

## Evaluation of Pre-Service Teachers' Views on the Reality Shock of the Teaching Practicum Course

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the process of the teaching practicum course, where students in the elementary education department gain their initial professional experiences in primary schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, in the context of the expectation of reality shock. Additionally, the study aims to raise awareness among pre-service teachers regarding the reality shock they may encounter in the early years of their profession. The study group of this research consists of students enrolled in the Primary School Teaching program at İnönü University during the 2022-2023 academic year who have taken the Teaching Practicum I course. The participants include 6 females and 6 males, totaling 12 individuals who agreed to participate in the interviews. Research data were obtained using a semi-structured interview form consisting of 7 questions. The results of the research reveal that pre-service teachers experience role ambiguity in the teaching practicum course. They face challenges in selecting and implementing appropriate methods and techniques, preparing suitable materials for the course content, course planning, effective classroom management, effective communication, transitioning from theory to practice, handling class size and physical conditions, determining appropriate behavior towards special needs students, considering individual and developmental differences of students in conducting courses, and communicating with students with different mother tongues. Additionally, some pre-service teachers reported difficulties in their interactions with supervising teachers. Some pre-service teachers did not encounter issues in delivering theoretical and practical knowledge to students during the teaching practicum course. They resolved problems related to classroom management through the experiences gained during the internship and observations. Furthermore, they developed self-confidence and competence in class discipline and management over time, exhibited socio-cultural development, fostered positive attitudes towards the qualities of the profession, and acknowledged the contribution of subject knowledge courses, particularly acknowledging the preparation provided by professional knowledge courses for entering the profession and their utility in professional development.

**Keywords:** Reality shock, expectation of reality shock, pre-service teacher, elementary education

### Öğretmenlik Uygulaması Dersinin Gerçeklik Şoku Bağlamında Öğretmen Adaylarının Görüşlerine Göre Değerlendirilmesi

#### Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı sınıf öğretmenliği bölümünde öğrenim gören öğrencilerin Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı ilkokullarda ilk mesleki deneyimlerini edindikleri öğretmenlik uygulaması dersi sürecinin gerçeklik şoku beklentisi bağlamında değerlendirmek ve bununla birlikte öğretmen adaylarının mesleğin ilk yıllarında karşılaşılabilecekleri gerçeklik şokuna ilişkin farkındalık oluşturmaktır. Bu araştırmanın çalışma grubu; 2022-2023 eğitim öğretim yılında İnönü Üniversitesi Sınıf Öğretmenliği programında öğrenim gören ve öğretmenlik uygulaması I dersini alan öğrencilerden oluşmaktadır. Katılımcılar 6 kadın ve 6 erkek olmak üzere görüşmeye katılmayı kabul eden 12 kişiden oluşmaktadır. Araştırma verileri 7 sorudan oluşan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile elde edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucuna göre, öğretmen adaylarının, öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinde rol karmaşası yaşadıkları, uygun yöntem ve tekniği hem seçmede hem de kullanmada, ders içeriğine uygun materyal hazırlamada, dersi planlamada, etkili sınıf yönetimi ve etkili iletişim kurmada, teoriden pratiğe geçişte, sınıf mevcudu ve sınıfın sahip olduğu fiziksel koşullar, özel öğrencilere nasıl davranılması gerektiği, öğrencilerin bireysel ve gelişimsel farklılıklarını göz önünde bulundurarak dersi nasıl yürütecekleri ve farklı anadile sahip öğrenciler ile nasıl iletişim kuracakları konusunda ve bazı adayların uygulama öğretmenleri ile sorunlar yaşadıkları ortaya konulmuştur. Bazı öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinde kuramsal ve pratik bilgileri öğrencilere aktarmada sorun yaşamadıkları, sınıf yönetimi ile ilgili yaşadıkları problemleri staj sürecinde kazandıkları deneyim ve yaptıkları gözlem ile çözdüklerini, kendilerini sınıf disiplini ve yönetimi konusunda geliştirdikleri, süreç içerisinde öz güven kazandıkları ve öz yeterliklerinin geliştiği, sosyokültürel açıdan gelişim gösterdikleri ve mesleğin niteliklerine ilişkin olumlu tutum geliştirdikleri, alan bilgisi derslerinin kendilerine katkı sağladığı özellikle meslek bilgisi derslerinin onları mesleğe hazırladığı ve mesleki gelişimleri açısından faydalı olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Gerçeklik şoku, gerçeklik şoku beklentisi, öğretmen adayı, sınıf öğretmenliği

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching, which focuses on achieving desired behaviors in education, is inherently a profession where ideals and expectations are significant and high. The profession of teaching, which requires a considerable level of social, cognitive, and affective knowledge, skills, and competence, is addressed through theoretical and applied courses in general knowledge, subject-specific knowledge, and pedagogy in teacher training institutions, namely education faculties. Teaching practicum emerges as the most concrete course with a practical focus in the process of teacher preparation. Within this course, activities such as "observing field-specific special teaching methods and techniques, conducting micro-teaching practices using field-specific special teaching methods and techniques, independently planning a course, developing activities and materials related to the course, preparing instructional environments, classroom management, and assessment and evaluation" are included. The aim here is to impart fundamental skills required by the teaching profession, thereby minimizing potential challenges in the early years of the profession. Indeed, each individual forms ideals and expectations at varying levels related to the profession they are educated in. The discrepancy between the ideals and expectations formed during vocational education and their complete realization in the professional working environment is a challenge experienced by employees in their early years. Teachers who experience that their ideals and expectations do not entirely align with the reality of their professional life in the early years of their careers may encounter this challenge more prominently. In the literature, these challenges are expressed as "reality shock."

The concept of reality shock, initially rooted in Hughes' studies (1958), was introduced to the literature by Kramer (1974). Kramer (1974) utilized the concept of reality shock, meaning intense surprise and disappointment regarding unforeseen situations in the early stages of a profession, to express the inconsistency between the expectations of a recent graduate and the reality of professional life. This term has been applied in various studies across professions, including accountants (Carcello et al., 1991; Dean, Ferris, Konstans 1988), newly employed white-collar workers (Ogawa, 2005; Kodama, 2017), IT professionals (Dhar, 2013), and librarians (Oud, 2008). Additionally, studies on reality shock have addressed professions such as nursing (Choe, Lee, 2016; Duchscher, 2009; Kramer, 1974) and teaching (Dicke et al., 2015; Kim & Cho, 2014; Marso & Pigge, 1987; Shaw, 2018; Veenman, 1984). Similar to other professional groups, prospective teachers also develop certain attitudes and expectations towards their profession before entering employment. Expectations related to career plans, working conditions, and the characteristics of the profession sometimes do not align with the expectations of the institution, leading employees, including pre-service teachers, to experience reality shock. The concept of reality shock, as defined by Veenman (1984), refers to the collapse of the training and professional ideals of novice teachers in the face of the reality of the practical environment before their actual service begins. The term reality shock is used to express the difficulties experienced by teachers in the early years of their profession, particularly those who have recently entered the education sector (Correa et al. 2015). This is because teachers, in the initial years of their profession, often face various challenges such as creating a positive reputation in the institution where they work, organizing and preparing new courses, and adapting to an entirely new role as an adult, professional, and educator (Gaede, 1978). During the early years of their careers, teachers frequently strive to get to know their students, acquire effective classroom management skills in the real classroom setting, and learn the policies and procedures of the institution they work for. In this process, new teachers may realize that their expectations about the profession may not align with the reality they experience (Dean et al. 1984). They become aware that there are both known and unknown aspects of the institution they work for (Caires et al. 2010; Newman & Johnson, 1994). Consequently, a teacher who perceives that their expectations and desires differ from the reality of the institution they serve may undergo a reality shock. Botha and Rens (2018) define reality shock as the gap between the theoretical knowledge learned during teacher training and the actual realities they face in the first years of their teaching profession.

Müller-Fohrbrodt and colleagues explained the concept of reality shock through five indicators ranging from problem perception to leaving the teaching profession (Veenman, 1984). Kramer (Carroll, 2007) also addressed reality shock in four stages. The process begins with the *honeymoon stage*, where individuals see the best aspects of their job, and continues with the *shock stage* where the differences between being a student and entering professional life become apparent. The recent graduate, who reorganizes their views on working life and regains balance, is in the *recovery stage*. When the individual embraces the unique culture and expectations of the workplace, develops new expectations, resolves conflicts, and aligns with the reality of the organization, they are in the *resolution stage*. In a study with information technology personnel, Dhar (2013) modeled reality shock using five components. The first component is the *fake title*, where the employee believes the job assigned to

them is superior to the job profile. The second component is *salary disparity*, a significant shock when the employee learns their actual salary compared to the organization's predetermined salary. The third component is access to benefits, where the employee, unable to *access benefits* due to excessive workload and inadequate staff, faces the reality, experiences a sense of insecurity, and develops a negative impression about the organization. The fourth component is the clash with the *dominant culture*, where the employee, witnessing an exaggerated cultural image upon entering the organization and facing contrary experiences, realizes the determinative features of the actual culture. The fifth component is disillusionment, where the employee, realizing that the organization's promised bright future and career goals cannot be achieved, feels deceived and confronts *limitations in professional development*. As per Moir's (1999) assessment of reality shock in the teaching profession, the initial year of a practicing teacher is marked by an emotional engagement with the profession—an unforeseen period of heightened excitement and anxiety known as the *expectation stage*. During this stage, teachers confront unexpected situations and challenges, expending considerable energy and experiencing fatigue due to the demanding workload. Subsequently, they enter the *survival stage*, wherein they grapple with the challenges of adapting to the demands of the profession. Following this, *disillusionment* sets in, characterized by an intense experience of reality shock, during which one's self-esteem diminishes. With the start of the holidays, the new teacher, finding opportunities for rest and socialization, enters the *recovery stage*. In the *reflection stage*, the novice teacher evaluates successes and failures experienced during the academic year, considers changes in teaching strategies, curriculum, and classroom management for the next year, and forms new expectations for the future, returning to the *Expectation stage*.

Literature on research related to education has aimed to provide a comprehensive perspective on the causes of reality shock, the problems it poses, and the coping mechanisms preferred by new teachers (Chen, 2018). Proposals for programs addressing the professional development, learning needs, and reduction of reality shock for novice teachers have been put forward (Shaw, 2018). Additionally, there have been efforts to prevent or minimize reality shock through training programs, particularly in classroom management (Dicke et al. 2015). Various studies have explored adaptation problems (Öztürk & Yıldırım, 2013), difficulties (Yanık et al. 2016), social, cultural, and professional issues (Başar & Doğan, 2015) experienced by new teachers in the early years of their profession, alongside the reality shock they undergo (Botha & Rens, 2018; Jesus & Paixao, 1996), its causes (Akan & Başar, 2022), emotional exhaustion in the context of reality shock, constructivist perspectives (Voss & Kunter, 2020), changes in professional perceptions (Power, 1981), and reality shock related to burnout (Friedman, 2000). Furthermore, studies have delved into reality shock experienced due to exam-focused education (Wang, 2016) and the effects of working under different conditions and at different levels on reality shock (Marso & Pigge, 1986). The relationship between the expectations of pre-service teachers (Koşar, 2018) and socio-emotional experiences during teaching practicum (Caires et al. 2009), attitudes toward the teaching profession concerning reality shock (Gürler, 2020), and how age and gender (Demir et al., 2018) influence the expectation of reality shock in the first year of the profession, as well as how motivation and perceptions of teaching competence affect the encountered reality shock (Kim & Cho, 2014), have also been explored.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The aim of this research is to assess the process of teacher practicum, where students in the primary education teaching program gain their initial professional experiences in primary schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, within the context of the expectation of reality shock. Additionally, the study aims to foster awareness among prospective teachers regarding the reality shock they may encounter in the early years of their teaching careers. In the service of the research question, the sub-problems were identified as follows:

1. How do pre-service teachers experience the transition from student to teacher within the context of teaching practicum?
2. In what situations do teacher candidates have difficulty in teaching practicum?
3. Which of the skills do pre-service teachers need to develop in order to practice the teaching profession?
4. To what extent can pre-service teachers apply what they learned during their undergraduate education within the scope of teaching practicum?

5. To what extent does undergraduate education prepare pre-service teachers for the profession?
6. What should the ideal undergraduate education program be like to avoid reality shock in the first years of the teaching profession?

### **Research Importance**

Newly initiated teachers may lack sufficient knowledge about the requirements of the institution and the classroom. The inconsistency between theoretical knowledge acquired in teacher training and the reality of teaching, coupled with the differentiation of expectations after entering the profession, can lead to the experience of reality shock. Considering the conditions in Turkey, the professional conditions encountered in primary school teaching undergraduate education may vary. Therefore, to minimize reality shock, pre-service education should not only provide theoretical knowledge but also heavily incorporate practical courses, and prospective teachers should be prepared with consideration for the realities of the teaching profession. In this context, the experiences gained in the teaching practicum course will provide crucial insights into the reality shock that prospective primary school teachers may face in the early years of their profession. When reviewing the literature, limited research on the expectations related to reality shock among pre-service teachers is observed. This qualitative study, aimed at determining the expectations of pre-service teachers regarding reality shock, is expected to contribute to the literature, the teaching profession, and institutions that train teachers.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This research, aiming to describe the experiences of pre-service teachers during the teaching practicum from a participant perspective, was conducted using a phenomenological design. The phenomenological design focuses on phenomena that are not entirely unfamiliar but lack a deep and detailed understanding. Phenomenology provides a suitable research framework for investigating phenomena that are not entirely foreign to us but at the same time not fully comprehended (Creswell, 2017; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). In this study, phenomenology was chosen to deeply describe the teaching practicum process from the perspective of pre-service teachers in the context of reality shock expectations.

### **Study Group**

In this research, the purposive sampling method was employed, specifically using the criterion sampling technique. In criterion sampling, criteria are prepared by the researcher, or a pre-established criterion list can be utilized (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018). The study group of this research consists of students enrolled in the Primary School Teaching program at İnönü University during the 2022-2023 academic year who have taken the Teaching Practicum I course. The participants include 6 females and 6 males, totaling 12 individuals who agreed to participate in the interviews.

### **Data Collection Tool**

Research data were obtained using a semi-structured interview form consisting of 7 questions. The questions in the semi-structured interview were prepared in advance, aiming for participants to narrate the reality they perceive with their own thoughts (Merriam, 2018). To prepare the interview form, the literature in the field was first reviewed. The questions were then presented to an expert group consisting of 2 academicians in the field of educational management, and a pre-application was conducted with 3 students from the Department of Primary School Teaching. After the application, the questions were re-examined by the researcher, and adjustments were made. The final version of the interview form was obtained by consulting an expert group consisting of 4 academicians from the departments of educational management and primary school teaching. Some question examples:

1. Based on your experiences in the teaching practicum, how would you describe your transition from student to teacher?
2. During your teaching practicum, have you ever encountered a situation where you felt you had difficulty with education?
3. In teaching practicum, have you ever had any problems with
  - a) the school administration, your colleagues and your practice teacher

- b) in implementing classroom activities
  - c) classroom management.? Explain.
4. As a teacher candidate, to what extent does undergraduate education prepare you for the teaching profession? Explain.

### **Data Collection**

Initially, online interviews were conducted as a trial with 4 students who took the Teaching Practicum I course and were studying in the primary school teaching department. The interviews were planned to last a maximum of 20 minutes. The comprehensibility of the questions directed to the participants in the interviews was evaluated, and necessary adjustments were made to the interview form by the researchers. The interviews were conducted in the online environment during the 2022-2023 spring semester and recorded. Participants were informed before the interviews started that they would be recorded, and these recordings would be used only for scientific research purposes. The recorded interviews were later transcribed into written form by two researchers.

### **Data Analysis**

In the scope of the research, content analysis was employed to reach concepts and relationships that were not previously perceived through an in-depth examination and to clarify the obtained data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2015). During content analysis, the collected data were transcribed into written form, and the participating pre-service teachers were coded as K1, K2, K3, K4. The analysis of the data followed an inductive coding approach. Codes were organized into categories and themes by the researcher and a subject matter expert. The interpretation of the findings included references to codes and direct participant expressions.

### **Validity and Reliability**

In qualitative research, the accuracy of results, credibility, and the adequacy of researchers are crucial criteria to ensure that the findings are valid and reliable (Krefting, 1991). In this study, participant validation was employed to ensure credibility, which is a condition for internal validity. Participant validation involves reaching out to some of the individuals from whom the data were obtained to receive feedback on the findings (Başkale, 2016). Confirmation was obtained from participants to verify the extent to which the reported findings reflected their own thoughts. Moreover, an examination of the research design, data collection, and analysis sections was conducted by two researchers who are experts in qualitative research methods. Purposive sampling based on specific criteria was used to ensure the transferability of the results to similar situations, and the study group was thoroughly introduced. To ensure the replicability of the research under similar conditions, the method was detailed. The results of the research were exemplified with direct participant expressions, demonstrating the confirmability of the findings. Additionally, the procedures and processes applied in the research were detailed, and the objectives, aims, and significance of the research were clearly stated.

### **Research Ethics**

The approval of Firat University Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee was obtained for ethical compliance with the research procedures on the date of 21.03.2023 issued with 15255.

## **FINDINGS**

In this section, the findings have been organized into tables and interpreted.

### *Findings Regarding the Implementation Process Theme*

The findings related to the implementation process theme are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Findings on the Transition Shock Expectations of Pre-service Teachers in the Implementation Process Theme

Theme: Implementation Process					
Sub-theme (Category)					
	Teaching Environment	Course Preparation	Student	Classroom Management	Practice Teacher
<i>Codes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Practice Opportunity</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom size</i></li> <li>• <i>Ability to use technology</i></li> <li>• <i>Knowledge transfer</i></li> <li>• <i>Physical conditions</i></li> <li>• <i>Instructional methods and techniques</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing guidance</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Preparing materials</i></li> <li>• <i>Planning</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Individual variances</i></li> <li>• <i>Developmental characteristics</i></li> <li>• <i>Special students</i></li> <li>• <i>Different mother tongue</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Effective Classroom Management</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensuring classroom discipline</i></li> <li>• <i>Communication skills</i></li> <li>• <i>Authority</i></li> <li>• <i>Motivation</i></li> <li>• <i>Attracting attention</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Occupational role model</i></li> <li>• <i>Conventional approach</i></li> <li>• <i>Compatibility with the practice teacher</i></li> <li>• <i>Mentorship</i></li> </ul>

The first theme created within the scope of the research is the theme of the teaching practicum process, which focuses on the practical aspect of the pre-service teachers' teaching practicum course in the school. As a result of data analysis, five subcategories related to the theme of the teaching practicum process have been identified. These categories include the teaching environment, course preparation, students, classroom management, and the practice teacher.

Pre-service teachers mentioned facing challenges in the teaching environment category due to issues related to class size and the physical conditions of the classroom, expressing the need to improve themselves in using technology. Additionally, they indicated that the practicum process provides opportunities to apply the knowledge they have acquired, and guiding their own students alters the nature of the learning process and the role of the teacher. However, concerning instructional methods and techniques, they generally reported difficulties in both selecting and using appropriate methods and techniques in the teaching practicum course. They emphasized the necessity of planning undergraduate education from the perspective of these qualities. Furthermore, some pre-service teachers expressed difficulties in conveying theory-based knowledge acquired during their undergraduate education to students during the teaching practicum. Conversely, some pre-service teachers stated that they encountered no issues in transmitting theoretical and practical knowledge to students, mentioning that what they learned facilitated their ease during the implementation phase. Here are some participant opinions related to the teaching environment category:

*K8: "...I wanted to stick with the same method, but it wasn't effective; different techniques needed to be tried. However, you can't predict which of these techniques will work."*

*K6: "..... Especially in classroom education programs, there is a need for a curriculum that emphasizes beautiful writing, combined classes, music, art, preparing digital materials, effective use of technology, and scientific research methods."*

*K2: "I became more successful in applying what I learned in classes where we were taught practically and constantly made materials. For example, in the first reading and writing class, I didn't have difficulty making materials during my internship and could come up with ideas for materials."*

*K3: "The courses I learned contributed significantly to my application. Especially, my knowledge on the initial reading and writing subjects was very helpful in the application phase. Therefore, I could apply almost everything I learned."*

According to the data gathered under the category of course preparation, only one participant mentioned facing difficulty in preparing appropriate materials for the course, while another participant expressed challenges in selecting and preparing a course plan. A participant's perspective related to the course preparation category is as follows:

*K3: "I struggled a bit in preparing suitable materials."*

*K11: "I have difficulty in selecting and preparing a plan that aligns with the learning outcomes of the course."*

Based on the data gathered under the student category, prospective teachers, during their teaching practicum, indicated challenges in how to interact with special needs students, considering individual and developmental differences of students, and managing communication with students who have different mother tongues. Some participants, who faced problems with students during the later stages of the teaching practicum, expressed that they resolved these issues by taking into account the developmental characteristics. Some participant views related to the student category are as follows: Some participant views related to the student category are as follows:

*K2: "One day, autistic student X in my class had a fight with all his classmates and attacked them while I was on internship. I had a hard time restraining him. I learned better how to interact with special needs children afterward."*

*K1: "...I felt that keeping the students at similar levels, even if their levels are not the same, would be more challenging."*

*K3: "...I learned to consider the developmental characteristics of children."*

*K5: "Keeping all students' attention at the same time is challenging. Additionally, the difference in their achievement levels is a negative factor. Some get bored while others can't keep up in the class..."*

*K4: "Yes, I had difficulty in communicating with foreign students; it was hard to understand the course because they spoke Arabic and didn't understand Turkish."*

Under the category of classroom management, the views of pre-service teachers have been analyzed with six codes: effective classroom management, ensuring classroom discipline, communication skills, authority, motivation, and attracting attention. According to the codes created under the classroom management category, it has been identified that the most common problems faced by pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum are effective classroom management and effective communication. K3, expressing the transition from being a student to becoming a teacher, states, *"...if a class can be entrusted to you, I believe you are in the stage of transitioning to teaching,"* emphasizes that effective classroom management skills are a prerequisite for becoming a teacher. Similarly, K7 defines this transition as, *"When we say, 'Now I can be with students all day, be alone with them, manage the classroom, and really teach something, I think we are in a transitional stage,"* highlighting once again that classroom management is a crucial component of the teaching environment and process. K2 articulates challenges in terms of effective classroom management, maintaining classroom discipline, and establishing authority: *"I think I need to learn to be more authoritative. It's nice to spend time with children, to be friends with them. But alongside these, I also need to ensure necessary classroom management. During the internship I had for a semester, I realized that this is the most important aspect I need to improve."* Moreover, a few participants within the study group mentioned the difficulty of keeping students' interest and attention during courses, emphasizing that motivation to *motivate* the desired behavior in students is one of the fundamental objectives of classroom management.

Some of the participants in the study have indicated that they resolved the challenges related to classroom management through the experience gained during their internship and the observations they made. They mentioned that they developed themselves in terms of classroom discipline and management. The prospective teachers who participated in the research expressed difficulties in communicating with students and adjusting social distance within the classroom. They emphasized that communication skills are essential for finding common ground with students, organizing and managing the classroom climate, and that these skills are both necessary and open to improvement. Some participant views related to the classroom management category are as follows:

*K3: "I believe I have communication skills with children, but I need to further develop them."*

*K9: "It is challenging for me when students hug me, and I have to prevent this physical closeness without breaking it."*

*K9: "I would like to improve my communication skills."*

*K2: "Communication skills should be imparted to pre-service teachers."*

*K1: "I think I couldn't adjust the teacher-student relationship and the distance between us. I need to develop in this regard."*

*K5: "I had problems with classroom management. Keeping all students' attention at the same time is challenging. Additionally, the difference in their achievement levels is a negative factor. Some get bored while others can't keep up in the class..."*

Additionally, the difference in their achievement levels is a negative factor. Some get bored while others can't keep up in the class. Some participants acknowledged that their practice teachers serve as successful teacher educators, effective mentors, and professional role models. They expressed a sense of harmony with their practice

teachers. However, there were also participants who raised concerns. They noted that some practice teachers did not implement the knowledge acquired during their teacher education program in the classroom, adhered to traditional teaching methods, and expressed discomfort with the use of contemporary teaching methods by the participants. Some participant views related to the Practice Teacher category are provided below:

K12: "Our practice teacher is successful in the profession, an experienced teacher educator who adds success to every year. We had no problems with them, and we learned a lot from them."

K11: "...they did their best to solve every problem I had; they provided continuous support to us, the intern students, during this process."

K9: "My practice teacher was uncomfortable with my closeness with the students and teaching the course using contemporary teaching methods. She taught the course using traditional methods, and she expressed that my use of methods other than hers caused problems in the way the course was conducted for the students."

*Findings Related to the Transition Theme*

Findings on the transition theme are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Findings on the Transition Theme in Shock Expectations of Pre-service Teachers

Theme: Transition				
Sub-theme (Category)				
Transition Process		Awareness		
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Anxiety</li> <li>•Inexperience</li> <li>•Administrative support</li> <li>•Enhancing Occupational Satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Building Occupational Confidence</li> <li>•Role Confusion</li> <li>•Transition from theory to practice</li> <li>•Acquisition of self-efficacy</li> <li>•Administrative work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Occupational awareness</li> <li>•Practice awareness</li> <li>•Emotional awareness</li> <li>•Occupational respect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Occupational competence</li> <li>•Cultural development</li> <li>•Responsibility</li> <li>•Importance of experience</li> <li>•Reality shock</li> </ul>

Within the category of the transition process, nine codes have been identified: anxiety, inexperience, administrative support, enhancing occupational satisfaction, development of occupational confidence, role confusion, transition from theory to practice, acquisition of self-efficacy, and administrative tasks. Pre-service teachers undergoing the transition from student to teacher during the teaching practicum have asserted in their narratives that they have garnered confidence, enhanced self-efficacy, and derived satisfaction from the teaching profession throughout this progression. However, certain participants noted challenges during the transition, attributing difficulties to their lack of experience in transitioning from theory to practice, consequently experiencing anxiety. Furthermore, participant K6 articulated encountering impediments due to a deficiency in administrative knowledge, while participant K11 underscored the support extended by school administration in addressing issues and aiding pre-service teachers engaged in the teaching practicum.

The code "role confusion," delineated under the transition process category, denotes, based on the gathered data, both the struggle of the pre-service teacher to perceive themselves unequivocally as either a student or a teacher and the failure of elementary school students to perceive intern teachers fully as educators. Participant K9 elucidated the experience of role confusion as follows: "It was a peculiar sentiment, am I assuming the role of a teacher or a student; I did not entirely comprehend. Simultaneously, I posit that I am not a complete teacher owing to my ongoing student status." Concurrently, participant K10 articulated, "It's a distinctive emotion, principally you remain a student, yet you also have your own students." Participants have expressed the role confusion experienced by elementary school students as follows:

K2: "...I encountered difficulties because the children perceived me more like a friend. I faced challenges in establishing authority and occasionally encountered difficulties in getting them to follow my instructions."

K3: "Due to approaching the students very informally, they saw me more as a sister than a teacher."

K7: "...they saw me more as a sister than a teacher because I established a very warm relationship with the students."



Within the awareness category, nine codes have been identified: occupational awareness, practical awareness, emotional awareness, occupational respect and competence, responsibility, the importance of experience, cultural development, and reality shock. Some participants have discussed positive professional awareness by addressing the qualities of the teaching profession during the teaching practicum. Others have mentioned facing difficulties in the early stages of the teaching practicum, highlighting that the teaching profession and the classroom environment have different characteristics than expected. This finding can be explained by the concept of reality shock. The misalignment between idealistic thoughts formed during the undergraduate education process and the experienced reality leads to the occurrence of reality shock, and at the same time, the acquired professional training fades away in the face of the reality of the school and the classroom (Veenman, 1984). Pre-service teachers have stated that the teaching practicum has contributed to their socio-cultural development and the development of positive attitudes towards the qualities of the profession. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of practicing and taking responsibility for the classroom to transfer the knowledge acquired during undergraduate education to the real classroom environment and gain experience. Some participant views related to the awareness category are as follows:

*K1: "Understanding what our teachers go through. That standing in front of the chalkboard and the situation is not as easy as sitting in our seats. Teaching is more laborious and extensive than learning. Experiencing challenges in individual success as a student, I realized that ensuring the success of many students as a teacher requires more effort, patience, and dedication. When I became a teacher, I understood that the responsibilities are much greater than my expectations. In short, the statement 'If I were a teacher, I would read a teacher' is merely a comment made by the student based on their own experience. Nothing is as it seems."*

*Findings Related to the Pre-Service Education Theme*

Findings related to the pre-service education theme are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Table 3 presents the findings related to the Pre-Service Education Theme in the Pre-Service Teacher Transition Shock Expectations of Pre-service Teachers

Theme: Pre-Service Education			
Sub-theme (Category)			
	Undergraduate Courses	Practice	Academician
<i>Codes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Field courses</i></li> <li>• <i>Occupational courses</i></li> <li>• <i>Creating realistic expectations</i></li> <li>• <i>Preventive education</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Importance of practicum</i></li> <li>• <i>Duration of the practicum</i></li> <li>• <i>Practicum payment</i></li> <li>• <i>Learning by doing and living</i></li> <li>• <i>School-faculty collaboration</i></li> <li>• <i>Village school experience</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theoretical knowledge transfer</i></li> <li>• <i>Interactive learning</i></li> <li>• <i>Monotonous university education</i></li> </ul>

Under the category of undergraduate courses, participants' opinions are described with four codes: field courses, professional knowledge courses, creating realistic expectations, and preventive education. Pre-service teachers have expressed that field courses, especially occupational courses, have contributed to their preparation for the profession and have been beneficial for their professional development. Additionally, they have emphasized the importance of planning undergraduate education to create realistic expectations about the teaching profession and the necessity of courses that act as preventive education, minimizing potential issues in the early years of the profession. Some participant views related to undergraduate courses are as follows:

*K2: "The courses related to the child's development, both in the field and elective courses, have contributed a lot to me."*

*K8: "...the most used course is special education and classroom management."*

The practice category is focused on courses that involve practical applications within undergraduate education. Particularly evaluated within the context of the teaching practicum course, this category includes codes such as the importance of the practicum, duration of the practicum, practicum payment, learning by doing, school-faculty collaboration, and village school experience. Participants in the study have stated that the teaching practicum course (students taking the teaching practicum course often refer to it intensively as an internship) is crucial for learning by doing, emphasizing the importance of its duration being more than two terms and receiving compensation during the practicum. Moreover, participants have highlighted the benefits of collaboration

between schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education and education faculties, suggesting that conducting the teaching practicum course (internship) in rural schools would be beneficial for gaining a realistic experience. Some participant views related to the application category are as follows:

*K11: "I think the teaching practicum should be a practice that students should do for 4 years as students because it is very productive and very useful in preparing us for the profession. I believe spreading it over 4 years will support students' development in terms of knowledge, accumulation, and experience."*

*K6: "The weight of the application should exceed 40% of the total course weight. The pre-service teacher should have one foot constantly in the field. And they must definitely earn an intern salary."*

*K3: "To prevent experiencing this shock, I think the practicum should last for more than a year, and at least for one term, there should be an opportunity to do an internship in a village school."*

*K7: "I think the most effective way to prevent this problem is to provide the opportunity to do our internship in a village school and the internship period should be 4 terms, not 2."*

The category of academicians has been created within the scope of participants' views on academics working in teacher training institutions. The academic category includes codes for theoretical knowledge transfer, interactive learning, and monotonous university education. Among the pre-service teachers participating in the research, there are differing opinions about the academic category. Some participants have expressed that academics are very useful in transferring theoretical knowledge. On the other hand, some participants have addressed the uniformity in the education provided by academics, emphasizing the importance of interactive learning and the necessity of applying the taught methods and techniques themselves. Some participant views related to the academic category are as follows:

*K12: "...it is important that our teachers are good instructors and transfer theoretical knowledge to us effectively."*

*K5: "Theory and practice should go hand in hand. If this is not possible, then instead of classes filled with just slide readings, more interactive classes can be conducted. Otherwise, by reading books instead of slides in daily life, the same level of competence can be achieved. What I mean is if teaching methods and techniques can be discussed, when necessary, the same techniques can be taught more permanently by applying them."*

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the views of students studying in the elementary education department and participating in the teaching practicum course were evaluated in the context of reality shock. Data obtained through a semi-structured interview form were used to create three main themes and ten categories related to these themes. Participant opinions were classified under 53 different codes, associated with the theory of reality shock.

In recent years, reality shock, previously explored in various professional fields, has become a subject of study in the teaching profession. The shock is notably evident in the early years of teaching, particularly during the transition from theory to practice in the elementary education branch. Elementary education, particularly in dealing with combined classes (Özdemir, Özdemir, & Gül, 2020), diverges from other branches due to challenges such as transportation, accommodation, nutrition, as well as cultural and physical inadequacies (Karataş & Kınaloğlu, 2018). Additionally, it distinguishes itself by facing issues like the inadequacy of pre-service theoretical education in the practical application process (Kara & Demir, 2021). As novice elementary school teachers confront these issues specific to their field, the likelihood of experiencing reality shock increases due to the harsher realities of the teaching profession. In the context of this research, this situation is defined as the expectation of reality shock among students currently continuing their undergraduate education and participating in the teaching practicum course. Therefore, the teaching practicum course is considered a significant factor in revealing the expectations related to reality shock and reducing the potential impact of the shock during the early years of the teaching profession.

The research results indicate that pre-service teachers face challenges in selecting and implementing appropriate teaching methods and techniques in the teaching environment, as well as transferring the knowledge acquired during their undergraduate education to the real classroom setting. The effective use of various methods and techniques in the teaching environment (Veenman, 1984), as well as the physical conditions of the school and class size (Dickson et al. 2014; Fantilli, 2009; Gökçe, 2013; Güvendir, 2017; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018; Mudzingwa & Magudu, 2013; Yanık et al. 2016; Yeşilyurt & Semerci, 2012; Yılmaz & Tepebaşı, 2011), are among the challenges emphasized by novice teachers in their profession. In the teaching practicum course, where pre-service teachers mention finding opportunities for application, the use of technology is seen as a skill that

needs to be developed. While skills in using technology can be developed through experiences gained in teaching practicum courses (Nakiboğlu, 2020), according to Eraslan (2009), pre-service teachers who do not have enough opportunities to practice in the schools they are assigned to can develop these skills in subject knowledge courses. Moreover, the use of technology is a necessary competence in the preparation process of the course, including planning and preparing materials. In research, it is expressed that pre-service teachers experience difficulties in course planning (Can & Baştürk, 2018; Gökçe & Demirhan, 2005; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018), material preparation, and the use of technology in the teaching process. However, they gain experience in these areas during the application process (Nakiboğlu, 2020). Newly appointed teachers, on the other hand, are observed to face challenges in obtaining, preparing, and implementing appropriate materials (Braga, 1972; Erdemir, 2007; Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Güvendir, 2017; Korkmaz et al. 2004; Veenman, 1984).

Elementary school students go through developmental stages that progress rapidly and intricately. Developmental characteristics and individual differences are significant factors expressed by pre-service teachers regarding this period. According to Güvendir (2017), students' preparedness, along with individual and developmental differences, complicates the application of theoretical knowledge acquired at the university. Additionally, newly appointed elementary school teachers have reported difficulties in recognizing students with special needs (Başar & Akan, 2022), understanding student problems, formulating appropriate questions (Yıldırım, Kurtdede, & Ergün, 2017), and preparing course plans (Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018). In the study by Karataş and Kınalıoğlu (2018), the difference in the mother tongue of students in rural schools has been identified as a student-related issue. Betts (2006) has noted that novice teachers who struggle with addressing students' individual differences, needs, and problems experience a reality shock when entering the profession.

Effective classroom management and communication skills, which create the expectation of reality shock, have been identified by pre-service teachers as concepts requiring improvement and posing challenges. Research indicates that pre-service teachers who take the teaching practicum course experience difficulties in classroom management during the application process (Başal et al., 2017; Bay, Şeker, & Alisinanoğlu, 2020; Busher, Gündüz, Çakmak & Lawson, 2015; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018) and struggle to communicate with students (Tosun, 2019). Being unprepared to deal with such problems within the classroom is a key factor leading to the reality shock experienced by newly appointed teachers (Dicke et al. 2015). Başar and Akan (2022) have also stated that newly appointed teachers experience reality shock most prominently in the area of classroom management.

Practice teachers serve as crucial professional role models within the teaching practicum process. Therefore, it is highly important for pre-service teachers to work in harmony with their practice teachers. Difficulties in communication between practice teachers and pre-service teachers have been observed when harmony is not achieved (Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018). The research results indicate that there is a divergence of opinions among pre-service teachers regarding their practice teachers in the teaching practicum course. While most participants express having a good relationship with their practice teachers, some mention encountering issues with them. In Ali, Othman, and Karim's (2014) study, practice teachers were found to guide the teaching process with constructive criticism, assist pre-service teachers in various aspects, and motivate them. In other studies, pre-service teachers have reported difficulties in establishing healthy communication with practice teachers (Ogan et al., 2010; Yakar, Uzun, & Tekerek, 2021; Yeşilyurt & Semerci, 2012), a lack of feedback from practice teachers (Aydın & Akgün, 2014; Eraslan, 2009; Gratch, 1998), and inadequate guidance due to the use of traditional teaching methods by practice teachers (Baştürk, 2009; Can & Baştürk, 2018; Duman, 2013; Eraslan, 2008; Gratch, 1998; Topal & Uzunoğlu, 2020; Yakar et al. 2021; Yeşilyurt & Semerci, 2012). It has been revealed that practice teachers fall short in translating various teaching methods and techniques into practice in the teaching practicum course (Gündoğdu et al. 2010), imparting professional knowledge and skills during the adaptation process to the institution and classroom (Baştürk, 2009), and serving as role models for pre-service teachers. In another study, pre-service teachers reported facing negative attitudes from practice teachers, administrators, and students in the practice school (Demir & Çamlı, 2011).

In the research, some pre-service teachers experiencing the transition from being students to becoming teachers during the teaching practicum course were observed to gain self-confidence, develop their self-efficacy, and derive satisfaction from the teaching profession. However, some other pre-service teachers faced challenges in transitioning from theory to practice due to lack of experience, experiencing anxiety and role confusion. Studies have addressed role confusion experienced by pre-service teachers due to being neither fully a teacher nor a student (Kilgore et al. 2003; Alptekin & Vural, 2014), professional role ambiguity (Chunmei & Chuanjun,

2015; Çelik & Saban, 2020; Ekşi, 2006), not being perceived as a teacher by students (Ali et al. 2014; Başal et al., 2017; Topal & Uzunoğlu, 2020; Yeşilyurt & Semerci, 2012), lack of experience (Altıntaş & Görgeç, 2014; Chunmei & Chuanjun, 2015; Çuhadar & Yücel, 2010; Hiğde & Aktamış, 2017; Yeşilpınar & Doğanay, 2014), and inadequacy in transitioning from theoretical pre-service training to practice (Yeşilpınar & Doğanay, 2014; Girgin & Şahin, 2019). Some of the participating pre-service teachers mentioned positive awareness towards the teaching profession. In a similar study, a pre-service teacher who experienced the role of a real teacher in a real classroom environment developed a positive attitude towards the teaching practicum course (Can & Baştürk, 2018). Classroom teachers participating in the study by Delican and Sönmez (2020) expressed that, despite feeling inadequate in professional competence and experience in the early years of their profession, the teaching practicum course positively impacted their professional lives. Another result that can be explained by the concept of reality shock is the difficulties faced by pre-service teachers due to the unexpected characteristics of the teaching profession and classroom environment. Similarly, Güvendir's (2017) study found a mismatch between teachers' expectations in pre-service education and their experiences throughout their working lives, indicating that university education did not accurately reflect the real world of the teaching profession.

Pre-service education, including undergraduate courses and teaching practicum, holds significant importance. Training on the most crucial skills to be used in the practice of the teaching profession is provided during this period. According to Ryan (1979), teachers who receive inadequate pre-service education often face difficulties in meeting the requirements of teaching in the early years of their profession. The research has shown that subject knowledge and professional knowledge courses contribute to pre-service teachers during the teaching practicum course. Eraslan (2009) stated that pre-service teachers did not find sufficient opportunities for practice and could not relate their undergraduate courses to the teaching practicum. However, during the practicum, they benefited greatly from professional courses, feeling like the real teacher of the practice class and gaining a closer understanding of the classroom environment. Another result of the research is that, according to pre-service teachers, the allotted program duration for practicum activities is insufficient when considering the objectives of the practicum course. The continuation of the teaching practicum course during the Public Personnel Selection Exam (KPSS) process (Eraslan, 2009; Şimşek, 2013) causes difficulties for pre-service teachers in terms of preparation for the profession. Due to time constraints, pre-service teachers experiencing anxiety may encounter difficulties in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities during the teaching practicum course. It has been observed that pre-service teachers in the first year of their education, who do not have sufficient knowledge about the teaching profession, have higher expectations of reality shock compared to other classes (Demir et al., 2018). To minimize the anticipated shock, pre-service teachers have expressed the need to increase the duration of the teaching practicum course and start it in the first year of undergraduate education (Başal et al., 2017; Doğan, 2005; Gökçe & Demirhan, 2005; Yeşilyurt & Semerci, 2012). In another study, institution personnel working in practice schools have also emphasized the importance of pre-service teachers engaging in longer-term practice in a specific class, reducing the number of pre-service teachers assigned to practice teachers, and increasing collaboration between faculties of education and practice school staff (Şimşek et al. 2013).

Another topic addressed by pre-service teachers to create realistic expectations and minimize the potential impact of reality shock is the inclusion of rural school experience within the scope of teaching practicum. Similarly, pre-service teachers in the study by Gündoğdu et al. (2010) recommended incorporating rural schools into the regional coverage of the teaching practicum course. Pre-service teachers who participated in the teaching practicum course in urban centers during their undergraduate education were reported to be unprepared for the reality of teaching in rural areas and experienced adaptation problems when assigned to village schools (Sidekli et al. 2015). It was also mentioned that they left the profession in their early years (Eret Orhan, 2017).

In this context, for novice teachers to feel competent and successful in the teaching profession, avoid developing negative attitudes towards the profession, and not experience shock due to the inconsistency between what they learned in their undergraduate education and the reality of the teaching environment, undergraduate education should be planned to integrate theory and practice, providing students with pre-professional experiences. Teacher training institutions should incorporate course content that creates realistic expectations from the first year onwards in their education programs. Additionally, more emphasis should be placed on courses related to classroom management and similar topics. School-faculty collaboration should be organized in a coordinated and planned manner, involving pre-service teachers, faculty members, and practice teachers working together. Furthermore, the duration of the teaching practicum course should be extended. This research is limited to students attending the teaching practice course at İnönü University Faculty of Education Classroom Teaching

and the data collected with the measurement tool. The codes, categories, and themes obtained in the research results can be used as variables for quantitative research.

#### Statements of Publication Ethics

The approval of Fırat University Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee was obtained for ethical compliance with the research procedures on the date of 21.03.2023 issued with 15255.

#### Researchers' Contribution Rate

All authors contributed equally to this work.

#### Conflict of Interest

This study has no conflict of interest.

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