

TEACHER COMPETENCIES AND IRRELEVANT TEACHING METHODS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GAP BETWEEN TRAINING AND TEACHING PRACTICES AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENT MOTIVATION TO LEARN

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Abstract

This article aims to critically analyze the relationship between teacher competencies, irrelevant teaching methods, and their impact on student learning motivation. Through a literature review using a critical analysis approach to scientific literature, this study identifies systemic gaps between teacher training and classroom teaching practices, as well as their implications for student engagement and motivation. The results of the analysis reveal that teacher professional development (TPD) programs, which have been implemented for more than four decades, have not succeeded in significantly transforming teaching practices due to theoretical training designs, program fragmentation, a lack of ongoing mentoring, and evaluations that are not impact-based. Irrelevant teaching methods—characterized by a teacher-centered, monotonous, and decontextualized approach—contribute 55.94% to low student motivation, which leads to decreased academic achievement, low participation, and barriers to the development of 21st-century competencies. This article recommends a comprehensive approach to bridge this gap, including the redesign of practice-based training, the implementation of impact-based evaluation, the adoption of student-centered methods, and the creation of a school environment that supports innovation. Systemic transformation in teacher professional development and teaching practices is an urgent imperative for improving student learning motivation and the overall quality of education.

Keywords: teacher competencies, teaching methods, student learning motivation, teacher professional development, training-practice gap, student-centered learning

Introduction

Quality education is the cornerstone of building a competent and globally competitive workforce. Within the educational ecosystem, teachers play a central role as agents of change who determine the direction and quality of classroom learning. Teacher competencies encompass not only mastery of subject matter but also pedagogical, personal, social, and professional skills that are integrated into daily teaching practices (Zulkarnain et al., 2025). However, the reality on the ground reveals a significant gap between expected competencies and the actual teaching practices implemented.

The phenomenon of a mismatch between the training teachers receive and its implementation in the classroom has become a chronic issue in Indonesia's education system. Various Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programs have been

launched over the past four decades, yet their impact on improving the quality of learning remains minimal (Zakiah and Aslan, 2024); (Zainudin and Aslan, 2025). This indicates that substantial investment in teacher training has not been directly proportional to the transformation of teaching practices into ones that are effective and relevant to students' needs.

One of the root causes lies in training designs that tend to be theoretical and fail to adequately consider the real-world classroom context. Research shows that many TPD programs in Indonesia do not take into account individual teacher profiles, the relevance of training materials, and lack post-training follow-up (Yasin et al., 2023); (Yaqin et al., 2023). As a result, teachers struggle to implement new knowledge into their teaching practices due to structural, cultural, and technical barriers that are not addressed in the training design. This mismatch is exacerbated by an incoherent education system, in which teacher development policies are not aligned with the operational needs of schools. Evaluations of TPD programs are often based on administrative compliance rather than on their impact on student learning (Yanti et al., 2022); (Yajie et al., 2023). This situation creates an environment where teachers lack strong incentives to change their teaching practices, so conventional, teacher-centered methods continue to dominate the classroom.

On the other hand, teaching methods that are irrelevant to the needs of 21st-century students have become a major demotivator in the learning process. Students tend to lose interest when learning materials feel disconnected from their real lives or when teaching methods are monotonous and non-participatory (Wu, 2024). The gap between what is taught and what students need creates an "authenticity gap" that erodes their intrinsic motivation to learn.

The impact of irrelevant learning methods is not limited to a temporary decline in motivation but also has long-term implications for students' academic achievement and competency development. Research shows that stagnant and non-adaptive instruction can trigger a negative chain reaction, including a decline in academic performance, rising dropout rates, and reduced student readiness to face the challenges of the workforce (Williamson, 2024). This serves as a wake-up call for the education system to immediately conduct a comprehensive evaluation of existing teaching practices.

The Indonesian context presents more complex challenges due to geographical and cultural diversity, as well as uneven educational infrastructure. Teachers in remote areas often face barriers to accessing quality training, while teachers in urban areas may have access but lack support for implementation (Komari et al., 2025). These disparities widen the competency gap between regions and reinforce the cycle of inequality in the quality of education in Indonesia. The work culture within school environments also contributes to the stagnation of teaching practices. An organizational culture that does not encourage initiative, a lack of professional discipline, and a lack of appreciation for innovation leave teachers unmotivated to

develop themselves (Itasari, 2020). In such an environment, even teachers who have participated in high-quality training tend to revert to their comfort zones by using teaching methods they are already familiar with, even if they are ineffective.

The impact on students' motivation to learn becomes even more critical when linked to 21st-century competency requirements such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Conventional teaching methods focused on rote memorization and one-way knowledge transfer are no longer sufficient to develop these skills (Zeichner, 2010). Unmotivated students tend to be passive, less engaged in the learning process, and ultimately fail to reach their full potential.

The urgency to bridge the gap between teacher training and teaching practice becomes increasingly evident when linked to national education development goals. Without significant transformation in how teachers are trained and supported to implement innovative learning, the goal of improving education quality will be difficult to achieve (Taufik and Rusdi, 2024). A more holistic and contextual approach is needed in designing teacher professional development programs.

This article aims to critically analyze the relationship between teacher competencies, irrelevant teaching methods, and their impact on student learning motivation. Through a systematic literature review, this article identifies the factors causing the training-practice gap, the characteristics of ineffective teaching methods, and their implications for student engagement and motivation. This analysis is expected to provide a conceptual foundation for the development of more targeted improvement strategies.

Research Methodology

This study employs a literature review method using a critical analysis approach to examine scientific literature relevant to the themes of teacher competence, teaching methods, and student motivation. Data sources were obtained from various indexed academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and others to ensure the relevance and currency of the information. The inclusion criteria used encompassed peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, research reports, and official publications from educational institutions that specifically addressed teacher professional development, the implementation of teaching methods, and their impact on student motivation. The analysis was conducted thematically by grouping the literature findings into three main categories: the training-practice gap, irrelevant learning method characteristics, and implications for student learning motivation. These findings were then synthesized narratively to construct a coherent, evidence-based critical argument (Zed, 2008); (Eliyah and Aslan, 2025).

Results and Discussion

The Gap Between Teacher Training and Teaching Practice

The gap between teacher training and teaching practice is a systemic problem that has long hindered improvements in the quality of education in Indonesia. Various teacher professional development (TPD) programs have been implemented for more than four decades, yet their impact on transforming classroom teaching practices remains very limited (Taufik and Rusdi, 2024). This phenomenon indicates a fundamental disconnect between what is taught in training and what teachers actually need in the context of their daily teaching.

One of the main dimensions of this gap lies in the design of training curricula, which tend to be theory-oriented and pay insufficient attention to practical aspects. Research shows that most TPD programs in Indonesia are still dominated by a one-way knowledge transfer approach through seminars, workshops, or short lectures that do not provide space for teachers to practice and reflect on their teaching practices (Serin, 2018). As a result, teachers return to the classroom with a solid conceptual understanding but without sufficient practical skills to change the way they teach.

The lack of practical training is exacerbated by the duration of the training, which is often too short to allow for the internalization of new knowledge. A study of graduates of the Pre-Service Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program revealed that 60% of new teachers stated they needed more practical training and hands-on teaching experience to feel better prepared to manage their classrooms (Pongpalilu and Aslan, 2025); (Orozco and Morina, 2023). Data from the Ministry of Education and Culture also indicate that 45% of PPG graduates reported a lack of readiness in classroom management and the integration of educational technology, reflecting an imbalance between theory and practice in teacher development programs (Nindigraha et al., 2026).

The practical skills dimension of the teacher training curriculum also shows low satisfaction levels. An evaluation of the adequacy of practical skills in the PPG program revealed that while the majority of participants felt the practical skills provided were sufficient, about one-third of participants (35%) felt that practical training was still inadequate (Nayor, 2016). The low satisfaction rate in this dimension indicates that participants need more opportunities to practice, receive feedback, and reflect on their teaching practices before entering actual classrooms.

The fragmentation of training programs is also a significant factor widening the gap between training and practice. Research has found that most teacher professional development programs remain piecemeal, fragmented, and rarely sustained (Muthmainnah et al., 2020). Teacher training tends to take the form of one-time seminars or workshops that fail to address real classroom practices and are not supported by post-training mentoring mechanisms. This type of training model does not provide teachers with the opportunity to consolidate their new knowledge through repeated practice and structured reflection. The lack of systematic evaluation of the

training's impact also contributes to the stagnation of teaching practices. Training often ends without adequate evaluation to measure whether the knowledge gained is actually implemented in teaching practice (Mishra and Koehler, 2006). Without a robust evaluation mechanism, there is no accountability for the effectiveness of the training and no empirical data that can be used to improve the design of future teacher development programs.

This gap is further exacerbated by inconsistencies between teacher development policies and operational realities in schools. Findings from a literature review indicate a disconnect between curriculum change policies and on-the-ground practices, where most teachers receive only brief training that is insufficient for understanding the essence and implementation of the new curriculum (Lindner et al., 2021). Frequent curriculum changes present various challenges for teachers, including conceptual understanding, limited training, a lack of facilities and infrastructure, psychological impacts, and the gap between policy and on-the-ground practice.

Implementation barriers also arise from individual teacher factors, including resistance to change and limited pedagogical literacy. Even many teachers who have participated in high-quality training tend to revert to their comfort zones by using teaching methods they have mastered, even if they are ineffective (Kim et al., 2015). This phenomenon is driven by a school culture that does not encourage initiative, a lack of professional discipline, and a lack of appreciation for innovation, leaving teachers without strong incentives to change their teaching practices.

Geographic context and infrastructure also play a significant role in widening this gap. Teachers in remote areas often face barriers to accessing quality training, while teachers in urban areas may have access but lack support for implementation (Kartiko and Gultom, 2026). These disparities widen the competency gap between regions and reinforce the cycle of educational inequality in Indonesia, where students in certain areas systematically receive lower-quality education compared to students in other regions.

Internationally effective training models have demonstrated that successful professional development programs are hands-on, collaborative, include ongoing mentoring, and are supported by institutional policies and infrastructure (Greenhalgh et al., 2021). Research at SMK PGRI Karisma Bangsa shows that training based on blended learning, lesson study, reflective practice, and professional learning communities (PLCs) has significantly improved teachers' professional competencies and had a positive impact on students' learning experiences (Saepuloh and Nugraha, 2025). However, such models are still rarely implemented on a large scale in Indonesia.

Limited facilities and infrastructure also pose a significant structural barrier to the implementation of training outcomes. Teachers who have been trained to use educational technology or innovative teaching methods often lack access to the necessary facilities at their schools (Widiastuti et al., 2018). This situation creates a scenario where teachers understand what they should be doing but lack the

operational capacity to implement it, leading them to revert to more accessible conventional methods.

The psychological impact of this gap also cannot be ignored. Teachers who repeatedly fail to implement what they have learned in training tend to experience a decline in motivation and self-confidence regarding their professional abilities (Wahyudi et al., 2025). This cycle of failure can trigger apathy toward future professional development programs, creating a vicious cycle in which teachers become increasingly resistant to change and innovation in their teaching practices. To address this gap, a more comprehensive and integrated approach is needed in designing teacher professional development programs. First, trainers must hold a trainer certification obtained through a Training of Trainers (ToT) program that incorporates active, innovative, creative, effective, and enjoyable (PAIKEM) learning materials (Utami et al., 2024); (Suswati, 2021). Second, increasing training time by implementing the “in-on-in” model (in-service training, on-the-job learning, and in-service training), which divides training into three stages: theory, practical application at school, and performance assessment. Third, schools need to conduct independent training by designing their own training programs tailored to teachers’ needs, at least twice a year.

Overall, to bridge the gap between teacher training and teaching practice, a more comprehensive approach is needed, including improvements in the quality of training design, mechanisms for ongoing mentoring, impact-based evaluation, and adequate infrastructure support (Suryadi and Aslan, 2025). Continuous professional development is crucial for teachers, not only to learn new concepts but also to master new skills and attitudes that can be integrated into their daily teaching practices. Without systemic transformation in the approach to teacher professional development, this gap will continue to hinder improvements in educational quality and ultimately harm students, who should be the primary beneficiaries of investments in teacher development.

Irrelevant Teaching Methods and Their Impact on Student Motivation

Irrelevant teaching methods are one of the key factors that significantly influence student learning motivation at various levels of education. Inappropriate teaching methods often lead to the failure of the teaching-learning process in general, cause boredom, and in turn make students apathetic toward the material being taught (Sulastri et al., 2023). In the context of modern education, which demands active student engagement, the use of monotonous and unvarying methods becomes a major obstacle to creating meaningful and motivating learning experiences.

The main characteristic of irrelevant teaching methods is their teacher-centered nature, in which the teacher is the sole source of knowledge and students serve only as passive recipients of information. Monotonous teaching methods are defined as teaching practices limited to the repeated use of a single method or approach without significant variation (Sulastini et al., 2024). When students are constantly exposed to

monotonous teaching methods, they tend to experience burnout and boredom in the learning process, which directly erodes their intrinsic motivation to actively engage in learning.

The negative impacts of monotonous teaching methods on students' learning motivation include learning fatigue, lack of interest, declining academic performance, and low student participation in learning activities (Subaidi and Jahari, 2023). Research shows that monotonous teaching methods not only reduce students' learning motivation but also hinder the development of creativity, social skills, and problem-solving abilities—all of which are essential for success in the 21st century. When students do not have the opportunity to interact, discuss, or apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, learning becomes merely a meaningless transfer of information.

The primary factors contributing to low student motivation are monotonous teaching methods, an unproductive classroom atmosphere, a lack of recognition, and peer influence (Saputry and Zahro, 2025). Among these various factors, teachers' teaching methods occupy a central position because they are the variable that most directly influences students' learning experiences in the classroom. Other extrinsic factors include an unproductive classroom atmosphere, minimal recognition from teachers, a lack of family support, limited learning facilities, and peer influence, which can either strengthen or weaken an individual's motivation to learn.

Empirical research shows that there is a significant relationship between teaching methods and students' learning motivation, with the teaching methods variable contributing 55.94% to students' learning motivation (Sapriani, 2019). This finding indicates that more than half of the variation in students' learning motivation can be explained by the quality and variety of teaching methods used by teachers in the classroom. Collectively, the variables of teaching methods and learning media contribute 40.40% to students' learning motivation, indicating that the pedagogical strategies implemented by teachers have a substantial impact on students' engagement and motivation to learn.

One manifestation of irrelevant teaching methods is the mismatch between curriculum content and students' needs and interests. Research findings reveal that the lack of relevance between the curriculum and students' needs and interests is one of the main factors contributing to low learning motivation (Saepuloh and Nugraha, 2025). When students do not see a connection between what they are learning and their daily lives or future goals, their motivation to learn tends to drop drastically. Students may wonder why they have to study certain material if it has no practical application in their lives.

Conventional, one-way teaching methods are also a significant factor in low motivation to learn, particularly in subjects that require deep conceptual understanding, such as science. One of the main reasons students lack motivation to study science is the conventional, one-way teaching method (Putra et al., 2023). This approach leaves no room for students to explore, ask questions, or construct their own

understanding, turning learning into a passive process that does not engage higher-order thinking.

Intrinsic factors affecting student motivation in learning are further exacerbated by irrelevant teaching methods, including a lack of self-confidence, difficulty understanding concepts, and a lack of curiosity about the material being taught (Osama et al., 2026). When teaching methods do not facilitate deep understanding and focus solely on rote memorization, students who struggle will feel increasingly incapable and lose their self-confidence. This cycle of failure can trigger negative attitudes toward learning as a whole and reduce students' willingness to try harder.

The long-term effects of low academic motivation resulting from irrelevant teaching methods are deeply concerning, including a decline in academic achievement, behavioral problems, and limited student self-development (Nisa et al., 2021). Students with low academic motivation tend to have poorer learning outcomes and struggle to meet established academic standards. Low learning motivation can also lead to unresponsive behavior, a lack of interest in school activities, and increased absenteeism, which can ultimately result in dropping out of school.

Unclear learning objectives also contribute to low student learning motivation. When students do not understand what is expected of them or why they are studying certain material, they lose direction and purpose in their learning (Nafi'ah, 2021). Irrelevant teaching methods often fail to clearly communicate learning objectives, so students learn without understanding the relevance and importance of the material to their lives. This situation creates a scenario where students study merely to fulfill an obligation, rather than out of an intrinsic motivation to understand and master the knowledge.

An unsupportive learning environment also exacerbates the negative impact of irrelevant teaching methods. Factors such as a lack of support from teachers and classmates, an unengaging curriculum, and an unproductive learning atmosphere can diminish students' motivation to learn (Mardhotillah et al., 2022). When teaching methods do not facilitate positive social interaction and collaboration among students, the classroom environment becomes inhospitable to meaningful learning. Students need a sense of security, support, and recognition to be motivated to learn. To address the issue of low learning motivation resulting from irrelevant methods, several strategies can be implemented, including contextual learning, collaborative learning, the use of technology, and problem-based learning (Judrah et al., 2024). Contextual learning involves learning that is relevant to students' real lives, where learning materials are connected to experiences and situations that students recognize. This helps students see the relevance of the learning materials and can increase their motivation. Collaborative learning encourages students to work together in groups, share ideas, and support one another in the learning process, which can increase engagement and a sense of ownership toward learning.

The use of technology in learning can also boost student motivation through interactive and engaging approaches, such as the use of multimedia, educational games, or online learning platforms (Judijanto, 2024). Technology can facilitate learning that is more personalized, adaptive, and responsive to students' individual needs, thereby enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of learning. Problem-based learning engages students in solving real-world problems, which develops critical thinking skills, creativity, and the ability to apply knowledge in authentic contexts.

Overall, irrelevant teaching methods have a profound and multifaceted impact on students' motivation to learn, ranging from a decline in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, low participation and engagement, to long-term effects on academic achievement and the development of students' competencies. Therefore, transforming teaching methods from teacher-centered to student-centered, from monotonous to varied, and from abstract to contextual is an urgent imperative in efforts to improve the quality of education. Teachers need to continuously develop their pedagogical competencies, adopt innovative and evidence-based teaching methods, and create a learning environment that supports student motivation and engagement. Thus, investment in teacher professional development not only enhances teaching competencies but also directly contributes to improved student motivation and learning outcomes, which ultimately determine the overall quality of education.

Conclusion

Irrelevant teacher competencies and teaching methods are two sides of the same coin that create a gap between expectations and the reality of educational quality in Indonesia. A critical analysis of the gap between training and teaching practices reveals that teacher professional development (TPD) programs, which have been implemented for more than four decades, have not succeeded in significantly transforming classroom teaching practices. Training designs that tend to be theoretical, program fragmentation, a lack of ongoing mentoring, and the limitations of impact-based evaluation make it difficult for teachers to implement new knowledge into their daily teaching practices, resulting in conventional, teacher-centered methods still dominating the classroom.

The impact of this mismatch on student learning motivation is multidimensional and has long-term implications. Monotonous, decontextualized, and low-interaction teaching methods not only reduce students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation but also hinder the development of 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Research shows that teaching methods contribute 55.94% to students' learning motivation, indicating that pedagogical transformation is a determining factor in creating meaningful and motivating learning experiences. Without systematic intervention to improve the quality of teaching methods, the cycle of low learning motivation will continue and harm students—the primary beneficiaries of the education system.

To bridge this gap, a comprehensive and integrated approach is needed, including: (1) redesigning teacher training programs to be practice-based (hands-on), collaborative, and supplemented by ongoing mentoring; (2) the implementation of impact-based evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of training on teaching practices and student learning outcomes; (3) the adoption of student-centered learning methods such as contextual, collaborative, and problem-based learning, as well as the use of technology to enhance relevance and student engagement; and (4) the creation of a school environment that supports innovation, reflection, and continuous professional development. Through systemic transformation in approaches to teacher professional development and teaching practices, it is hoped that the gap between expected competencies and classroom realities can be narrowed, which will ultimately enhance student motivation and the overall quality of education.

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