

Constructivism in the New Educational Context: Lens of Pre-Service Teachers



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Preface

The ever-changing landscape of education has transformed the role of teachers from mere transmitters of knowledge to facilitators of meaningful and active learning. As classrooms become increasingly diverse and learner-centered approaches gain greater emphasis, pre-service teachers are expected to develop the knowledge, skills, and flexibility needed to meet the demands of contemporary education. Among these approaches, constructivism has emerged as a significant educational philosophy that encourages students to actively construct knowledge through collaboration, inquiry, and authentic learning experiences.

This monograph presents a study that examines the teaching practices of pre-service English teachers within the current educational context. It explores the extent to which constructivist principles are reflected in their instructional practices, the challenges they encounter in implementing learner-centered teaching, and the strategies they employ to address these challenges. By understanding their experiences, this work aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion on improving teacher preparation and enhancing classroom instruction.

Drawing upon qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews with ten pre-service English teachers from the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC) community, this study provides valuable insights into the realities of teaching during the practicum experience. The findings reveal that while pre-service teachers integrate various instructional approaches—including structured lessons, differentiated instruction, game-based learning, collaborative activities, and the activation of prior knowledge—the consistent implementation of constructivist teaching is often influenced by classroom management demands, curriculum requirements, limited instructional resources, and the diverse learning needs of students. Nevertheless, the participants demonstrated adaptability by employing strategies such as scaffolding, task differentiation, and collaborative role assignments to promote student engagement and learning.

Recognizing these realities, this monograph proposes a constructivist-based intervention material designed to support pre-service English teachers in planning and delivering more learner-centered, engaging, and flexible instruction. It is hoped that this resource will serve not only as a practical guide for future educators but also as a reference for teacher educators, cooperating teachers, curriculum developers, and educational researchers who are committed to strengthening teacher preparation programs.

Ultimately, this work underscores the importance of continuous professional support, reflective practice, and innovative pedagogical training in preparing future English teachers to navigate the complexities of modern classrooms. It is the author's sincere hope that this monograph

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will inspire further research and encourage educational stakeholders to cultivate teaching practices that empower learners and promote meaningful learning experiences.

In preparing this monograph, the author utilized contemporary digital writing technologies, including ChatGPT developed by OpenAI, as an assistive tool for language refinement, content organization, and editorial support. The use of artificial intelligence was limited to enhancing the presentation and clarity of the manuscript and did not replace the author's independent scholarly work.

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Author

Dr. Enhelyn Morla is a researcher and academic whose work focuses on advancing quality education through scholarly inquiry and innovative teaching practices. Holding a doctorate degree, Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Education, Dr. Morla has developed expertise in educational research, curriculum development, and teacher education, with a particular interest in English language teaching and learner-centered pedagogy.

Her research interests include constructivist learning, English language education, pre-service teacher development, instructional design, classroom pedagogy, and educational innovation. Through her research and academic work, she seeks to bridge educational theory and classroom practice by developing evidence-based strategies that enhance teaching effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes.

Dr. Morla is committed to mentoring future educators and contributing to the continuous improvement of teacher education programs. Her scholarly work emphasizes reflective teaching, professional growth, and the integration of research-informed practices that prepare teachers to address the evolving needs of contemporary classrooms.

Dr. Morla has presented and participated in academic research initiatives and continues to engage in scholarly activities that promote excellence in education. Her publications and research contributions reflect her dedication to fostering meaningful learning experiences, advancing educational practice, and supporting the professional development of teachers and educational leaders.

Through this monograph, Dr. Morla shares insights into the experiences of pre-service English teachers and advocates for the thoughtful integration of constructivist approaches in teacher preparation. Her work aims to serve as a valuable resource for researchers, teacher educators, students, and practitioners committed to improving the quality of English language education and teacher development.

Table of Content

1. THE STUDY	8
1.1 THE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT	8
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	10
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	11
1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	12
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	12
1.6 SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS	13
1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS	13
2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS	14
2.1 PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION	15
2.2 CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING THEORY	16
2.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM	17
2.4 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE NEW EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT	17
2.5 DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION	19
2.6 COLLABORATIVE LEARNING	19
2.7 GAME-BASED LEARNING	20
2.8 SCAFFOLDING AND GUIDED LEARNING	21
2.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	22
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	23
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	24
3.2 RESEARCH LOCALE	24
3.3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS	25
3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE	25
3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	26
3.6 DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE	26
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS	27
3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY	28
3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	29
4. TEACHING PRACTICES OF PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS	29
4.1 PREDOMINANTLY STRUCTURED BUT ADAPTABLE TEACHING	30
4.2 DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION AND VARIED ACTIVITIES	31
4.3 GAME-BASED AND ACTIVITY-ORIENTED INSTRUCTION	33
4.4 CLASSROOM ORDER AND GUIDED LEARNING	35
4.5 LESSON PREPARATION USING MIXED FRAMEWORKS	36
5. CONSTRUCTIVISM IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' TEACHING	38
5.1 ACTIVATION OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE	38
5.2 COLLABORATIVE LEARNING	39
5.3 LEARNER EXPLORATION	41

Publication Partner:

International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (ISSN: 2250-3153)

5.4 GUIDED DISCOVERY	42
5.5 TRADITIONAL PRACTICES THAT LIMIT CONSTRUCTIVISM	43
6. CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ENGLISH	44
6.1 LIMITED INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES	45
6.2 DIVERSE LEARNER ABILITIES	46
6.3 CURRICULUM AND TIME CONSTRAINTS	46
6.4 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES	47
6.5 CONSTRUCTIVIST RESPONSES TO CLASSROOM CHALLENGES	48
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	49
7.1 CONCLUSIONS	50
7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS	51
REFERENCES	54
GLOSSARY	56

1. THE STUDY

1.1. The Contemporary Educational Context

Education has always been regarded as a dynamic enterprise that continually responds to the changing demands of society. Throughout history, educational systems have evolved to address social, cultural, technological, political, and economic transformations, requiring teachers to redefine their roles and instructional practices. In the twenty-first century, these changes have become increasingly rapid, compelling educators to move beyond the traditional function of transmitting knowledge toward becoming facilitators of learning, mentors of critical thinking, and designers of meaningful educational experiences. Consequently, classrooms today are expected to cultivate learners who are capable of collaboration, creativity, communication, and lifelong learning.

The contemporary educational context is characterized by diversity and complexity. Learners enter classrooms with varying cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic conditions, linguistic abilities, learning preferences, prior experiences, and levels of academic preparedness. These realities challenge teachers to create inclusive learning environments where every learner has equitable opportunities to participate and succeed. Effective instruction, therefore, requires flexibility, responsiveness, and a willingness to employ pedagogical approaches that acknowledge the uniqueness of each learner.

The emergence of digital technologies has further transformed teaching and learning. Information is no longer confined to textbooks or classroom lectures; instead, students have immediate access to vast amounts of knowledge through digital platforms and online resources. This shift has altered the relationship between teachers and learners. Rather than serving solely as providers of information, teachers now guide students in evaluating information critically, constructing knowledge collaboratively, and applying learning to authentic situations. Such expectations require educators to develop instructional strategies that encourage inquiry, reflection, and meaningful participation.

These transformations became even more pronounced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic disrupted educational systems across the globe, forcing schools and universities to suspend traditional face-to-face instruction and adopt remote, online, and hybrid learning modalities. This abrupt transition challenged both experienced educators and beginning teachers to rethink their instructional practices while responding to unprecedented educational circumstances. Learning environments changed almost overnight, requiring teachers to integrate technology, redesign instructional materials, and adopt flexible approaches that could accommodate learners studying under varying conditions.

For pre-service teachers, these changes represented a particularly significant challenge. As prospective educators completing their teaching internship, they entered classrooms that had already undergone considerable transformation. Their preparation no longer involved simply mastering instructional techniques within stable classroom environments; instead, they were expected to teach in contexts characterized by uncertainty, changing policies, learner diversity, technological integration, and evolving educational expectations. These experiences demanded adaptability, resilience, reflective practice, and continuous professional learning.

Within this contemporary landscape, English language teaching assumes a particularly important role. English functions not only as an academic subject but also as a medium through which learners communicate ideas, access information, and participate in local and global communities. Consequently, English teachers are expected to create learning experiences that extend beyond grammar and vocabulary acquisition. They must foster communication skills, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and intercultural understanding while addressing the diverse needs of learners.

The evolving responsibilities of English teachers have encouraged greater emphasis on learner-centered instructional approaches. Among these approaches, constructivism has become one of the most influential perspectives in contemporary education. Constructivist pedagogy views learners as active participants who construct knowledge through experience, interaction, inquiry, and reflection. Rather than memorizing information transmitted by teachers, students engage in authentic learning experiences that allow them to connect new knowledge with prior understanding and apply concepts to real-life situations.

In constructivist classrooms, the teacher's role shifts from being the primary source of information to becoming a facilitator who guides learners through questioning, scaffolding, collaborative activities, and meaningful problem-solving experiences. Such classrooms encourage students to explore ideas, exchange perspectives, and develop understanding through interaction with peers and their environment. These principles align closely with the competencies expected of learners in the twenty-first century, making constructivism particularly relevant within contemporary educational practice.

Despite the growing recognition of constructivist pedagogy, its implementation remains challenging, particularly for novice educators. Beginning teachers frequently encounter practical constraints such as curriculum requirements, classroom management concerns, limited instructional resources, insufficient teaching experience, and varying learner abilities. These realities often require them to balance learner-centered approaches with more structured forms of instruction to ensure that learning objectives are achieved. As a result, many pre-service teachers adopt instructional practices that combine traditional teaching methods with constructivist strategies.

The experiences of pre-service English teachers provide valuable insights into how future educators respond to these educational realities. Their teaching practices reflect the interaction between theoretical knowledge acquired during teacher education and the practical demands encountered during classroom instruction. Examining these experiences contributes to a deeper understanding of teacher preparation and offers important implications for strengthening teacher education programs.

This monograph explores the teaching practices of pre-service English teachers within the contemporary educational context. Specifically, it investigates how constructivist principles are reflected in their instructional practices, identifies the challenges they encounter while teaching English, and examines the strategies they employ to respond to these challenges. By documenting these experiences, the study seeks to contribute to the continuing improvement of teacher education and to the preparation of future English teachers who are capable of facilitating meaningful, learner-centered instruction in increasingly diverse and dynamic educational environments.

1.2 Background of the Study

Teaching has long been recognized as one of the most influential professions because it shapes not only learners' academic development but also their personal growth, values, and participation in society. The effectiveness of any educational system depends largely on the competence, commitment, and preparedness of its teachers. Consequently, teacher education institutions carry the important responsibility of preparing future educators who possess the knowledge, pedagogical skills, professional dispositions, and adaptability necessary to respond to changing educational contexts.

Pre-service teacher education serves as the foundation of this professional preparation. It provides prospective teachers with opportunities to integrate educational theory with classroom practice through supervised teaching experiences. During the teaching internship, pre-service teachers gradually assume responsibility for planning lessons, facilitating learning, managing classrooms, assessing student performance, and reflecting upon their instructional decisions under the guidance of experienced cooperating teachers.

The transition from university coursework to actual classroom teaching, however, is often accompanied by numerous challenges. While teacher education programs equip future educators with theoretical knowledge and instructional principles, the realities of classroom practice frequently require immediate decision-making, flexibility, and contextual adaptation. Pre-service teachers must reconcile what they have learned academically with the practical demands of diverse learners, limited instructional resources, curriculum expectations, and classroom management responsibilities.

The contemporary educational environment has intensified these challenges. Educational reforms, technological innovations, increasing learner diversity, and the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have transformed classroom instruction. Teachers are now expected to employ learner-centered pedagogies that encourage collaboration, inquiry, critical thinking, creativity, and authentic learning experiences while ensuring that curriculum standards are achieved.

Within English language teaching, these expectations become even more significant because language learning is inherently interactive and communicative. English teachers must create classroom environments where learners actively participate in constructing meaning through discussion, collaboration, problem-solving, and meaningful language use. These instructional expectations align closely with constructivist principles, which emphasize active learner engagement, social interaction, and the construction of knowledge through authentic experiences.

Although constructivism has become a widely accepted educational philosophy, translating its principles into actual classroom practice remains a challenge for many beginning teachers. Practical constraints such as limited instructional materials, time restrictions, diverse learner abilities, and classroom management concerns often influence instructional decisions. Consequently, pre-service teachers frequently combine traditional instructional methods with learner-centered strategies as they develop confidence in their teaching practice.

Recognizing these realities, the present study examines how pre-service English teachers teach within the contemporary educational context. It seeks to understand the instructional approaches they employ, the extent to which constructivist principles are reflected in their teaching, the challenges they encounter during classroom instruction, and the strategies they use to address these challenges. Ultimately, the study proposes a Constructivist-Based Intervention Material (CBIM) designed to strengthen learner-centered teaching and support the continuing professional development of future English teachers.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The contemporary educational landscape demands that teachers possess not only strong content knowledge but also the pedagogical competence to create learner-centered environments that foster critical thinking, collaboration, and meaningful learning. For pre-service English teachers, meeting these expectations is particularly challenging because they are still developing their professional identity while navigating the realities of classroom instruction. Although teacher education programs introduce constructivist principles and other learner-centered pedagogies, the extent to which these approaches are implemented during the teaching internship remains an important area of inquiry.

Constructivism encourages teachers to facilitate learning by engaging students in authentic experiences, collaborative activities, and reflective thinking. However, beginning teachers often encounter contextual constraints such as limited instructional resources, curriculum requirements, classroom management concerns, and the diverse learning needs of students. These realities may influence their instructional decisions and affect the consistent implementation of constructivist teaching practices.

Understanding how pre-service English teachers respond to these challenges is essential for improving teacher education programs and strengthening professional preparation. By examining their classroom experiences, instructional practices, and pedagogical decisions, teacher education institutions can identify areas where additional support and intervention are needed.

Guided by these considerations, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What teaching practices do pre-service English teachers employ in the contemporary educational context?
2. How are constructivist principles reflected in, or absent from, the teaching practices of pre-service English teachers?
3. What challenges do pre-service English teachers encounter in teaching English, and how do these challenges influence the implementation of constructivist pedagogy?
4. What Constructivist-Based Intervention Material (CBIM) may be developed to support pre-service English teachers in implementing learner-centered instruction?

1.4 Research Objectives

General Objective

This study aims to explore the teaching practices of pre-service English teachers within the contemporary educational context and examine how constructivist principles influence their instructional decisions and classroom experiences.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. describe the teaching practices employed by pre-service English teachers during their teaching internship;
2. examine the extent to which constructivist principles are manifested in their classroom instruction;
3. identify the challenges encountered by pre-service English teachers while teaching English in contemporary classrooms; and
4. analyze the strategies they employ to address instructional and classroom challenges
5. develop a Constructivist-Based Intervention Material (CBIM) that may enhance learner-centered teaching practices among future pre-service English teachers.

These objectives provide the direction for the investigation and establish the basis for the development of practical recommendations for teacher education institutions and future educators.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the continuing improvement of teacher education and English language instruction. By examining the lived experiences of pre-service English teachers, the study provides insights into how constructivist pedagogy is interpreted and implemented within the realities of contemporary classrooms.

Pre-Service English Teachers. The study provides opportunities for reflection on instructional practices and classroom experiences. The proposed Constructivist-Based Intervention Material may serve as a practical guide in designing learner-centered lessons, addressing classroom challenges, and strengthening pedagogical competence during the teaching internship.

Teacher Education Institutions. The findings may assist institutions in evaluating and enhancing teacher preparation programs. The study identifies areas where additional training, mentoring, and instructional support may be provided to strengthen constructivist teaching practices among future educators.

Teacher Educators and Cooperating Teachers. The study offers valuable information regarding the instructional experiences of pre-service teachers during their internship. These insights may guide mentoring practices, classroom supervision, and professional coaching that support the development of reflective and competent educators.

Curriculum Developers and Educational Leaders. The study contributes evidence that may inform curriculum enhancement and the development of professional learning initiatives that promote learner-centered teaching, instructional innovation, and constructivist pedagogy.

Researchers. The study adds to the growing body of knowledge on constructivist teaching, English language education, and pre-service teacher development. It also provides a foundation for future qualitative and mixed-methods studies that investigate similar educational contexts.

Learners. Although learners are not the direct participants in the study, they ultimately benefit from improved instructional practices. Better-prepared teachers are more likely to create engaging, inclusive, and meaningful learning environments that support learners' academic achievement and personal growth

1.6 Scope and Delimitations

This monograph focuses on the teaching practices of ten (10) pre-service English teachers from the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC) who completed their teaching internship in contemporary educational settings.

The study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather detailed accounts of the participants' teaching experiences. The interview data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to instructional practices, constructivist teaching, classroom challenges, and adaptive teaching strategies.

The investigation is limited to the perspectives and experiences of the selected participants. Classroom observations, learner assessments, and quantitative measures of instructional effectiveness were beyond the scope of the study. Consequently, the findings are intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences rather than statistical generalizations applicable to all pre-service English teachers.

1.7 Definition of Terms

To promote clarity and consistency throughout this monograph, the following terms are defined conceptually and operationally as they are used in the study.

Constructivism. Conceptually, constructivism is a learning theory that explains knowledge as actively constructed through experience, interaction, and reflection. Operationally, it refers to the learner-centered instructional approaches demonstrated by the participants, including collaborative learning, scaffolding, learner exploration, and the activation of prior knowledge.

Constructivist-Based Intervention Material (CBIM). This refers to the instructional material proposed by the study to assist pre-service English teachers in designing and implementing learner-centered lessons that address the realities of contemporary classrooms.

Contemporary Educational Context. This refers to the current educational environment shaped by post-pandemic instructional reforms, learner diversity, technological integration, and evolving teaching practices.

Differentiated Instruction. An instructional approach in which teachers modify learning activities, teaching strategies, instructional materials, and assessments according to students' readiness levels, interests, and learning needs.

Game-Based Learning. A learner-centered instructional strategy that incorporates educational games and interactive activities to promote engagement, motivation, and meaningful learning.

Pre-Service English Teachers. Students enrolled in a teacher education program specializing in English who are undertaking supervised teaching practice as part of the requirements for completing their degree.

Scaffolding. Temporary instructional support provided by teachers to assist learners in accomplishing tasks that they cannot yet perform independently, with support gradually withdrawn as learners gain competence.

Teaching Practices. The instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, lesson planning approaches, learning activities, and assessment methods employed by the participants during their teaching internship.

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

The quality of teaching is influenced not only by teachers' mastery of subject matter but also by the theoretical perspectives that guide their instructional decisions. Educational theories provide a framework for understanding how learning occurs, how learners develop, and how teachers can create environments that foster meaningful learning. For pre-service English teachers, these theories become particularly significant because they bridge the transition from university coursework to authentic classroom practice.

Contemporary education has shifted from viewing learning as the passive acquisition of information toward recognizing learners as active participants in constructing knowledge. This transition has influenced teacher education programs worldwide, encouraging the adoption of learner-centered pedagogies that promote inquiry, collaboration, critical thinking, and reflective practice. International organizations such as UNESCO and the OECD have likewise emphasized that effective teaching requires flexibility, responsiveness to learner diversity, and instructional approaches that support active engagement rather than rote transmission of knowledge.

Within English language education, these developments have reinforced the importance of communicative and interactive teaching approaches. English teachers are expected to facilitate authentic language use, encourage collaboration, and design learning experiences that enable students to connect new knowledge with prior experiences.

Consequently, constructivist learning theory has become one of the most influential foundations for contemporary English language teaching.

This chapter synthesizes the theoretical and conceptual literature that informs the present study. It examines pre-service teacher education, constructivist learning theory, social constructivism, English language teaching in the contemporary educational context, differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, game-based learning, and scaffolding. Rather than presenting isolated summaries of previous studies, the chapter integrates these concepts to establish the intellectual foundation upon which the investigation is built.

2.1 Pre-Service Teacher Education

Teacher education is widely recognized as one of the most important determinants of educational quality because teachers directly influence learners' academic achievement, motivation, and personal development. The effectiveness of schools therefore depends not only on curriculum and educational policy but also on how well teachers are prepared before entering the profession.

Pre-service teacher education refers to the formal preparation prospective teachers receive before obtaining professional licensure and assuming full teaching responsibilities. It encompasses academic coursework, field experiences, and supervised teaching practice designed to develop pedagogical knowledge, content expertise, classroom management skills, professional ethics, and reflective practice. The teaching internship represents the culminating component of this preparation, allowing pre-service teachers to integrate theoretical knowledge with authentic classroom experiences.

During the internship, pre-service teachers gradually assume responsibility for planning instruction, facilitating learning, managing classrooms, assessing student performance, and responding to learners' diverse educational needs. This period is widely regarded as the bridge between educational theory and professional practice because it provides opportunities to apply instructional principles within real educational settings.

However, the transition from university classrooms to actual teaching presents numerous challenges. Beginning teachers frequently encounter situations that require immediate pedagogical decisions, flexibility, and professional judgment. Learners differ in academic readiness, language proficiency, interests, cultural backgrounds, and learning preferences, requiring teachers to adapt instruction continuously. At the same time, curriculum requirements, assessment demands, and classroom management responsibilities place additional pressures on novice educators.

Recent international reports have emphasized that contemporary teacher education must prepare educators who are adaptable, reflective, and capable of facilitating learner-centered instruction. Rather than functioning solely as transmitters of information, teachers are increasingly expected to guide inquiry, foster collaboration, encourage critical thinking, and support learners in constructing knowledge through meaningful experiences. These expectations

align closely with constructivist principles and underscore the need for teacher education programs that emphasize active learning and reflective practice.

The experiences of pre-service English teachers are particularly significant because language learning depends heavily on interaction, communication, and authentic use of language. Consequently, teacher preparation must equip future English teachers with instructional approaches that promote learner participation while addressing the realities of diverse and dynamic classrooms.

2.2 Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist learning theory provides the primary theoretical lens for this study because it explains learning as an active process of knowledge construction rather than passive information acquisition. Rooted in the works of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner, constructivism argues that learners develop understanding by integrating new experiences with prior knowledge through interaction, reflection, and social participation.

Piaget (1972) viewed learning as a process of cognitive development in which individuals continuously organize and reorganize mental structures through the complementary processes of assimilation and accommodation. Learners actively interpret new experiences according to existing cognitive structures while simultaneously modifying those structures when confronted with unfamiliar information. From this perspective, meaningful learning occurs when learners engage directly with ideas rather than merely receiving explanations from teachers.

Bruner (1996) extended constructivist thinking by emphasizing discovery learning and the importance of structuring instruction in ways that enable learners to construct concepts independently. He argued that effective teaching should cultivate curiosity, promote inquiry, and encourage learners to move beyond the information explicitly presented during instruction. Rather than memorizing isolated facts, students develop deeper conceptual understanding when they actively explore relationships among ideas.

Vygotsky (1978) contributed a complementary perspective by emphasizing that cognitive development is fundamentally social. According to sociocultural theory, higher mental functions first develop through interaction with more knowledgeable others before becoming internalized by individual learners. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) illustrates that learners achieve higher levels of understanding when teachers or peers provide appropriate guidance and support.

These perspectives collectively transformed educational thinking by redefining the teacher's role. Instead of functioning primarily as a transmitter of knowledge, the teacher becomes a facilitator who designs meaningful learning experiences, encourages inquiry, supports collaboration, provides scaffolding, and creates opportunities for learners to construct understanding through authentic activities.

International educational organizations likewise recognize constructivist learning as foundational to learner-centered education. UNESCO describes constructivist learning environments as communities in which learners actively construct knowledge through authentic tasks, collaboration, reflection, and interaction with teachers and

peers. Such environments encourage learners to negotiate meaning, explore multiple perspectives, and develop deeper conceptual understanding rather than relying exclusively on memorization or teacher explanation.

Similarly, the OECD distinguishes constructivist models from purely transmission-based models of teaching. While acknowledging that direct instruction has an appropriate place in education, the OECD emphasizes that social constructivist classrooms encourage collaboration, inquiry, creativity, and meaningful learner participation, enabling students to become active contributors to their own learning rather than passive recipients of information.

For pre-service English teachers, constructivism provides an instructional philosophy that supports communicative language teaching, collaborative learning, authentic assessment, and learner autonomy. These principles align closely with the competencies expected of English language teachers within contemporary educational contexts and therefore provide an appropriate theoretical foundation for the present study.

2.3 Social Constructivism

While constructivism explains learning as an active process of knowledge construction, social constructivism emphasizes that learning is fundamentally shaped by interaction with others and participation in meaningful social and cultural contexts. Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory has become one of the most influential perspectives in understanding how learners develop cognitively through communication, collaboration, and guided participation (Vygotsky, 1978).

Central to Vygotsky's theory is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), defined as the difference between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with the guidance of a more knowledgeable person. Learning occurs most effectively within this zone because teachers and peers provide appropriate support that gradually enables learners to perform tasks independently. This instructional support, later termed scaffolding by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), has become a fundamental principle in contemporary learner-centered education.

Social constructivism views language as more than a communication tool; it is the primary medium through which thinking develops and knowledge is negotiated. Classroom dialogue, collaborative problem-solving, peer interaction, and reflective discussion therefore become essential learning activities rather than supplementary instructional techniques. Through interaction, learners are exposed to multiple perspectives that challenge existing ideas and contribute to deeper conceptual understanding.

Within English language teaching, social constructivism is particularly relevant because language acquisition naturally occurs through meaningful communication. Learners develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills by engaging in authentic conversations, collaborative tasks, and communicative activities that mirror real-world language use. Johnson (2009) argues that language teachers should create classroom communities where interaction facilitates both language development and cognitive growth.

For pre-service English teachers, adopting a social constructivist perspective requires designing classrooms that encourage participation, collaboration, and shared inquiry. Rather than dominating classroom discourse, teachers facilitate meaningful interactions that allow learners to negotiate meaning, express ideas, and develop confidence in using the English language. Such instructional environments promote not only language proficiency but also critical thinking, interpersonal skills, and learner autonomy.

2.4 English Language Teaching in the New Educational Context

English language teaching has undergone significant transformation over the past several decades. Traditional approaches often emphasized grammar instruction, vocabulary memorization, and teacher-directed lessons. Contemporary English language education, however, increasingly promotes communicative competence, learner engagement, authentic language use, and meaningful interaction. These developments reflect broader educational reforms that prioritize learner-centered instruction and the development of twenty-first-century competencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated many of these changes. Teachers were required to integrate digital technologies, redesign instructional materials, and adopt flexible teaching approaches capable of supporting learning across face-to-face, online, and hybrid environments. UNESCO (2021) emphasized that the pandemic demonstrated the importance of resilient educational systems and teachers who are capable of adapting instruction to diverse and changing circumstances.

Within this context, English teachers face complex responsibilities. They are expected not only to teach grammar and language structures but also to develop learners' communication skills, intercultural competence, digital literacy, collaboration, and critical thinking. Richards (2017) notes that effective English language teaching requires creating opportunities for learners to use language meaningfully rather than simply studying linguistic forms in isolation.

Contemporary English classrooms therefore encourage learners to participate actively through discussions, project-based learning, collaborative tasks, presentations, problem-solving activities, and authentic communication. These instructional practices align closely with constructivist principles because they position learners as active participants in constructing language knowledge through experience and interaction.

Pre-service English teachers entering today's classrooms must therefore demonstrate flexibility in selecting instructional strategies that address diverse learner needs while maintaining learner engagement. Their ability to balance curriculum requirements with learner-centered instruction represents an important aspect of professional competence.

2.5 Differentiated Instruction

One of the defining characteristics of contemporary classrooms is learner diversity. Students differ in academic readiness, interests, cultural backgrounds, language proficiency, motivation, prior experiences, and preferred learning styles. Consequently, uniform instructional approaches rarely meet the needs of every learner. Differentiated instruction provides a framework for addressing these differences while maintaining common learning goals.

Tomlinson (2017) defines differentiated instruction as a proactive approach in which teachers modify content, learning processes, instructional products, and learning environments according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Rather than lowering academic expectations, differentiation provides multiple pathways through which learners can achieve the same educational outcomes.

Differentiation is closely aligned with constructivist philosophy because both perspectives recognize learners as active individuals who bring unique experiences and understandings to the classroom. Constructivist teaching acknowledges that meaningful learning occurs when instruction connects with learners' existing knowledge and developmental needs. Differentiation operationalizes this principle by adjusting instruction to accommodate learner variability.

For English language teachers, differentiated instruction may involve modifying reading materials, varying classroom activities, providing multiple assessment options, organizing flexible learning groups, or offering scaffolded language support. These strategies enable learners with different proficiency levels to participate meaningfully in classroom instruction while progressing toward common language learning objectives.

Research consistently demonstrates that differentiated instruction improves learner engagement, motivation, and academic achievement when implemented systematically. However, beginning teachers frequently identify differentiation as one of the most challenging instructional practices because it requires careful planning, ongoing assessment, and responsiveness to individual learner needs.

2.6 Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is one of the most widely recognized instructional strategies associated with constructivist pedagogy. It involves learners working together to solve problems, complete tasks, exchange ideas, and construct shared understanding through interaction.

Johnson and Johnson (2009) argue that cooperative learning promotes higher academic achievement, stronger interpersonal relationships, increased learner motivation, and improved problem-solving abilities. Effective collaboration requires positive interdependence, individual accountability, meaningful interaction, and shared responsibility for learning outcomes.

Within English language teaching, collaborative learning creates authentic opportunities for communication. Group discussions, peer editing, role-playing, debates, project-based learning, and collaborative writing activities encourage learners to use English for meaningful purposes rather than simply practicing isolated language structures.

Social interaction also promotes confidence among language learners. Students frequently experience less anxiety when communicating with peers than when responding directly to teachers. Consequently, collaborative

classrooms often encourage greater participation, increased willingness to communicate, and improved language fluency.

For pre-service English teachers, collaborative learning requires thoughtful classroom organization, clear instructional expectations, and effective classroom management. Teachers must facilitate productive interaction while ensuring that all learners participate meaningfully and contribute to group learning experiences.

2.7 Game-Based Learning

The increasing emphasis on learner engagement has led educators to explore innovative instructional approaches that promote meaningful participation while achieving educational objectives. Among these approaches, game-based learning (GBL) has emerged as an effective pedagogical strategy that integrates educational content with structured games and interactive activities. Unlike recreational games, educational games are intentionally designed to promote learning by encouraging learners to solve problems, apply knowledge, and collaborate with others in meaningful contexts.

Game-based learning is grounded in constructivist principles because it positions learners as active participants who construct knowledge through experience, experimentation, and reflection. Rather than passively receiving information, learners engage in authentic tasks that require decision-making, communication, and critical thinking. Plass, Homer, and Kinzer (2015) explain that well-designed educational games create environments where learners actively explore concepts, receive immediate feedback, and develop deeper conceptual understanding through repeated engagement.

Within English language teaching, game-based learning provides opportunities for learners to practice language skills in authentic and motivating situations. Vocabulary games, role-playing activities, language simulations, digital quizzes, and collaborative competitions encourage learners to communicate naturally while reducing anxiety commonly associated with language learning. Gee (2003) argues that effective games embody sound learning principles by promoting active participation, problem-solving, and continuous reflection, thereby creating conditions conducive to meaningful learning.

Research has consistently shown that game-based learning enhances learner motivation, participation, and retention of knowledge. Hamari, Shernoff, Rowe, Coller, Asbell-Clarke, and Edwards (2016) found that educational games increase engagement when they are carefully aligned with instructional objectives and integrated into meaningful classroom activities. However, the effectiveness of game-based learning depends largely on thoughtful instructional design. Games should reinforce learning outcomes rather than distract learners from educational goals.

For pre-service English teachers, game-based learning represents a practical strategy for increasing learner engagement while supporting communicative language teaching. The participants in the present study frequently incorporated games into their lessons to encourage participation, reinforce vocabulary, and maintain learner interest. These classroom experiences demonstrate how constructivist principles can be translated into engaging instructional practices within contemporary English language classrooms.

2.8 Scaffolding and Guided Learning

Scaffolding is one of the most influential instructional concepts derived from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. It refers to the temporary support provided by teachers or more knowledgeable peers that enables learners to accomplish tasks beyond their current level of independent performance. As learners develop competence, this support is gradually reduced until they can perform the task independently (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

Scaffolding reflects the principle that learning is a developmental process rather than an isolated event. Teachers assess learners' existing knowledge, identify appropriate levels of challenge, and provide strategic assistance through questioning, modeling, demonstrations, prompts, feedback, visual organizers, or collaborative activities. Such support encourages learners to become increasingly confident and independent while preventing frustration associated with tasks that are excessively difficult.

Bruner (1996) emphasized that effective teaching involves structuring learning experiences so that learners gradually assume greater responsibility for their own understanding. Similarly, Hammond and Gibbons (2005) argue that scaffolding should not merely simplify learning tasks but should instead enable learners to engage in intellectually challenging activities with appropriate guidance. This perspective reinforces constructivist teaching by encouraging active participation while recognizing that learners require varying degrees of instructional support.

Within English language teaching, scaffolding is particularly valuable because language learning involves multiple cognitive and communicative processes. Teachers frequently scaffold instruction by modeling pronunciation, providing sentence starters, demonstrating writing strategies, asking guiding questions, and organizing peer collaboration. These practices enable learners to participate successfully in increasingly complex language tasks while gradually developing independence.

The findings of the present study demonstrate that pre-service English teachers naturally employed scaffolding in various forms. Participants described dividing complex activities into manageable tasks, assigning roles during group work, providing examples before independent practice, and offering continuous guidance during classroom activities. These strategies illustrate how constructivist principles were implemented even when participants faced instructional constraints such as limited resources and diverse learner needs.

The literature reviewed in this chapter demonstrates that contemporary education increasingly emphasizes learner-centered teaching, reflective practice, collaboration, and authentic learning experiences. Although educational theories differ in their explanations of learning, they collectively recognize that effective teaching requires active learner participation and instructional responsiveness rather than the simple transmission of information.

The discussion on pre-service teacher education highlights the importance of supervised teaching experiences in bridging educational theory and professional practice. Teaching internships provide opportunities for future educators to develop instructional competence while responding to authentic classroom situations. However, the

transition from theory to practice is often accompanied by challenges related to classroom management, learner diversity, curriculum implementation, and instructional decision-making.

Constructivist learning theory provides the primary theoretical perspective for understanding these experiences. Piaget's cognitive constructivism emphasizes knowledge construction through individual cognitive development, whereas Vygotsky's social constructivism highlights the importance of interaction, collaboration, and guided participation in learning. Together, these complementary perspectives establish the theoretical foundation for learner-centered instruction.

The literature further indicates that differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, game-based learning, and scaffolding are practical manifestations of constructivist pedagogy. These instructional approaches acknowledge learner diversity, encourage meaningful participation, and promote higher-order thinking while supporting learners in constructing understanding through authentic educational experiences.

Within English language teaching, constructivist principles assume particular importance because language acquisition depends largely on communication, interaction, and meaningful language use. Learner-centered classrooms provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, collaborate with peers, and apply language in authentic contexts. Such experiences contribute not only to linguistic competence but also to the development of critical thinking, creativity, and interpersonal communication skills.

Collectively, the reviewed literature suggests that effective teacher education should prepare future educators who possess both theoretical understanding and practical competence. Pre-service teachers must be capable of adapting constructivist principles to the realities of diverse classrooms while maintaining instructional effectiveness. This synthesis provides the scholarly basis for examining the instructional practices of pre-service English teachers within the contemporary educational context.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the premise that the teaching practices of pre-service English teachers are shaped by the interaction between constructivist learning principles and the realities of contemporary classroom practice.

Constructivist learning theory serves as the primary theoretical foundation of the study. It explains that learners actively construct knowledge through experience, interaction, collaboration, and reflection. Complementing this perspective, social constructivism emphasizes that learning occurs within social contexts through communication and guided participation. These theories provide the conceptual basis for examining learner-centered instructional practices among pre-service English teachers.

The study assumes that pre-service teachers enter classrooms equipped with theoretical knowledge acquired through teacher education programs. However, their actual instructional practices are influenced by contextual factors such as learner diversity, classroom management concerns, instructional resources, curriculum requirements, and time

constraints. These realities affect the extent to which constructivist principles are implemented during classroom instruction.

The investigation therefore examines four interrelated components:

1. **Teaching Practices** – the instructional approaches employed by pre-service English teachers.
2. **Manifestations of Constructivism** – the extent to which constructivist principles are reflected in classroom instruction through collaborative learning, learner exploration, scaffolding, activation of prior knowledge, and guided discovery.
3. **Teaching Challenges** – contextual factors that influence instructional decisions, including limited resources, diverse learner abilities, curriculum demands, and classroom management.
4. **Constructivist-Based Intervention Material (CBIM)** – the proposed instructional material developed from the study's findings to strengthen learner-centered teaching practices among pre-service English teachers.

These components illustrate the logical flow of the investigation. Teaching practices are examined through the lens of constructivist theory, contextual challenges are analyzed to understand their influence on instructional implementation, and the findings become the basis for developing a practical intervention that supports future pre-service English teachers.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The strength of qualitative research lies in its ability to capture the richness and complexity of human experiences. Unlike quantitative approaches that measure variables and test hypotheses through numerical analysis, qualitative research seeks to understand how individuals interpret, construct, and give meaning to their lived experiences within particular contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since the present study explored the teaching practices of pre-service English teachers in the contemporary educational context, a qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate methodological framework.

This chapter presents the methodological foundation of the study. It describes the research design, research locale, participants, sampling procedure, research instrument, data gathering process, methods of data analysis, strategies employed to establish trustworthiness, and ethical considerations observed throughout the investigation. Collectively, these methodological components ensured that the findings accurately reflected the experiences of the participants while maintaining the rigor expected of qualitative inquiry.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate the teaching practices of pre-service English teachers within the contemporary educational context. A qualitative case study enables researchers to examine a bounded system in depth by exploring participants' experiences within their natural setting (Merriam & Tisdell,

2016; Yin, 2018). Rather than seeking statistical generalizations, this approach aims to generate a comprehensive understanding of complex educational phenomena.

The selection of a case study design was guided by the nature of the research problem. The investigation did not seek to determine causal relationships or measure instructional effectiveness through numerical indicators. Instead, it sought to understand how pre-service English teachers experienced classroom instruction, interpreted constructivist principles, responded to instructional challenges, and adapted their teaching practices during their internship.

Qualitative case studies are particularly appropriate in teacher education because teaching is inherently contextual. Classroom practices are influenced by learners, curriculum requirements, instructional resources, school culture, and teachers' own beliefs and experiences. These contextual influences cannot be adequately understood through surveys or standardized instruments alone. Through in-depth interviews, the researcher gained access to participants' reflections, instructional decisions, and professional experiences that would otherwise remain difficult to capture.

The study therefore focused on understanding the participants' perspectives rather than evaluating their performance. Their narratives served as the primary source of evidence from which themes and patterns were identified through thematic analysis.

3.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted within the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC) community, focusing on pre-service English teachers who completed their teaching internship in partner schools during the academic year covered by the investigation.

ISPSC has long been committed to preparing competent and socially responsible educators capable of responding to the educational needs of local communities. Its teacher education programs integrate theoretical coursework with supervised teaching practice, allowing future educators to apply pedagogical principles in authentic classroom settings.

The schools where the participants completed their internship represented contemporary educational environments characterized by diverse learners, varying instructional resources, curriculum requirements, and post-pandemic teaching realities. These settings provided an appropriate context for examining how pre-service English teachers implemented learner-centered instruction while responding to authentic classroom challenges.

Because the investigation focused on understanding participants' experiences rather than comparing schools, the emphasis remained on the instructional realities encountered by the participants rather than institutional differences among placement schools.

3.3 Research Participants

The participants consisted of ten (10) pre-service English teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College. All participants had completed or were completing their supervised teaching internship at the time of data collection.

These participants were selected because they possessed direct experience teaching English within contemporary classroom settings. Their internship experiences provided firsthand knowledge regarding lesson planning, classroom instruction, learner engagement, classroom management, instructional decision-making, and the implementation of constructivist teaching practices.

The participants represented information-rich cases capable of providing detailed descriptions of their teaching experiences. Their narratives enabled the researcher to examine both the opportunities and challenges associated with learner-centered English language instruction during the teaching internship.

To protect confidentiality, participants were assigned pseudonyms during transcription, coding, analysis, and presentation of findings. No identifying information was included in the research report.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The study utilized purposive sampling, a widely accepted sampling strategy in qualitative research. According to Patton (2015), purposive sampling involves selecting participants who possess specific knowledge, experiences, or characteristics relevant to the research problem.

The participants were intentionally selected because they met the following inclusion criteria:

- they were officially enrolled as pre-service English teachers at ISPSC;
- they had completed or were undergoing supervised teaching practice;
- they had actual classroom teaching experience in English; and
- they voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

Purposive sampling was appropriate because the objective of the investigation was not to obtain a statistically representative sample but to gather rich, meaningful descriptions from individuals who had firsthand experience with the phenomenon under investigation.

The sample size of ten participants was considered adequate for qualitative inquiry because the interviews generated detailed narratives that allowed recurring themes and patterns to emerge. The emphasis of qualitative research is depth of understanding rather than numerical representation.

3.5 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide. Semi-structured interviews are widely employed in qualitative research because they provide a balance between consistency and flexibility, allowing researchers to explore predetermined topics while encouraging participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed descriptions of the participants' teaching practices, classroom experiences, understanding of constructivist pedagogy, instructional challenges, and strategies for addressing these challenges. Additional probing questions were asked whenever necessary to clarify responses or encourage participants to provide richer descriptions of their experiences.

Prior to data collection, the interview guide underwent expert validation by professionals in English language education and educational research. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the questions with the objectives of the study. A pilot interview was also conducted with a participant who was not included in the final sample to determine whether the questions were understandable and capable of generating meaningful responses.

The use of semi-structured interviews enabled participants to narrate their experiences freely while ensuring that all topics relevant to the research questions were adequately explored. This approach generated rich qualitative data that reflected the participants' authentic experiences during their teaching internship.

3.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process followed a systematic and ethical procedure to ensure the credibility and integrity of the study.

Initially, the researcher sought permission from the appropriate university authorities before conducting the investigation. Upon receiving approval, potential participants who met the inclusion criteria were identified and invited to participate in the study. The purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and the procedures involved were explained clearly before obtaining informed consent.

Individual interviews were scheduled at times convenient for the participants. Depending on availability and institutional policies, interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through an appropriate online communication platform. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes, allowing sufficient time for participants to discuss their instructional experiences in detail.

With the participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy of data collection. The recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim. The researcher carefully reviewed each transcript while listening to the recordings to verify the accuracy and completeness of the transcribed data. Field notes documenting observations, reflections, and contextual information were also maintained throughout the data collection process to support interpretation during analysis.

Following transcription, participants were given the opportunity to review portions of their interview transcripts to confirm that their views had been accurately represented. This process, commonly referred to as member checking, contributed to the credibility of the findings.

3.7 Data Analysis

The study employed thematic analysis to examine the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. Thematic analysis is a flexible and systematic method for identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns of meaning across qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The analysis followed six interconnected phases:

Phase 1: Familiarization with the Data. The researcher repeatedly read the interview transcripts while reviewing the audio recordings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences. Initial observations and reflective notes were documented during this stage.

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes. Significant statements, meaningful phrases, and recurring ideas relevant to the research objectives were identified and assigned descriptive codes. Coding enabled the researcher to organize large amounts of qualitative information into manageable units of analysis.

Phase 3: Searching for Themes. Related codes were examined and grouped according to conceptual similarities. Emerging categories were organized into broader themes that represented recurring patterns across participants' experiences.

Phase 4: Reviewing Themes. The preliminary themes were compared with the original interview transcripts to ensure that they accurately reflected the participants' narratives. Themes that lacked sufficient supporting evidence were revised, merged, or removed.

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes. Each theme was refined to ensure conceptual clarity and alignment with the research objectives. Operational definitions were developed to explain the meaning and scope of each theme.

Phase 6: Producing the Report. The finalized themes formed the basis for presenting and interpreting the findings in Chapters 4 through 6. Representative participant quotations were incorporated to illustrate the themes while preserving the authenticity of participants' voices.

Thematic analysis was particularly appropriate because it enabled the researcher to identify recurring instructional practices, manifestations of constructivist pedagogy, classroom challenges, and adaptive teaching strategies among the participants.

3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study

Establishing trustworthiness is essential in qualitative research because it demonstrates that the findings accurately represent participants' experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria for evaluating qualitative rigor: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria guided the methodological procedures employed in the present study.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence that the findings accurately represent the participants' perspectives. To enhance credibility, the researcher employed prolonged engagement with the data, member checking, careful transcription of interviews, and continuous reflection throughout the research process. Participants were given opportunities to verify portions of their interview transcripts to ensure that their intended meanings had been accurately captured.

Transferability

Transferability concerns the extent to which findings may be applicable to similar educational contexts. Rather than seeking statistical generalization, the researcher provided detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and methodological procedures. These rich descriptions enable readers to determine whether the findings may be relevant to their own settings.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency and stability of the research process. An audit trail documenting research decisions, interview procedures, coding processes, and analytical steps was maintained throughout the investigation. This documentation allows future researchers to understand how the findings were generated.

Confirmability

Confirmability ensures that the findings emerged from the participants' narratives rather than the researcher's personal assumptions or biases. Throughout the investigation, the researcher maintained reflexive notes to acknowledge personal perspectives and minimize their influence on data interpretation. Direct quotations from participants were incorporated into the findings to preserve authenticity and support analytical interpretations.

Collectively, these strategies strengthened the methodological rigor of the investigation and enhanced confidence in the credibility of the reported findings.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles guided every stage of the research process. The study adhered to generally accepted standards for research involving human participants, ensuring respect for participants' rights, dignity, privacy, and well-being.

Prior to participation, each participant received a clear explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, potential benefits, and voluntary nature. Written informed consent was obtained before interviews commenced. Participants were informed that they could decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. Participants' names and identifying information were replaced with pseudonyms during transcription, analysis, and reporting. Audio recordings, interview transcripts, and research documents were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher.

The study also adhered to the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence. Interview questions focused solely on professional teaching experiences and were designed to avoid psychological discomfort or unnecessary risk. The findings were presented honestly and accurately, without fabrication, falsification, or selective reporting of data.

By observing these ethical principles, the study protected the rights of participants while ensuring the integrity and credibility of the research process.

4. TEACHING PRACTICES OF PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS

Teaching in the contemporary educational context requires flexibility, pedagogical competence, and responsiveness to learners' diverse needs. Following the disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuing evolution of educational policies, teachers are expected to facilitate learner-centered instruction while ensuring that curriculum standards are achieved. For pre-service English teachers, these expectations present unique opportunities and challenges. Although they possess theoretical knowledge acquired through teacher education programs, their teaching internship serves as the first authentic environment where pedagogical theories are translated into classroom practice.

This chapter presents the findings regarding the instructional practices of pre-service English teachers as they navigated the demands of contemporary English language classrooms. Using thematic analysis, five major themes emerged from the participants' narratives: (1) predominantly structured but adaptable teaching, (2) differentiated instruction and varied learning activities, (3) game-based and activity-oriented instruction, (4) classroom order and guided learning, and (5) lesson preparation using mixed instructional frameworks.

Rather than functioning as isolated teaching strategies, these themes collectively illustrate how beginning teachers negotiate the balance between traditional instructional practices and constructivist principles. Their experiences reveal that while learner-centered pedagogies are increasingly embraced, practical classroom realities continue to shape instructional decision-making.

4.1 Predominantly Structured but Adaptable Teaching

One of the most prominent findings of the study is that pre-service English teachers generally employ a structured approach to instruction while demonstrating a growing willingness to adapt their teaching according to classroom situations. Although participants recognized the value of learner-centered learning experiences, they consistently described beginning lessons with teacher-guided explanations before gradually transitioning learners toward interactive activities.

Participant 2 explained:

"I'm more comfortable with a lecture–discussion that incorporates some CLT. I prefer to make sure everything is clear first before I have them do a task."

This response illustrates that explicit instruction serves as the instructional foundation upon which communicative and collaborative activities are subsequently built. Rather than viewing lecture-discussion and communicative teaching as opposing approaches, the participant intentionally combines both strategies to establish conceptual clarity before learners engage in independent or collaborative work.

Similarly, classroom structure was closely associated with effective classroom management. Participant 4 emphasized the importance of maintaining discipline by stating:

"I'm strict when it comes to discipline. I want the class to be quiet during the explanation before they move on to group work."

This perspective suggests that novice teachers perceive classroom order as essential for successful instruction. Structured learning environments provide predictability, allowing beginning teachers to manage transitions effectively while reducing disruptions during classroom activities.

Collectively, these findings indicate that pre-service teachers rely on structured instruction not because they reject learner-centered teaching but because structure provides instructional security during the early stages of professional practice. As novice educators, they are simultaneously learning to teach, manage learners, implement curriculum requirements, and respond to diverse classroom situations. Under such conditions, teacher-directed instruction becomes an important mechanism for maintaining confidence and instructional control.

Nevertheless, the participants' narratives also reveal an emerging capacity for pedagogical flexibility. Although lessons often begin with direct instruction, participants consistently reported incorporating communicative activities, collaborative work, differentiated tasks, and learner participation once students had acquired sufficient understanding of lesson concepts. This gradual release of responsibility reflects a transitional stage in professional development, where beginning teachers combine familiar instructional approaches with learner-centered practices introduced during their teacher education program.

From a constructivist perspective, this pattern represents an evolving rather than contradictory instructional orientation. Constructivism does not prohibit explicit teaching; instead, it emphasizes that teacher guidance should support learners in constructing understanding through meaningful experiences (Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). The participants' instructional decisions demonstrate an attempt to balance explanation with exploration, recognizing that learners often require initial guidance before engaging in collaborative or inquiry-based activities.

This finding also aligns with Farrell's (2016) observation that novice teachers commonly begin their careers relying on structured, teacher-centered methods because these approaches provide confidence and predictability. As professional experience increases, teachers gradually incorporate more learner-centered instructional strategies and become increasingly comfortable facilitating inquiry, collaboration, and independent learning.

Within the contemporary educational context, this hybrid approach may be viewed not as a limitation but as an adaptive response to classroom realities. Pre-service teachers are expected to implement constructivist pedagogy while simultaneously addressing curriculum expectations, learner diversity, time constraints, and classroom management challenges. Consequently, their teaching practices reflect a dynamic integration of traditional instructional structure and emerging learner-centered pedagogies.

The findings therefore suggest that professional preparation should not encourage beginning teachers to abandon structured instruction entirely. Rather, teacher education programs should assist pre-service teachers in understanding how explicit teaching can complement constructivist learning when strategically integrated into lesson design. Such preparation enables future English teachers to move progressively from teacher-directed instruction toward increasingly autonomous, collaborative, and inquiry-based learning environments as their professional confidence develops.

4.2 Differentiated Instruction and Varied Learning Activities

Another significant finding of the study is the participants' deliberate effort to accommodate learners' diverse abilities through differentiated instruction and varied classroom activities. Although the pre-service English teachers acknowledged that students possess different levels of language proficiency, motivation, and learning preferences, they demonstrated a conscious attempt to modify instructional strategies to encourage participation and improve learning outcomes.

Several participants described using multiple classroom activities within a single lesson to address learner diversity. Rather than relying solely on lectures, they incorporated pair work, group discussions, collaborative tasks, oral presentations, worksheets, and interactive exercises. One participant explained:

"I try to prepare different activities because not all students learn the same way. Some prefer writing, while others learn better when they work with classmates."

This statement reflects an emerging understanding of differentiated instruction, where teachers recognize that a single instructional strategy cannot effectively address the needs of all learners. Instead, participants attempted to provide multiple opportunities for students to engage with lesson content through different modes of learning.

Another participant emphasized the importance of adjusting activities according to learners' academic readiness:

"If I notice that some students cannot follow immediately, I simplify the activity first before giving a more difficult task."

This practice illustrates instructional flexibility that aligns with learner-centered pedagogy. Rather than expecting all students to progress uniformly, the participant recognized individual differences and modified instruction

accordingly. Such adaptive teaching reflects an awareness that effective instruction requires continuous assessment of learners' understanding throughout the lesson.

These findings resonate strongly with Tomlinson's (2017) framework of differentiated instruction, which emphasizes adapting content, process, product, and learning environment according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Differentiation is not simply the use of varied classroom activities; it is a systematic instructional approach that ensures all learners have equitable opportunities to achieve learning objectives despite their individual differences.

Within constructivist theory, differentiation is equally important because learners construct knowledge based on prior experiences and existing cognitive structures (Piaget, 1972). Since students enter the classroom with varying backgrounds and levels of understanding, instructional activities must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate these differences. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development further supports differentiated instruction by suggesting that learning is optimized when instructional support matches learners' developmental needs.

The participants' narratives also reveal that differentiation extended beyond academic adjustments. Some pre-service teachers intentionally assigned specific responsibilities during group activities to encourage participation among quieter or less confident learners. By assigning roles such as discussion leader, recorder, presenter, or timekeeper, they created opportunities for all learners to contribute meaningfully regardless of their academic ability.

This strategy demonstrates an important aspect of inclusive teaching. Rather than allowing more proficient students to dominate classroom activities, participants attempted to distribute learning responsibilities across group members. Such practices foster collaboration while promoting learners' confidence and sense of belonging within the classroom community.

However, participants also acknowledged that implementing differentiated instruction presented significant challenges. Large class sizes, limited instructional time, and varying levels of learner preparedness often constrained their ability to design individualized learning experiences. Some participants admitted that although they understood the importance of differentiation, practical classroom realities occasionally required them to adopt whole-class instructional approaches.

These observations are consistent with the findings of Tomlinson (2017), who notes that differentiation is intellectually demanding because it requires ongoing assessment, careful lesson preparation, and continuous instructional adjustment. Beginning teachers often experience difficulty balancing learner-centered practices with curriculum expectations and classroom management responsibilities. Consequently, differentiation should be viewed as a developmental competency that improves with professional experience rather than an instructional technique mastered immediately during teacher preparation.

Despite these constraints, the findings indicate that the participants demonstrated an encouraging commitment to addressing learner diversity. Their willingness to modify activities, adjust instructional support, and

create multiple learning opportunities reflects the development of adaptive expertise, an essential characteristic of effective teachers in contemporary educational environments.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that teacher education programs should continue strengthening pre-service teachers' competence in designing differentiated instruction. Coursework and teaching internships should provide future English teachers with practical opportunities to develop adaptable lesson plans, implement flexible grouping strategies, and design assessments that accommodate learner diversity while maintaining academic rigor.

Ultimately, differentiated instruction emerged not merely as an instructional strategy but as an expression of responsive teaching. The participants recognized that effective English language instruction requires sensitivity to learners' differing needs and a willingness to modify instruction to maximize participation and understanding. Such responsiveness represents an important step toward the realization of constructivist, learner-centered classrooms.

4.3 Game-Based and Activity-Oriented Instruction

An important theme that emerged from the participants' narratives was the consistent use of game-based and activity-oriented instructional strategies to increase learner engagement and participation. The pre-service English teachers viewed games not merely as recreational activities but as instructional tools that enhanced students' motivation, encouraged interaction, and created meaningful opportunities for language use. This finding reflects the participants' recognition that English language learning becomes more effective when students actively participate rather than passively receive information.

Several participants described integrating educational games into their lessons to reinforce vocabulary, review previous topics, and introduce new concepts. One participant shared:

"I use games because students become more active and interested. Even those who are usually quiet participate when the lesson becomes enjoyable."

This response demonstrates that game-based activities served as a motivational strategy that encouraged wider classroom participation. The participant observed that learners who were often hesitant to engage during traditional instruction became more confident when learning occurred through interactive activities. Such observations suggest that game-based learning can reduce learners' anxiety while creating a more supportive environment for communication.

Another participant explained that classroom activities helped sustain learners' attention throughout the lesson:

"If the lesson is only discussion, students lose interest. Activities help them stay focused and understand the lesson better."

This statement highlights an important pedagogical consideration for contemporary English language teaching. Maintaining learner attention has become increasingly challenging in classrooms characterized by diverse

learning preferences and shorter attention spans. By incorporating games, collaborative exercises, and interactive tasks, the participants attempted to transform learners from passive listeners into active participants in the learning process.

The findings support the constructivist view that meaningful learning occurs through active engagement with learning experiences rather than through passive reception of information (Bruner, 1996). Educational games provide learners with opportunities to apply knowledge, solve problems, communicate with peers, and receive immediate feedback. These experiences encourage learners to construct understanding through participation, experimentation, and reflection.

Similarly, Plass, Homer, and Kinzer (2015) argue that game-based learning promotes deeper learning by integrating instructional objectives with engaging activities that require learners to think critically, make decisions, and collaborate with others. Unlike activities designed solely for entertainment, educational games create structured learning environments where knowledge is acquired through purposeful interaction. In English language classrooms, such interactions allow students to practice vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and communication skills within authentic contexts.

The participants' responses further indicate that games were frequently integrated with collaborative learning activities. Rather than encouraging competition alone, many classroom games required learners to work in pairs or small groups to complete language tasks. This collaborative dimension reflects Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective, which emphasizes that learning develops through interaction with others. Group-based games enabled learners to exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and support one another while accomplishing shared learning objectives.

Beyond learner engagement, the participants also viewed activity-oriented instruction as a practical means of assessing student understanding. Through quizzes, role-playing, language games, and group presentations, they were able to observe learners' comprehension and provide immediate feedback. These activities served both instructional and assessment purposes, enabling teachers to identify misconceptions while maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere.

However, the participants also acknowledged several challenges associated with implementing game-based instruction. Limited instructional time, insufficient classroom resources, and large class sizes occasionally restricted the use of elaborate learning activities. Some participants explained that they needed to balance enjoyable classroom experiences with curriculum requirements and lesson objectives. Consequently, games were carefully selected to support—not replace—the intended learning outcomes.

These observations reinforce Hamari et al.'s (2016) conclusion that the effectiveness of game-based learning depends on purposeful instructional design rather than the mere inclusion of games in classroom instruction. Educational games become meaningful only when they are aligned with curriculum objectives, learner needs, and

assessment goals. The participants' experiences demonstrate an emerging awareness of this principle as they intentionally selected activities that reinforced lesson content while promoting active participation.

Overall, the findings reveal that game-based and activity-oriented instruction constituted an important component of the participants' teaching practices. Their use of educational games reflected a learner-centered orientation consistent with constructivist pedagogy, where learning occurs through participation, collaboration, and authentic engagement. Although practical constraints occasionally limited implementation, the participants recognized that meaningful classroom activities contributed to improved learner motivation, increased confidence, and more effective English language learning.

4.4 Classroom Order and Guided Learning

While participants consistently promoted learner participation through collaborative and interactive activities, they also emphasized the importance of maintaining classroom order and providing continuous instructional guidance. Their narratives indicate that learner-centered teaching did not imply the absence of teacher direction. Instead, effective instruction required balancing student autonomy with purposeful guidance and classroom management.

Several participants described establishing clear classroom expectations before allowing learners to engage in collaborative activities. One participant remarked:

"Before group activities begin, I explain the instructions clearly because students become confused if expectations are not clear."

This finding illustrates that classroom structure served as a foundation for successful learner-centered instruction. Rather than limiting student participation, clear expectations enabled learners to engage confidently in classroom tasks while minimizing unnecessary confusion.

Participants likewise reported providing continuous support during learning activities by circulating around the classroom, answering questions, offering hints, and clarifying instructions whenever learners encountered difficulties. Such practices closely resemble the concept of instructional scaffolding proposed by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), in which teachers provide temporary assistance that gradually decreases as learners become more independent.

The participants' descriptions demonstrate that guidance was not intended to control learning but to facilitate it. As learners gained confidence and demonstrated understanding, teachers gradually reduced assistance, allowing students to assume greater responsibility for completing learning tasks independently. This gradual release of responsibility reflects both Bruner's (1996) constructivist perspective and Vygotsky's (1978) concept of learning within the Zone of Proximal Development.

These findings indicate that the participants viewed effective classroom management and guided learning as complementary rather than contradictory practices. Structured guidance created an environment where learners could participate actively while remaining focused on instructional objectives. Such an approach illustrates the evolving pedagogical competence of pre-service English teachers as they balanced learner autonomy with instructional responsibility.

4.5 Lesson Preparation Using Mixed Frameworks

The final theme that emerged from the participants' narratives concerns their approach to lesson preparation. The findings indicate that pre-service English teachers did not rely exclusively on a single pedagogical framework. Instead, they combined traditional lesson structures with learner-centered instructional strategies, reflecting an adaptive approach to planning that responded to classroom realities.

Several participants described preparing lessons by first identifying the learning competencies and intended outcomes before selecting instructional strategies that would best facilitate student learning. Although lesson planning generally followed the prescribed format required by the cooperating school and the Department of Education, participants intentionally incorporated interactive activities, collaborative learning, and formative assessment throughout the lesson. One participant explained:

"I follow the lesson plan format required by our school, but I also include activities where students can participate and share their ideas because they learn better that way."

This response illustrates that pre-service teachers viewed lesson plans not as rigid instructional scripts but as flexible guides that could be modified according to learners' responses during instruction. While institutional requirements influenced lesson organization, participants exercised professional judgment in adapting classroom activities to address students' needs and interests.

The findings further revealed that participants frequently combined direct instruction with learner-centered strategies. Lessons commonly began with motivation and teacher explanation before progressing to collaborative tasks, classroom discussions, games, or performance-based activities. This sequence reflects a gradual release of instructional responsibility in which learners receive sufficient guidance before engaging in independent or collaborative learning.

From a constructivist perspective, such instructional planning demonstrates an understanding that meaningful learning requires both structure and active participation. Bruner (1996) argues that teachers should organize learning experiences in ways that progressively support learners' conceptual development. Likewise, Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that effective instruction provides appropriate guidance before encouraging learners to assume greater independence. The participants' lesson preparation practices illustrate these principles by integrating explicit teaching with opportunities for exploration, collaboration, and reflection.

Another important aspect of lesson preparation involved anticipating classroom challenges. Participants reported considering learner diversity, time limitations, availability of instructional materials, and possible classroom management concerns while designing lessons. Several participants prepared alternative activities in anticipation of unexpected classroom situations, demonstrating increasing pedagogical flexibility.

One participant remarked:

"Sometimes the activity I planned does not work because of time or the students' level, so I prepare another activity just in case."

This finding highlights the participants' growing awareness that effective teaching extends beyond lesson design to include responsive decision-making during instruction. Rather than adhering rigidly to predetermined plans, they recognized the importance of adjusting teaching strategies based on learners' immediate needs and classroom conditions.

The use of mixed instructional frameworks also reflects the developmental nature of teacher learning. As beginning educators, participants were simultaneously applying theoretical knowledge acquired during teacher education while adapting to the practical realities of classroom instruction. Their lesson preparation therefore represented an evolving process of professional growth in which traditional instructional techniques and constructivist practices coexisted rather than competed.

These findings support the argument that effective teacher education should encourage flexibility rather than adherence to a single instructional model. Pre-service teachers benefit from understanding how different pedagogical approaches can complement one another when used strategically to promote meaningful learning. By integrating structured lesson planning with learner-centered instructional activities, the participants demonstrated emerging professional competence consistent with the expectations of contemporary English language teaching.

5. CONSTRUCTIVISM IN PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' TEACHING

Constructivism has become one of the most influential theoretical perspectives guiding contemporary educational practice. Rather than viewing learners as passive recipients of information, constructivist theory emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed through interaction, experience, collaboration, and reflection (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). Within English language teaching, constructivist pedagogy encourages teachers to design learning environments that promote inquiry, meaningful communication, learner autonomy, and authentic engagement with language.

The findings presented in Chapter 4 demonstrated that pre-service English teachers employed a variety of learner-centered instructional strategies while simultaneously responding to the practical realities of classroom instruction. Building upon those findings, this chapter specifically examines the extent to which constructivist principles were reflected in their teaching practices.

Five major themes emerged from the thematic analysis: (1) activation of prior knowledge, (2) collaborative learning, (3) learner exploration, (4) guided discovery, and (5) traditional instructional practices that constrained the implementation of constructivism. Collectively, these themes illustrate that while participants embraced several constructivist practices, their implementation remained influenced by contextual and institutional factors encountered during the teaching internship.

5.1 Activation of Prior Knowledge

One of the most evident manifestations of constructivist teaching among the participants was the deliberate activation of learners' prior knowledge before introducing new lessons. The participants recognized that meaningful learning occurs when new concepts are connected to learners' previous experiences, existing knowledge, and familiar situations. Consequently, many participants intentionally began their lessons by reviewing previous topics, asking introductory questions, or presenting familiar examples that encouraged learners to recall relevant information.

One participant explained:

"Before introducing the lesson, I always ask questions related to what they learned before so they can connect the new lesson with what they already know."

Another participant similarly stated:

"I ask them about their experiences because students understand the lesson better when they can relate it to real life."

These responses demonstrate that the participants viewed learners' existing knowledge as an essential foundation for subsequent learning. Rather than presenting information in isolation, they attempted to establish cognitive connections that enabled students to interpret new concepts within familiar contexts.

This instructional practice aligns closely with Piaget's (1972) theory of cognitive constructivism, which posits that learning occurs through the processes of assimilation and accommodation. Learners interpret new information based on existing cognitive structures, modifying these structures only when confronted with experiences that challenge previous understanding. Activating prior knowledge therefore facilitates meaningful learning by enabling learners to integrate unfamiliar concepts with established mental frameworks.

The findings are likewise consistent with Bruner's (1996) view that effective instruction should build progressively upon learners' existing understanding rather than treating each lesson as an isolated learning experience. By encouraging students to recall previous knowledge before introducing new material, the participants created opportunities for conceptual continuity and deeper understanding.

Within English language teaching, activating prior knowledge is particularly valuable because language learning depends heavily upon contextual understanding and meaningful communication. Learners interpret vocabulary, grammar, and communicative situations more effectively when instructional content relates to familiar

experiences. The participants' emphasis on questioning, review activities, and real-life examples therefore reflects sound pedagogical practice grounded in constructivist learning theory.

Although participants employed various techniques for activating prior knowledge, the findings also suggest opportunities for further professional growth. Future teacher education programs may strengthen pre-service teachers' ability to design inquiry-oriented opening activities that encourage learners not only to recall information but also to predict, question, analyze, and reflect before formal instruction begins. Such enhancements would further reinforce learner-centered teaching while promoting higher-order thinking.

The findings indicate that activating prior knowledge served as an important entry point for constructivist instruction. It enabled learners to become intellectually prepared for new learning while establishing meaningful connections between previous experiences and new educational content.

5.2 Collaborative Learning

Another prominent manifestation of constructivist pedagogy identified in the study was the participants' consistent use of collaborative learning activities. The interview data revealed that pre-service English teachers frequently organized pair work, group discussions, role-playing activities, and cooperative classroom tasks to encourage learner interaction and active participation. These instructional practices reflected their recognition that learning becomes more meaningful when students engage with one another while constructing knowledge.

One participant explained:

"I let them work in groups because they learn from each other. Students who understand the lesson can help those who are still struggling."

Another participant similarly observed:

"During group activities, students become more confident because they can discuss their answers before sharing them with the class."

These narratives illustrate that collaborative learning was perceived not merely as a classroom management strategy but as a pedagogical approach that promoted peer support, communication, and shared responsibility for learning. Rather than positioning themselves as the sole source of knowledge, the participants encouraged learners to exchange ideas, solve problems together, and learn through meaningful interaction.

The findings strongly reflect Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, which argues that cognitive development is fundamentally a social process. According to Vygotsky, learners construct understanding through interaction with more knowledgeable peers and teachers, gradually internalizing knowledge that initially develops through social engagement. Collaborative activities therefore provide valuable opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning, clarify misconceptions, and extend their understanding through dialogue.

The participants' practices also align with Johnson and Johnson's (2009) Social Interdependence Theory, which emphasizes that effective cooperative learning promotes academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, and learner motivation. When students work collaboratively toward common goals, they develop not only subject knowledge but also communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills that are essential for lifelong learning.

Within English language teaching, collaborative learning is particularly valuable because language acquisition depends upon meaningful communication. Group discussions, peer editing, debates, role-playing, and collaborative writing activities create authentic opportunities for learners to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing while interacting with classmates. These activities enable students to use English as a tool for communication rather than simply studying language forms in isolation.

Despite these benefits, participants acknowledged that collaborative learning also presented challenges. Some reported that highly capable learners occasionally completed most of the work, while less confident students remained passive during group activities. Others observed that maintaining classroom discipline became more difficult when students worked in groups.

These observations highlight an important consideration in constructivist teaching. Collaboration alone does not guarantee meaningful learning. Teachers must carefully structure group activities, assign clear roles, monitor participation, and provide guidance to ensure that all learners contribute actively. The participants demonstrated growing awareness of these responsibilities by assigning group roles, monitoring discussions, and facilitating classroom interaction.

Overall, the findings suggest that collaborative learning constituted one of the strongest indicators of constructivist teaching among the participants. Although implementation varied according to classroom conditions, the participants consistently recognized the educational value of peer interaction and cooperative learning in promoting English language development.

5.3 Learner Exploration

The findings likewise indicate that participants encouraged learner exploration by providing opportunities for students to discover ideas independently before receiving formal explanations. Although this practice was not implemented consistently across all participants, several described designing activities that allowed learners to observe, analyze, discuss, and generate responses before teacher clarification.

One participant stated:

"Instead of giving the answer immediately, I let them think first and discuss their ideas before we talk about the correct answer."

Another participant explained:

"I ask students to analyze examples first because they understand better when they discover the pattern themselves."

These responses demonstrate that some participants deliberately shifted aspects of the learning process from teacher explanation to learner investigation. Rather than presenting concepts directly, they encouraged students to engage with examples, formulate ideas, and develop preliminary understanding through exploration.

This instructional practice reflects Bruner's (1996) concept of discovery learning, which proposes that learners develop deeper conceptual understanding when they actively investigate relationships among ideas instead of passively receiving information. Discovery-oriented instruction promotes curiosity, critical thinking, and long-term retention because learners become actively involved in constructing meaning.

Learner exploration also supports Piaget's (1972) cognitive constructivist perspective. Through exploration, students encounter situations that challenge existing knowledge structures, prompting them to assimilate new information or accommodate their existing understanding. Such cognitive engagement promotes meaningful conceptual development rather than rote memorization.

Within English language teaching, learner exploration may involve analyzing authentic texts, identifying grammatical patterns from examples, interpreting literary passages, or solving language problems collaboratively. These activities encourage learners to become independent thinkers capable of constructing understanding through inquiry and reflection.

Nevertheless, the findings indicate that opportunities for learner exploration remained somewhat limited. Participants explained that curriculum requirements, time constraints, and learners' varying proficiency levels sometimes required more direct teacher explanation. As novice teachers, they often felt more confident providing explicit instruction before allowing students to explore concepts independently.

These findings suggest that while learner exploration was evident in the participants' instructional practices, its implementation remained influenced by practical classroom realities. Continued professional development may therefore strengthen pre-service teachers' confidence in designing inquiry-based lessons that encourage greater learner autonomy while maintaining instructional effectiveness.

5.4 Guided Discovery

Another constructivist element evident in the participants' teaching practices was the use of guided discovery. While learners were encouraged to participate actively in classroom activities, the participants consistently emphasized the importance of teacher guidance throughout the learning process. Rather than allowing students to work independently without support, they carefully monitored classroom activities, provided prompts, clarified misconceptions, and encouraged learners to arrive at their own conclusions through structured guidance.

One participant shared:

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"I don't immediately give the answer. I ask guide questions first so they can think about it before I explain."

Another participant explained:

"When students have difficulty answering, I give clues instead of telling them the answer immediately."

These responses illustrate that participants viewed teaching as a process of facilitating learning rather than simply transmitting information. By using guiding questions and instructional prompts, they encouraged learners to analyze situations, reflect on their responses, and construct understanding through supported inquiry.

This instructional approach closely reflects Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which proposes that learners achieve higher levels of understanding when assisted by a more knowledgeable individual. Within the ZPD, teachers provide temporary instructional support that enables learners to complete tasks they could not accomplish independently. As learners gain competence, the support is gradually reduced until independent performance becomes possible.

The participants' practices also demonstrate the principle of scaffolding, introduced by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976). Scaffolding involves providing structured assistance through questioning, modeling, demonstrations, feedback, and guided practice while gradually transferring responsibility to the learner. Throughout the interviews, participants described circulating around the classroom, monitoring group discussions, asking follow-up questions, and providing immediate feedback during learning activities. These practices illustrate that guidance remained an integral component of learner-centered instruction.

The findings suggest that guided discovery was particularly valuable in English language teaching. Rather than correcting learners immediately, participants encouraged students to examine examples, reconsider their responses, and discuss ideas with classmates before teacher clarification. Such practices promoted reflective thinking while preserving learners' confidence and willingness to participate.

Bruner (1996) argues that effective teachers structure learning experiences so that learners progressively develop independence through carefully sequenced guidance. The participants' instructional practices demonstrate an emerging understanding of this principle. They recognized that meaningful learning occurs not when teachers provide answers immediately but when learners are given opportunities to discover solutions with appropriate support.

However, participants also acknowledged that guided discovery requires considerable instructional skill. Some explained that excessive guidance limits learner independence, whereas insufficient support causes confusion and frustration. Balancing these competing demands proved particularly challenging for beginning teachers who were simultaneously developing classroom management skills and instructional confidence.

Despite these challenges, the findings indicate that guided discovery became an important strategy through which participants attempted to translate constructivist principles into classroom practice. Their use of questioning, prompts, and feedback reflects an evolving understanding of learner-centered teaching that extends beyond traditional lecture-based instruction.

5.5 Traditional Practices that Limit Constructivism

Although the findings revealed numerous examples of constructivist teaching practices, the study also identified several traditional instructional practices that limited the full implementation of constructivist pedagogy. Participants consistently explained that classroom realities often required them to adopt more teacher-directed approaches despite recognizing the value of learner-centered instruction.

One of the most frequently reported constraints involved the need to maintain classroom discipline. Several participants believed that direct instruction and teacher control were necessary before learners could successfully participate in collaborative or inquiry-based activities. As one participant remarked:

"Sometimes I have to explain everything first because if I let them work immediately, they become confused or noisy."

This response demonstrates the tension between constructivist ideals and practical classroom management. While participants valued learner autonomy, they also perceived structured instruction as necessary for maintaining an orderly learning environment.

Curriculum requirements likewise influenced instructional decision-making. Participants reported feeling pressured to complete required competencies within limited instructional time, leading them to rely on direct teaching methods when classroom schedules became constrained. One participant observed:

"There are times when I cannot do many activities because we have to finish the lesson within the allotted time."

Time constraints therefore reduced opportunities for extended inquiry, collaborative investigation, and learner exploration. Similar concerns have been identified in educational research, where beginning teachers frequently report difficulty balancing learner-centered instruction with curriculum coverage and assessment requirements.

Learner diversity also presented challenges. Participants explained that differences in language proficiency, motivation, and academic readiness often required additional teacher explanation before students could engage successfully in independent activities. Consequently, explicit instruction remained an important component of classroom teaching.

These findings should not be interpreted as evidence that participants rejected constructivism. Instead, they illustrate the complex realities of teaching in authentic educational settings. Constructivist pedagogy exists along a continuum rather than as an all-or-nothing instructional approach. Teachers continuously make professional decisions regarding when to provide direct instruction, when to facilitate collaboration, and when to encourage independent learning.

The participants' experiences therefore reflect what educational researchers describe as adaptive teaching—the ability to modify instructional approaches according to learners' needs, curriculum expectations, classroom context, and available resources. Rather than adhering rigidly to either traditional or constructivist methods, participants integrated elements of both approaches in response to practical classroom conditions.

This finding has important implications for teacher education. Preparing future English teachers requires more than introducing constructivist theory; it also requires helping pre-service teachers develop the pedagogical judgment needed to implement learner-centered instruction within the realities of contemporary classrooms. Opportunities for reflective practice, mentoring, and extended teaching experiences can strengthen beginning teachers' confidence in balancing instructional guidance with learner autonomy.

6. CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ENGLISH

Teaching English in today's educational environment requires more than mastery of language content. Teachers are expected to respond to learner diversity, integrate learner-centered instructional approaches, utilize available technologies, and achieve curriculum standards despite limited instructional time and resources. For pre-service English teachers, these responsibilities become particularly demanding because they are simultaneously developing professional competence while adjusting to the realities of classroom practice.

The findings of this study indicate that although the participants demonstrated commitment to implementing constructivist teaching practices, they encountered numerous challenges that influenced their instructional decisions. These challenges did not prevent them from facilitating meaningful learning; rather, they required the participants to adapt their teaching strategies according to the realities of their classroom contexts.

Five interrelated themes emerged from the participants' narratives: (1) limited instructional resources, (2) diverse learner abilities, (3) curriculum and time constraints, (4) classroom management challenges, and (5) constructivist responses to classroom challenges. These themes illustrate the complex environment in which pre-service English teachers attempt to balance learner-centered pedagogy with institutional expectations and practical teaching realities.

6.1 Limited Instructional Resources

One of the most frequently identified challenges involved the limited availability of instructional resources. Participants reported that the absence of adequate teaching materials, technological equipment, and classroom facilities often constrained their ability to implement interactive and constructivist learning activities.

One participant explained:

"Sometimes I want to use videos or interactive presentations, but the classroom does not have the necessary equipment."

Another participant observed:

"There are activities that I prepared, but I had to change them because the materials were not available."

These narratives demonstrate that resource limitations directly influenced instructional planning. Although participants recognized the educational value of multimedia presentations, collaborative learning materials, and technology-supported activities, practical classroom conditions frequently required them to modify or simplify their lesson plans.

Constructivist teaching often emphasizes authentic learning experiences supported by varied instructional resources. However, the findings suggest that participants did not perceive resource limitations as insurmountable obstacles. Instead, they demonstrated adaptability by improvising instructional materials, modifying classroom activities, and maximizing available resources.

Several participants described creating handmade visual aids, utilizing locally available materials, and designing activities that required minimal technological support. Such practices reflect professional creativity and resilience, characteristics that are increasingly recognized as essential competencies for beginning teachers.

The findings indicate that teacher preparation programs should continue strengthening pre-service teachers' ability to design effective instruction using both high-technology and low-resource teaching environments. Developing this adaptability prepares future educators to maintain instructional quality regardless of resource availability.

6.2 Diverse Learner Abilities

Another major challenge identified by the participants involved the considerable diversity of learners within English language classrooms. Differences in language proficiency, academic readiness, motivation, confidence, and learning preferences frequently influenced instructional decisions and classroom interaction.

One participant remarked:

"Some students understand immediately, while others need more explanation. It is difficult to make sure everyone learns at the same pace."

Another participant shared:

"There are students who actively participate, but there are also those who are very shy and do not want to speak in English."

These responses demonstrate that learner diversity extended beyond academic performance to include communication confidence, classroom participation, and individual learning needs. Such diversity required participants to modify activities, provide additional explanations, and create multiple opportunities for learner engagement.

Consistent with Tomlinson's theory of differentiated instruction, the participants responded by adjusting classroom activities, providing additional guidance, organizing flexible groupings, and simplifying instructional tasks when necessary. Although these strategies did not eliminate learner differences, they enabled greater participation among students with varying levels of readiness.

The findings further illustrate that learner diversity should not be viewed solely as a classroom challenge but also as an opportunity to develop inclusive instructional practices. Participants increasingly recognized that effective English language teaching requires flexibility, patience, and continuous assessment of learners' progress rather than reliance on uniform instructional approaches.

6.3 Curriculum and Time Constraints

The participants consistently identified curriculum requirements and limited instructional time as significant challenges affecting classroom instruction. While constructivist pedagogy encourages inquiry, collaboration, and extended learner engagement, participants frequently reported that curriculum pacing required them to complete prescribed competencies within fixed instructional schedules.

One participant explained:

"There are many competencies that need to be finished, so sometimes there is not enough time for longer activities."

Another participant stated:

"I want students to explore more, but we also need to complete the lesson within the allotted period."

These narratives reveal the tension between learner-centered instruction and curriculum implementation. Although participants valued collaborative and inquiry-based learning, they often shortened discussions, reduced classroom activities, or relied on direct instruction to ensure that lesson objectives were completed on schedule.

Rather than abandoning constructivist teaching, participants demonstrated instructional flexibility by integrating shorter collaborative tasks within structured lessons. This adaptation reflects the professional judgment required of beginning teachers as they balance educational ideals with institutional expectations.

The findings suggest that teacher education programs should provide greater opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice lesson pacing, instructional prioritization, and curriculum integration. Such preparation would strengthen their ability to implement learner-centered instruction without compromising curriculum requirements.

6.4 Classroom Management Challenges

Another major challenge identified by the participants was classroom management. While learner-centered instruction encourages interaction, collaboration, and active participation, it also requires teachers to maintain an environment conducive to learning. For the pre-service English teachers in this study, balancing student engagement with classroom discipline proved to be one of the most demanding aspects of their teaching practice.

Several participants described difficulties in maintaining learners' attention during classroom discussions and collaborative activities. One participant shared:

"Sometimes students become too excited during group activities, and it becomes difficult to bring their attention back to the lesson."

Another participant explained:

"Managing different personalities in one classroom is challenging because some students participate actively while others become distracted."

These responses suggest that classroom management extended beyond maintaining silence or discipline. Instead, participants recognized that effective classroom management involves organizing learning activities, maintaining productive interactions, and creating an environment where all students can participate meaningfully.

The findings support the view that classroom management is closely connected to instructional quality. According to Evertson and Weinstein (2006), effective classroom management involves creating conditions that maximize student learning through clear expectations, positive relationships, and well-organized instructional routines. Rather than controlling learners through strict discipline alone, effective teachers establish structures that promote both academic engagement and responsible behavior.

The participants demonstrated several strategies for managing classroom behavior while preserving learner participation. They established classroom rules at the beginning of lessons, explained activity procedures carefully, assigned specific responsibilities during group work, and monitored learners continuously throughout instructional activities. These practices reduced confusion, encouraged accountability, and minimized disruptions during collaborative learning.

The participants also emphasized the importance of building positive teacher–student relationships. Several explained that learners were more cooperative when they felt respected, listened to, and encouraged. This finding reflects the constructivist view that learning occurs within supportive social environments where students feel psychologically safe to participate and express their ideas.

Nevertheless, classroom management remained a significant challenge because beginning teachers were still developing confidence in balancing authority with learner autonomy. The findings indicate that classroom management should be viewed as an evolving professional competency that strengthens through continued teaching experience, reflective practice, and mentoring.

6.5 Constructivist Responses to Classroom Challenges

Despite the numerous challenges encountered during their teaching internship, the participants demonstrated remarkable adaptability by employing constructivist-oriented strategies to address classroom difficulties. Rather than abandoning learner-centered instruction, they modified their teaching practices to respond to contextual constraints while maintaining meaningful learning experiences.

One of the most frequently reported strategies was instructional scaffolding. Participants explained that when learners struggled with classroom tasks, they provided step-by-step guidance, simplified instructions, modeled expected responses, and gradually reduced support as students became more confident.

One participant stated:

"If students cannot answer immediately, I break the activity into smaller steps so they can understand it more easily."

This practice reflects Vygotsky's (1978) concept of scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development, where teacher support enables learners to accomplish tasks that would otherwise be beyond their independent capabilities. Rather than providing direct answers, participants encouraged learners to develop understanding through guided participation.

Another important strategy involved flexible grouping. Participants intentionally organized learners into heterogeneous groups so that more proficient students could assist classmates experiencing learning difficulties. This approach promoted peer tutoring, collaborative problem-solving, and shared responsibility for learning.

The participants likewise demonstrated flexibility in lesson implementation. When planned instructional activities proved unsuitable because of time limitations, unavailable materials, or learner readiness, they modified classroom tasks without losing sight of the intended learning objectives. Such adaptability illustrates the professional judgment expected of effective teachers operating in diverse educational contexts.

The findings further indicate that participants viewed reflection as an essential component of professional growth. Following classroom instruction, several participants evaluated the effectiveness of their lessons, identified areas requiring improvement, and adjusted subsequent teaching strategies accordingly. This reflective practice aligns with Schön's (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner, which emphasizes continuous learning through critical examination of professional experience.

Collectively, these responses demonstrate that constructivism functioned not merely as a theoretical framework but as a practical guide for responding to classroom challenges. Although participants encountered limitations related to resources, learner diversity, curriculum requirements, and classroom management, they consistently sought instructional solutions that promoted learner engagement, collaboration, and active participation.

These findings underscore the importance of preparing future English teachers to become adaptive professionals capable of responding creatively to the complexities of contemporary education. Teacher education institutions should therefore provide extended opportunities for authentic classroom practice, mentoring, and reflective learning that strengthen pre-service teachers' ability to integrate constructivist pedagogy with the realities of everyday teaching.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This monograph examined the teaching practices of pre-service English teachers within the contemporary educational context, emphasizing the extent to which constructivist principles were reflected in their classroom instruction, the challenges they encountered during their teaching internship, and the strategies they employed to address these challenges. Through qualitative inquiry involving semi-structured interviews with ten pre-service English teachers, the study provided meaningful insights into how beginning educators translate pedagogical theory into authentic classroom practice.

The findings demonstrate that pre-service English teachers adopt instructional approaches that combine structured teaching with learner-centered practices. Although lessons frequently begin with teacher guidance and explicit instruction, participants consistently integrate differentiated learning activities, collaborative learning, educational games, scaffolding, and opportunities for learner participation. These practices indicate that beginning teachers recognize the importance of creating engaging and responsive learning environments while ensuring that instructional objectives are achieved.

The investigation further revealed that constructivist pedagogy is evident in the participants' instructional decisions through the activation of prior knowledge, collaborative learning, learner exploration, and guided discovery. Rather than positioning learners as passive recipients of knowledge, participants encouraged them to construct understanding through interaction, discussion, reflection, and authentic learning experiences. However, the implementation of constructivist teaching was not absolute. Classroom management demands, curriculum expectations, limited instructional resources, diverse learner abilities, and time constraints frequently influenced the extent to which learner-centered approaches could be fully implemented.

An important contribution of the study lies in demonstrating that effective teaching does not require choosing exclusively between traditional and constructivist pedagogies. Instead, the findings suggest that successful pre-service teachers develop adaptive instructional practices by integrating explicit teaching with learner-centered experiences according to learners' needs and classroom conditions. Such pedagogical flexibility reflects the evolving professional competence expected of teachers in contemporary educational settings.

The study likewise highlights the importance of reflective practice in teacher development. Throughout their teaching internship, participants continuously evaluated their instructional decisions, modified classroom activities, and developed increasingly responsive teaching strategies. These experiences contributed significantly to their professional growth and strengthened their capacity to facilitate meaningful English language learning.

Overall, the findings affirm that constructivist pedagogy remains highly relevant in English language education. However, its successful implementation depends not only on theoretical understanding but also on institutional support, adequate instructional resources, mentoring, and opportunities for sustained classroom experience. Teacher education institutions therefore play a critical role in preparing future educators who possess both pedagogical knowledge and the adaptive expertise necessary to respond effectively to the realities of contemporary classrooms.

7.1 Educational Implications

The findings of this study carry important implications for teacher education, curriculum development, and classroom practice.

For teacher education institutions, the results underscore the need to strengthen opportunities for experiential learning. Coursework should provide pre-service teachers with repeated opportunities to design learner-centered lessons, implement differentiated instruction, and reflect critically on classroom experiences. Greater emphasis should also be placed on mentoring relationships between cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and pre-service teachers to support the practical application of constructivist principles.

For cooperating schools, the findings highlight the importance of creating supportive learning environments that encourage instructional innovation. Access to appropriate instructional resources, collaborative professional learning, and constructive feedback can strengthen pre-service teachers' confidence in implementing learner-centered pedagogies.

For curriculum developers, the study suggests that instructional policies should provide sufficient flexibility for inquiry-based learning, collaborative activities, and authentic assessment. Curriculum implementation should balance competency coverage with opportunities for meaningful learner engagement.

For future researchers, the study provides a foundation for further investigations involving larger participant groups, multiple teacher education institutions, or mixed-method research designs that examine the long-term impact of constructivist teacher preparation on classroom effectiveness.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Teacher education institutions should strengthen constructivist pedagogical training through increased classroom simulations, microteaching, and reflective teaching experiences.
2. Cooperating teachers and university supervisors should provide continuous mentoring and constructive feedback that encourages the gradual implementation of learner-centered instructional approaches.

3. Pre-service English teachers should continue developing reflective teaching practices by evaluating instructional effectiveness and modifying lesson designs according to learners' needs.
4. Schools should improve access to instructional materials and educational technologies that support interactive and collaborative English language instruction.
5. Professional development programs should focus on differentiated instruction, classroom management, formative assessment, and constructivist lesson design to strengthen beginning teachers' instructional competence.
6. Future studies should investigate the effectiveness of constructivist intervention programs using larger and more diverse participant groups across different educational contexts.

7.3 Proposed Constructivist-Based Intervention Material

One practical outcome of this investigation is the development of a Constructivist-Based Instructional Guide for Pre-Service English Teachers. The proposed intervention material is intended to support beginning teachers in designing learner-centered English language lessons that are responsive to contemporary classroom realities.

The instructional guide emphasizes practical classroom application by integrating constructivist principles with everyday teaching practices. It includes:

- lesson planning templates grounded in constructivist pedagogy;
- strategies for activating learners' prior knowledge;
- collaborative learning techniques;
- differentiated instructional activities;
- game-based learning strategies;
- scaffolding techniques for English language teaching;
- formative assessment tools;
- reflective teaching guides; and
- sample learner-centered lesson exemplars.

The intervention material also addresses common challenges identified in this study, including limited instructional resources, learner diversity, classroom management, and curriculum constraints. By presenting adaptable

teaching strategies, the guide aims to strengthen pre-service teachers' instructional confidence while promoting meaningful learner engagement.

It is recommended that the intervention material be implemented during teaching internships and evaluated through future research to determine its effectiveness in enhancing constructivist teaching competence among pre-service English teachers.

Final Reflection

Preparing future English teachers extends beyond developing content knowledge and pedagogical skills. It involves cultivating reflective professionals who are capable of responding thoughtfully to changing educational environments and the diverse needs of learners. The experiences shared by the participants demonstrate that effective teaching is a dynamic and evolving process characterized by continuous learning, adaptation, and professional growth.

As educational systems continue to evolve, learner-centered instruction will remain an essential component of quality English language education. Supporting pre-service teachers through meaningful preparation, sustained mentoring, and practical instructional resources will contribute significantly to the development of competent educators who are prepared to inspire, engage, and empower future generations of learners.

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Glossary

A

Authentic Learning – An instructional approach that engages learners in real-world tasks and meaningful activities that reflect practical applications of knowledge and skills.

C

Classroom Management – The strategies and practices teachers use to establish and maintain an orderly, respectful, and productive learning environment that supports effective instruction.

Collaborative Learning – A learner-centered instructional approach in which students work together to achieve shared learning goals, solve problems, and construct knowledge through interaction.

Conceptual Framework – A visual or narrative representation of the relationships among the key concepts and variables that guide a research study.

Constructivism – A learning theory which posits that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences, reflection, interaction, and problem-solving rather than passively receiving information.

Constructivist Teaching – An instructional approach based on constructivist principles that emphasizes learner participation, inquiry, collaboration, critical thinking, and the active construction of knowledge.

Contemporary Educational Context – The present educational environment characterized by technological advancement, curriculum reforms, learner diversity, inclusive education, and evolving teaching methodologies.

D

Data Analysis – The systematic process of organizing, interpreting, coding, and examining research data to identify patterns, themes, and meaningful findings.

Differentiated Instruction – A teaching approach that adapts content, instructional strategies, learning activities, and assessment according to learners' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles.

E

English Language Teaching (ELT) – The field of education concerned with the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language through appropriate pedagogical approaches.

Ethical Considerations – The principles and procedures that ensure research is conducted responsibly, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respect for participants.

F

Formative Assessment – An ongoing process of evaluating student learning during instruction to provide feedback that improves teaching and learning.

G

Game-Based Learning – An instructional strategy that incorporates educational games or game elements to enhance learner motivation, engagement, participation, and achievement.

Guided Discovery – A teaching strategy in which learners are supported by the teacher through questions, prompts, and structured activities that enable them to discover concepts independently.

I

Inquiry-Based Learning – A learner-centered instructional approach that encourages students to investigate questions, solve problems, and develop understanding through exploration and critical thinking.

Intervention Material – A structured instructional resource or teaching guide developed to address identified educational needs and improve teaching and learning outcomes.

L

Learner-Centered Instruction – A pedagogical approach that prioritizes learners' needs, interests, experiences, and active participation in the learning process.

Learner Exploration – The process by which students independently investigate ideas, analyze information, and construct understanding through inquiry and discovery.

P

Pedagogy – The theories, principles, and methods of teaching used to facilitate learning and improve educational outcomes.

Pre-Service English Teachers – Undergraduate students enrolled in teacher education programs who are undergoing professional preparation and teaching internship before becoming licensed professional teachers.

Prior Knowledge – The knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and understandings that learners possess before encountering new learning experiences.

Q

Qualitative Research – A research approach that explores human experiences, perspectives, and behaviors through non-numerical data such as interviews, observations, and document analysis.

R

Reflective Practice – A continuous process in which teachers critically examine their instructional experiences to improve professional knowledge, teaching effectiveness, and decision-making.

Research Instrument – A tool used to collect research data, such as interview guides, questionnaires, observation protocols, or checklists.

S

Scaffolding – Temporary instructional support provided by a teacher or more knowledgeable peer to help learners accomplish tasks beyond their current level of independent ability. The support is gradually withdrawn as learners develop competence.

Semi-Structured Interview – A qualitative data collection method that uses predetermined questions while allowing flexibility for probing and follow-up questions to obtain richer participant responses.

Social Constructivism – A theory of learning proposed by Lev Vygotsky that emphasizes the role of social interaction, language, and collaboration in the construction of knowledge.

Student Engagement – The degree of learners' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in classroom activities and learning experiences.

T

Teaching Internship – A supervised field experience in which pre-service teachers apply pedagogical knowledge and instructional skills in actual classroom settings under the guidance of cooperating teachers and university supervisors.

Thematic Analysis – A qualitative data analysis method used to identify, organize, analyze, and interpret recurring themes and patterns within research data.

Trustworthiness – The quality criteria for qualitative research that establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of research findings.

Z

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) – A concept developed by Lev Vygotsky referring to the difference between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with appropriate guidance and support.

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Index

Scientific Research 3, 13

Atom 4, 47, 123

Newton 4

Photon 5, 43

Dark Particle 5