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Pre-Service Teachers' Conceptions of Practicum Assessment Across Knowledge, Skills, and Values: An Interpretative Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

This study presented a rigorous qualitative protocol to examine pre-service teachers' conceptions of assessment in the teaching practicum, treating knowledge, skills, and values (K–S–V) as interdependent domains of professional formation. Situated within a constructivist paradigm, it used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to illuminate how pre-service teachers understood assessment purposes, processes, criteria, and consequences during authentic classroom placements. The design employed purposive sampling of final-semester participants who had recently completed extended placements across multiple teacher-education institutions. Data were generated through 60–90-minute focus-group discussions and were analyzed using reflexive thematic procedures.

The literature indicated that practicum assessment was experienced as both developmental and judgmental, and that the perceived alignment of formative and summative mechanisms was pivotal for learning, identity work, and the transition to teaching. Evidence further suggested that conceptions were often implicit and fragmented, weakening assessment literacy and obscuring how K–S–V were recognized in practice. Accordingly, the study (a) made explicit how pre-service teachers conceptualized K–S–V in practicum assessment; (b) identified tensions between intended purposes and experienced practices; and (c) informed a coherent assessment framework that integrated dialogic feedback with credible summative decisions. Contributions included a richer account of assessment literacy from the learner-teacher perspective and design implications for practicums that made evidence of knowledge, enactment of skills, and embodiment of professional values visible, dialogic, and fair.

Keywords: teaching practicum; conceptions of assessment; knowledge–skills–values; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; reflexive thematic analysis; assessment literacy.



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Introduction

Background and Focus

Teaching practicum is the crucible in which pre-service teachers integrate subject knowledge, enact pedagogical and classroom-management skills, and embody professional values under authentic school conditions (USAID, 2020; Valtonen et al., 2021; Santos & Castro, 2021). Assessment within this space confers meaning on performance and shapes identity formation by signalling what counts as evidence, which criteria matter, and how feedback is to be interpreted (Shepard, 2014; Manasia & Chiciooreanu, 2020; Ajani, 2024). International reform discourses underscore alignment among curriculum, practicum experiences, assessment criteria, and feedback ecologies, calling for clarity, fairness, and coherence in how practicum evidence is gathered and judged (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2021; Nguyen & Nha, 2021). In this article, Objective 1 of the originating thesis—examining pre-service teachers’ conceptions of assessment is extended specifically with reference to knowledge, skills, and values (K-S-V) and elaborate a publishable protocol to generate robust qualitative evidence (Jumani & Abbasi, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 2020).

Conceptual Emphasis: Knowledge–Skills–Values (K-S-V)

The K-S-V triad provides an ungenerous and comprehensive lens for interpreting conceptions of practicum assessment. Knowledge refers to subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge; skills exponent planning, instruction, differentiation, assessment for learning, and classroom arrangement; values encompass professionalism, ethics, equity-mindedness, care, and reflective stance (Valtonen et al., 2021; Barends et al., 2023; Banks, 2024). Prior work shows that pre-service teachers tend to experience knowledge as documented artifacts (e.g., lesson plans, content explanations), skills as enactment under observation, and values as implicit expectations inferred from feedback and institutional cultures (Manasia & Chiciooreanu, 2020; Atienza et al., 2023; Tiainen & Lutovac, 2024). Making these implicit logics explicit is central to strengthening assessment literacy and improving practicum design (Ajani, 2024; Atjonen et al., 2024; Smith & Gillespie, 2023).

Problem Statement

Despite the intended developmental functions of practicum assessment, pre-service teachers often report transparency and fragmentation: criteria appear shifting, feedback cycles are uneven, and summative judgments sometimes feel poorly connected to formative guidance (Shepard, 2014; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Ajani, 2024). These experiences risk compliance-oriented performance rather than reflective growth, and they can diminish the credibility of assessment as a fair representation of K-S-V (Manasia & Chiciooreanu, 2020; Barends et al., 2023). Limited empirical research interrogates how pre-service teachers themselves conceptualize the purposes, evidence, and consequences of practicum assessment across K-S-V domains, especially in contexts where program reforms aspire to align standards, mentoring, and evaluation practices (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2021; Nguyen & Nha, 2021).

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine pre-service teachers’ conceptions of practicum assessment with reference to knowledge, skills, and values. The research questions were: RQ1: How do pre-service teachers conceptualize the purposes of practicum assessment for evidencing knowledge, enacting skills, and embodying professional values?



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RQ2: How do they interpret criteria, evidence, and feedback as these relate to K-S-V during observations and associated tasks?

RQ3: How do they perceive the alignment or misalignment between formative and summative mechanisms, and with what consequences for learning and identity?

Theoretical and Methodological Orientation

A constructivist paradigm frames the inquiry: meanings of assessment are co-constructed through interactions among pre-service teachers, mentors, and institutional norms (Guba & Lincoln, 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Methodologically, interpretative phenomenology is used to access lived experience and situated sense-making, with reflexive thematic analysis to move from idiographic accounts to patterned meanings while maintaining closeness to participants' language (Moustakas, 2017; van Manen, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021). This alignment is appropriate for uncovering how assessment "works" as experience—its purposes, stakes, and practical consequences in school placements (Shepard, 2014; Banks, 2024; Zondo & Adu, 2024).

1.6 Definitions and Scope

Conceptions of assessment: Pre-service teachers' beliefs, understandings, and interpretations of assessment's purposes, processes, criteria, evidence, feedback, and consequences in practicum (Shepard, 2014; Manasia & Chicioreanu, 2020).

Knowledge: Subject matter, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular alignment as evidenced through planning artifacts and instructional explanations (Valtonen et al., 2021; Atienza et al., 2023).

Skills: Instructional planning and delivery, formative assessment, differentiation, classroom orchestration, and interactional competence under observation (Banks, 2024; Barends et al., 2023).

Values: Professional responsibility, ethics, equity-mindedness, reflective practice, and care—often implicit yet consequential in observation feedback and professional conduct (Ajani, 2024; Tiainen & Lutovac, 2024).

Delimitations. The study focuses on final-year pre-service teachers with recent practicum experience in selected universities; teacher educators' and school leaders' perspectives are beyond the scope of Objective 1 and are addressed elsewhere in the study (Jumani & Abbasi, 2015; Liu, 2024; Shah et al., 2024).

Significance and Contributions

First, by centering pre-service teachers' expression, the study advances assessment literacy as an experiential construct, clarifying how K-S-V become visible and actionable through evidence and feedback (Manasia & Chicioreanu, 2020; Atjonen et al., 2024). Second, findings were informing a coherent practicum assessment architecture with tighter formative–summative alignment, credible criteria, and dialogic feedback cycles (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Atienza et al., 2023; Barends et al., 2023). Third, the protocol models a methodologically transparent approach (constructivist IPA + reflexive thematic analysis) applicable to teacher-education quality enhancement in diverse systems (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2021; Guba & Lincoln, 2020). At policy level, the work complements competence-focused reforms and standards movements emphasizing teacher effectiveness, feedback, and professional growth (OECD, 2020);



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UNESCO, 2021; Nguyen & Nha, 2021).

Literature Review

Practicum assessment: purposes, meanings, and stakes

Across teacher education systems, practicum assessment signals what count as competent performance and how professional identity, and progression are adjudicated. Classic accounts emphasize that assessment carries social meanings—it legitimizes learning claims and confers status when tied to shared standards (Shepard, 2014), and serves multiple purposes including certification, quality assurance, enhancement of learning, and lifelong development (Bloxham & Boyd, 2009). In the Pakistani context, practicum was positioned as the critical venue for competency development, while effectiveness is ultimately read through the lens of assessment practices (Jumani & Abbasi, 2015; Manasia & Chicioreanu, 2020). Together, these strands establish that conceptions of assessment are not merely private beliefs; they structure how pre-service teachers interpret criteria, feedback, and consequences for advancement. (Shepard, 2014; Bloxham & Boyd, 2009; Jumani & Abbasi, 2015; Manasia & Chicioreanu, 2020).

The knowledge–skills–values (K–S–V) triad as an interpretive frame

The study advances K–S–V frame—knowledge (subject matter and pedagogy), skills (planning, instruction, classroom management, assessment for learning), and values/dispositions (professionalism, reflective practice, ethical conduct) as the integrated object of practicum assessment. The framework explicitly aligns K–S–V to formative and summative procedures and to the intended outcome of improving teaching competencies (knowledge, skills, dispositions). This structure sharpens the analytic focus of the present study and underwrites construct validity for interpreting pre-service teachers' conceptions of what is being assessed and why (knowledge as evidentiary artifacts, skills as observed enactments, values as professional stances). (Byrd, 2023).

Formative and summative assessment in practicum

Operational definitions in the study distinguish formative assessment as continuous, feedback-rich guidance integrated into the teaching placement (peer assessment, cooperating-teacher evaluation, reflective presentations and discussions) and summative assessment as end-point judgments that consolidate achievement against program criteria (e.g., exams, final presentations, capstone tasks, micro-teaching). The alignment of these two logics shapes how pre-service teachers come to conceptualize assessment either as a logical support for growth or as an opaque filter for selection (Shepard, 2014). (Shepard, 2014).

Feedback and reflection as engines of learning

Two traditions organize the feedback–reflection nexus in practicum. First, reflective practice foregrounds professional growth through cycles of reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983). Second, instructionally useful feedback is structured by three orienting questions—Where am I going? How am I going? Where to next?—which together improve uptake and self-regulation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In practicum assessment designs, these traditions converge to frame how pre-service teachers interpret feedback's purpose, specificity, and timing—core components of their conceptions of assessment. (Schön, 1983; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).



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Standards, program coherence, and institutional models

Standards frameworks (e.g., NPST) and international program models (e.g., NIE Singapore) place assessment within a competency-based architecture that blends K–S–V, reflective development, and credible judgment. NPST aligned systems combine formative (peer evaluation, reflective journals) and summative (portfolios, performance assessments) procedures; portfolios curate evidence (lesson plans, student evaluations, self-assessments) for coherent judgments of readiness. Comparative accounts note alignment with INTASC and UNESCO-type standards, as well as with high-performing systems in Finland and Singapore, while also flagging uneven implementation across institutions in Pakistan. (Zakaria et al., 2024; Kalim, 2024; Ahmad et al., 2024; Kriewaldt et al., 2024; Shah, 2025).

Digital assessment artifacts and feedback ecologies

Emerging digital innovations video observations, e-portfolios, and collaborative tools—enhance capture, review, and dialogic feedback in practicum, enabling self- and peer-assessment and potentially increasing transparency of criteria and evidence for K–S–V (Yu, 2024; Sahar & Shahbaz, 2023). Under a conception-of-assessment lens, these tools can reconfigure pre-service teachers' perceptions of fairness and usability of feedback by making performance visible and revisable across time. (Yu, 2024; Sahar & Shahbaz, 2023).

What pre-service teachers actually experience: a lens on conceptions

Empirical strands consolidated in the study show that pre-service teachers' conceptions evolve in response to ongoing interactions with supervisors, cooperating teachers, peers, and classroom learners (Lawson et al., 2015). Conceptions are shaped by observation practices, meetings, and repeated cycles of teaching and reflection; when criteria are under-specified or feedback is inconsistent, pre-service teachers may default to compliance performance rather than reflective growth. These dynamics argue for examining conceptions of assessment not only as beliefs but as experience-near meanings formed in practicum ecologies. (Lawson et al., 2015; Manasia & Chicioreanu, 2020).

2.8 The Pakistani context: gaps and imperatives

the study identifies a literature gap on conception-of-assessment studies linked to teaching practice in Pakistan and argues for in-depth, phenomenological inquiry to surface lived meanings across institutional contexts. It further notes system-level concerns uneven standard implementation and calls for coherent assessment designs that integrate reflective practice and feedback models. (Smith et al., 2022; Moustakas, 2017; Shah, 2025).

Conceptual synthesis guiding the present study

Integrating these lines of work, the study treated conceptions of assessment as pre-service teachers' experience-based understandings of the purposes, criteria/evidence, feedback processes, and consequences of practicum assessment—read through the K–S–V triad and the formative–summative interface. This synthesis, already embedded in the study framework, justifies a constructivist–phenomenological strategy cantered on focus-group narratives and reflexive analysis to reveal how assessment is made sense of in real placements and how those meanings align (or clash) with intended standards and program architectures (Guba & Lincoln, 2019, 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018; van Manen,



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2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ary et al., 2007; Neubauer et al., 2019).

Method

Design and Paradigm

This inquiry adopted a constructivist paradigm and a phenomenological strategy to elicit pre-service teachers' lived meanings of practicum assessment (Guba & Lincoln, 2019, 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Within constructivism, knowledge is co-constructed through interaction; reality is subjective and context-bound, and the researcher is an instrument of interpretation (Guba & Lincoln, 2019, 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018; van Manen, 2021).

Methodologically, the study is phenomenological, privileging experience-near accounts to illuminate how assessment is understood and used during practicum (Vagle, 2018; Reiners, 2019; Ary et al., 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Neubauer et al., 2019).

The integration of paradigm, qualitative approach, and phenomenological design ensures alignment between philosophical underpinnings and procedures (Lincoln & Guba, 2018).

Setting and Context

Data were generated across four public universities in Islamabad–Rawalpindi–coded in the study as IIUI, NUML, ARID, and FJWU—to maximize contextual variation while retaining homogeneity of role (final-year pre-service teachers who recently completed practicum).

The study provides institutional codes and FG rosters that guide recruitment and sampling frames for pre-service cohorts.

Participants and Inclusion Criteria

Participants are pre-service teachers (final-year B.Ed/BS) with direct, recent practicum experience and exposure to practicum-based assessment (e.g., observed lessons, artifacts, feedback). Purposeful selection privileges those capable of reflective articulation about assessment processes, criteria, and consequences (Smith & Osborn, 2003; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Inclusion criteria: (a) completion of the most recent teaching placement; (b) ability to participate in a 60–90-minute focus group; (c) consent to audio-recording; (d) willingness to discuss assessment experiences. This aligns with phenomenology's idiographic depth and cross-case comparison of convergences/divergences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Sampling Strategy and Sample Size Rationale

Sampling is purposive, the modal approach in phenomenological work, to ensure experience-proximity and analytic richness (van Manen, 2021; Smith & Osborn, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Following the thesis, the study anticipated multiple focus groups of 4–6 participants per institution; the literature recommends at least 3–5 groups for variation, expandable up to ~10 where phenomena are complex (Morgan, 1997; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study targets 8 focus groups (~32–48 participants) distributed across the four institutions, consistent with the thesis' FG coding tables (e.g., FG06–FG08).



Table 1
Sampling Frame and Focus-Group Plan (drawn from the institution codes)

Site code	Program	Planned FGDs (n)	Target n per FGD	Anticipated total
IIUI	B.Ed/BS final year	2	4–6	8–12
NUML	B.Ed/BS final year	2	4–6	8–12
ARID	B.Ed/BS final year	2	4–6	8–12
FJWU	B.Ed/BS final year	2	4–6	8–12
Total		8		32–48

Data-Generation Instruments

Focus-Group Discussions (FGDs). FGDs enable dynamic interaction and co-elaboration of meanings—well suited to a phenomenological design exploring conceptions of assessment among pre-service teachers (Cutri et al., 2020; Annamalai, 2021). The study positions FGDs as the primary tool for prospective teachers, allowing nuanced perspectives on purposes, criteria, evidence, and feedback to surface through peer dialogue.

The FGD guide is structured around the knowledge–skills–values triad and the formative–summative interface, with probes on (a) purposes of assessment, (b) criteria and evidence considered credible, (c) timing/specificity/use of feedback, (d) fairness and transparency, and (e) perceived impacts on learning and identity (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Schön, 1983).

Demographic Proforma. A brief sheet records program, subject area, placement length/type, and institution code to support thick description and transferability. (Design logic aligned with the thesis’ sampling frames.)

Researcher Memos. Reflexive memoing records positionality, analytic moves, and emergent interpretive questions, consistent with constructivist phenomenology’s emphasis on co-construction and reflexivity (Guba & Lincoln, 2020; van Manen, 2021).

Procedures

Recruitment. Departmental focal persons at each institution disseminate invitations; interested students contact the research team. This procedure flows from the thesis’ institution-coded rosters and stakeholder mapping.

Session Logistics. FGDs (60–90 minutes; 4–6 participants) were conducted in quiet campus spaces or secure online rooms. Sessions were audio-recorded with permission; the moderator used a semi-structured script while enabling emergent discussion—balancing structure and flexibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Data Capture. Alongside audio recordings and transcripts, the researcher maintains field notes on group dynamics, context, and reflexive impressions, which later triangulate



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interpretive claims (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Ethical On-ramps. Written informed consent, withdrawal rights, confidentiality assurances, and permission for recording were secured prior to sessions; participants later review transcripts (“member revisiting”) to correct factual errors and clarify meaning (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Patton, 2002).

Data Management

All audio files and transcripts were de-identified (pseudonyms + institution codes), stored on encrypted drives, and maintained in an audit-ready repository that tracks data transformations (raw → transcript → coded segments → thematic map). This conforms to the thesis’ emphasis on confidentiality, consent, and transparency in qualitative handling.

Analytic Approach

The study employed interpretative phenomenological analysis with a reflexive thematic workflow (Braun & Clarke, 2021), moving from idiographic depth to patterned meanings while staying close to participants’ language (Moustakas, 1994/2017; van Manen, 2021). Analysis proceeds in the following steps—each documented in memos to preserve interpretive transparency:

Immersion: Repeated reading/listening and holistic noting to register experiential contours.

Initial coding: Line-by-line and segment-level codes capturing meaning-units related to purposes, criteria/evidence, feedback, and consequences.

Theme development: Collapsing codes into higher-order candidate themes; mapping relationships among themes and subthemes.

Review/refinement: Checking internal coherence and external distinctiveness across cases; revisiting data extracts.

Naming/defining: Articulating essence statements for each theme with exemplar quotations.

Narrative synthesis: Writing a thick, integrative account that situates findings in practicum contexts across institutions.

These steps align with the thesis’ “several steps by developing themes... reading and re-reading... initial notes... derive emergent ideas... identify connections” description of qualitative, phenomenological analysis.

Throughout, the knowledge–skills–values (K-S-V) triad operates as sensitizing concepts, not a priori categories: codes and themes remain inductive, with K-S-V used to check coverage and analytic completeness (Lincoln & Guba, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Researcher Stance and Reflexivity

The study explicitly acknowledges subjectivity and positionality (researcher as teacher educator/mentor), and prescribes reflexive journaling, peer input, and participant revisiting to mitigate bias while leveraging experiential insight (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2021). The study adopted that stance: the researcher were keeping a reflexive log (assumptions, reactions, decision points), invite peer debriefing, and conduct member-reflection on synthesized theme statements for resonance and clarification—not for “approval” of raw data (constructivist ethos).

Trustworthiness, Ethics, and Limits



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Credibility

To enhance credibility, the study used (a) member reflection on synthesized theme statements (resonance checks rather than approval of raw data), (b) peer debriefing on coding and theme logic, and (c) prolonged engagement with the transcripts via iterative coding and memoing (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2021). The study emphasizes a reflexive stance—acknowledging the researcher’s subject-matter proximity and its benefits/risks for interpretation—and explicitly documents strategies to keep participants’ voices cantered: “I kept a reflexive notebook... I utilized member checking... and solicited comments from my colleagues... ensuring that the lived experiences of the participants remained at the centre of the study.”

Dependability and Confirmability

An audit trail recorded sampling rationales, instrument iterations, coding revisions, thematic maps, and analytic memos. Reflexive journaling Were capture assumptions, decision points, and interpretive shifts, as the study notes that subjectivity is an asset when “managed... in a transparent and reflexive manner,” thereby adding depth and authenticity to the inquiry.

Transferability

The deep description of institutional contexts (IIUI, NUML, ARID, FJWU), practicum structures, and assessment regimes reported, enabling readers to judge transferability. (Sampling frames and institutional codes are laid out in the thesis.)

Ethical Considerations

Ethical safeguards include informed consent, right to withdraw without penalty, de-identification (pseudonyms + institution codes), and secure storage of audio files and transcripts. These align with the thesis’ procedures for confidentiality and consent in qualitative handling (e.g., coded rosters, data management).

Table 2

Trustworthiness Matrix (Design → Action → Evidence)

Criterion	Design choices mapped to the thesis	Evidence produced
Credibility	Member reflection on theme summaries; peer debriefing; iterative immersion (read–code–review)	Annotated syntheses shared with participants; tracked changes in a memo; peer notes
Dependability	Versioned codebook; protocol for revising themes; timestamped decisions	Audit trail; code-revision log; thematic map versions
Confirmability	Reflexive journaling; triangulation of transcripts + field notes	Reflexive memos; cross-checks between extracts and claims
Transferability	Thick description of each site’s practicum/assessment ecology	Site vignettes; sampling table; institutional codes

Researcher Stance and Reflexivity

The study states the researcher is a teacher educator and former mentor, recognizing the dual edge of proximity greater insight alongside potential bias—addressed through journaling, colleague feedback, and member interaction: “I resolved to embrace my



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positionality... ensuring that the lived experiences of the participants remained at the centre of the study.”

Limitations of Study

As a phenomenological, experience-near design, the study does not claim statistical generalizability; instead, it offers analytic generalization supported by multi-site variation and thick description. The idiographic focus is appropriate for the article’s objective (pre-service teachers’ conceptions), consistent with the research paradigm and approach.

Findings Architecture, Implications, Conclusion

This article foregrounds Objective 1: “To examine the pre-service teachers’ conception of assessment with reference to knowledge, skills, and values about their teaching practicum assessment.”

Analytic Frame and Working Definitions (for reporting)

Assessment (operational): “mechanism of periodic feedback provided to the prospective teachers during their field experiences in placement schools...”

Formative assessment: includes “peer assessments, evaluation by the cooperating teacher, [and] presentations...” with the principle to “increase their learning... by real-time opinion.”

Summative assessment: “result... at the completion of teaching practicum... mid-term... final... capstone... micro-teaching... evaluate the cumulative knowledge and skills.”

NPST triad: “The NPST framework comprises three primary components knowledge, skills and dispositions.”

Table 3
Reporting Scaffold: K–S–V Domains, Evidence Types, and Typical Practicum Sources

Domain	Indicative evidence	Typical practicum sources
Knowledge	Subject matter accuracy; PCK links; curricular alignment	Lesson plans, unit maps, content explanations, assessment artifacts
Skills	Planning & delivery; differentiation; classroom arrangement	Observed lessons, supervisor/cooperating-teacher rubrics, student work
Values (Dispositions)	Professionalism, ethics, care, reflective stance	Observation notes, reflection logs, feedback dialogues, portfolios
Assessment types	Formative (peer/cooperating/supervisor feedback) · Summative (final lesson, capstone, portfolio)	As defined in study (operational subsections)

Anticipated Thematic

Drawing on the framework and the IPA + reflexive thematic approach, the expected thematic map (to be validated by data) is:

What Assessment is for (Purposes & Stakes). Assessment conceptualized as certification and enhancement (Shepard, 2014; Bloxham & Boyd, 2009), with K–S–V as the lens for



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“readiness.” The study positions practicum as decisive for competency development and assessment literacy.

What Counts as Evidence (Criteria & Visibility). Knowledge is often treated as documented artifacts, skills as enactment under observation, and values as implicit expectations inferred from feedback (Atienza et al., 2023; Barends et al., 2023; Atjonen et al., 2024).

Feedback Ecology (Formative Mechanisms). Usefulness hinges on timing, specificity, and dialogue (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Schön, 1983); study operationalization details the instruments and stakeholders in peer/cooperating/supervisor roles.

Alignment Tensions (Formative ↔ Summative). Perceived misalignments may yield compliance performance; the study explores how pre-service teachers reconcile growth-oriented feedback with end-point judgments (Shepard, 2014; Manasia & Chicioreanu, 2020).

Standards Literacy (NPST & Local Models). Conceptions intersect national standards emphasizing K–S–V, portfolios, and performance assessments, as the study notes.

Table 4

Anticipated Themes → Subthemes → Example FGD Prompts

Theme	Subthemes	Example prompt (FGD)
Purposes & Stakes	Certification vs growth; identity & confidence	“During practicum, what was assessment for, and how did it affect preparation?”
Evidence & Criteria	Visibility of K; judging S in action; surfacing V	“Which artifacts or interactions best evidenced teaching skills or professional values, and why?”
Feedback Ecology	Timing/specificity; dialogic uptake; fairness	“Which feedback most changed practice? What made it usable?”
Alignment Tensions	Formative–summative coherence; rubrics	“Where did guidance align (or not) with final decisions?”
Standards Literacy	NPST awareness; portfolios; rubrics	“How did standards/rubrics shape what ‘counted’ as achievement?”

Practical Implications

Curriculum & Assessment Design. Make K–S–V visible with explicit “evidence maps” linking artifacts/observations to criteria; align formative cycles to summative judgments (Shepard, 2014; OECD, 2020).

Mentor & Supervisor Development. Train assessors in feedback for learning (timing, specificity, dialogic uptake) and in values-infused observation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Schön, 1983).

Portfolio Assessment. Use NPST-aligned portfolios integrating lesson artifacts, reflections, and observations to support credible summative decisions (Zakaria et al., 2024; Kalim, 2024).

Conclusions

Anchored in a constructivist, interpretative phenomenological orientation, the proposed inquiry offers an experience-proximal account of how pre-service teachers conceptualize practicum assessment across the interdependent domains of knowledge, skills, and values. By coupling purposive, multi-site focus-group evidence with reflexive thematic analysis, the study was positioned to (i) delineate a defensible evidence map that specifies credible indicators for subject knowledge, pedagogical enactment, and professional dispositions; (ii) articulate design features of feedback cycles–timing, specificity, dialogic uptake–that render assessment usable for learning; and (iii) advance principles for formative–summative alignment (e.g., NPST-aligned rubrics, portfolios)



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that enhance transparency and judgment credibility. Although interpretations remained contextually situated, thick description and cross-institutional sampling support analytic transferability to comparable teacher-education settings. Conceptually, the work refines the construct of assessment literacy from the learner-teacher vantage; practically, it supplies program leaders and mentors with an actionable architecture through which what pre-service teachers know, can do, and embody as professionals becomes visible, consistently appraised, and developmentally consequential within the practicum.

Recommendations

Following recommendations have been drawn from the study,

Teacher education departments may provide standardized K-S-V-aligned rubrics across practicum sites, explicitly mapped to NPST

Strengthen mentor capacity may be fostered through workshops and regular sessions using shared lesson videos to reduce inter-rater variability.

Departments may build assessment-literacy micro-modules for pre-service teachers (purposes, validity, criteria, feedback use) early in practicum.

Use technology for feedback/portfolios (video-based observation, digital portfolios, LMS) to make feedback timely and auditable.

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