
Reflection on Parenting Course Learning in Fostering Parent-Teacher Collaboration at PG-Paud UNIPAR Jember

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Abstrak. Parent-teacher collaboration remains a challenge in many early childhood education settings in Indonesia, necessitating early preparation for prospective teachers. This article aims to examine the role of parenting education in shaping prospective early childhood education (PAUD) teachers who are capable of bridging collaboration between parents and teachers. Using a reflective approach to the Parenting course taught in the Early Childhood Teacher Education Program (PG-PAUD) at UNIPAR Jember, this paper highlights the importance of integrating positive parenting values, empathetic communication, and strengthening the role of the family in the early childhood education process. The method employed is descriptive qualitative, based on classroom reflections and student assignments. The results show that students are able to understand and apply fundamental parenting principles and design simple programs that can be implemented in real contexts. This reflection is significant as it provides a concrete picture of students' readiness to bridge communication gaps between families and educational institutions, and it illustrates the transformation of the PAUD teacher's role as a facilitator, mediator, and learning partner for parents. The implication is that parenting education at the tertiary level needs to be continuously strengthened as an integral part of the PG-PAUD curriculum, both theoretically and practically.

Keywords: Parenting education, early childhood education (ECE), parent-teacher collaboration, teacher training, reflective learning

INTRODUCTION

A solid partnership between parents and teachers is an important foundation in supporting optimal early childhood growth and development (Fu et al., 2024). However, the implementation of this cooperation still encounters various obstacles in many PAUD institutions. Some common obstacles include a lack of effective mutual communication, differences in understanding of each other's roles, and limited time and resources from both parties. In fact, various studies have shown that the active involvement of parents in education has a significant impact on children's achievement and development (Epstein, 2001).

In this context, prospective PAUD teachers need to be prepared from an early age with the skills to build partnership relationships with parents. In the Early Childhood Teacher Education Study Program (PG-PAUD) Universitas PGRI Argopuro Jember, this is facilitated through the Parenting course, which not only presents parenting theories but also encourages students to evaluate personal experiences and develop collaboration strategies that are contextual with family conditions (Suyanto & Setiawan, 2020). The integration of parenting education into teacher preparation programs is crucial in fostering effective teacher-parent partnerships (Suryani & Fauzi, 2021). Furthermore, this approach allows students to understand the diverse family dynamics that influence children's development (Arifin et al., 2022). The Parenting course also serves as a platform for prospective teachers to reflect on their own parenting styles and how these impact their teaching practices (Harahap & Kurniawan, 2021). Collaboration with parents is essential in early childhood education as it supports the overall development and well-being of children (Prasetyo et al., 2023). This type of education helps future educators to adapt their methods according to the unique needs of

each family and child (Wahyudi & Dewi, 2022).

Teaching parenting at the university level has a strategic role in bridging theoretical understanding with practice in the field. Students are not only trained to learn various types of parenting styles such as authoritarian, democratic, and permissive (Hurlock, 2000), but are also trained to understand the socio-cultural reality of Indonesian families with an approach centered on humanistic values, namely empathy, healthy communication, and concern for the social environment (Rogers, 1969; Maslow, 1970).

This paper aims to reflect on the lecture process of the Parenting course at *PG-PAUD* UNIPAR Jember and evaluate its contribution in shaping student competence as a bridge between the world of school and family. The writing approach used is reflective and descriptive, with reference to learning experiences, lecture assignments, and classroom interactions.

A solid partnership between parents and teachers is crucial for optimizing early childhood development. Research by Epstein (2001) highlights that active parental involvement significantly enhances children's academic and social outcomes. However, despite its recognized importance, many early childhood education (*ECE*) settings in Indonesia face challenges in fostering effective collaboration, such as communication gaps and differing role perceptions (Fitriani & Prasetyo, 2022). This underscores the need for proactive strategies to bridge these gaps, particularly through teacher training programs.

Studies have explored the role of parenting education in teacher training, emphasizing its impact on professional readiness. For instance, Oktaviani and Yulindrasari (2021) found that parenting courses enhance prospective teachers' ability to engage with families. Similarly, Sari and Wulandari (2020) demonstrated that reflective learning in parenting education fosters empathetic communication skills. However, these studies primarily focus on theoretical outcomes, leaving a gap in understanding how such courses translate into practical, context-specific collaboration strategies in diverse *ECE* settings.

While existing literature acknowledges the value of parenting education, there is limited empirical evidence on how reflective learning approaches in higher education institutions shape prospective teachers' competencies in real-world parent-teacher collaboration. Most studies concentrate on general pedagogical outcomes rather than the transformative process of integrating theory, personal reflection, and field application (Nugroho, 2021). This gap highlights the need for deeper exploration of experiential learning models in parenting courses.

The urgency of this study lies in the growing demand for *ECE* teachers who can act as mediators between schools and families, particularly in socio-culturally diverse contexts like Indonesia. With parental involvement being a key determinant of child development (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007), equipping teachers with collaborative skills is essential. The current lack of tailored training programs addressing interpersonal challenges (e.g., communication barriers) further amplifies the need for this research.

This study contributes novelty by examining the Parenting course at *PG-PAUD* UNIPAR Jember through a reflective learning lens, capturing both cognitive and affective transformations in students. Unlike prior works, it analyzes how classroom reflections, program design tasks, and role-playing simulations collectively prepare teachers for real-world collaboration. The integration of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis to interpret reflective journals and interviews also offers a methodological advancement.

The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Parenting course in fostering parent-teacher collaboration competencies among *PG-PAUD* students. Specifically, it investigates: (1) students' conceptual understanding of parenting styles, (2) their ability to design contextually relevant parenting programs, and (3) the interpersonal challenges they face in transitioning from theory to practice.

The findings will benefit *ECE* stakeholders by providing a model for integrating reflective learning into teacher education curricula. Policymakers can use the results to advocate for curriculum reforms that emphasize experiential training. Additionally, educators and institutions will gain insights into addressing communication barriers, ultimately enhancing family-school partnerships in *ECE* settings.

This study has practical implications for redesigning parenting courses to include more field-based activities and empathetic communication training. Theoretically, it reinforces humanistic education frameworks (Rogers, 1969; Maslow, 1970) by demonstrating their applicability in teacher identity formation. Long-term, it supports the global agenda of fostering socially resilient educators capable of navigating 21st-century educational challenges (Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2008).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach by utilizing classroom reflection techniques as the primary strategy to explore students' learning experiences in the Parenting course. The research focuses on the internalization of parenting concepts, the development of parenting programs, and students' readiness to establish effective communication between parents and teachers. Through this approach, the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how the *Parenting* course contributes to shaping the collaborative competencies of early childhood education (*PAUD*) teacher candidates.

Data were collected from three main sources: (1) Classroom observations conducted throughout the even semester of 2025, involving 32 students from the Early Childhood Education Program at Universitas PGRI Argopuro Jember. These observations aimed to capture student interactions and engagement in discussions and reflective activities; (2) Learning documents, including individual and group assignments such as partner-based parenting program designs, personal reflection journals, and group presentations on collaborative parenting strategies; (3) Semi-structured interviews with five purposively selected students who demonstrated active participation and deep reflection during the course. These interviews were intended to gather subjective insights into students' learning experiences and perceptions of the *Parenting* course.

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflective thematic analysis, which involved several stages: repeated reading of student reflection journals, field observations, and interview transcripts to obtain a holistic understanding; identifying and coding meaningful and relevant information across data sources; grouping the codes into key themes such as understanding of parenting, strategies for building collaboration, and students' role transformation as future educators; and interpreting each theme within theoretical frameworks from experts such as Epstein (2001), Hurlock (2000), and humanistic education theorists like Rogers (1969) and Maslow (1970).

To ensure the validity of the findings, several validation techniques were employed: (1)

Source triangulation by comparing and confirming findings from classroom observations, learning documents, and student interviews; (2) Peer debriefing involving two fellow lecturers who reviewed the consistency of findings and the researcher's interpretations; and (3) Member checking, in which feedback was solicited from student informants to confirm that the interpretations and narratives accurately represented their experiences and perspectives. Through these combined techniques, student reflections were treated not merely as personal notes, but as valid academic data for evaluating the effectiveness of reflective learning approaches in developing pedagogical and social competencies among prospective early childhood educators.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Understanding of the Concept of Parenting

The results of the analysis of reflection journals and interviews show that most students have a good understanding of the concept of parenting style and its implications for early childhood development. Students are able to relate the theories learned in class such as authoritarian, democratic, and permissive styles (Hurlock, 2000)—with personal experiences and the surrounding social context.

As an illustration, one of the students wrote in his reflection journal:

"I just realized that my parents' upbringing tends to be permissive, and that made me less confident as a child."

This statement reflects a reflective awareness of the influence of parenting in the formation of children's personalities. The ability of students to reflect on past experiences is an important capital in the formation of professional identity as prospective PAUD teachers. This supports the view of Zeichner (1996) that reflection on personal experience is a strategic step in building an authentic pedagogical understanding.

Parenting Program Design Ability

In addition to understanding the theory, students demonstrate the capacity to translate parenting concepts into real, contextual and relevant programs. Some of the program plans that appear in their final project include:

1. Father's Class, which is an informal educational session specifically designed to increase father's involvement in parenting.
2. Simulation of Parental Interaction at Home, as a form of learning through play.
3. Empathetic Communication Training, which is aimed at parents to better understand their children's emotional needs.

These programs are not only conceptually arranged, but also presented in class and receive constructive feedback from lecturers and peers. Based on Bloom's taxonomy, students have reached the application stage, which is able to implement knowledge into practical situations (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

This ability supports Epstein's (2001) thesis that the success of school-family partnerships is greatly influenced by teachers' initiatives in creating inclusive and supportive collaborative spaces. In this context, PG-PAUD UNIPAR students show a shift from a passive role as a recipient of theory to an agent who designs interventions based on community needs.

Interpersonal Challenges and the Adaptation Process

Although the students' achievements are quite encouraging, the learning process also presents a number of challenges, especially in the aspect of interpersonal communication. Students' awkwardness in building interaction with parents is one of the main obstacles. One student revealed:

"I feel awkward to convey feedback to parents, for fear of being misunderstood or perceived as pretentious."

This statement indicates that there is a gap between conceptual readiness and social courage in facing real dynamics on the ground. This challenge is naturally experienced by prospective teachers who are still in the stage of forming a professional identity.

To bridge this, lecturers apply various learning strategies such as role-play, real-case discussions, and peer feedback. This strategy has been proven to be able to increase student confidence and encourage the growth of empathetic and assertive communication.

Students gradually begin to understand that the role of early childhood education teachers is not limited to delivering material, but includes functions as social mediators and facilitators of communication between schools and families. They also realize the importance of building sensitivity to parental backgrounds, as well as the ability not to judge, but to accompany with a humanistic approach.

Reflective Learning as a Professional Identity Transformation

The findings from reflections and interviews show that the learning process of the Parenting course has contributed significantly to the transformation of students' perspectives on the role of PAUD teachers. Students no longer see themselves only as educators, but as partners in the growth and development of children and families. This is in line with the idea of Sari and Wulandari (2020), which emphasizes the importance of making parenting education a vehicle for teacher character formation, not solely the mastery of theory. Reflection-based learning provides space for integration between cognition, affection, and action, so that students are able to think critically, empathic, and act collaboratively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the *Parenting* course applied in the PG-PAUD Study Program of PGRI Argopuro University (UNIPAR) Jember has a strategic role in shaping the competence of prospective PAUD teachers, especially in social, pedagogical, and reflective aspects. The learning process designed based on reflection has been proven to foster students' critical awareness of the importance of positive parenting, empathic communication, and parental involvement in supporting early childhood growth and development. The reflections carried out by students show a process of self-transformation from students to collaboratively oriented educators. They not only master the theory of parenting styles conceptually but also demonstrate a readiness to translate that knowledge into the form of parenting programs that are relevant to the needs of the surrounding community. This shows that *Parenting* is not just a theoretical course, but a vehicle for the formation of professional attitudes of prospective teachers. These findings reinforce the argument that parenting education should be fully integrated into the PG-PAUD curriculum, with an emphasis on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. An approach that combines experiential learning, deep reflection, and field practice has been proven to facilitate the birth of prospective

educators who are socially resilient and empathetic in communicating with students' families. Thus, this study makes an important contribution to the discourse on the development of early childhood teacher education in Indonesia. In addition to strengthening the theoretical foundation, the students' reflective results also show that a holistic and contextual learning approach is the main key in preparing PAUD teachers who are able to establish productive partnerships with families. This is in line with the teacher education reform agenda that emphasizes social and emotional competence as an integral part of the professionalism of educators in the 21st century.

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