Exploring the Experiences During Teaching Internships in Indonesia and Thailand: Perspectives on Intercultural Skills

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Abstract

This study investigates the internship experiences of English Education students from UHAMKA in Indonesia and Thailand, focusing on how these experiences shape their teaching skills and cultural understanding. Despite the growing importance of teaching English as an international language, there is limited research comparing the internship experiences of students in different cultural contexts, particularly in Indonesia and Thailand. The purpose of this study is to explore how multicultural internship experiences influence students' confidence in teaching and their intercultural skills. A mixed methods approach was employed, utilizing Likert-scale questionnaires and open-ended questions to gather data from 34 students who completed internships in both countries. The results indicate that 85.3% of participant reported increased confidence in their teaching abilities. Challenges such as language barriers and differing teaching methodologies were identified, yet students emphasized the importance of cultural adaptation and experiential learning. The findings highlight the significance of practical internship experiences in enhancing teaching readiness and intercultural competence, ultimately preparing future educators to thrive in diverse educational settings.

Keywords: *English Education; Teaching Internships; Cultural Adaptation; Intercultural Competence; Experiential Learning*.

1.Introduction

Teaching English as an international language has become an important component of the education system in various countries, including Thailand and Indonesia. In the era of globalization, English language ability is not only a necessity, but also a highly valued skill (Sari et al., 2024). However, the practice of teaching English in these two countries is influenced by various factors, including local culture, social norms, and different education systems (J. Nurkamto, 2023). To understand how these factors affect the learning process, a more in-depth approach is needed, such as through activities that allow prospective teacher students to be directly involved in the school environment.

Culture plays a crucial role in understanding differences in teaching practices across countries, particularly in the context of teaching English as an International language. Koentjaningrat, an Indonesian anthropologist, defines culture as the entire system of ideas, actions, and human creations that people adopt as their own through learning for life in society (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). This means culture encompasses ideas and customs passed down and learned by individuals as members of their social group. In English, this concept is referred to as culture, which generally refers to patterns of life including language, belief systems, customs, and social norms that give meaning to a society's life (Dr. R. Kusherdyana, 2013).

Specifically, Thai culture includes various aspects that influence daily life, including education, social interactions, and teaching practices in schools. Thailand's official language, *Phasa Thai (ภาษาไทย)*, has a complex script and grammar and is a tonal language, which requires adaptation when teaching English (Niko, 2020). Additionally, the majority of Thailand's population practices *Theravada Buddhism*, which influences social values and ethics, including the principle of *Kreng jai (การเกรงใจ)*, emphasizing respect for others (Rusdianto, 2019). Thai social norms also highlight

the importance of hierarchy and respect for authority. Moreover, Thai cuisine, known for its use of spices and balance of flavours, is a significant part of the culture, often combining sweet, sour, spicy and salty tastes in a single dish.

Meanwhile, Indonesian culture, particularly in Jakarta, which is influenced by Betawi culture, is diverse and reflects the ethnic and traditional richness present in the region. Indonesian, as the official language of the country, serves as a means of communication among various ethnic groups, while Betawi, as a local dialect, enriches daily interactions and performing arts such as *lenong* and *gambang kromong* (Musthofa, 2020). Religion, especially Islam, which is practiced by the majority of the population, has a significant impact on social values in society, including the principles of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and *musyawarah* (deliberation), which influence how students collaborate in education. Customs and social norms in Jakarta reflect the ethnic diversity, with various festivals and cultural celebrations. Traditional Betawi food, such as *Soto Betawi, kerak telor,* and *nasi uduk*, not only represent local cuisine but also serves as a symbol of cultural identity that binds the community.

In this context, one of the ways undergraduate students in the Education program engage with teaching is through teaching practice or what is commonly referred to as internships. This is a process of observation and training conducted by students in the Education program to learn about the aspects of teaching and education management in educational institutions (Engkus Kusnadi, 2020). This internship activity allows students, including those in the English Language Education program are often expected to undertake internships at schools, both domestically and abroad. This activity is part of a collaboration between UHAMKA and AECL (Association of Education Cultural International) to carry out Community Service (KKN) and Field School Introduction (PLP) or internships in Thailand. This provides students with the opportunity to apply the theories they have learned in a real-world context, as well as understand the dynamics of teaching in a different environment. However, the internship experience can vary greatly depending on the cultural context in which the students undertake their internship.

The rich cultures of Thailand and Indonesia influence how students learn and interact in the classroom. In Thailand, education often emphasizes discipline and respect for authority, which can limit active student participation in the learning process (Murni, 2024). In contrast, in Indonesia, cultural and religious diversity presents unique challenges in teaching, where teachers must be able to adapt their teaching methods to the diverse backgrounds of their students (Khairunida et al., 2023). Despite this, there is a lack of literature that directly compares teaching practices of English students in Thailand and Indonesia, especially from cultural perspective.

In previous research, The study by (Wijirahayu et al., 2024) discusses how cultural integration impacts academic engagement and language learning, further emphasizing the role of culture in shaping English teaching methods.

The urgency of this research its potential to enhance teacher preparation, address educational inequities, and promote effective teaching practices in diverse classrooms. By exploring the experiences of English Education students during their internships, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on improving education in a multicultural context.

The aim of this study is to explore the internship experiences of English Education students in Indonesia and Thailand, focusing on how these experiences influence the development of their teaching and communication skills, as well as their understanding of international educational practices. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the impact of multicultural environments on students' confidence in teaching, the challenges they face during their internships, and how these challenges shape their perspectives on effective teaching in diverse classrooms. These study, titled "Exploring the Experiences During Teaching Internships in Indonesia and Thailand: Perspectives on Culture and Intercultural Skills."

This research will involve UHAMKA's English Education students who are have completed internships in Thailand and Indonesia, and who have taken the Cross-Cultural Understanding course. The research will cover aspects such as the students' cultural awareness, teaching experiences, and the challenges they face when adapting to new environments.

The research questions for this study are: How do internship experiences in multicultural environments influence the development of teaching and communication skills among English Education students? And What challenges do English Education students face during their internships in Indonesia and Thailand, and how do these challenges affect their understanding of international educational practices?

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning theory, developed by (Kolb, 1984), emphasizes the central role of experience in the learning process. (Kolb, 1984) proposed a learning cycle consisting of fur interconnected stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. This theory has been widely applied in various educational contexts, including teacher training programs, to enhance practical skills and reflective practices. Recent studies, such as those by (Gonondo, 2021), have highlighted the effectiveness of experiential learning in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application in teacher education.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) defines learning as a process where knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. The four stages of the cycle are interconnected. In the first stage, learners engage in concrete experiences by directly participating in real-life activities. They then proceed to reflective observation, where they analyze and reflect on their experiences to derive meaning. Abstract conceptualization follows,

allowing learners to integrate their reflections into theoretical frameworks or concepts. Finally, through active experimentation, they test their newly acquired knowledge in different contexts. Finally, through active experimentation, they test their newly acquired knowledge in different contexts. According to recent research by (Haryanto & Kurnia, 2024), this cycle provides a robust foundation for professional development in teaching, enabling individuals to continually refine their skills.

Internship programs often an ideal platform for experiential learning. By engaging in authentic teaching experiences, student-teachers can apply theoretical concepts, reflect on their teaching practices, and adapt their strategies to meet diverse classroom needs. Kolb's framework is particularly relevant in cross-cultural teaching environments, as it encourages adaptability and problem-solving. A study by (Sabon et al., 2020) demonstrated that experiential learning during internships significantly enhances teaching effectiveness and cultural competence, highlighting its value in preparing educators for diverse educational settings.

Intercultural

Intercultural theory provides a framework for understanding how cultural differences influence human interactions and behaviors. Developed extensively through the work of (Hofstede, 2010), this theory outlines dimensions of cultural variation, such as individualism versus collectivism and power distance. These dimensions serve as tools for analyzing cultural influences in educational settings. Recent studies, such as those by (Vizmonte & Ligot, 2024), emphasize the importance of cultural awareness in fostering effective teaching practices in multicultural classrooms.

Hofstede's theory identifies six primary dimensions of culture: Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence versus Restraint (Hofstede, 2010). These dimensions highlight the values and behaviors prevalent in different cultural contexts. For example, a high-power distance culture may require educators to adopt a more hierarchical approach, while in individualistic cultures, fostering student autonomy is prioritized. Research by (Molle et al., 2024) underscores the importance of integrating Hofstede's dimensions into teacher training programs to enhance cultural responsiveness.

Understanding cultural dimensions is essential for adapting teaching methods to the needs of diverse student populations. Teachers equipped with intercultural competence are better positioned to address the varied expectations and learning styles of students from different cultural backgrounds. For instance, a study by (Krasnoff, 2016) found that intercultural awareness among teachers led to improve student engagement and academic performance in multicultural classrooms.

Intercultural Competence Framework

The intercultural competence framework, as proposed by (Deardorff, 2009), focuses on the attitudes, knowledge, and skills required for effective cross-cultural communication and interaction. This framework is widely recognized in the field of education for its applicability in preparing teachers for multicultural environments. Recent studies, including those by (Zur, 2019), support its integration into teacher training programs to develop culturally responsive educators.

Deardorff's model emphasizes three critical components: attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Deardorff, 2009). Attitudes such as openness and empathy form the foundation for effective intercultural interactions. Knowledge of cultural norms, values, and practices enables teachers to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity. Skills, including active listening and effective communication, are essential for fostering positive relationships in diverse classrooms. Research by (Mayer et al., 2024) highlights the transformative impact of developing these competencies n teaching efficacy in multicultural settings.

Internship programs in diverse cultural contexts provide invaluable opportunities for developing intercultural competence. Through firsthand experiences, student-teachers can cultivate cultural awareness and enhance their ability to adapt teaching strategies to meet the needs of students from various backgrounds. A study by (Deardorff & Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017) demonstrated that internships significantly improved participants intercultural skills, enabling them to become more effective educators in globalized educational environments.

Teaching Readiness

Teaching Readiness theory, developed by (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), focuses on the confidence and self-efficacy of teachers in their ability to positively influence student outcomes. This theory underscores the importance of experiential learning and professional development in building teaching readiness. Recent research, such as that by (Ajani, 2023), highlights the role of internships in enhancing teaching readiness among pre-service teachers.

Teaching readiness is defined as the preparedness and confidence teachers to effectively manage classrooms, deliver instruction, and address diverse student needs. It involves a combination of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and emotional resilience. According to recent studies, including one by (Okrianti & Aufa, 2024), teaching readiness is a critical predictor of teacher effectiveness and student success.

Internships play a pivotal role in fostering teaching readiness by providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. These experiences help build confidence and refine

teaching strategies. A study by (Cai et al., 2022) found that internship experiences significantly increased participants' self-efficacy and preparedness for classroom challenges, particularly in multicultural environments.

2.Method

This research employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the experiences of English Language Education students who participated in teaching internships in Indonesia and Thailand. This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative data, using the experiential learning theory framework proposed by (Kolb, 1984) emphasizes that direct experience is the core of the learning process, which enables reflection and the integration of practical knowledge. In this context, the internship experience serves as the primary medium for students to learn and develop their teaching skills in culturally diverse environments.

The participants in this study are English Language Education at UHAMKA who have completed teaching internships in Indonesia and Thailand. A total of 34 students were recruited to ensure a diverse representation of experiences across different cultural contexts. The selection of students who are completed internship programs and taking the Cross-Cultural Understanding course. The research is located in two countries, Indonesia and Thailand for the specific locations for the study are East Jakarta in Indonesia and Krabi in Thailand.

Data collection was carried out using two main instruments: a Likert-scale questionnaire and open-ended questions. The Likert-scale questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data related to various aspects of the internship experience, such as the effectiveness of communication and teaching, cultural awareness, and the support and adaptation received by the participants. Participants responses were measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with items designed to explore their perceptions of the internship experience, such as "The internship experience significantly contributed to increasing my confidence in teaching" and "Understanding the cultural background of students enhances their learning experience." This questionnaire provides a measurable quantitative overview of the participants views on their experiences.

In addition, open-ended questions were included to collect qualitative data, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences in greater detail. These questions were designed to gather insights about the most memorable lessons or activities. This qualitative data enriches and helps identify patterns and themes that emerge from their experiences.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to analyze the quantitative data from the Likert scale questionnaire, which was used to summarize the participants responses numerically. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analysed thematically, with the aim of identifying key themes and patters related to the participants experiences, challenges, and adaptation strategies. With this mixed methods approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the interns' experiences in culturally diverse contexts.

3. Findings and Discussion

The data collected through Likert scale questionnaires and open-ended questions provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences English Education students participating in teaching internships in Indonesia and Thailand.

Likert -Scale Questionnaires

1) **Effectiveness in Communication and Teaching**

Survey results indicate that 85.3% of respondents felt more in their teaching abilities after completing the internship. The majority of respondents agreed (58.8%) and strongly agreed (26.5%) that the internship experience In Thailand and Indonesia significantly contributed to enhancing their confidence in teaching. This highlights the importance of practical experience in a multicultural environment, which allowed participants to refine their teaching skills and adapt to various cultural backgrounds.
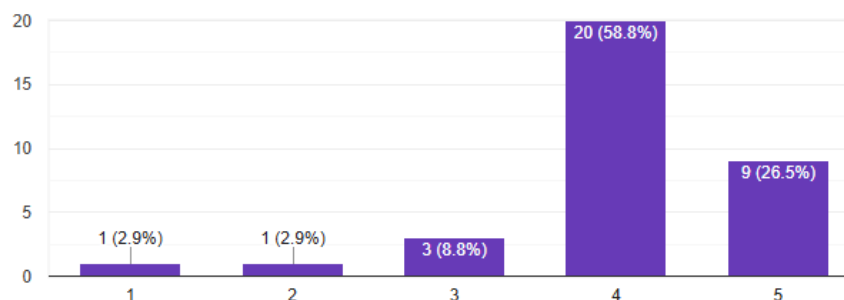

Figure 1. I feel more confident in my teaching abilities after completing the internship

The internship experience in a culturally diverse environment helped participants feel more prepared to face the challenges of teaching in a classroom with students from various cultural backgrounds. This finding align by (Haryanto & Kurnia, 2024), who argue that intercultural communication experiences can enhance students' awareness of cultural diversity, thereby building teachers' confidence in their teaching. It also reflects the importance of improving communication skills to bridge cultural gaps in the classroom.

2) Cultural Understanding Awareness

Survey results show that 85.3% of respondents agree or strongly agree that understanding students' cultural backgrounds enhances their learning experience. 52.9% agree and 32.4% strongly agree. This demonstrate that participants recognize the importance of cultural knowledge in creating a more relevant and effective learning experience.

8. I believe that understanding students' cultural backgrounds enhances their learning experience.
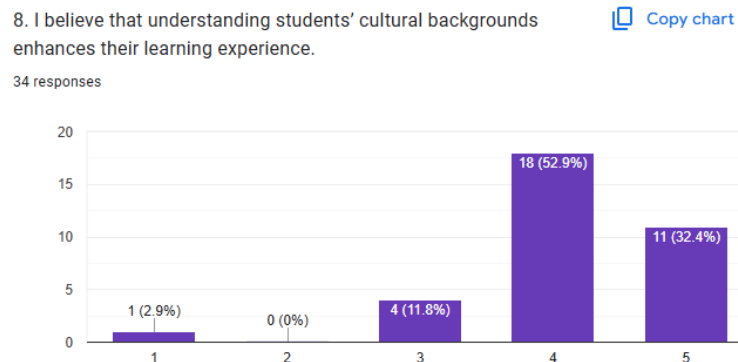
34 responses

Figure 2. I believe that understanding students' cultural backgrounds enhances their learning experience

A deep understanding of culture allows teachers to design more culturally sensitive lessons, improving engagement with the material and strengthening the relationship between teachers and students. This finding is consistent with the study by (Sari Novita et al., 2024), which indicates that culturally responsive teaching approaches can increase students engagement and create a more comprehensive learning experience.

3) Support and Adaptation

Survey results 79.4% of respondents reported that their cross-cultural experience during the internship helped them improve their intercultural communication skills. This is particularly relevant since effective communication with students from diverse cultural backgrounds is essential for creating an inclusive classroom. With over 70% of respondents feeling that this experience enhanced their communication skills, it can be concluded that the internships in Thailand and Indonesia provided valuable experience in understanding and respecting cultural differences in the classroom.
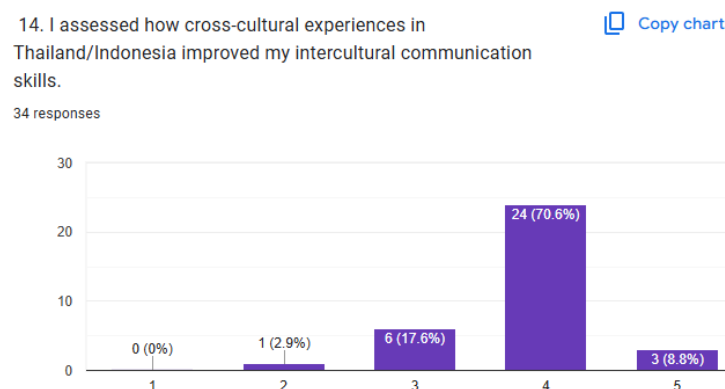
14. I assessed how cross-cultural experiences in Thailand/Indonesia improved my intercultural communication skills.

34 responses

Figure 3. I assessed how cross-cultural experiences in Thailand/Indonesia improved my intercultural communication skills

This finding supports by (Pfund et al., 2022), who emphasize the importance of culturally responsive mentorship programs in enhancing both mentors' and mentees' communication and intercultural understanding. These skills are essential for improving teaching effectiveness and helping students feel valued and understood in the classroom.

4) Professional Development and Innovation

The most prominent statement in this theme is that 88.3% of respondents felt the internship broadened their perspectives on educational practices in Thailand and Indonesia. 47.1% agree and 41.2% strongly agree with this statement. This indicates that participants felt they gained new insights into international teaching practices and how local culture influences teaching and learning process.
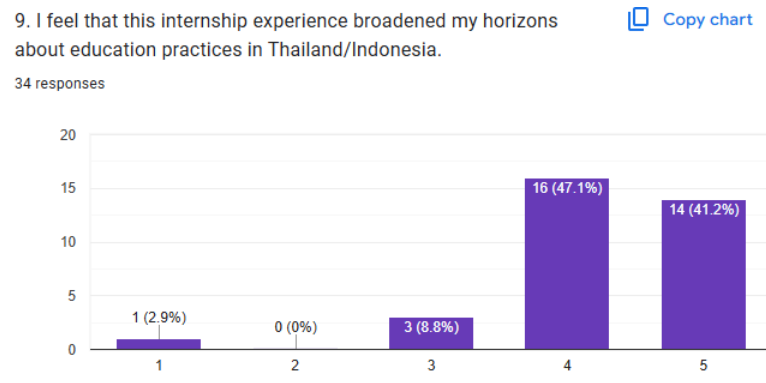
Figure 4. I feel that internship experience broadened my horizons about education practices in Thailand/Indonesia

Interning abroad provided participants with the opportunity to observe differences in teaching practices, enriching their experience in adapting teaching strategies that are suited to the local culture. This finding aligns by (Auni et al., 2022), which demonstrated that international internships can enhance pre-service teachers' competencies, including pedagogical skills, communication abilities, and cultural understanding.

Open-ended Questions
1)   "Write a memorable lesson or activity that you conducted during your internship?"

Based on the responses provided by the principles, one of the most memorable activities during their teaching internships involved incorporating various interactive and culturally relevant strategies, such as game-based learning and integrating local culture into the lessons. These activities were recognized for enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes, particularly in the context of language acquisition and cultural exchange.

Several participants highlighted the use of educational games, such as Kahoot! And "Market Day Simulation," as particularly engaging for students. These games not only facilitated vocabulary acquisition but also fostered a fun and dynamic classroom environment, which helped improve students' speaking and listening skills. According to study by (Altawalbeh, 2023), game-based learning has been shown to increase student motivation and involvement, making it a valuable tool in language education.

Another widely mentioned, many participants reflected on the importance of integrating students' local cultures into the lessons, which enhanced students' understanding and connection to the material. One of the notable activities involved creating a "Cultural Diversity" project, where students researched and presented on the cultures of Indonesia and Thailand.

Table 1. Memorable lesson during internship

Use of Games to Enhance Learning	Cultural Integrating in Lessons	Active and Collaborative Learning	Student-Cantered Learning Approach
1. "Playing Kahoot with the students." 2. "Playing games to train students in understanding grammar material, e.g., teaching conditional sentence material." 3. "After the Daily Test, we played	7. "Teaching argumentative text with the theme 'bubur diaduk or not.'" 8. "Exchanging vocabularies and cultures with Thai students." 9. "Integrating cultural elements into English language teaching in Indonesia." 10. "A group project on 'Cultural Diversity,' researching and	11. "Teaching vocabulary through a 'Market Day Simulation' for 10-th grade students." 12. "Creating a well magazine to describe something." 13. "A descriptive text project where students created an art exhibition, decorated pictures, and described their	17. "Allowing freedom in teaching and creating teaching modules, making lesson preparation enjoyable. 18. "Using technology-based learning to make students more active." 19. "Realizing that students learn better when the material is related to their own culture." 20. "Understanding student characteristics helped me balanced

'Guess the Picture' with English vocabulary and played 'Granny' and 'Ludo' games as rewards." 4. "Mini games with the students in class." 5. "A game in class where students were very excited." 6. "Using quiz games to teach English material; students were divided into group to compete in answering questions quickly and correctly."	presenting the cultures of Indonesia and Thailand through posters and oral presentations."	friends' works on paper." 14. "Students practiced cooking in class as part of a procedure text lesson." 15. "Directing students to create videos of practical cooking procedures for procedure text material." 16. Using 'snowball' or 'bouncing ball' activities to cover all English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)."	my teaching material." 21. "Improving my teaching preparation and delivery for classes with different characteristics."

This approach is consistent with findings from (Javier et al., 2023), who argue that incorporating cultural context in language learning helps students relate better to the material, fostering both language proficiency and intercultural understanding.

Another widely mentioned, many participants reflected on the importance of integrating students' local cultures into the lessons, which enhanced students' understanding and connection to the material. One of the notable activities involved creating a "Cultural Diversity" project, where students researched and presented on the cultures of Indonesia and Thailand. This approach is consistent with findings from (Javier et al., 2023), who argue that incorporating cultural context in language learning helps students relate better to the material, fostering both language proficiency and intercultural understanding.

Additionally, collaborative of group activities, such as collaborative projects and classroom debates, was frequently mentioned as a memorable aspect of the internship experience. For instance, some students practiced creating video demonstrating cooking procedures, an activity that encouraged active student participation and teamwork. As (Kuntariati et al., 2024) explain, cooperative learning strategies not only promote language skills but also foster social and cultural interaction, making the learning experience more immersive.

One respondent highlighted the transition from traditional teacher-led to more student-cantered learning, where students were given freedom to explore and present their ideas in various forms, such as posters and oral presentations. This is supported by (Triasmosari, 2021), who suggest that student-cantered learning enhances critical thinking and creative expression, allowing learners to engage more deeply with both the subject matter and their peers' diverse perspectives.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that combining interactive methods, cultural relevance, and collaborative learning can enhance the effectiveness of teaching internship. These strategies not only improve language acquisition and student engagement but also support cultural exchange and professional growth for pre-service teachers.

2) "What factors contributed to the success or challenges of this lesson or activity?"

Based on the results identified key success factors and challenges in teaching. Success factors include good collaboration between students and teachers, engaging media, and the relevance of teaching material to local culture, which increase student engagement. Active participation in culturally-based activities, such as games and market simulations, also boosts motivation.

However, challenges include differences in students' language proficiency and limited time management, which hinder smooth teaching. Students with lower English proficiency often need additional explanations in the local language.

Table 2. Factors contributed cross culture teaching activities

Category	Contributing Factors	Description from Student Responses
Succes Factors	Student-Teacher Collaboration	"Good collaboration between students and teachers, as well as students' enthusiasm in learning topics relevant to their lives."
	Use of Teaching Media	"Use of pictures to teach vocabulary and media selected that interest students keen on, learning English."
	Cultural Relevance in Learning Materials	"Materials related to local culture that increased student engagement and understanding."
	Engaging Teaching Methods	"Use of Engaging methods like games or simulation such as 'Market Day Simulation,' which made the learning experience fun."
	Student Motivation and Involvement	"Active student participation and enthusiasm in lessons."
	Clear Instruction and Approaches	"Clear instructions and diverse approaches used by teachers to help students understand the material."
	Proper Preparation	"Well-prepared lessons, such as using visual aids and practicing tasks, helped students understand their assignments."
Challenges	Language Proficiency Gaps	"Some students struggled to understand the material in English, needing additional explanations in Indonesian."
	Time Constraints	"Limited time made it difficult to complete all activities, and some students could not participate fully."
	Passive Students	"Some students were passive and required extra encouragement to engage and speak up in class."
	Language and Communication Barriers	"Communication difficulties with students who had limited English proficiency, which hindered effective teaching."
	Cultural and Background Differences	"Students' varied social and cultural background affected how they understood the material being taught."
	Limited Facilities and Resources	"Limited facilities in the school posed a challenge for implementing more interactive teaching methods."
	Classroom Management Issues	"Extremely active or overly enthusiastic students made classroom management challenging."

Success in Teaching **is** the use of engaging media and the relevance of the material to local culture have proven to be important factors in increasing student motivation and understanding. The use of visual media and interactive games in teaching helps students with varying language abilities stay actively engaged in classroom activities. As found in the study by (Widyastuti & Sa'adah, 2022), the use of engaging teaching media can increase student involvement, especially when students come from diverse language and cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, activities based on local culture, such as the market simulation activity, have a positive impact on student motivation. This is line with the findings of (Nasir, 2021), who showed that linking teaching material to local cultural contexts can increase student engagement in the learning process. Research by (Ayu Paramita Dharmayanti

& Putu Dian Sawitri, 2024) also revealed that integrating local wisdom into English language teaching enriches students' learning experiences.

Despite many supporting factors, the main challenge faced in teaching is the difference in language proficiency among students. Some students struggle to understand the material presented in English, requiring additional explanations in Indonesian. To address this, teachers need to provide simpler explanations and allow students to speak in the language they are most comfortable with.

Additionally, limited time management is a significant challenge, especially when classroom activities take more time than expected. As explained by (Widyastuti & Sa'adah, 2022), using appropriate media and through preparation can help mitigate time management issues, allowing the learning activities to proceed more effectively. Research by (Setiawan et al., 2024) also indicates that the use of technology, such as game-based applications, can help accelerate the learning process even in time-constrained situations.

3) **"What were the biggest challenges you faced while adapting to the educational environments in Thailand and Indonesia?"**

Based on this survey responses, several significant challenges were identified by students during their teaching internships in Thailand and Indonesia. These challenges encompass various aspects of teaching, including language barriers, teaching methodologies, cultural differences, classroom management, and technology limitations.

Table 3. Challenges related to cross culture environments

Category	Challenges	Description from Student Responses
Language Barriers	Language Proficiency Gaps	"Difficulty in communicating due to language differences, with many students unable to understand English or Thai."
	Language Barrier in Thailand	Limited English proficiency among students in Thailand made it challenging to explain lessons."
Teaching Methodology and Styles	Differences in Teaching Approaches	"Varying teaching styles between Indonesia and Thailand, with traditional methods in some schools making it harder to engage students."
	Adapting to Student Needs	"Different student characteristics, requiring tailored approaches for engagement, such as dealing with passive or shy students."
Cultural Differences	Cultural Barriers	"Adapting to different social norms, values and teaching expectations in Indonesia and Thailand."
	Adapting to Local Culture	"Understanding local customs and how students interact with teachers to effectively communicate and teach."
Classroom Management	Managing Large Classes	"Difficulties in managing large class sizes in Indonesia, which hinder individualized attention for students."
	Classroom Discipline and Focus	"Challenges in maintaining student focus, particularly in schools with high levels of student distraction and internet use."
Students Motivation	Students' Lack of Motivation and Focus	"Struggling to engage students who are not interested in English or lack focus during lessons."
	Lack of Student Enthusiasm	"Students losing interest in lessons or feeling overwhelmed by the material, making it hard

		to motivate them."
Technological and Resource Issues	Lack of Teaching Resources and Facilities	"Limited access to teaching resources such as projectors, visual aids, and digital tools especially in Indonesian schools.
	Insufficient Technology Support	"Difficulty in using technology effectively due to a lack of facilities or digital tools, especially in rural areas."
Student Characteristics	Dealing with Diverse Student Backgrounds	"Handling students from different educational and family backgrounds, making it challenging to provide equal support to all."
	Varying Levels of English Proficiency	"Some students have higher proficiency in English than others, creating disparities in engagement and understanding."
Personal Challenges	Adapting to a New Work Environment	"Adapting to a new teaching environment including the school culture, environment and how to relate to local students."
	Overcoming Nervousness and Lack of Confidence	"Overcoming the initial nervousness of teaching in a real classroom, especially with students from diverse backgrounds."
Classroom Engagement	Encouraging Active Participation	"Encouraging more passive students to engage in discussions and participate in activities during lessons."
Environmental and Institutional Factors	Adapting to School Environment	"Challenges adapting to school environments, such as Islamic schools or schools with limited educational diversity."

Language Barriers is the most significant challenge faced by students was language proficiency gaps, which affected communication with both students and teachers. In Thailand, students struggled with limited English proficiency among local students, making it difficult to explain lessons effectively. Similarly, in Indonesia, students faced challenges due to differences in language proficiency, which hindered smooth teaching interactions. Research by (Setiawan et al., 2024) highlights that language barriers are a common issue in multicultural classrooms, with teachers needing to adjust their communication strategies to address these differences effectively.

The second is Differences in Teaching Methodologies, the differences in teaching styles between Indonesia and Thailand emerged as one of the most prominent challenges. In Indonesia, the use of more traditional teaching methods, such as lectures and assignments, sometimes made it difficult for interns noted a variety of teaching approaches, which required adjustment based on the diverse characteristics of the students. This finding is consistent with the research by (Rahmawati & Sya, 2024), which discussed the challenges of adapting to international teaching styles.

The third is Cultural Differences, cultural differences also played a significant role in shaping the intern' experiences. Many interns reported challenges in adjusting to the different social norms and values between Thailand and Indonesia, particularly in their interactions with students and classroom management. Research by (Susilowati et al., 2024) emphasizes the importance of understanding local culture to establish effective communication between teachers and students in both countries.

The fourth is Classroom Management, especially in handling large classes in Indonesia, was a challenge faced by most of the interns. This made it difficult to provide individualized attention to students and to motivate them to remain focused. Additionally, maintaining discipline in the classroom emerged as a major issue, particularly in schools where distractions such as excessive internet use were prevalent. These findings align with research by (Nurhaliza et al., 2024), which revealed that classroom management and student discipline are often primary challenges for teachers in Indonesia.

The fifth is Student Motivation is Challenges related to student motivation were also clearly evident, with many interns reporting difficulties in engaging students who were not interested in English or lacked focus during lessons. This finding is in line with research by (Rahmawati & Sya, 2024), which highlighted that teaching English often faces obstacles in sustaining the interest of students who tend to be passive and disengaged.

The sixth is Technology and Resource Issues. In Indonesia, the interns identified limitations in access to teaching resources and technology, such as projectors, visual aids, and digital tools. These limitations made it difficult to implement technology-based teaching, especially in rural areas. Previous research by (Susilowati et al., 2024) also found that English teaching in rural areas of Indonesia is highly dependent on limited facilities and technology, which affects the quality of teaching.

The seventh is Personal Challenges also played a significant role in the adaption process. Interns reported feeling nervous and lacking confidence when they first started teaching, especially with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This challenge is consistent with the study by (Ruben & Quitolbo, 2024), which noted that foreign teachers often experience anxiety and uncertainty in interacting with students from very different cultures.

4) "**How did you handle these challenges?**"

The findings from the responses of interns regarding their handling of various challenges in teaching reveal a multifaceted approach to overcoming obstacles, particularly in multicultural and multilingual classroom settings. The strategies employed can be categorized into several key areas: language barriers, teaching methods, relationship building, cultural adaptation, classroom management, personal development, technology use, and student motivation.

Table 4. Covering the challenges

Category	Handling Methods	Description from Student Responses
Language Barriers	Using Local Language, Translating	"Learning the local language (Thai or Indonesian), using broken English and utilizing Google Translate to help communicate."
	Visual Aids and Gestures	"Using pictures, body language, and visual aids to help students understand the material."
Teaching Methods and Adaption	Project-Based Learning and Group Activities	"Implementing group tasks, project-based learning, and collaborative activities to engage students and overcome language barriers."
	Differentiated Instruction	"Tailoring lessons to varying levels of English proficiency by providing different materials and individualized support."
	Interactive and Engaging Activities	"Making learning fun through games, icebreakers, and quizzes to engage students and foster participation."
Building Relationships with Students	Creating a Friendly and Comfortable Atmosphere	"Building closer relationships with students by interacting as a friend, while maintaining boundaries and making students feel comfortable."
	Developing Student Engagement	"Engaging with students directly to build trust, making students feel more comfortable asking questions and participating."
Cultural Adaption	Understanding Local Culture and Customs	"Observing local customs, respecting cultural norms, and integrating cultural aspects into lessons to make them relatable."
Classroom	Group Learning and Peer Learning	"Using group activities, peer learning, and collaborative tasks to manage large

Management		"class sizes and ensure every student participate."
	Handling Classroom Behaviour	"Dealing with distractions by confiscating phones, setting clear boundaries, and using icebreakers or fun activities to regain focus."
Personal Development and Support	Seeking Support from Mentors and Supervisors	"Consulting with supervisors, teachers, or colleagues for advice and guidance on how to handle specific challenges."
	Self-Motivation and Self Reflection	"Maintaining personal motivation and seeking teaching resources, constantly looking for ways to improve."
Technology and Resources	Using Available Resources and Tools	"Relying on available resources, such as printouts, WhatsApp for sharing materials and improving with materials to support teaching."
Adaption to Teaching Environment	Flexibility and Adaptability	"Being flexible adapting to the school's rules and environment, following local teaching methods, and observing the situation."
	Preparing Backup Materials	"Having prepared teaching materials, such as printed or digital copies, that can be easily accessed by students for better understanding."
Student Motivation and engagement	Motivating Students	"Using quizzes, icebreakers, and games to rekindle students' enthusiasm and encourage active participation."
Handling Diverse Student Needs	Individualized Attention for Students	"Addressing the varying needs of students by providing tailored materials or offering extra support for students struggling with lessons."
Collaborative Solutions	Engaging with Other Educators	"Discussing challenges with fellow teachers, collaborating on solutions, and learning from one another's teaching practices."

Language Barriers posed the significant challenges for teaching interns. Respondents noted that they used local languages and translation tools to overcome communication barriers. Additionally, they frequently employed visual aids and gestures to facilitate the delivery of concepts. This aligns with the research by (Edwanto et al., 2024), which recommends that teachers use various strategies, such as local languages, translation tools, and visual aids, to enhance communication in diverse classrooms.

Teaching Methos and Adaptation further support use of project-based learning and group activities emerged as a prominent strategy for engaging students. Interns noted that collaborative tasks not only helped to overcome language barriers but also fostered a sense of community among students. Differentiated instruction was another critical method identified, enabling educators to tailor lessons to accommodate varying levels of English proficiency. This approach is supported by (Ayu et al., 2021) indicating that personalized learning experiences can significantly enhance student engagement and comprehension.

Building Relationships with Students was another critical aspect. Creating a friendly and comfortable atmosphere was crucial for interns in establishing rapport with their students. By interacting as friends while maintaining professional boundaries, interns were able to build trust and encourage student participation. Developing student

engagement through direct interaction was also highlighted as an effective strategy for making students feel more comfortable asking questions (Wahyuni & Dafit, 2024).

Understanding local culture and customs played a vital role in the interns' adaptation process. Many noted that integrating cultural aspects into lessons made the content more relatable and engaging for students. Observing local customs and respecting cultural norms not only facilitated smoother interactions but also enriched the learning experience. This is supported by (Bagea, 2023) indicating that when teachers incorporate cultural elements into their teaching materials, students become more engaged and are able to relate their everyday lives.

Interns utilized group learning and per learning strategies to manage large class sizes effectively. By implementing collaborative tasks, they ensured that all students participated actively. Handling classroom behaviour was addressed through clear boundaries and engaging activities, such as icebreakers, which helped regain focus when distractions arose. Research by (Syed et al., 2023) indicates that using collaborative learning strategies significantly enhances student participation and helps manage classroom dynamics effectively in diverse educational settings. Similarly, by (Effendi & Wijirahayu, 2024) emphasize that students benefit more from group projects than individual work, as collaboration promotes shared understanding, critical thinking, engagement, communication skills, creativity, and problem solving ability, all of which contribute to better learning outcomes.

Seeking support from mentors and supervisors was a common strategy among interns facing challenges, many emphasized the importance of consulting experienced colleagues for guidance on specific issues. Self-motivation and reflection were also critical components of their teaching practices. According to (Sugiarti, 2024), mentor support via coaching and mentoring significantly enhances teacher performance, particularly in planning and executing instructional activities. The study also underscores the importance of reflection as part of continuous professional development for teachers.

The effective use of available resources was highlighted as a key factor in supporting teaching efforts. Interns relied on tools such as printouts and messaging apps to share materials and enhance communication with students. A study by (Omayra, 2021) indicates that utilizing technology and communication tools significantly improves educational outcomes, enhancing interaction and resource sharing in educational settings.

Flexibility and adaptability were essential traits for interns navigating new teaching environment. Being open to adjusting their methods according to school rules and local practiced allowed them to integrate more seamlessly into their roles. Additionally, preparing backup materials ensured that students had access to resources that facilitated understanding. Research by (Wirawan et al., 2024) discusses how educators must remain flexible and adaptable in their teaching approaches to effectively respond to changes in their environments, highlighting the significance of preparing resources and adjusting methods accordingly.

Motivating students through interactive activities such as quizzes and games was a recurring theme in the interns' responses. These methods not only rekindled enthusiasm but also encouraged active participation among students who might otherwise be disengaged. A study by (Aseery, 2024) indicates that interactive teaching methods are effective in increasing student motivation and engagement, ultimately enhancing the educational experience.

Interns recognized the importance of providing individualized attention to address the varying needs of their students. Tailoring materials or offering extra support for those struggling with lessons demonstrated a commitment to inclusive education. These findings are supported by (Ranbir, 2024), which emphasizes that addressing diverse learning needs through individualized approaches is essential for fostering an inclusive educational environment.

5) "How did this internship help you grow as a future educator?"

The internship experience provided valuable insights into various aspects of teaching, allowing interns to grow as future educators.

Table 5. Internship and Future educator

Category	Insights Gained	Description from Student Responses
Practical Teaching Experience	Classroom Management and Lesson Planning	"Gained practical experience in classroom management lesson planning, and handling diverse classroom environments.
	Engaging with students	"Learned how to engage students effectively, managing classrooms with varying levels of proficiency and character.

	Real-Life Teaching Experience	"Experiencing real-life teaching situations helped build confidence and refine teaching techniques."
Adaptability and Flexibility	Adapting to Diverse Educational Environments	"Learned how to adjust teaching methods to fit different educational contexts, student needs, and diverse classrooms."
	Handling Classroom Challenges	Gained skills in managing challenges like crowded classrooms, varying students' abilities, and limited resources.
	Adjusting to Local Educational Systems	"Learning about local curricula, teaching styles, and how to adapt to the school's teaching culture."
Reflection and Self Improvement	Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving	"The internship encouraged reflection, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving in dealing with challenges."
	Self-Reflection and Personal Growth	"Allowed for self-reflection on teaching practices, fostering personal growth and development in the teaching profession."
	Building Confidence	"The experience of teaching helped build confidence in front of students, especially in managing and leading the class."
Cultural Understanding	Understanding Cultural Contexts	"Gained a deeper understanding of the cultural context of students and how it affects learning styles and classroom dynamics."
Teaching Strategies	Creative and Effective Teaching Methods	"Learned to design creative and effective teaching strategies, making lessons more engaging for students.
	Student-Cantered Learning Approach	"Developed a focus on student-centered learning, meeting the needs of individual students.
Empathy and Relationship Building	Building Empathy and understanding Student Needs	"Deepened empathy for students' learning challenges and the importance of understanding their diverse needs."
	Building Teacher-Student Relationships	"Recognized the significance of fostering good relationships with students to facilitate better learning outcomes."
Professional Development	Growth as an Educator	"The internship provided a solid foundation for future career development as an educator, through practical and hands-on experiences."
	Learning from Experienced Educators	"Benefited from observing and learning from experienced educators in the fields."
Curriculum Design and Teaching	Developing Teaching Materials and Plans	"Gained experience in creating lesson plans, adapting resources, and creating

Materials		effective teaching materials."
Confidence in Teaching	Overcoming Teaching challenges	"Felt more confident and prepared to tackle future challenges in teaching, such as managing large classrooms and addressing varied needs."
Preparation for Teaching Career	Preparing for the Teaching Profession	"The internship experience helped solidify the passion for teaching and prepared the participants for their future careers in education."
Skills Development	Improvement in Critical Skills	"Developed key skills, such as adaptability, critical thinking, and problem-solving, necessary for becoming a successful educator."
New Insights and Experiences	Exposure to New Educational Aspects	"Gained exposure to new teaching methods, classroom environments, and educational systems not previously covered in college."

Interns reported significant gains in practical teaching skills, particularly in classroom management and lesson planning. Many noted that engaging with students effectively was crucial for managing classrooms with diverse proficiency levels and personalities this hands-on experience not only built their confidence but also refined their teaching techniques through real-life situations. Research by (Ranbir, 2024) indicates that practical teaching experiences gained through internships are vital for developing essential competencies in prospective teachers, emphasizing the importance of real-world engagement in refining teaching skills.

A recurring theme was the importance of adaptability in navigating diverse educational environments. Interns learned to adjust their teaching methods to meet various student needs and handle classrooms challenges such as overcrowding, differing abilities, and limited resources. Additionally, understanding local educational systems, curricula, and teaching cultures was highlighted as essential for effective integration into new teaching contexts. A study by (Andani et al., 2024) supports this notion by emphasizing that practical training enhances adaptability in teaching practices.

Interns emphasized the role of reflection in their professional growth. The internship encouraged critical thinking and creative problem-solving when faced with challenges. Self-reflection on teaching practices fostered personal development, allowing interns to build confidence in their abilities to manage and lead a classroom effectively. The research by (Juma, 2024) indicates that self-reflection is essential for enhancing teaching effectiveness and promoting continuous improvement, enabling educators to identify strengths and areas for growth while fostering personal development.

Gaining a deeper understanding of students' cultural contexts was another significant insight. Interns recognized how cultural backgrounds influence learning styles and dynamics, which is crucial for effective teaching. This cultural awareness helped them develop more inclusive teaching strategies that cater to diverse student needs. Research by (Thi et al., 2024) underscores the importance of cultural understanding in education, highlighting its role in enhancing teaching effectiveness and fostering inclusivity.

Interns reported learning to design creative and effective teaching methods that made lessons more engaging. A shift towards a student-cantered learning approach was noted, emphasizing the importance of meeting individual students' needs through tailored instruction. The research by (Andani et al., 2024) highlights that collaborative learning approaches enhance student engagement and motivation.

Building empathy for students' learning challenges emerged as a critical aspect of the internship experience. Interns acknowledge the significance of fostering strong teacher-student relationships to facilitate better learning outcomes. Understanding students' diverse needs allowed them to create supportive learning environments. Research by (Sarwer et al., 2024) highlights that teacher empathy plays a vital role in enhancing student academic achievement by fostering emotional connections and understanding, which are essential for effective teaching.

The internship served as a foundation for professional development, equipping interns with essential skills for their future careers in education. Learning from experienced educators provided insights into effective teaching practices and strategies, enhancing their pedagogical knowledge. Research by (Salam et al., 2024) emphasizes the significance of

professional development programs in enhancing teacher competencies and highlights how mentorship from experienced educators significantly contributes to future teachers professional growth.

Interns gained practical experience in developing lesson plans and adapting resources to create effective teaching materials. This experience was vital in preparing them for real-world teaching scenarios where flexibility and creativity are required. Research by (Fathoni et al., 2024) emphasizes that professional development programs focused on practical skills significantly enhance teachers' abilities to design effective curricula and adapt resources for diverse educational contexts.

Many interns expressed increased confidence in tackling future teaching challenges, including managing large classrooms and addressing varied student needs. This newfound confidence is expected to positively impact their future careers in education. A study (Purba et al., 2024) indicates that hands-on experiences during internships help educators develop essential skills, leading to increased self-efficacy and preparedness for future teaching roles.

Finally, interns reported significant improvements in critical skills necessary for successful teaching, such as adaptability, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Exposure to new educational aspects during the internship broadened their perspectives on effective teaching practice not previously covered in college. Research by (Khin & Sin, 2022) indicates that practical experiences during internships significantly enhance critical skills essential for effective teaching.

By the internship experience significantly contributed to the intern's growth as educators by providing practical skills, fostering adaptability, enhancing cultural understanding, and promoting professional development.

6) **"Based on your experiences, what recommendations would you give to future interns regarding cultural adaption in teaching practices?"**

The insights gathered from interns regarding cultural adaptation in teaching practices reveal several key recommendations that can enhance the effectiveness of future educators in diverse environments.

Table 6. Recommendation for future interns

Category	Recommendation	Participant's Response Description
Understanding and Familiarizing with Local Culture	Appreciate and understand the local culture	"Before starting to teach, take the time to understand the local culture, values, and customs in order to create a more relevant and respectful learning environment."
Flexibility in Teaching Methods	Adapt teaching methods to the characteristics of students and local culture	Be flexible in your teaching methods, adjust your approach to meet students' needs, and don't be afraid to change your teaching style to align with local culture and students' preferences."
Interaction with Students and Colleagues	Build positive relationships with students and colleagues	"Actively interact with students and colleagues to create positive relationships, fostering respect and trust, which will enhance comfort in the learning environment."
Building Empathy and respecting Differences	Understand cultural differences and students' characteristics	"Make an effort to understand and respect cultural differences and students' characteristics. Don't hesitate to ask for advice from colleagues or mentor teachers on how to address these differences."
Learning about Local Values and Traditions	Understand the values, norms, and traditions of the local community	"Learn about the values and traditions practiced in the community where you are teaching such as Indonesia's culture "gotong royong" (mutual cooperation), to understand ow students interact and learn."

Using Engaging Teaching Media	Use engaging media such as pictures or games to attract students' attention	"Make learning fun by incorporating pictures, games, or other creative approaches to prevent students from getting bored and help them learn with enthusiasm."
Through Preparation and Understanding Students' Characteristics	Get to know students' abilities and characteristics thoroughly	"Get to know students' abilities and characteristics in depth, prepare lessons accordingly, and always have alternative plans in place to address variations in the classroom."
Adapting to the School Environment	Adapt to the school environment and staff	"Try to adapt well to the school environment, including teachers, students, and staff, to avoid "culture shock" and ease the teaching process."
Improving Social and Communication Skills	Improve communication skills with students and colleagues	"Be more active in speaking and interacting with students to make them feel comfortable and appreciate you as their teacher."
Respecting Diverse Perspectives	Respect diverse perspectives and adjust to local social norms	"Be open to students' perspectives and those of fellow educators, and adjust your approach to how students participate or interact in the classroom, making it more inclusive and sensitive to cultural differences."
Listening and Accepting Feedback	Listen to feedback from students and colleagues and for self-improvement.	Actively accept feedback from students and colleagues to improve your teaching practices, ensuring that they align with community expectations and are effective.
Incorporating Local Culture into Lessons	Incorporate elements of local culture into the lessons	Include aspects of local culture in teaching materials to provide students with insights into their cultural heritage, for example, introducing Indonesian culture to students in Thailand.
Motivation and Positive Approach	Build motivation and maintain a positive relationship with students	"Provide motivation to students and create a positive, open, and friendly atmosphere where they feel comfortable talking and learning."
Being Active in Asking and Learning	Don't hesitate to ask fellow to educators or mentors for guidance on improving your teaching	"Don't be afraid to ask mentor teachers or colleagues for advice on how to address different situations to learn and grow."
Making Learning Fun and Relevant	Create lessons that are relevant to students' interests and needs.	"Always find ways to make lessons relevant and fun by using methods that align with Gen Z students' preferences, such as learning while playing."

Interns emphasized the importance of appreciating and understanding local culture, values, and customs before beginning their teaching journey. This foundational knowledge is crucial for creating a relevant and respectful learning environment. Research by (Chandratreya, 2024) supports this notion, indicating that educators who understand local cultural contexts can foster positive relationships with students, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes.

The ability to adapt teaching methods to suit the characteristics of students and local culture was highlighted as essential, interns recommended being flexible in instructional approaches to meet students' needs and preferences. A study by (Shih, 2022) emphasizes that local culture curriculum planning should be cantered on the child, highlighting the importance of adapting teaching methods and educational spaces to accommodate individual abilities and local contexts.

Building positive relationships with students and colleagues was identified as a key strategy for fostering a supportive learning environment. Intern noted that active interaction helps create respect and trust. Research by (Lubis, 2024) emphasizes that effective interaction patterns between teachers and students can significantly enhance the learning process. The study highlights that when teachers engage actively with their students, it fosters a more dynamic and supportive classroom atmosphere, leading to improved educational outcomes.

Interns stressed the need to understand and respect cultural differences among students. They recommended seeking advice from colleagues or mentor teachers to address these differences effectively. According to (Ramadhanti et al., 2024), fostering empathy and respect for diversity is crucial in educational settings, as it helps create an inclusive environment where all students feel valued. The study emphasizes that teachers play a significant role in modelling respectful behaviour and encouraging students to appreciate differences among their peers.

Understanding local values, norms, and traditions was seen as vital for effective teaching. Interns suggested learning about community practices to better understand how students interact and learn. This aligns with findings from (Herlina et al., 2024), who emphasizes that integrating local culture into the educational curriculum helps students internalize moral values more easily because these values are contextual and closer to their daily lives. The study indicates that through direct experiences in traditional ceremonies and community activities, students learn to respect the social values present in their environment.

Interns recommended incorporating engaging media such as pictures or games to attract students' attention and make learning enjoyable. Research by (Nurseto, 2020) emphasizes the importance of using varied and advanced tools in developing educational materials.

Improving communication skills was highlighted as essential for building rapport with a students and colleagues. Interns suggested being proactive in interactions to foster a comfortable learning environment. According to (Khaerudin, 2022), effective communication a strategies are crucial are crucial in educational settings as they enhance the learning process and help build positive relationships among students and teachers. The study emphasizes that implementing various communication strategies can significantly improve students' engagement and comfort in the classroom.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study indicates that the internship experiences of English Education students in Indonesia and Thailand have a significant positive impact on the development of teaching skills, communication, and cultural understanding. Most participants reported feeling more confident in their teaching abilities after engaging in a multicultural environment, where they learned to appreciate cultural differences and apply more interactive and contextually relevant teaching methods. Although challenges such as language proficiency differences and time management persist, these experiences enriched their insights into international educational practices and enhanced their ability to adapt to diverse student backgrounds. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of practical experiences in preparing prospective teachers to address the challenge of teaching in diverse classrooms.

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