

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

The discussion of this chapter covers research background, problem identification, problem limitation, research questions, objectives of the research, and significances of the research.

#### **Research Background**

Over the past few decades, many researchers were concerned on conducting study about the essential features of general teacher education programs. There is no doubt that teaching practicum becomes the most “vital component and lying at the heart of teacher development process” (Mutlu, 2014, p.1). This is because teaching practicum provides substantial experiences in the real teaching process to students. This valuable experience represents the opportunity that integrates students’ acquired knowledge into practical experiences in teaching practicum (Crookes, 2003). Andaibai (2013) affirmed that in fact teaching practicum provides diverse experiences to teach that designed and implemented to assist “trainee teachers in increasing their personal competence” (p.13).

The importance of teaching practicum in students’ enhancement on teacher education cannot be denied, although there are various difficulties regarding the teaching practicum’s implementation. There are two common difficulties regarding teaching practicum, students used to encounter personal problems related to the personal issues, while other problems associated with the teaching skills (Jusoh, 2013). Jusoh (2013) wrote that students’ motivation, teaching skills, and anxiety level can negatively impact their performance during teaching practicum. Hudson, Nguyen, and Hudson (2008) affirmed that the students are facing difficulties in teaching skills, such as preparing teaching materials, motivating students, engaging students’ interest on the course.

Thus, the discussion over difficulties in the first year experience of teaching practicum should be more concerned, since a little few of practitioners mention that the first year experience of teaching is critical and crucial time to determine students' future teaching. It is supported by Saenz-Lopez, Almagro and Ibanez (2011) explained that during the first year experience of teaching, students might encounter different situations that influence the tension, insecurity, and confidence. Therefore, beside the difficulties on experiencing different situations of teaching, during the first year experience of teaching the students need to deal with the anxiety. Sammephet and Wanphet (2013) confirmed that anxiety is not only concerned by an experienced teacher, however it is something that students in teacher education need to deal with. Thus, Sammephet and Wanphet (2013) explained that anxiety also has negative impact on students' experience in the early of teaching.

Before conducting this research, the researcher did a written survey to the second year students at one of private universities at Yogyakarta. This private university provided different teaching practicum program method in the previous policy, which assisted the students an opportunity to experience teaching practicum in their first year. Then the researcher distributed written survey to the students to discover information through their viewpoint on the first year experience of teaching practicum. There were several questions asked to students regarding their point of view in conducting the first year teaching practicum. The results showed that there were numbers of participants on this survey believed that they were experiencing different feelings and emotions during the first year teaching practicum.

The data displayed that students had experienced different kind of feelings and emotions towards the first year experience of teaching practicum. These experiences could more less influence students' interest, desire and idea towards teaching profession in all aspects. As we start the discussion about how critical and crucial the first experience of

teaching towards students' future teaching profession, Quick and Sieborger (2005) asserted that those experiences may affect students' performance during teaching practice and may in the long run affect their perception of the teaching profession.

Besides discussing the difficulties in teaching practicum, our very first discussion was disclosed by some positive statements about teaching practicum. Those positive statements indicate that teaching practicum is high-priced feature in teacher education. This is because teaching practicum provides an opportunity to students to increase either personal development or teaching skill. Hamaidi, Al-Shara, Arouri, & Awwad (2014) asserted that teaching practicum provides an opportunity to the students to examine and to practice their theoretical journey into the real teaching processes. This opportunity to experience teaching practicum could help the students in the future teaching as they had previous experiences during teaching practicum.

Based on the researcher's written survey, the second year students had experienced several feelings and emotions during the first year experience of teaching. This research aimed to identify the second year students' difficulties and benefits during the first year experience of teaching practicum comprehensively. Thus, the researcher would like to investigate through the second year students' perspective whether their experiences in the first year experience of teaching practicum would contribute to their teaching performance in the second year. The researcher wanted to investigate the contribution of students' teaching experiences to their teaching practicum performance since those two teaching practicums have different context to teach.

### **Problems Identification**

In the process of conducting teaching practicum program, many studies argued that the students are often times assisted by the program although certain problems are also encountered during the process. In spite of the differences method applied by many teacher

education, but the students are mainly in the same way of being too inexperienced during the teaching practicum. Ganal (2009) described the difficulties towards the teaching practicum as the financial adjustment, students' classroom management, communication skills, instructional skills, different feeling and emotion. It can be classified to the context of being too inexperienced that referred to the students performance during teaching practicum. This is because the students would eventually perceive an unusual situation where they need to perform in front of the class as a teacher by bringing small amount of experience in teaching.

The difficulties in conducting teaching practicum would not only affect the students' present time where they conduct the teaching practicum program. As for the experiences of teaching practicum would continue to live in their memory for period of times, in a due time those experiences would contribute influencing the students' perspective towards the future teaching. Quick and Sieborger (2005) said that those difficulties may affect students' performance during teaching practicum and may in the long run affect their perception of the teaching profession. These are the difficulties that students would need to deal either immediate or later on for period of times.

### **Problem Limitation**

The researcher specified the discussion focus on second year students at English Education Department in one the private universities at Yogyakarta. This private university conducted diverse policy of teaching practicum method from 2010 up to the 2014 by producing three times of teaching practicum. The three times of teaching practicum is designed to teach at elementary school on the first year, junior high school on the second year, and senior high school on the third year. Thus, teaching experiences in this research refers to the first year teaching practicum on the elementary school. Furthermore, the researcher will not involve the students that experienced in teaching at private course since teaching practicum at university and teaching at private are two different things.

Teaching practicum can be broadly studied, however in this research, the researcher would only focus on looking at the contribution of teaching experiences towards teaching practicum performance in the second year. This means that the researcher would conduct a research about the contribution of the first year students' teaching experiences at elementary school to their performance on teaching practicum in the second year. However, the researcher would start the study to find out the difficulties and benefits of the students in the first year of teaching practicum.

### **The Research Questions**

The research questions on this study are constructed as follows:

- a. What are the students' perspectives about **the difficulties and benefits** towards their first year experience of teaching practicum?
- b. To what extent do the first-year teaching experiences influenced the students' teaching performance in the second year?

### **The Purpose of the Research**

This research aims to discover two purposes as follows:

- a. To identify the students' perspectives about **the difficulties and benefits** towards their first year experience of teaching practicum.
- b. To analyze the contribution of the first-year experiences of teaching practicum to the students' teaching performance in the second year.

### **The Significance of the Research**

This research aims is to the readers who are interested in teaching practicum program. In general purpose, this study is presented to the students who were, are, and would experience teaching practicum, the institution, teacher mentor and supervising teacher, and the other researchers.

**The students.** This study serves some important information about teaching practicum. It is expected that the study would be helpful for the students in producing information towards teaching practicum in general. The finding of this research would let the students know about difficulties and benefits regarding teaching practicum, so they can minimize the limitations and prepare themselves to do the teaching practicum.

**The institution.** The findings of the research may serve as reference to evaluate the teaching practicum method in the future. Although multiple changes have been made in the present time, the researcher hopes that this study would help the institution to provide references as comparison material.

**Teacher mentor and supervising teacher.** This study expects that teacher mentor from the school and supervising teacher from the university could take this research as their references to guide the students, as this study provides information about the difficulties and benefits that involves in teaching practicum.

**The other researcher.** There are many researchers conducting study that regarding the teaching practicum. However, based on the researcher experience in conducting this research, there are limited sources that can be used as references. This research expects that other researcher would use this research as one of their references.

