

# **Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions on Implementing Student Centered Learning (SCL)**

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## **Abstract**

Student-Centered Learning (SCL) is one of the approaches used by pre-service teachers during teaching practicum. This study aims to investigate pre-service teachers' perceptions on implementing SCL in their teaching practicum. Second, it aims to investigate pre-service teachers' perceptions on the difficulties they had when implementing SCL. Last, it aims to investigate pre-service teachers' perceptions on the solution to solve the difficulties in implementing SCL. This study used qualitative descriptive design. The interview was used as the data collection method. In this study, the researcher used interview guideline as the research instrument. The participants were four pre-service teachers of a private university in Yogyakarta. The findings showed conceptual understanding of SCL perceived by pre-service teachers' perceptions was that the method that make students participate actively in teaching learning process. That method also focuses on the students, where the role of the teacher is only as a facilitator and controller in the activity of students. The activities in implementing SCL based on pre-service teachers' perceptions included making group or peer discussion to answer the question and making creative poster. Games also became one of the activities in implementing SCL. Pre-service teachers felt happy when they

succeeded in implementing SCL, although they felt tired and nervous in the beginning of implemented SCL in their teaching practicum. The difficulties faced by pre-service teachers in implementing SCL, were making students participate actively, controlling the students, preparing the materials, and making students understand about the instructions. The solutions to solve the difficulties in implementing SCL based on pre-service teachers' perceptions were conducting the activities that make students more active, finding more resources of the material, controlling the students and repeating the instruction until students understand.

Keyword: SCL, Pre-service teacher, teaching practicum

## **1. Introduction**

SCL is one of the methods that are implemented by teachers to teach their students. This teaching method differs from the others, in that it focuses on the students and not the teachers themselves. In this era, SCL is very popular in the education world. This method is also used not only in Indonesia, but also in other countries as well. In this method, the teacher acts only as a facilitator and instructor for the students in a learning process. The instructor provides students with opportunities to learn independently and from one another, as well as coaching students in the skills they needed to perform effectively (Froyd & Simpson, 2008). In addition, SCL is very important in language learning. This is due to the opportunities SCL gives that can train the students' activeness. As said by Neo and Kian (2003), in SCL courses, students play an active part in their learning process and become autonomous learners. Besides, SCL can make the students implement the theories and materials given by the teacher in real life situations. SCL also helps the students implement their ability in their daily life. Therefore, not only are the students able to implement SCL in a school environment, but they can also implement it in their daily life with their friends. The activeness of the students should be trained to improve their confidence and what they learned from SCL approach. It can make students more active in their environment

Pre-service teachers are the students who study to become a teacher in the future. Pre-service teacher education courses aim to prepare graduates to become qualified teachers (Bransford, Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005). Based on the researcher's experience and observations, there are some problems and difficulties faced by pre-service teachers when implementing SCL in their language teaching practicum. The first problem is that pre-service teachers cannot control the students in the classroom. The second problem is that pre-service teachers do not understand that SCL is important to support the learning process. The third problem is that many pre-service teachers have no idea what kind of teaching strategies they should use when teaching the students in the classroom.

This study aims to investigate the pre-service teachers' perceptions on implementing SCL in their teaching practicum. The second aim is about pre-service teachers' perceptions on the difficulties they may have in implementing SCL. This study also aims to examine the solution to solve the difficulties of implementing SCL based on pre-service teachers' perceptions.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***Student-centered Learning (SCL)***

SCL is one of the methods used by experienced teachers and pre-service teacher in the learning process. It is a method that places the students as the main role in learning process. According to Nanney (2004), SCL is a broad teaching approach that encompasses replacing lectures with active learning, integrating self-paced learning programs and/or cooperative group situations. In addition, Bronowski (2010) argued that SCL implemented to build on the idea that learners must construct and reconstruct knowledge in order to learn effectively, with learning being most effective, as part of an activity.

Implementing SCL is important because the students will be a more active participant and learn autonomously. It is also supported by Neo and Kian (2003) that in student-centered learning mode, students play an active part in their learning process and become autonomous learners who are actively engaged in constructing new meaning within the context of their current knowledge, experiences and social environments. They also mentioned that learners are

encouraged to seek information and knowledge on their own. Besides that, learners can determine how to reach the desired learning outcomes themselves and build upon their prior knowledge. Teachers also supply them with what they already know actively construct their own understanding.

SCL can benefit pre-service teachers in the teaching and learning process. Plush and Kehrwald (2014) argued that the use of student-centered learning (SCL) activities is increasing in tertiary education. In other words, this can be attributed to a shift from a focus on the activity of teaching, particularly in the form of teachers' structuring and presentation of knowledge, to process of learning, with a focus on learners' characteristic, experiences and effort to make sense of what they encounter in educational settings (Barr & Tagg, 1995). In other hand, Hewitt-Taylor (2001) as cited in Lalopa (2005), one of the challenges of adopting student-centered assessment strategies is the students' misconception about what it is. Some students do not understand the concept of SCL. LaLopa (2005) also argued that the teacher needs to orient students to the learning and assessment methodologies so that they understand the reason Student-Centered approaches are being used with intended benefit that is clearly articulated.

### ***Pre-service Teacher***

Pre-service teachers are students who are learning to become a teacher. Students will get the knowledge on how to teach the students with practice in the classroom. According to Britzman as cited in Ozbas (2015), pre-service teacher is the people who join to a process of becoming a teacher or a time of formation and transformation, into what one is doing, and who can become. Inayah (2016) also argued that pre-service teachers were a college student who prepares themselves to be a teacher.

In education, pre-service teachers need to themselves prepare to be a teacher. It is supported by Inayah (2016) pre-service teachers need well understanding in a lesson plan, classroom management, curriculum, mediation, material, and even student's psychology. In other hand "Pre-service teachers are required to demonstrate their ability to reach professional standards before they qualify to graduate into the teaching profession" (Jackson, Simoncini & Davidson, as cited in Inayah, 2016, p. 6-7).

Almost all of pre-service teachers have problems in conducting the teaching practice. Ganal, Andaya and Guiab (2016) have the experience problems and difficulties as regards instruction, classroom management, learning outcomes education, school, learners, teachers and community adjustment etc. In addition, their study mentioned that the problems and difficulties that happen in conducting teaching practice are encountered related to homesickness, financial adjustment, learners, classroom management, communication skills, instructional skills, instructional materials and evaluation tools preparation and analysis of test result, different feelings and emotions, and on adjustment to the cooperating school as a whole.

### ***Related Previous Studies***

This study also related with some previous study. In this study, the researcher showed two related previous study. First, it was about the impact of SCL on academic achievement and social skills. That study has written by Asoodeh H, Asoodeh B, & Zarepour in 2012. The purpose of that study is investigating what the effects of SCL on academic achievement and social skills in 2nd elementary. That study conducted in Shahid Atashdast Shousf School in 2010. The participants of that study were the students 2nd elementary of Shahid Atashdast Shousf School. That study lasted for three months. The result of that study showed that this approach was successful and effectual as a technique toward teaching pupils in 2nd elementary. According to what have been done, cooperative learning through performance of pupils provides the opportunity for social acceptance and self-confidence and also improved mental ability.

Second previous study was about challenges of implementing student-centered strategies in classroom. That study has written by Kumar in December 2016. The purpose of that study is investigating what the challenges teachers and students faced in implementing student-centered method in English classes. That study conducted in Agazi preparatory school in Adigrat Eithopia. The participants of that study were the teachers of Agazi preparatory school in Adigrat Eithopia. That study showed that most of the students were not interested to learn through

student-centered method due to different factors, such as sense of fear lack of interest and confidence and mother tongue influence. To minimize the problem, teachers created different techniques to make students participants and encouraged the learners to use English in teaching and learning process.

From those related previous study, it can be compare with this study. The result of second study had the same purpose with this study. It was investigate what the challenges and solution in implementing SCL. The result almost same with this study, it showed that students who not interested with SCL became one of the challenges in implementing SCL. It was because the students have different factors, such as sense of fear lack of interest and confidence and mother tongue influence. Teachers created different techniques to make students participants as the solution of the problem.

For the first related previous study, that has different purpose with this study. That study investigates to know what the effect of SCL method for students' academic achievement. The result of that study showed that this approach was successful and effectual as a technique toward teaching pupils in 2nd elementary. According to what have been done, cooperative learning through performance of pupils, provide the opportunity for social acceptance and self-confidence and also improve mental ability.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study is qualitative research which use case study as the research design. Creswell (2012) stated that the purpose of the qualitative research is to create research questions in a general regarding the participants' experiences. Therefore, qualitative design was an appropriate applied in this study. This study is conducted in ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. For the reason, the researcher wanted to know about English education program of a private university in Yogyakarta especially for pre-service teachers' perceptions in implementing SCL in their practicum. Besides, it also included teaching practicum program for pre-service teachers. In the university, pre-service teachers mostly did practicum. Owing to researcher' another reason, the researcher also wanted to choose easy place to be availably visited by the participants. Therefore,

the researcher conducted this study at a private university in Yogyakarta in order to make this study more effective. Four pre-service teachers from all classes of year 14 are going to be the participants in this study. The researcher chooses participants who have passed all the internship courses, having good understanding in SCL. It hoped that they can give broad information regarding to SCL method.

#### **4. Findings and Discussion**

##### **Pre-Service Teachers' Perception on Implementing Student Centered Learning (SCL)**

The aim of this study was to investigate the pre-service teachers' perceptions of a private university in Yogyakarta on implementing SCL during their teaching practicum. In this study, the researcher provided preliminary interviews which discussed about implementing SCL during teaching practicum based on pre-service teachers' perceptions. Preliminary interview consisted of introductory questions that were given before the main questions which mentioned in the interview guideline. The findings from preliminary interviews revealed that all of the participants understanding about the conceptual of SCL, activities in implementing SCL, and feeling in implementing SCL. Besides, pre-service teachers have the difficulties in implementing SCL. Pre-service teachers also have the solution to solve the difficulties in implementing SCL.

##### **The conceptual understanding of SCL based on pre-service teachers' perspective**

There were three points declared by the participants regarding what the conceptual understanding about SCL during teaching practicum which are presented below:

**Definition of SCL.** Based on the information the researcher got, there was the same perspective of the participants about the definition of SCL. First, Pre-service teachers argued that SCL was the method that made the students to participate in the classroom during teaching and learning process actively. The statement was not only stated by the participants but some experts also argued it.

Neo and Kian (2003) asserted that in Student-Centered Learning mode students play an active part in their learning process and become autonomous learners.

SCL is also the method that focuses on the students. Focusing on the student means that during teaching and learning process used SCL method and the activities in the classroom are done by students fully. In this point, teachers provided the opportunities for the students to more participate actively in their learning. As stated by Means (as cited in Brush and Saye, 2000), Student-Centered Learning environments are designed to provide students with opportunities to take a more active role in their learning by shifting the responsibilities of organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing content from the teacher to the learners.

The participants also assumed that in implementing SCL, the teacher was only as the facilitator for the students in the classroom. The teacher just controlled the students' activity in the classroom. As supported by Neo and Kian (2003), the learners are encouraged to seek the information and knowledge on their own. They also mentioned that teachers also supply them with what they already know actively to construct their own understanding.

**The Activities in Implementing SCL.** There were some activities which could be done in implementing SCL method. Almost all of the teachers asked the students to make a group in discussing the activity or the material in the classroom. Based on four participants in this study, they also asked the students to make a group when they implemented SCL method in their practicum. Besides, in group class discussion, pre-service teachers ever asked the students to make a peer group discussion with their tablemates. It was also supported by Nanney (2004) who mentioned that SCL is a broad teaching approach that encompasses replacing lectures with active learning, integrating self-paced learning programs, and cooperative group situations. In addition, Goklahe as cited in Emenyeonu (2012) maintained that there is a mix of skill ability, a student at various performance levels works together in small groups to achieve a common goal. Hence, in group discussion, students can elaborate their skill and ability to get the result and solution. Games also used by pre-service teachers as an activity during implementing SCL.



**Feeling in implementing SCL.** From some statements of the participants, they enjoyed using SCL method because they were happy with successful method. Although at the beginning of the class there was a pre-service teacher who was nervous if the method made the students feel bored, but finally that method was appropriate for the students as well. Besides, a pre-service teacher should try to make students participate actively, but after the students could participate actively, pre-service teacher felt happier.

### **The Challenges Experienced by Pre-Service Teachers of the English Education Program in a Private University in Yogyakarta in Implementing SCL**

There were four difficulties that faced by pre-service teachers in implementing SCL. In SCL, the role of the teacher was only as a controller for the students. Automatically, the teacher needed the effort to control all of the students in the classroom. Besides, the difficulties were faced by the teacher who implementing SCL for the first time. As supported by Huba and Freed (2000), they found out that student-centered assessment is harder than previously imagined, especially when implementing it for the first time. In this finding, there were two participants who mentioned that making all of the students to participate actively was one of the challenges or difficulties in implementing SCL. Usually, there were only some of the students who could participate actively in the classroom. Especially, when the students worked in a group, they had a different level of students' ability. Not all of the students contributed to their group. According to Kumar (2016), most of the students were not interested to learn through student-centered method due to different factors such as the sense of fear, lack of interest, and confidence and mother tongue influence.

In addition, making students understand about the instructions also became the difficulties in implementing SCL. The researcher assumed that it was because the students in the classroom had different level of understanding about what teacher said. The last difficulty was about preparing the material because pre-service teachers should have many ideas to create the material. There were the different difficulties in preparing materials faced by the participants. The first

difficulty was creating the creative teaching materials. Pre-service teachers also needed many times to create different material in every meeting. In this method, the teacher should have many ideas to make the various materials in order to make students' interest.

### **The Solution to Solve the Challenges in Implementing SCL Based on Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions**

There were four solutions to solve the difficulties in implementing SCL based on pre-service teachers' perceptions. For making students participate actively, pre-service teachers changed the techniques of teaching. These strategies were same as the opinion of Kumar (2016) who said that to minimize the problems; teachers should create different techniques to make students participate actively in teaching and learning process.

Controlling the students one by one in a group became the solution to solve the problem done by a pre-service teacher. It also supported by O'Neill and McMahon (2005) who stated that one of strategies in implementing SCL focuses on interaction with controlling the students to make teachers know about how the way students interact with other members in their group. In addition, repeating the instruction with easier sentences became the solution to make students understand about the instructions from pre-service teachers.

In providing various materials, one of the important things used in teaching learning process was the guidance for pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum. Pre-service teachers should find the creative and different materials which make the students be able to share their ideas to others. Hence, pre-service teacher should find the appropriate material that can make students interested to show their ability in English. In this finding, pre-service teacher found the material from the internet. Also, they used internet to be references, and in the internet, they found various appropriate materials to the curriculum.

## **5. Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to investigate pre-service teacher perception on implementing Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in their teaching practicum. SCL is one of the methods that are implemented by teachers to teach their students.

This teaching method differs from the others, in that it focuses on the students and not the teachers themselves. Based on the researchers' observation, the problems faced by teachers during implementing SCL such as control the students, misconception about the function of SCL, and pre-service teachers had no idea about the teaching strategies.

This study used the qualitative research design as the research design. The researcher conducted this study in the one of the private university in Yogyakarta. The particular group of people that become research participants was four pre-service teacher students from the batch 2014. This study used the interview as data collection method and interview guideline as research instrument. This study used pseudonyms of the participants to made participants' identities secret.

Appropriate with the objective and research question of this study, there were three findings and discussion of this study. It consisted of pre-service teachers' perceptions about implementing SCL. It consisted of the conceptual understanding of Student-Centered Learning, activities in implementing SCL, the feeling of pre-service teachers in implementing SCL. Second, it was about the difficulties in implementing SCL, and the last was about the solution to solve the difficulties in implementing SCL. All of the participants felt happy when they implemented SCL during their teaching practicum. There were many activities that are done by students. One of them made a group or peer discussion. Almost all of the participants mentioned that SCL is a method that focuses on the students because the students actively participate in the classroom and the teacher only as a facilitator for the students in the classroom. Almost all of the participants had understanding about the concept of SCL.

The second finding was about the difficulties in implementing SCL during their teaching practicum. The various difficulties in implementing SCL also found in this study. Making students participate actively in the classroom became one of the difficulties in implementing SCL. Besides that, controlling all students and made various material also became the difficulties in implementing SCL. The last difficulty was making students understand the instruction from the teacher. So, there were four difficulties that faced by pre-service teachers in implementing SCL during their teaching practicum.

In this study, there was a solution for every difficulty. Pre-service teachers always had the solution to solve the difficulties. One of them was giving the motivation for the students to make students more participate actively in the classroom. Pre-service teachers also made creative material by finding the references from the internet. With various materials, pre-service teachers can make students more enjoy and fun during teaching and learning process. Pre-service teacher controled all of the students one by one in their group for giving the opportunities for students asked the question freely and pre-service teacher also answered the question one by one. For facing the students who cannot understand the instruction, the pre-service teacher should be patient and repeated the instruction with easier sentences.

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