

Exploring EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Critical Incidents in Microteaching Practicum

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Abstract

This paper analyzes pre-service teachers' critical incidents as reflected in their e-portfolios during their teaching simulation in the microteaching course. Three cycles of teaching practice were scheduled for each pre-service teacher. Thirty-six pre-service teachers' critical incidents and e-portfolios were analyzed. Data were collected mainly from their e-portfolios containing their critical incidents. In addition, observations and focus group discussions were conducted to triangulate and confirm the students' critical incidents. Results showed that of the total 130 critical incidents, 60 occurred in their first, 38 in their second, and 34 in their third teaching cycle. It indicates that the pre-service teachers struggle more at the beginning of their teaching practicum, go through the learning process, and develop their understanding of teaching. In addition, the pre-service teachers are empowered by obtaining the ability to sense the theoretical and practical gaps in teaching, indicate teaching problems and complexity, become aware of the challenging classroom management issues, and future professional development. This study highlights the importance of reflective practices such as critical incident analyses to be induced in teacher training programs. Through critical incident identification, pre-service teachers are trained to develop their reflection-on-action skills, pedagogical awareness and choices and sharpen their sense of teaching problems, particularly when encountering theory-practice gaps.

Keywords: critical incidents; microteaching practicum; pre-service teachers; reflective practice; theory-practice gaps

Introduction

For teachers, updating professional skills through professional development initiatives such as keeping teaching journals, conducting action research, and analyzing critical incidents

can help teachers make appropriate decisions for their pedagogical choices (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Such initiatives, widely acknowledged as reflective practice and indicated as necessary skills in teacher training programs, have been extensively used in various contexts to empower both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers in ESL and EFL contexts (Collin et al., 2013). Reflective practice applied in pre-service teachers can also indicate their development of scope and levels of reflection (De Ville, 2010). For pre-service and in-service teachers, reflective practice can help

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them think critically about their teaching practices, be fully responsible for their classroom decisions, become more confident in performing their profession, and continue improving their professional practices (Farrell, 2008; Geyer, 2008).

Critical incident analysis is a tool extensively used to prepare and support teachers to develop their professionalism among varied types of reflective practice. Critical incidents have been identified to help teachers become more ready to face problems they encounter in classrooms (Farrell, 2008). Critical incidents have also transformed in-service teachers in Hong Kong to become more engaged in their professional development and changed their classroom practices along with improved awareness they obtained from their previous experiences (Yu, 2018). In a Taiwanese teacher education program, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory learning framework for writing critical incidents, doing observation, and interviews were used to examine if there were influences on teacher professional development after a discussion and analysis of critical incidents. Results indicate development on several issues, such as classroom management, instructional strategies, and solutions to problems in the fields (Chien, 2014). Additional talk with teachers and students' emotional management through critical incident analysis of pre-service teachers results in the presence of professional discourse, decision-making, and the process of reconstructing practices (Harrison & Lee, 2011). It is, therefore, urgent for pre-service teachers to be trained and to experience the process of doing reflections through critical incidents on their teaching practices. By acquiring these

skills, they are expected to have the capability to solve problems in their future professions.

Critical incidents, referred to as classroom events that can change one's life (Tripp, 2006), examine the theory and practice integration and the potential to be used as an assessment tool (Lister & Crisp, 2007). A study on critical incidents scrutinized from complexity theory indicates that critical incidents of teachers' experience vary and correspondingly impact their cognition. Students, colleagues, policies, professional development practices, teachers' cognition, and learner parents are to mention several main aspects of teachers' critical incidents (Karimi & Nazari, 2021). Similarly, critical incidents raise awareness when their beliefs initiate changes. (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Critical reflection has been extensively used in various teacher-educational contexts, dating back to Dewey's concept of reflective teachers whose characteristics are open-minded, responsible, and wholehearted (Dewey, 1910). Reflective practices in teacher training programs have proven crucial and beneficial for professional development.

Studies on using critical reflection using critical incidents were also conducted in pre-service teacher training programs (Bruster & Peterson, 2013; Hall & Townsend, 2017) and in-service teachers in the profession (Williams & Grierson, 2016; Yu, 2018). Reflections on critical incidents can help teachers identify trivial events that potentially change perceptions and practices of teaching and learning (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Identifying critical incidents and responding to classroom problems is indicated to help the development of teachers in the profession. Through critical incidents, students' emergent practices, general concepts of

teaching, and adapted teaching techniques can be revealed (Hall & Townsend, 2017). It can be concluded that critical incidents are important for pre-service teachers to prepare them to become reflective teachers in the profession. Besides, it is also essential for teacher training programs to consider including reflective practices using critical incidents in their program.

Through stories of their classroom experiences, teacher trainees can indicate their best practices and reflect on their future professional development (Kılıç & Cinkara, 2020). The critical incident analyses of four pre-service teachers in their Microteaching course show that language proficiency issues, teaching preparation, teaching delivery, and student participation are four major issues demanding urgent handling. Critical incidents were also used as a form of critical reflection in pre-service teacher education programs, resulting in 38 critical incidents, with the most critical occurrences of course delivery problems, students' participation, course preparation problems, and proficiency problems (Permatasari, 2018). A recent study on CI in teacher education programs shows that critical incidents have contributed to pre-service teachers teaching development and identity awareness (Megawati et al., 2020). Critical incident analyses through professional conversations within peer groups in initial teacher education have also indicated a better understanding of pre-service teachers' teaching practices and why classroom management issues become their concern, including their emotions when teaching (Harrison & Lee, 2011). Critical incident identification indicates graduate and undergraduate students'

sensitivity to initial critical incidents. However, they still need to learn to notice which incidents may significantly impact the next learning (Finch, 2010).

Meanwhile, positive and negative critical incidents help pre-service teachers shape their identity (Megawati et al., 2020). Common critical incidents identified by pre-service teachers include delivery problems, student participation, language proficiency problems, and course preparation problems (Permatasari, 2018). Despite those recent attempts to investigate teachers' critical incidents (Finch, 2010; Megawati et al., 2020; Permatasari, 2018; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011), implementation of critical incidents in teacher training programs, particularly in Indonesia, remains limited (Wijaya & Kuswandono, 2018). Hence, regarding the varied benefits of critical incident analyses for pre-service teachers' teaching experiences and the need for more empirical grounding in this field, this study aims to investigate pre-service teachers' critical incidents to help understand the development of their teaching practices and enhance their cognitions. This study aims to find out what critical incidents are experienced by the EFL pre-service teachers during their three-cycle teaching simulation and how teaching practicum impacts the EFL pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and language learning.

Method

Research design

Referring to previous similar studies on critical incidents and the goal of this study—to explore how pre-service teachers perceive their teaching experiences, this study employed qualitative study, particularly the

phenomenological approach. Phenomenology focusing on critical incidents is suitable for investigating and finding the participants' shared perceptions (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2023). Following Creswell (2013), this study views critical incidents as the phenomena described in the participants' reflections. The pre-service teachers' experience in identifying and giving meanings to their teaching, their feelings, and the detailed description through reflection leads to meaningful lived experiences (Heidegger, 1962).

Research Context

The context of this study was a Microteaching class that met twice a week for 100 minutes each session for 14 weeks. The first three meetings were allocated for the teaching practicum preparation and ensured that all pre-service teachers understood the procedures, the teaching practicum processes, the recording sessions, and the grading. Schedules were made to cater to all pre-service teachers teaching practice sessions with an average of the same time allocation. Each teaching practice lasted 20-30 minutes, followed by 5-10-minute oral feedback from peers and the lecturer. Before the feedback, they were asked to express their feelings and emotions and reflect on their practices.

The teaching practicum lasted for four months. Scaffolded learning is provided, such as mentoring sessions for lesson planning, Teaching media preparation, and teaching material adaptation processes to prepare the pre-service teachers to acquire pedagogical knowledge and experience for their future professional careers. In addition, to cater to varied cultural, social, and economic gaps and contexts of Indonesian students at schools and

to prepare students with contextual pedagogical knowledge, three teaching cycles were to be simulated using low technology, teaching practice using high technology, and teaching practice with classmates playing assigned roles as, for example, unmotivated students, low proficient students, and misbehaved students. Teaching using low technology uses traditional media such as printed pictures, realia, papers, pens, and board games. No electronic or digital media were allowed to be used.

In contrast, high technology teaching involves using digital devices and applications such as computers, mobile phones, slides, the internet, online games, and other interactive educational media such as Kahoot, Quizziz, Google Forms, and social media. Using role plays refers to teaching with peers acting as students in a simulated classroom. Each student was assigned roles for varied characteristics such as active, passive, low proficient, high proficient, and misbehaved students.

Participants

There were 36 Indonesian pre-service teachers (Year 3), 14 male and 22 female, who were 22 – 25 years old, taking Microteaching courses, participated in this research. Bahasa Indonesia was their first language, and English as a foreign language. The data of this study were obtained from two parallel Microteaching classes (a four-credit compulsory course). To obtain ethics for research data, the researcher asked the participants' permission to use their e-portfolios, explained how to use the data, and that their identities were covered. All students confirmed their consent to participate in this study.

Instruments

The instrument of this study was critical incident portfolios adapted from Hall & Townsend (2017) (see Table 1). Three cycles of teaching practice unavailable in Hall & Townsend's framework were added, and the category of teaching concepts and practices was made into one category. This adaptation

was because changes in teaching concepts were likely to manifest in teaching practices. In addition to the critical incident form, the research participants were required to complete a table containing the changes before and after three components (their teaching, their beliefs about language learning, and their worldview) (see Table 2).

Table 1

Critical Incident form adapted from Hall & Townsend (2017)

Cycle	This should be filled with the Teaching Cycle 1, 2, or 3
Category*	Categories can be selected from the samples provided, or a new category can be added.
Incident	This should contain the description of the incident that occurred.
Significance	This should contain how you felt and why this incident was important.
Result	This should contain an explanation of the changes in your teaching, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, etc.
Categories:	
Changes in my teaching concepts and practices	
Changes in my worldview	
Changes in my understanding of engaging topics	
Changes in my understanding of the school (classes, rules, education system, teachers, etc.)	

Table 2

Beliefs about Language Learning adapted from Hall & Townsend (2017)

Before	Components	After
	My Teaching	
	My Beliefs about Language Learning	
	My worldview	

Data Collection

In this study, several stages of data collection were employed. First, the pre-service teachers had three cycles of teaching practices. Second, all their teaching practices were observed and recorded. Third, the researcher held a workshop on uncovering critical incidents during teaching practices before critical incident identification. Fourth, the pre-service teachers watched their teaching videos,

filled in the critical incident sheets, and had a group discussion with the researcher. Fifth, all the critical incident forms were collected and ready to be analyzed.

Data Analysis

This study employed adapted critical incident categories of Hall and Townsend (2017) and Tripp's critical incident analysis, that is, the why challenge. The challenge is included in the critical incident form under the term

significance of incidents (see Table 1). The frequency of the critical incidence occurrence based on Hall and Townsend's categories was tallied. Meanwhile, the why challenge and the explanation provided by the participants were analyzed inductively following the thematic analysis of Braun & Clarke (2006). Then, themes and sub-themes from the participants' critical incident reports and group discussion notes were generated. Member checking to ensure the trustworthiness of this study was conducted by sharing the results of the findings with the participants and asking for the participants' comments and objections.

Table 3

Frequency of critical incidents

Cycle	Class A	Class B	Frequency
Cycle 1	33	27	60
Cycle 2	19	19	38
Cycle 3	23	11	34

Table 4.

Frequency of critical incidents based on categories

Category	Frequency
Changes in teaching concepts and practices	94
Changes in worldview	3
Changes in understanding of engaging topics	9
Changes in understanding of the school (classes, rules, education system, teachers, etc.)	14
Changes in understanding of Classroom Management issues*	11
Changes in understanding of teaching style*	1
Total of changes	132

Table 4 indicates that the most frequent critical incidents based on the categories of Hall and Townsend (2017) are the changes in teaching concepts and practices (94 times). In contrast, the changes in the worldview category are the fewest (3 times). Two categories

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Critical incidents of EFL pre-service teachers' experience during their three-cycle teaching simulation.

Results from the analysis of 36 pre-service teachers' critical incidents were accordingly collected, tallied, categorized, and analyzed. The tally of the critical incidents in each teaching cycle is illustrated in Table 3. From the table, it can be illustrated that critical incidents occurred most frequently in Teaching Cycle 1 (60 times), followed by Teaching Cycle 2 (38 times), and Teaching Cycle 3 (34 times).

generated from the participants' critical incidents are changes in the understanding of classroom management issues (11 times) and the understanding of teaching style (1 time).

Based on the critical incident reports, the changes in teaching concepts and practices

comprise teaching media, grouping issues, teaching materials, language instruction, teaching preparation, setting teaching goals, and creating appropriate tasks. The incidents are presented in excerpts in which the sentences were revised to meet the comprehensible and grammatical sentences without changing the original meanings. The following are the incidents and the significance collected from the participants' accounts.

Pre-service teachers realized that grouping strategies need immediate decisions as problems may appear in the middle of teaching. Although previously prepared, grouping students before an activity may be problematic when a few students are absent, and the number of students may also affect how the activity will be executed.

When I intended to group my students, it turned out that not all students were present. I had to repeat shaking the Random Name Picker Wheel (an online application for choosing a name of a person) until it mentioned the students who were in the class (Critical Incident, Student 5)

Another concern that pre-service teachers need to be considered in teaching preparation is teaching materials. Inappropriate texts or audio/videos may negatively impact students' perception of learning and how they see the world. A lack of skills to select appropriate teaching materials may result in negative responses.

I chose a topic about asking and giving opinions, and I chose a theme about 'Bullying'. I realized that it's a sensitive issue to be taught for the students. I chose a video about bullying with a

shooting scene, which is inappropriate because it may be traumatic for some students. I think we need to be careful to choose learning materials. Teachers must carefully consider sensitive issues that could possibly build negative perspectives for the students (Focus Group Discussion, Student 5)

Detailed procedures to teach using media are crucial for pre-service teachers as general or random media picked for teaching may lead to students' misperception of classroom activities.

I did not give the student a flash card that contained a theme for their dialogue, instead, I gave them a random theme by mentioning some places. I felt terrible about it because it seemed that the students were slightly confused because I only mentioned places without contexts. I should have given them a specific theme along with the condition and situation for certain tasks to help students fully understand the task (Critical Incident, Student 12).

Critical incident analyses can provide students with the precaution of unorganized teaching. They have mixed up teaching procedures, missing teaching materials, and anxiety. Therefore, pre-service teachers must understand the significance of preparation before teaching and the impacts when it is not carried out.

I think I have missed something. When explained the materials, I just remembered to explain the characteristics, language features, generic structure, and I did not explain the formal announcement part. Because I was panicking, I used 80% Bahasa

Indonesia. Now I believe that I need to practice a lot from far before I start my teaching practice. I need to have a small note about my teaching steps to anticipate my forgetfulness and get used to speaking English (Focus Group Discussion, Student 2)

In the same way, language instruction is the classroom discourse that pre-service needs to acquire. Using bilinguals may also help students in some ways. The pre-service teacher's account proves this.

I forgot that I had to use English when teaching. I understand that I should refrain from using Bahasa Indonesia when teaching. Thus, the students also learn the language... however, students will understand better when English is used. When some parts are difficult, I can use Bahasa Indonesia (Critical Incident, Student 6)

Bringing along teaching goals throughout the sessions is the key to learning objective accomplishment. This awareness can help pre-service teachers focus on achieving learning objectives and keeping track of teaching processes.

I taught the students about talking about self. I told the student, "Okay, this would be for describing a person" at the practice stage. Then, I said different things at the production stage "to introduce yourself". I think I have missed the teaching goal while teaching them. The purpose of the learning in the presentation and practice stages was not clear. So, it is like floating in the shallow river (not deep) (Critical Incident, Student 28)

For pre-service teachers, paying attention to the students while teaching at the same time may not be an easy act. Split concentration and attention to teaching materials, delivery, and classroom management need many right practices.

I did not pay full attention to my students while I was explaining the material; and some were talking to each other and some were busy with their own gadgets. I think this may commonly occur so I should be more aware of my surroundings especially my students...I will approach the students who are busy talking and playing with their own gadget and ask a few questions about the material to check their understanding of the material. I will pay attention more to students so they will be more focused on the learning process (Critical Incident, Student 12)

All students in classrooms must hear teachers' voices. Learning is likely to be significantly disturbed when unheard, and misunderstanding tasks may cause failure to achieve learning objectives.

I did not speak loudly. My voice needed to be louder for such a big classroom; therefore, my students did not listen clearly to what I explained. As a teacher, I should speak loudly because it dramatically affects my students (Critical Incidents, Student 19)

From the excerpts, as described in the participants' critical incidents, changes in the teaching concepts and practices, changes in the understanding of the school, changes in the understanding of classroom management issues, and changes in the understanding of

engaging topics have become the most concerned emergent problems addressed by the pre-service teachers. With as many as 94, 14, 11, and 9 occurrences during their three teaching cycles, respectively, these changes should become the major focus for improving the pre-service teachers' teaching practices as they are likely to occur repeatedly. Moreover, different contexts of classrooms, characteristics of students, and learning environments can significantly affect the teaching processes.

Two new categories were generated from the participants' critical incidents—changes in understanding of classroom management issues and teaching style. What is more interesting is that the classroom management issues are indicated by several sub-categories, as mentioned by the participants in their critical incident reports. There are six sub-categories, including dealing with misbehaved students (2 times), time management three times, classroom engagement (once), instructional strategies (2 times), teacher's attention (once), and teacher's voice (once) (see Table 4). It may indicate that classroom management issues are worth dealing. Meanwhile, the teaching style proposed by a pre-service teacher can be specified as typical rather than general of the critical incidents.

EFL pre-service teachers' teaching beliefs and values

The critical incidents by the participants show several changes in the pre-service teachers' teaching and language learning beliefs. First, the belief is that teaching has many properties and needs preparation. Second, the shift of teaching definition before and after the pre-service teachers took microteaching courses and experienced

teaching practicum. Third, the change of perceptions of teaching. Fourth, the change of the perceptions of the theory and practice of teaching, the growth of the affective domain, and the teaching preparedness. The sample of students' beliefs before and after the teaching practicum is illustrated in Table 5.

Some students also indicate that they learn teaching values from their reflection, such as professional development vision, management of emotion, and the issue of teaching styles. A student, Sarah realizes that she needs to prepare for her professional development, as she expresses in her reflection.

"After I had done my teaching practice, my mindset changed. I should not be an individualist nor an ego-centric future teacher. I should think about my next generations, make them smart, and change their mindset that learning was not something boring." (Sarah)

Self-control on nervousness when teaching is another issue addressed by the students. Sonia shows her nervousness and how she manages to embrace her nervousness.

"I felt nervous and stammering. I did not feel confident when a whole class was looking at me... but after the practicum I can control my confidence, and it's like the whole class is my body, so I can control or manage the class as I want." (Sonia)

Another interesting issue found in the students' reflection is teaching styles. Debby exemplifies how she learns from her classmates and understands that teaching style is unique to each teacher.

"During the microteaching class, I saw my classmates' performance. They have different teaching style, so I think I could adopt some

teaching styles of my classmates. I realize that the teaching style constructs how teachers deliver materials or manage the class and influences the class's nuances and learning

experience, too. Teaching style could be one of the rarest materials taught explicitly in the classroom.” (Debby)

Table 5

The sample of students' beliefs before and after the teaching practicum

Before	Components	After
I didn't know how to manage the class, and I didn't know how to be a good teacher. I couldn't manage a lot of students' characters. I thought if I taught students, all of them should be treated equally. I also didn't know how to move from one teaching stage to another, and from warmer to production smoothly.	My Teaching	After I saw my friends' teaching practice before me, I understood that before my turn to teaching simulation, I had to prepare my media to teach as much as possible such as preparing lesson plans, choosing topics that were interesting and made the media as creative as possible. I also had to learn to be ready to face the limited conditions of students such as learning with or without technology.
It was very difficult for me to adapt to a new language. To be fluent in English is not easy. I needed a long time to get used to it. I would quickly remember if I saw other people speaking English rather than having to learn from books or videos and audio.	My Beliefs about language learning	After I stepped into the 6th semester at PBI UII, my English skills were pretty good because I was surrounded by people who always used English. The lectures always use English, so I am used to it and get a lot of new vocabulary.
I didn't like to be a teacher because I thought being a teacher was boring and not interesting. I didn't like teaching others. I thought being a teacher was a troublesome thing for me because I had to prepare lesson plans, make exam questions etc.	My world view	After all this time, I had been involved in the world of education. I understood how noble it was to be a teacher, I felt that being a teacher was very fun because we taught new things to others. It required us to be creative and care about our students etc.

Meanwhile, the spectrum of the pre-service teachers' perception of language learning varies. It can be categorized into the importance of language learning, the aspects of language learning, and expanded perceptions of language learning. They have become more aware that language learning is important, necessary, varied, complex, and crucial for

future career development. In addition, learning languages can be more fun and interesting when done using media, when the motivation to learn is maintained and encouraged, and when exposure is given in varied ways and types. Language learning is also believed to have several aspects that serve as the building blocks for language mastery,

such as structure, rules, strategies, proficiency levels, and characteristics of language learners. In addition, they believe that language learning involves learning about societies and their culture. Interestingly, a pre-service teacher believes that the change of one's dialect does not necessarily indicate language learning success into that of the native speakers; instead, it is the transfer of meaning that matters, and communication does not experience a breakdown.

Discussion

Pedagogical beliefs, including teachers' knowledge, skills, and abilities in managing teaching and learning (Loughran, 2013), play a significant role in teachers' success in their professional lives. The findings of this research show that the changes in teaching concepts and practice lie in pedagogical concerns such as knowledge of teaching media and materials, setting teaching goals, and how to create relevant classroom tasks. Similarly, the skills to select grouping strategies and use effective classroom language to instruct students become pre-service teachers' concerns. However, it is indicated that pre-service teachers' personal beliefs can influence their pedagogical beliefs (Pajares, 1992). More importantly, pre-service teachers' complex beliefs and understanding of pedagogy and pedagogical teaching goals often intertwine, making them more resistant to change (Thompson & Pascal, 2012).

Regarding this, Wubbels (1992) suggests that pre-service teachers are required to have the ability to bridge the theory-practice gaps to construct their new pedagogical beliefs. With this skill to identify and deal with theory-practice gaps, pre-service teachers must make

sense of their teaching experiences (Kourieos, 2016) and deal with real classroom problems (Korucu-Kış, 2021). In short, although pre-service teachers' personal beliefs may affect their pedagogical beliefs, it does not always mean that they can not change or will never change.

Pre-service teachers may change their pedagogical beliefs when encountering real gaps between their ideal concept of pedagogy and the realities of teaching in classrooms (Tarman, 2012). Although few studies confirm that pre-service teachers' beliefs can not be changed by teacher education programs (Peacock, 2001) and that professional development programs may not yield specific outcomes (Sansom, 2020), their beliefs can be shaped by their studentship experiences (Urmston, 2003). In addition, changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs may focus on certain concerns, such as grammar beliefs and practices (Nazari Boustani, & Shaikhi, 2022). Similar changes in pre-service teachers before and after teaching practicum also include student management, teaching evaluation, and student learning (Qiu et al., 2021). Harmonizing teacher education programs with real classroom experiences and pre-service teachers' negotiation and adaptation of what they learn in teacher education programs and how they deal with emerging teaching problems are a great way to construct expected pedagogical beliefs.

Classroom management issues, as indicated by this study finding, also become the most encountered situation in classroom teaching. As described in this study's findings, pre-service teachers know how they manage the time during teaching practices, how difficult it is to

engage students in a classroom activity, and how rules should be consistently applied. Instructions should be clear and procedural so students can follow correctly and appropriately. Likewise, they become more aware that teachers are supposed to have the competencies to creatively group students to align with classroom activities, use the target language more than the mother tongue, select and create qualified and appropriate teaching materials, control the right pitch for the classroom size, share equal attention, and be on the right track to achieve learning goals. Such reflections bring greater influence not only to the pre-service teachers' current pedagogical and conceptual knowledge but also to the holistic perspectives on teaching in varied contexts. Doyle (2006) confirms that many classroom occurrences are often unpredictable and unscripted. Therefore, improvisation during teaching is necessary for pre-service teachers to acquire. Torres-Goens and Farley (2017) perpetuate that reflective practice can expand individual learning awareness and accountability and possibly change teaching perspectives. Critical incidents can function as reflective tools and practices for pre-service teachers to raise the self-awareness of their teaching and prepare for their future career development.

The pre-service teachers' change of beliefs in teaching and language learning is likely to result from the thread of experiences and exposures of teaching practicum and the whole process of learning about teaching during their teacher training program. In addition, the critical incidents have trained them to critically reflect on what occurred in classrooms and what should and should not occur. Making

meaning of past experiences influences their teaching and language learning beliefs. Aligned with the concept of reflection proposed by John Dewey and summarized by Rodgers (2002), reflection involves the meaning-making process occurring in the array of past experiences and ideas in continuing the learning process that shapes people's beliefs now and in the future.

The pre-service teachers' cognition has activated the notion of professional development needs. Reflective practices also help pre-service teachers prepare for their professional development (Farrell, 2009), and critical incidents are reflective practices for pre-service teachers during their practicum sessions. With sufficient training during their pre-service education, such critical incidents knowledge and experiences are expected to provide them with soft skills supporting their professional development endeavors. It can assist pre-service teachers in crafting their career paths since they are still learning in a teacher training program by building the blocks to reach a better future. Based on the insight of critical reflection (Russell, 2017), in which critical thinking should extend the thinking of ideas and acts of the present, the past, and the future, critical incidents during teaching practices can be regarded as critical reflection practices. Teaching practices, which are implementing teaching concepts into classroom activities as seen in the lesson plans, teaching materials, instructions, assessments, interactions, and strategies, bring along ideas from past experiences and the present understanding of good teaching. In addition, critical incidents require pre-service teachers to reflect on the teaching practices by bringing along possible improvements, corrections,

reflections, and evaluations for future teaching opportunities in the professional development framework.

Conclusion

This paper concludes with several highlights on what critical incident analyses have contributed to the changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching. Critical incidents as a form of reflective practice in teacher education programs have significantly helped students curb the gap between teaching theories and practices. In addition, reflecting on their teaching practices has stimulated their sense of teaching problems and complexity. More interestingly, classroom management skills and the importance of professional development have also been brought to the awareness-raising level, allowing pre-service teachers to prepare and plan for their future teaching challenges.

Results reveal that pre-service teachers learn most intensively in their first cycle of teaching practices. Of 132 critical incident occurrences, changes in the teaching concepts and practices rank the highest. It shows that teaching practicum is all about manifesting concepts into practice. What they learn in theories might be different from what they had expected. Context-bound issues such as systems and regulations, as well as classroom management issues, become their second and third concerned incidents as those have raised their awareness and made them think of the need for improvement.

No less important are the changes in their language teaching and learning beliefs. Teaching, as the pre-service teachers were formerly assumed as "simple instructions

asking students to learn," is then perceived as a complex, dedicated, and noble duty followed by many corresponding consequences. Similarly, language learning is believed to be more complicated yet can be made fun of by teachers when planning and execution meet the learning goals and help students succeed academically.

Critical incidents seem to work well for pre-service teachers in this study context. However, as this study has limitations, there could be more incidents left unidentified and unexplored due to the limited skills of the pre-service teachers, time constraints from the lecturers in providing scaffolding throughout the whole process of teaching, and further investigation to deeply explore teaching experiences after the first, second, and third critical incident identifications and reflections.

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