Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning Volume 6, No. 1, January 2021

Available online at: https://journal.umv.ac.id/index.php/FTL/issue/view/720

e-ISSN: 2580-2070, p-ISSN: 2527-7650

Article History: Submitted: 19 December 2020 Reviewed: 11 January 2021 Edited: 12 January 2021 28 January 2021 Accepted: 28 January 2021



Classroom management: Applying appropriate strategies to enhance effective teaching

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.18196/ftl.v6i1.10638

Abstract

The teaching and learning process should be conducted effectively so that students can obtain the learning objectives. In so doing, teachers should have the ability to deliver the teaching materials effectively by conducting good classroom management. In this case, as prospective teachers, pre-service teachers should manage the classroom well to maintain teaching effectively. However, handling classroom management is not easy, and therefore pre-service teachers should apply appropriate strategies in managing the classroom. This research aims to investigate the strategies that pre-service teachers use to overcome the problems in managing the classroom during their teaching practices in a private senior high school. A qualitative research approach was employed to answer the research questions, in which in-depth interviews were administered to collect the data. Besides, four pre-service teachers at an Islamic university in Yogyakarta volunteered as the participants in this study. This study's results showed that the participants applied several strategies to respond to the problems emerging during their teaching practice. The strategies which these pre-service teachers applied to overcome the problems comprised 1) improving self-confidence, 2) preparing lessons carefully, 3) anticipating unpredictable situations, 4) responding to unpredictable questions wisely, and 5) handling with the students' heterogeneity. Having various ways of handling classroom management, these pre-service teachers could deliver the lesson effectively. Therefore, this study is beneficial for those who are having teaching practice to keep the classroom run successfully.

Keywords: Pre-service teachers; teaching practice; strategies; classroom management

Introduction

In conducting the teaching and learning process, teachers should create an effective learning environment in the classroom. Effective learning is defined as a situation in which students are suitably engaged and participating in their learning (De Freitas, 2018) to understand the material easily. Besides, the effective learning also brings the benefit to teachers in achieving the learning objectives. In order to obtain student' effective learning in the classroom, teachers should deliver the material effectively as it will give a good impact on students' learning.

Effective learning is resulted from effective teaching. Effective teaching happens when all education stakeholders, including parents, policymakers, community members, and educators, share responsibility for continuous improvement and student achievement (Killion & Hirsh, 2011). Besides, they stated that effective teaching in each classroom could be achieved by striving for a culture of collaboration and shared accountability among school stakeholders. Thus, effective teaching is a process, not the final goal. Loes and Pascarella (2015) said that effective teaching is associated with students' gaining critical thinking, propensity for lifelong learning, academic motivation, graduate degree plans, success in the study, and deep learning approaches. Furthermore, Bistari (2017) affirmed that effective teaching indicators include success in managing the classroom, success in the communicative process, good quality of students' response, good in the learning process, and success in the lesson's objectives.

In building the success of effective teaching, teachers should be able to master classroom management well. Classroom management is one of the most critical problems for teaching foreign languages (Macías, 2018). He illustrated that a foreign language teacher might explain an issue of the foreign language correctly, but the way he/she explained the issue in front of the students might be wrong, for example, in pronunciation. Thus, the effectiveness of teaching often depends on how teachers adapt their classroom management to teaching. Classroom management is defined as any actions done by the teachers in the classroom to create a learning atmosphere that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation (Burden, 2020). Besides, classroom management refers to the

Available online at: https://journal.umy.ac.id/index.php/FTL/issue/view/720

e-ISSN: 2580-2070, p-ISSN: 2527-7650

wide variety of skills and techniques teachers use to keep students "organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a class" (Babadjanova, 2020, p. 281).

Good classroom management means everything related to maintaining the class environment to create a conditional class to achieve the learning goal. If the classroom can be managed effectively, the teaching and learning process's objectives can be obtained. Therefore, teachers' skill in classroom management becomes prerequisite for achieving instructional objective so that it can help to create a better learning and teaching process. In meeting this objective, effective teachers who can display strong classroom management skills are obligatory. In other words, good ability in managing the classroom should be possessed by each teacher. Similarly, pre-service teachers as prospective teachers in the future should also display their strong classroom management skills, especially during their internship program at schools. It is a prevalent practice that pre-service teachers have teaching practices as parts of their internship program. Under the supervision of a teacher mentor, these pre-service teachers conduct teaching practices in front of the students in a real classroom. As teaching practice is a relatively new experience for these pre-service teachers, they sometimes find challenges in managing the classroom in front of the students.

As asserted by Irawati and Listyani (2020), one of the problems, particularly in a rural school, is a "behavioral problem". They added that classroom management behavioral issues include verbal interference, such as talking, singing, and laughing while the teacher discusses the subject. Owing to these behavioral problems, students would not understand the content that the instructor discussed well. It would make students have a low level of knowledge and not get insight into learning. A similar situation was also experienced by pre-service teachers when doing teaching practice. In her research, Rozimela (2016) stated that the difficulties faced by pre-service teachers in managing classrooms are related to handling disruptive students, controlling students in the class, grouping students, and giving time to the student while doing an oral assessment. Besides, these pre-service teachers also found problems in attracting student's attention to pay attention to them. In this context, it can be said that to handle this situation, the pre-service teachers as prospective teachers should develop their skills on what to teach and how to teach during teaching practice by applying effective strategies.

There has been a plethora of study discussing classroom management in foreign language classroom contexts (Babadjanova, 2020; Burden, 2020; Irawati & Listyani, 2020; Macías & Sánchez, 2015; Merç & Subaşı, 2015; Rozimela, 2016). However, these studies focused on problems or challenges in classroom management. Only a few of them discussed the classroom strategies done by pre-service teachers in secondary school contexts. Therefore, it is very interesting to find out the strategies these pre-service teachers face in managing the classroom. This study then aimed to investigate how the pre-service teachers handled the challenges they found in their teaching practice or their classroom management strategies effectively.

Literature Review

Effective teaching and teacher

In the teaching and learning process, teachers should teach effectively to obtain the target of the lesson. MacSuga-Gage, Simonsen, and Briere (2012) stated that effective teaching involved both art and science. Successful teachers have expertly woven together academic, behavioral, and social threads to create a special classroom tapestry. Teaching a foreign language such as English as Foreign Language (EFL) in a classroom needs more preparation and effort because a teacher should focus not only on the content knowledge of the language but also on the language itself as a medium of instruction. Some strategies can be conducted to make effective teaching, such as having sufficient preparation prior to the class and designing a good lesson plan, as well as understanding the characteristics of the lessons (Richards & Bohlke, 2011). Besides, effective teaching can be conducted by integrating neurocognitive plasticity, students' learning potential, modifiability of students' intelligence, the role of students' emotions, and learning metacognition (Wilson & Conyers, 2020). In such a context, effective teaching is influenced by teachers as the main agent of teaching. Thus, it can be said that effective teaching results from an effective teacher.

Richards and Bohlke (2011, p. 15) mentioned that teachers play an essential role in creating effective teaching. They added that teachers must be ready to become "a sample of good behavior" and create a "positive attitude toward learning" for students in the classroom (p. 15). In so doing, they proposed ways by which teachers can create positive attitudes, such

as 1) creating a positive classroom climate, 2) arranging the class to promote effective learning,

3) managing the use of class time, 4) maintaining appropriate behavior in teachers' eyes, and

5) creating a culturally sensitive classroom. Most of these activities are, in fact, parts of

classroom management that teachers should handle appropriately to make the teaching and

learning process successful. To sum up, to build effective teaching, teachers must have good

classroom management capacity.

Classroom management

The concept of classroom management is as old as that of teaching. A plethora of

researchers has done research related to classroom management (See Ahmad et al., 2012;

Babadjanova, 2020; Burden, 2020; Irawati & Listyani, 2020; Macías & Sánchez, 2015; Martin

et al., 2016; Pereira & Gates, 2013; Rozimela, 2016). In general, classroom management is

defined as the teacher's action to manage the class environment to achieve good results, both

academic and social learning. Macías and Sánchez (2015) explained that classroom

management is an action about managing the class environment to become good to establish

the learning process successfully. Classroom management is also a term used to describe the

method of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly without disruptive actions by students

compromising the delivery of instruction. Thus, as mentioned earlier, classroom management

is related to any action taken by classroom teachers to build a learning environment that

promotes positive social interaction, active participation in learning, and self-motivation

(Burden, 2020). Therefore, classroom management refers to the broad range of skills and

strategies teachers use to keep students "organized, well-ordered, attentive, on-the-job, and

academically effective in the classroom" (Babadjanova, 2020, p. 281). In summary, appropriate

classroom management infers the success of teaching and learning, not only in students'

academic matters but also in students' social learning. Thus, effective classroom management

contributes to effective teaching.

In order to obtain effective teaching, teachers must handle classroom management

effectively. The way teachers handle their classrooms can affect how students behave because

the classroom is an environment where students and teachers interact (Irawati & Listyani,

2020). However, they added that many teachers still faced problems related to classroom

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management. In particular, they found out that teachers in a rural area faced problems related to students' behavior in the classroom. A similar experience is also potential to be experienced by pre-service teachers.

Pre-service teachers are usually students of teacher training education who have school-based field experience. Under the supervision of a coordinating teacher, these pre-service teachers gradually take on more responsibility for classroom management and teaching. In general, these pre-service teachers experience teaching practice starting from designing the lesson, delivering the lesson, and assessing students' performance in the classroom. In conducting the teaching practice, many pre-service teachers face problems related to classroom management. The following section explains problems related to classroom management that teachers and pre-service teachers often face in detail.

Problems in classroom management

In doing the teaching practice in an internship, pre-service teachers often meet the difficulties, especially if it is their first personal experience to teach in front of the real classroom. In this condition, the pre-service teachers should think harder to overcome the problems. Some difficulties might appear during the teaching and learning process. The problems are listed by Brown (2007), such as: feeling anxious, facing the disruptive student in the class, getting unpredictable questions from the students, having unpredictable situations during the teaching and learning process, lack of experience, and lack of time. Besides, Irawati and Listyani (2020) reported that teachers in rural areas faced "behavioral problems", which resulted in students acting misbehavior, such as disrespecting the teachers, sleeping in the classroom during lessons, daydreaming, and using many rude words. Finally, pre-service teachers' other problems are most likely due to the students' low motivation, students' minimal English ability, and the pre-service teachers' lack of classroom management skills (Rozimela, 2016).

In order to run the class effectively, these problems related to classroom management must be overcome. In this context, while doing the teaching practice, the pre-service teachers should handle the challenges as efficiently as possible. Some of the strategies to handle the problems in classroom management are mentioned in the next section.

Available online at: https://journal.umy.ac.id/index.php/FTL/issue/view/720

e-ISSN: 2580-2070, p-ISSN: 2527-7650

Strategies in classroom management

Improving self-confidence. Pre-service teachers often feel nervous when teaching for the first time. Their anxiety feeling often results from giving unclear explanations during the lesson, and this condition causes misunderstanding from the student. However, no matter how nervous they feel, they must be able to handle their anxiety. One way to solve this problem is to give clear, slow, and short instruction and provide a good visual aid. It helps students to focus on what the pre-service teachers say and understand the instruction clearly. Also, Merç and Subaşı (2015) said that one way to ensure students' understanding is by asking students to repeat the instruction. Finally, Cheng, Chan, Tang, and Cheng (2009) argued that teachers' beliefs would affect several things, such as shaping the teacher conception, the instructional strategies, and the class's performance. Therefore, pre-service teachers must have the self-confidence to cope well with their anxiety.

Paying attention to disruptive students. Students at schools have various attitudes and behaviors. Some students are well behaved, while some others are disruptive. These disruptive students often distract pre-service teachers while teaching in the classroom. In solving these problems, Merç and Subaşi (2015) suggested pre-service teachers pay attention to them by making eye contact, giving reminders, showing interest in them, changing students' seat rows, and having individual talk after class. Such solutions are also stated by (Ahmad et al., 2012), who mentioned that one way to solve these problems with disruptive students is paying attention to these students. Finally, according to (Al-Amarat, 2011), to handle problems related to disruptive students in the classroom, the pre-service teachers can have discussions or consultations with their parents.

Preparing the lessons carefully. In some cases, when teachers do a group discussion or group activity, students like to do anything they want. Some students may talk a lot with their friends, and some others remain silent in the group. This situation can disturb the class activity. In responding to such a situation, pre-service teachers should prepare the lesson carefully before the meeting. They should design appropriate learning activities that can accommodate both individual and group learning and assign all students in the class with different tasks suitable for their capacity. Ahmad et al. (2012) mentioned that the pre-service teachers should make the

students ask a question in a group with other friends or the teacher. Besides, Merç and Subaşı (2015) also said-that the pre-service teachers should monitor and give more attention to all the group rather than sit at the front desk. These activities can only be done if the pre-service teachers can design lesson plan carefully. Clement (2010) argued that a good lesson plan prepared by pre-service teachers helped them avoid classroom management problems.

Responding to unpredictable questions wisely. Unpredictable questions from the students become one of the big problems for pre-service teachers. Commonly, the teaching and learning process is concluded by Question and Answers session. In this opportunity, the students ask questions about the topic, and the teacher answers them. However, sometimes, there is a condition in which the students ask questions out of context. This situation can lead to teachers' inability to answer the questions directly. It is then called unpredictable questions. Brown (2007) said that the unpredictable question is a question that may not be related to the lesson, or it is related-to the lesson but in the in-depth discussion and more complicated. This kind of situation must be responded to by the pre-service teachers well so that they know what to do in the classroom. Besides, Merç and Subaşi (2015) affirmed that the teacher should make a discussion to answer the question or ask time to search for the answer. Thus, if the teacher cannot answer directly, they can say that they will find the answer the other day and search for the answer at home. After getting the answer, the teacher should tell the student.

Anticipating unpredictable situations. According to Brown (2007), the common problem is that the pre-service teacher usually prepares the lesson plan; in the middle of the plan, there is an interruption from the students, and the pre-service teacher plans are not going well. Another case in the teaching and learning process is the interruption caused by teachers' unfamiliarity about students' names, students' characteristics, or students' manners. In some cases, the students intentionally disturb the teachers by paying no attention to the lessons and chatting with their peers. Based on Merç and Subaşi (2015), the pre-service teachers can ignore the unimportant interruption. If the interruption only comes from one or two students, the preservice teachers can ignore all of them. Unless the interruption is quite noisy, the teacher can give them advice.

Methodology

In conducting the study, the qualitative approach was applied, which focused on the preservice teachers' strategies to manage their classrooms. Also, an interpretivist approach (Bryman, 2012; Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007; Walsham, 2006) to investigate these opinions was applied. This approach was suitable for this study as it enabled the development of a greater understanding of the participants' interpretations of classroom management and how they made meanings to those interpretations (Bryman, 2012), which was imperative to meet the research focus. Using descriptive qualitative as the research design, the researchers sought the participants' experiences concerning their teaching practices during the internship, particularly classroom management. V. A. Lambert and C. E. Lambert (2012) mentioned that descriptive qualitative is used to analyze, describe, and summarize the participants' specific experiences.

This research was conducted in a private university in Yogyakarta. Using convenience sampling, four female pre-service teachers were selected as the participants. This type of sampling was applied because many participants were potentially selected (Alvi, 2016). Therefore, to minimize the fuss of the participants' selection, this convenience sampling was applied. In selecting the participants, the researchers chose the pre-service teachers who were available and close to the researchers and willing to be the participants voluntarily. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) stated that the near, available, and accessible participants could be chosen in convenience sampling. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect the data. The data collected were transcribed, stored, sorted, and coded, as well as analyzed based on similar themes. In order to maintain its trustworthiness, member checking was done. All the participants confirmed that the data were correct. Finally, to maintain the participants' identity, pseudonyms of Rose, Orchid, Tulip, and Jasmine were used.

Findings and Discussions

This study aimed to seek strategies applied by pre-service teachers concerning classroom management when conducting teaching practices during their internship programs. As mentioned earlier, these pre-service teachers frequently found problems related to classroom management when doing teaching practices. In responding to these problems, several strategies

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e-ISSN: 2580-2070, p-ISSN: 2527-7650

were applied. Based on the participants' interviews, the findings revealed the pre-service teachers' strategies in handling their problems. These findings were then categorized into four themes: 1) improving self-confidence, 2) preparing lessons carefully, 3) anticipating unpredictable situations, 4) responding to the unpredictable questions wisely, and 5) handling with the students' heterogeneity. The findings are explained further in the following section.

Finding 1: Improving self-confidence. Most of the pre-service teachers admitted they felt nervous prior to teaching practices. They were often worried about their lesson plan, their teaching materials, and even their students. Their anxiety often affected their classroom management. The participants applied several strategies to solve these problems, such as talking to their students, asking for peers' suggestions, thinking positively, preparing the lesson well prior to the class, and thinking positively during the class. One of the participants, Rose, said: "I talk to my students when I feel nervous". In this case, Rose tried to handle her nervous feeling by building communication with the class students. Unlike Rose, Orchid used another strategy. She said, "I asked my friends' suggestion in teaching method". Then, she added, "also...I just pray to God and do positive thinking". Orchid chose to ask for her friends' suggestions while building her positive thinking at the same time to overcome her anxiety. The other participant, Tulip, stated, "I just searched and found a good topic to discuss before starting the class".

The participants' responses indicated that they had their strategy for handling nervousness, insecurity, and unconfident. In handling these problems, the pre-service teachers should believe in their own belief in teaching and always think positively. While Rose tried to build communication with the students in the class, Orchid encouraged herself by maintaining a positive attitude, and Tulip prepared herself before the class. These activities strengthened their beliefs that teaching should be done with positive thinking and preparation. It is according to Cheng et al. (2009), who stated that teachers' beliefs would affect several things, such as shaping the teacher's conception, the instructional strategies, and the class's performance.

Finding 2: Preparing lessons carefully. Based on the interviews, it was revealed that pre-service teachers often found problems related to time management. Some pre-service teachers lacked time when teaching so that they could not finish their teaching materials, and

some others had run out of the materials and had no idea to spend the time until the class was over. In solving this problem, they tried to do several strategies, such as designing good lesson plans and consulting the lesson plans with their mentor teacher. Rose stated, "[I] designed a good lesson plan before class". She also added, "[I] had a lesson plan consultation with the mentor teacher". In this case, as a pre-service teacher, Rose was mentored by the professional teacher during the internship program; therefore, she could always contact and ask for suggestions in preparing her teaching practice.

The strategies used by these pre-service teachers mentioned above corroborates Merç and Subaşi (2015), who stated that the teacher should pace the lesson, do all the activity quickly, and-give the activity as homework. As prospective teachers, the pre-service teachers should understand the classroom situation and do-good time management in every meeting to achieve the learning objectives. On the other hand, Jasmine used a different way. She said that whenever she still had time while she already finished the teaching materials, she did "chatting and sharing about the future with the students [in the classroom]". This way, Jasmine could handle her classroom well while having more proximity with her students by chatting about students' future goals.

The strategy of preparing lesson plans carefully was also used when the participants found problems concerning their pedagogical skills. Many of the pre-service teachers had limited experience in delivering the teaching materials in front of the students. As Orchid said, "I tried to search how to manage a classroom appropriately through the internet". Thus, she prepared the lesson by searching for information from online resources. Meanwhile, another participant, Tulip, used her own experience with her previous teacher to prepare the lesson well. She said, "I decided to follow what my lecturer taught to me". When the participants found their strategy in handling their classroom management problems, Clement (2010) stated that a good lesson plan is useful for the pre-service teachers to avoid classroom problems. The strategy applied by the participants also aligns with Richards and Bohlke (2011), who argued that having sufficient preparation before the class and designing a good lesson plan, as well as understanding the characteristics of the lessons, can be conducted to make effective teaching.

Finding 3: Anticipating unpredictable situations. Another strategy employed by the pre-service teachers in class was anticipating unpredictable situations. An unpredictable

situation often happened in the middle of the teaching process, causing a classroom management problem. If such a thing happened, the pre-service teachers chose a temporary class leader to help them prepare and control the classroom situation. This strategy helped the pre-service teachers in managing the classroom condition to be effective. There were several ways to anticipate unpredictable situations. One of them was from Orchid, who said that "I choose a temporary class leader to help me lead the *du'a* and prepare LCD projector".

The findings referred that the pre-service teacher took action directly when facing the problems in the class. They chose the temporary class leader to help prepare and control the class. This way, the class could be managed well, and the teaching and learning process could run effectively. This condition is consistent with Merç and Subaşi (2015), who stated that the pre-service teachers could ignore the unimportant interruption; instead, they could do more positive ways to anticipate the problems, such as stated by the participants above.

Finding 4: Responding to the unpredictable question wisely. The next strategy used by the student-teachers was responding to unpredictable questions. One of the participants had a special way to overcome unpredictable questions. Jasmine said, "I said to the students to discuss the question [which I cannot answer now] in the next meeting". In her situation, Jasmine did not answer the questions directly as she did not know the answer, but she promised her students to find the answer and inform them in the next meeting. It happened because the student asked a question that was out of the topic. This strategy is, in fact, in keeping with Merç and Subaşi (2015), who said that the teacher should make a discussion to answer the question or ask for more time to search the answer.

Finding 5: Handling with the students' heterogeneity. The final strategy that preservice teachers applied in classroom management was related to students' different characteristics or heterogeneity. It is prevalent that a classroom consists of students with various characteristics and behaviors. A good teacher will be familiar with students' names to understand their characteristics well. However, sometimes, this is not easy. Some pre-service teachers also found such difficulties. In responding to this situation, they had to use a good strategy. Tulip, one of the participants, told her experience and said, "In handling with an unfamiliar name, I decided to get close to the class leader. The aim to know the class leader is

to help me control the classroom condition". In responding to her unfamiliarity with the

students' names, she decided to ask the class leader to help her memorize the students' names.

Therefore, whenever she forgot about the names, she asked the class leader. This way, Kenana

used the class leader as her assistance in controlling the class.

The strategy to involve the class leader to help her control the students in the class was

effective because the class leader could understand more about what the students wanted or

what they needed. Besides, the strategy to ask for help from the class leader is also in line with

Wilson and Conyers (2020), who asserted that integrating the role of students' emotions in

managing the classroom can be used to create effective teaching. In this case, the class leader

acted as the teacher's assistance to inform the pre-service teachers about unfamiliar names. This

way, the pre-service teacher could focus more on the teaching and learning process.

Conclusion

This study focused on strategies in managing the classroom while doing teaching

practices conducted by the pre-service teachers. As prospective teachers, the pre-service teachers

should have the ability to manage the classroom as well as professional teachers. In reality, many

pre-service teachers lacked experience in teaching and trying hard to manage the classroom

condition. Based on these ideas, the researchers were interested in investigating the strategies

that pre-service teachers used in handling the problems related to classroom management in

Senior High School education.

In conducting this research, the researchers applied a qualitative approach to know the

participants' points of view based on their own experiences related to this research topic. Using

descriptive qualitative as the research design, the study was conducted in an Islamic secondary

school in Yogyakarta, in which the students of the English Language Education Department

had their teaching practices for one semester. The research participants were initially six people;

however, two of them withdrew their involvement due to their personal affairs.

The findings were meant to answer the research question of how the pre-service

teachers applied their strategies as an attempt to solve the problems in managing the classroom

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Available online at: https://journal.umv.ac.id/index.php/FTL/issue/view/720

e-ISSN: 2580-2070, p-ISSN: 2527-7650

while doing their teaching practice. Based on the findings, several strategies were implemented

in the classroom, comprising 1) improving self-confidence, 2) preparing lessons carefully, 3)

anticipating unpredictable situations, 4) responding to the unpredictable questions wisely, and

5) handling with the students' heterogeneity. This study is believed to be useful for several

parties, and therefore, several recommendations are given to the following parties in the next

section.

Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are given to the following

parties, comprising:

Pre-service teachers. As prospective teachers, the pre-service teachers must be able to

manage all possible difficulties in managing the class. The students must also be able to

overcome problems that arise in class as soon as possible using their strategy. Moreover, the pre-

service teachers must prepare everything well before starting the class.

The government or institution. An education institution or teacher training

education must provide sufficient education to their pre-service teachers before assigning them

to do a school-based internship and conducting teaching practice. This education institution

must also provide learning about how to organize classes correctly and adequately so that the

pre-service teachers are ready when they have to do teaching practice.

Future researcher. The researchers recommended future researchers who research the

same topic to evolve and conduct the different focus areas of research to get more in-depth data

about classroom management strategies for pre-service teachers. Future researchers can also

focus their research using a quantitative approach so that different findings will be revealed.

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