journal of Educational Research, 77*,15-25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2016.02.003

Kadel, P. B. (2023). Issues of teaching practice in master of English education: Supervisors' perspectives. *Tribhuvan University Journal, 38*(1), 74-87. https://doi.org/10.3126/tuj.v38i01.56144

Koirala, K. P. (2022). Practices of Pre-service Science Teacher Education Program: Review and Reflection. *The Educator Journal, 10*(1), 126-134. https://doi.org/10.3126/tej.v10i1.46735

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning*

and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Lawson, T., Çakmak, M., Gündüz, M., & Busher, H. (2015). Research on teaching practicum–a systematic review. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(3), 392-407. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2014.994060

Leshem, S., & Bar-Hama, R. (2008). Evaluating teaching practice. *ELT Journal*, *63*(3)., 257-265.https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccmo20

Manna, N., & Tattwasarananda, S. (2018). Teacher education in SAARC countries: A comparative analysis. *International Journal of Advanced Research, 6*(12), 1420-1424. https://doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/8283

Marino, M. P., & Crocco, M. S. (2020). The pre-service practicum experience and inquiry-oriented pedagogy: Evidence from student teachers' lesson planning. *The Journal of Social Studies Research, 44*(1), 151-167. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2019.02.001

Masood, F., Khan, A. R., & Munawar, U. (2022). Bridging Theory-Practice Gap: Connecting Feedback with Teaching Practicum. *Review of Education, Administration & Law, 5*(3), 419-428.

Masood, S., Siddiqui, M. F., & Arif, K. (2022). Challenges pre-service teachers face during teaching practicum: An anatomy of teachers' education programs. *VFAST Transactions on Education and Social Sciences, 10*(2), 131-141. https://doi.org/10.21015/vtess.v10i2.1049

Pfitzner-Eden, F. (2016). I feel less confident so I quit? Do true changes in teacher self-efficacy predict changes in preservice teacher's intention to quit their teaching degree? *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 240-254. https://doi.org/10.1016/jtate.2016.01.018

Pratiwi, D. (2020). Teaching practicum in preservice teaching education. *Yovana Bhasa: Journal of English Language Education, 3*(1), 31-42. https://doi.org/10.25078/yb.v1i1.1375

Richards, J. C. & Farrell, T. S. C. (2011). *Practice teaching: A reflective approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Scott, S. V. (2013). Practicing what we preach: towards a student-centered definition of feedback. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 1-11. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080.13562517.2013.827639

Seferoglu, G. (2006). Teacher candidates' reflections on some components of a pre-service English teacher education programme in Turkey. Journal of Education for Teaching: *International Research and Teacher need to make the Pedagogy, 32*(4),369-378. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607470600981953

Shrestha, K. N. (2008). Teacher development and management at secondary education in Nepal. *Journal of Education and Research, 1*(1), 41-50. https://doi.org/10.3126/jer.v1i0.7950

Smith, K., & Lev-Ari, L. (2005). The place of the practicum in pre-service teacher education: The voice of the students. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 33*(3), 289-302. https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660500286333

Ssentamu-Namubiru, P. (2010). Teaching practicum supervisor's identity and student's assessment on the practicum: An assorted mind set? *Africa Education Review, 7*: 2,305-322. https://doi.org/10.1080.18146627.2010.515423.

Subedi, D., & Rai, I. M. (2021). Praxis amid Theory and Practice in a Teacher Education Course: Narrowing the Gap via Reflective Practices. *Innovative Technologies and Pedagogical Shifts in Nepalese Higher Education, 10*, 104-118. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004448865_007

Sulistiyo, U., Mukminin, A., Abdurrahman, K., Haryan, E. (2017). Learning to teach: A case study of student's teachers practicum and policy recommendations. *The Qualitative Report,22* (3-3),712-731.https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2017.2671

Timsina, J. N. (2024). Teaching Practice at Undergraduate Level: A Comparative Analysis of Policies Across Universities in Nepal. *Education Quarterly, 5*(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.3126/jeqtu.v5i1.76737

Yuksel, H. G. (2014). Teacher of the future: perceived teaching competencies and visions of pre-service English language teachers. *International Journal of Human Sciences,11*(2),27-39. https://doi.org/10.14687/ijhs.v11i2.2920