Using Community as a Classroom approach to Enhance Dzongkha Learning and Experiential Competencies in Pre-Service Teachers

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of utilising community as a classroom approach on learning in a Dzongkha module (mindfulness and awareness) among pre-service B.Ed First-year students across science and arts streams, framed within the principles of place-based education. Employing a quasi-experimental design, students from the History/English and Biology/Chemistry courses formed the treatment group (n = 61), while those from the English/Geography and Physics/Mathematics served as the control group (n = 52). The intervention engaged students in structured community-based activities, such as visits to the local *Dratshang* (monastery) and interactive lectures by the *Lam Neten* (head of the monastery), designed to enhance authentic language engagement, cultural appreciation, and applied learning. Descriptive statistics revealed higher mean scores for the treatment group (M = 14.77, SD = 3.45) compared with the control group (M = 13.15, SD = 2.52). Levene's test indicated unequal variances, F (1, 111) = 4.97, p = .028, and an independent-samples t-test assuming unequal variances confirmed a significant difference, t (108.64) = 2.87, p = .005, mean difference = 1.62, 95% CI [0.50, 2.73]. Perception data collected from the treatment group only indicated strong agreement regarding the approach's relevance, engagement, and practicality (M = 4.04–4.22), with moderate challenges reported (M = 2.88, SD = 1.01). Findings affirmed that using community as a classroom approach enhances learning, reflection, and professional readiness through culturally grounded, place-based pedagogy.

Keywords: Community-based learning, engagement, experiential learning, Place-based education, pre-service teachers, reflection

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Introduction

Language education plays a crucial role in preserving cultural identity and promoting effective communication within society. In Bhutan, Dzongkha is not only the national language but also a vital medium for transmitting cultural values, traditions, and social norms. However, teaching Dzongkha mainly through classroom lessons often gives students few opportunities to use the language in real-life situations, such as speaking Dzongkha during community ceremonies, listening to monastic teachings, or reading religious texts in their actual settings. For example, students may learn words and grammar from textbooks but have limited experience using Dzongkha in formal situations such as in monasteries or in everyday conversations with community elders, which can limit both their language skills and cultural understanding.

"Community as a Classroom" approach offers a pedagogical alternative by extending learning beyond the physical boundaries of the classroom into the community environment. This method allows students to actively engage in community activities, interact with native speakers, and experience language use in authentic social and cultural contexts. By integrating experiential learning and social constructivist principles, community-based pedagogy fosters not only language acquisition but also cultural literacy, civic awareness, and social responsibility.

This study investigated the effectiveness of teaching a Dzongkha module through a 'community as a classroom' approach among first-year pre-service B.Ed. student teachers enrolled in Arts and Science programmes. Although these pre-service teachers have studied Dzongkha throughout their schooling, many exhibit limited proficiency and confidence in using the language in formal, cultural, and professional contexts, particularly in relation to mindfulness and awareness practices. Based on the tutor's observations, existing classroom instruction tended to emphasise textbooks and written assessments, providing limited opportunities for authentic engagement with the language within community and cultural settings. This concern is also reflected in the National Dzongkha School Curriculum Framework, which highlights the need for contextualised, experiential, and culturally grounded language learning approaches to strengthen students' communicative competence and cultural identity (Ministry of Education and Skills Development [MoESD], 2024). Consequently, students have fewer opportunities to develop practical communicative competence and contextual understanding of the language beyond academic requirements. This limitation may affect both students' linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding, but also their ability to apply mindfulness practices in real-life contexts. There is limited empirical research in Bhutan examining the impact of using community as a classroom on Dzongkha learning among pre-service teachers at the tertiary level. This gap highlights the need for teaching strategies that bridge classroom learning with experiential, place-based experiences, providing authentic opportunities for students to engage with language, culture, and mindfulness in meaningful ways. This study was, therefore, undertaken to determine whether using community as a classroom, through activities such as visits to the *Dratshang* (monastery) and interactive sessions with the *Lam Neten*, could enhance students' Dzongkha proficiency, cultural awareness, and professional readiness.

The study was guided by the following objectives:

    (i)   To examine the effect of using community as a classroom approach on pre-service teachers' learning outcomes in Dzongkha, as measured through assessment scores;

    (ii)   To compare the academic performance of students taught through the community as classroom and conventional classroom approaches; and

    (iii)   To explore treatment-group students' perceptions of the relevance, engagement, practicality, and challenges of using the community as classroom for Dzongkha learning, based on survey responses across six themes: Relevance & Connection, Engagement & Motivation, Reflection & Awareness, Skill Development & Application, Perceived Effectiveness & Endorsement, and Challenges & Difficulties.

Based on the objectives, the study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: Does using community as a classroom approach improve pre-service teachers' learning outcomes compared to conventional classroom instruction?

RQ2: How do pre-service teachers perceive the relevance, engagement, and practicality of learning Dzongkha through community as a classroom approach?

RQ3: What challenges do students encounter when participating in community as a classroom learning activities?

The study tested the following hypotheses:

H_1: Pre-service teachers exposed to community as a classroom approach will achieve significantly higher learning outcomes than those taught through conventional classroom instruction. H_2: Pre-service teachers in community as a classroom group will report positive perceptions about the relevance, engagement, and practicality of learning Dzongkha through community-based experiences.

Literature Review

Learning through real-world experiences is increasingly recognised as an effective approach to enhancing student engagement, skills development, and cultural understanding. In Bhutan, teaching Dzongkha, the national language, faces challenges due to the predominance of textbook-based instruction and limited exposure to authentic communication contexts. Pre-service teachers often demonstrate limited confidence and proficiency in using the Dzongkha language in formal, cultural, and professional situations, particularly in mindfulness and awareness practices. This literature review examines the theoretical frameworks and empirical studies on community-based learning, experiential education, and related pedagogical approaches, highlighting their relevance to language learning and the use of community as a classroom principle in place-based education. The aim is to provide a comprehensive context for exploring how structured community experiences can enhance language proficiency, cultural understanding, and professional readiness among pre-service teachers.

Community-Based Learning and Experiential Education

Community-based learning integrates academic instruction with real-world engagement, fostering deeper learning experiences. Eyler and Giles (1999) show that service learning, a form of community-based learning, improves students' personal, interpersonal, and civic development by linking academic content with practical community activities. These experiences allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in meaningful, authentic contexts, which increases retention and understanding. Such approaches create authentic contexts where students can practise skills and apply knowledge**,** which aligns with the principle of using the community as a classroom in place-based education.

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory further supports this approach, emphasising that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. The cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation demonstrates that involving students in real-world community settings enhances both their practical and theoretical understanding. For pre-service teachers, engagement with local communities, such as monasteries or cultural centres, provides a dual benefit: practising Dzongkha communication skills and observing culturally grounded practices, particularly related to mindfulness and awareness.

Engagement, Motivation, and Reflection in Learning

Student engagement is a critical factor influencing learning outcomes. Fredricks et al. (2004) identify three dimensions of engagement-behavioural, emotional, and cognitive, which collectively contribute to academic success. Active engagement encourages participation, strengthens motivation, and supports learners in taking ownership of their learning.

Reflection plays a pivotal role in experiential learning. Boud et al. (1985) argue that reflection enables learners to make sense of their experiences, leading to deeper understanding and personal growth. For language education, reflective activities such as journaling, peer discussions, or guided debriefing allow pre-service teachers to connect Dzongkha language learning with cultural practices, mindfulness, and real-world communication, reinforcing both language proficiency and cultural awareness.

Skill Development and Application in Community-Based Learning

Community-based learning not only strengthens academic knowledge but also promotes transferable skills that are essential for professional development. Pellegrino and Hilton (2012) emphasise the importance of developing critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and communication skills. These skills are particularly relevant for pre-service teachers who need to integrate classroom theory with real-world teaching practice. By participating in community as a classroom activities, students develop practical competencies such as effective communication in

Dzongkha, teamwork, leadership, and the ability to apply mindfulness strategies in educational settings.

Similarly, Prince (2004) demonstrates that active learning methods, commonly used in community-based learning, promote deeper engagement, encourage experimentation, and enhance students' ability to transfer knowledge to authentic situations. Such active and collaborative approaches help pre-service teachers gain confidence in their abilities and better prepare for professional responsibilities.

Perceived Effectiveness and Endorsement of Experiential Learning

Students' perceptions of community-based learning play a crucial role in its adoption, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. When learners view such experiences positively, they are more likely to engage actively, integrate knowledge into practical contexts, and maintain motivation throughout the learning process. Shapiro et al. (2007) emphasise that incorporating mindfulness and reflective practices into educational settings not only enhances learners' well-being but also strengthens their professional effectiveness. In the context of language education, students who perceive community-based classroom experiences as meaningful and relevant are more likely to participate fully, apply their acquired skills in authentic situations, and appreciate the value of the learning process itself. Furthermore, favourable perceptions can foster a supportive learning environment, encourage continued involvement, and lead to students' advocacy for innovative pedagogical approaches, thereby reinforcing the sustainability and impact of community-oriented learning initiatives.

Challenges and Considerations in Community-Based Learning

While community-based learning offers numerous benefits, it also presents certain challenges. Logistical issues, such as coordinating partnerships with community organisations, scheduling visits, and ensuring student participation, can complicate implementation (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Pedagogical concerns, including the assessment of experiential learning outcomes and aligning activities with learning objectives, require careful planning and continuous guidance (Boud et al., 1985). Addressing these challenges effectively necessitates structured reflection, clear learning goals, and institutional support to ensure that students can translate their community experiences into meaningful learning. Kolb (1984) suggests that when these factors are well managed, community-based learning not only enhances academic outcomes but also fosters engagement, professional skills, and civic awareness among students.

Summary and Research Gap

The reviewed literature demonstrates that community-based and experiential learning approaches enhance engagement, skills development, reflection, and perceived effectiveness. However, few

studies in Bhutan have examined the impact of using the community as a classroom on Dzongkha proficiency, cultural awareness, and mindfulness among pre-service B.Ed. students. Moreover, there is limited empirical evidence linking these approaches to measurable outcomes in language proficiency. This gap underscores the need for research that evaluates both students' academic performance and their perceptions of learning in authentic, community-based settings, providing a clear rationale for the present study.

Methodology

This section outlines the research methods employed to examine the effectiveness of using community as a classroom in teaching a Dzongkha module to pre-service B.Ed. first-year students. The methodology combined quantitative assessment of learning outcomes with qualitative insights into students' perceptions, aligning with the study's objectives, research questions, and hypotheses.

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design to investigate the impact of utilising community as a classroom approach on Dzongkha proficiency among pre-service Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) first-year students. Specifically, a non-equivalent control group (N=52) was used, comprising a treatment group exposed to community-based learning and a control group receiving conventional classroom instruction. This design enabled comparison between students experiencing the intervention and those following typical teaching methods, while maintaining ethical and practical feasibility within the educational context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants

A total of 113 pre-service B.Ed. first-year students from a teacher education institute participated in the study. The treatment group consisted of 61 students enrolled in English/History and Biology/Chemistry courses, while the control group comprised 52 students enrolled in English/Geography and Physics/Mathematics courses. Participants included both science and arts stream students, ensuring interdisciplinary representation. All participants were aged 18-23 years and had comparable prior academic backgrounds in Dzongkha.

Instruments

1. **Pre-test-Post-test Assessment:**
   Dzongkha proficiency and module content mastery were assessed using a pretest-posttest assessment administered before and after the completion of the module. The assessment evaluated students' understanding of module content and language proficiency, providing an objective measure of learning outcomes. Validity was ensured through expert review of the content, and reliability was confirmed via a pilot study, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82.

2. Student Perception Survey:

A structured questionnaire captured students' perceptions of community as a classroom approach across six thematic areas, designed to reflect the key components of experiential and place-based learning:

(i) *Relevance and Connection (7 items):* perceived relevance of the community experience and the connection between classroom theory and real-life application.

(ii) *Engagement and Motivation (9 items):* students' active participation, interest, and motivation during community-based activities.

(iii) *Reflection and Awareness (6 items):* mindfulness, self-reflection, and awareness fostered through authentic community interactions.

(iv) *Skill Development and Application (4 items):* practical skills, collaboration, and application of learning in real-life contexts.

(v) *Perceived Effectiveness and Endorsement (5 items):* overall value of the approach and students' willingness to engage in similar learning experiences.

(vi) *Challenges and Difficulties (5 items):* perceived obstacles, stress, or uncertainty encountered during community as classroom activities.

All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The survey was specifically designed to assess the impact of using community as a classroom approach and demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Data Analysis

Pretest and posttest scores were analysed using independent samples *t-tests* to compare treatment and control groups. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and composite scores were calculated for survey items. Levene's test assessed equality of variances to guide t-test interpretation. Analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Version 22.

Ethical Considerations

Students were informed about the study's purpose, and assured of confidentiality. Data was anonymised and securely stored in compliance with the university's research guidelines and regulations.

Results and Discussion

The study examined the impact of utilising community as a classroom approach on enhancing Dzongkha language proficiency among pre-service B.Ed. first-year students across science and arts streams. The treatment group included students from English/History and Biology/Chemistry courses ($n = 61$), while the control group included students from English/Geography and Physics/Mathematics courses ($n = 52$).

Quantitative Analysis: Dzongkha Proficiency

An independent sample *t-test* was conducted to examine the effect of community-based learning on Dzongkha language proficiency. Descriptive statistics revealed that students in the treatment group ($M = 14.77$, $SD = 3.44$) outperformed those in the control group ($M = 13.15$, $SD = 2.52$), suggesting a potential benefit of community-based learning approach (see Table 1).

Levene's test for equality of variances was significant, $F(1, 111) = 4.97$, $p = .028$ (Table 2), indicating violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the *t-test* result not assuming equal variances was interpreted. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in Dzongkha proficiency between groups, $t(108.64) = 2.87$, $p = .005$, with a mean difference of 1.62 (95% CI [0.50, 2.73]). These findings suggest that engaging students in community-based learning significantly enhanced Dzongkha language proficiency.

This result aligns with prior research demonstrating that community-based and service-learning approaches enhance language proficiency by providing authentic, context-rich opportunities for practice (Arabacı Atlamaz, 2022; Baker, 2019). Such approaches are particularly effective for pre-service teachers, as they allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in meaningful, real-world contexts.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics Showing Mean Scores for Treatment and Control Groups

	Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Scores	Treatment	61	14.77	3.44	.44
	Control	52	13.15	2.52	.34

Table 2

Independent Samples t-test for Scores between Treatment and Control Groups

Assumption	*F*	*p-value (Levene's)*	*t*	*df*	*p-value (2-tailed)*	*Mean Difference*
Equal variances assumed	4.97	.028	2.80	111	.006	1.62
Equal variances not assumed	-	-	2.87	108.64	.005	1.62

Note: The Levene's test indicated unequal variances ($p = .028$); therefore, the "Equal variances not assumed" row should be used for interpretation.

Thematic analysis of student survey responses across six themes provided further insights into the effectiveness of community-based learning.

Theme 1: Relevance & Connection

Students perceived community-based learning approach as relevant and effective, with item means ranging from $M = 4.01$ to $M = 4.35$ and a composite mean of $M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.59$ (Table 3). These results indicate that students recognised the connection between classroom theory and real-world application. These findings align with prior research indicating that community-based learning enhances students' perception of relevance and contextual understanding (Arabacı Atlamaz, 2022; Cárdenas Curiel, 2024). Such experiential learning approaches provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to observe and engage with authentic community contexts, strengthening the link between theory and practice.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Relevance & Connection Items

Item Statement	M	SD
I found the community-based learning approach relevant to the module content.	4.29	0.60
The PBE approach helped connect theory with practical life situations.	4.01	0.65
I perceived the community as an effective extension of the classroom.	4.15	0.64
I feel more connected to the course objectives because of the community experience.	4.07	0.63
I developed a more positive attitude towards mindfulness through this approach.	4.26	0.55
I feel more competent in connecting theoretical knowledge to real-life issues.	4.05	0.63
Learning in a real-world community setting enhanced my understanding of mindfulness and awareness.	4.35	0.66
Composite Mean	**4.16**	**0.59**

Theme 2: Engagement & Motivation

Students generally reported high levels of engagement and motivation during community-based learning activities. Individual item means ranged from $M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.63$ *("I actively participated in community-based activities during the module")* to $M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.68$ *("I felt respected and valued as a learner during community interactions*"), indicating overall positive responses. The composite mean score for this theme was $M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.63$, suggesting that students, on average, felt motivated, purposeful, and engaged throughout the module (see Table 4). The moderate standard deviations indicate some variability in individual experiences, particularly regarding active participation, but overall responses were consistent. These results suggest that a community-based approach effectively promoted student engagement and motivation.

This aligns with Baker (2019), who reported that service-learning projects enhance intrinsic motivation and engagement by offering meaningful opportunities for interaction with the community. Similarly, Cárdenas Curiel (2024) found that pre-service teachers participating

in community-based programmes exhibited higher engagement due to the authentic nature of the learning experience.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Engagement & Motivation Items

Item Statement	M	SD
The community environment made the learning experience more engaging.	4.18	0.61
I was motivated to participate because of the real-life application of concepts.	4.10	0.65
The chance to interact with community members increased my interest in the module.	3.98	0.68
I felt a sense of purpose while working in real-world community settings.	4.00	0.73
I was eager to explore mindfulness practices beyond the classroom.	4.09	0.75
The community-based approach inspired me to learn more about my own community.	3.97	0.68
Seeing the impact of our work in the community increased my commitment to learning.	4.11	0.55
I felt respected and valued as a learner during community interactions.	4.20	0.68
I actively participated in community-based activities during the module.	3.75	0.63
Composite Mean	**4.04**	**0.63**

Theme 3: Reflection & Awareness

Students reported positive experiences in reflection and awareness, with item means ranging from $M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.76$ to $M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.66$, and a composite mean of $M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.64$ (Table 5). This suggests that the module facilitated self-reflection, mindfulness, and heightened awareness of students' thoughts and actions.

These findings corroborate Arabacı Atlamaz (2022), who highlighted that service-learning projects help pre-service teachers critically reflect on their pedagogical practices, enhancing mindfulness and self-awareness. Reflection, a core component of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), strengthens both understanding and personal and professional growth.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Reflection & Awareness Items

Item Statement	M	SD
I was able to reflect better through community interactions.	4.15	0.66
I engaged in meaningful reflection about my experiences during PBE activities.	4.00	0.62
I demonstrated more awareness of my thoughts, actions, and environment after the module.	4.10	0.61
I practiced mindfulness techniques outside of class as a result of the module.	3.83	0.76

Item Statement	M	SD
I have a deeper understanding of mindfulness concepts after completing the module.	4.15	0.66
I feel more confident applying mindfulness practices in everyday situations.	4.13	0.62
Composite Mean	**4.06**	**0.64**

Theme 4: Skill Development & Application

Data revealed positive learning outcomes among students in applying learning and developing practical skills (see Table 6). Item means ranged from $M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.70$ (“*I applied what I learned in real-life situations within my community*” and *“I collaborated effectively with peers and community members during learning tasks”*) to $M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.74$ (“*I gained practical knowledge that I can use in academic or personal life*” and “*I improved my communication and collaboration skills through this module*”). The composite mean was $M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.69$, suggesting that students perceived the module as effective in promoting practical application, communication, and collaboration skills. This finding is consistent with Baker (2019), who demonstrated that community-based learning enhances both cognitive and practical competencies, enabling pre-service teachers to implement theoretical knowledge collaboratively in authentic settings.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Skill Development & Application Items

Item Statement	M	SD
I applied what I learned in real-life situations within my community.	3.96	0.70
I gained practical knowledge that I can use in academic or personal life.	4.13	0.74
I improved my communication and collaboration skills through this module.	4.13	0.64
I collaborated effectively with peers and community members during learning tasks.	3.96	0.68
Composite Mean	**4.05**	**0.69**

Theme 5: Perceived Effectiveness & Endorsement

Descriptive statistics for the Perceived Effectiveness & Endorsement theme are presented in Table 7. Students consistently reported high levels of endorsement for community-based learning approach. Individual item means ranged from $M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.68$ (“*I believe the PBE approach should be applied in more modules*”) to $M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.57$ *(“This teaching method promotes deeper learning and awareness”)*. The composite mean was $M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.63$, indicating that students generally perceived the approach as highly effective, valuable for deeper learning, and worthy of wider application. These results suggest strong student approval and willingness to engage in similar approaches in future modules. These results corroborate prior studies highlighting that community-based learning fosters positive attitudes towards active learning

approaches and increases students' willingness to participate in future community-oriented projects (Arabacı Atlamaz, 2022; Cárdenas Curiel, 2024).

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Effectiveness & Endorsement Items (N = 79–80)

Item Statement	M	SD
I believe this approach is more effective than traditional classroom teaching for this module.	4.16	0.74
I believe the PBE approach should be applied in more modules.	4.15	0.68
I would recommend this teaching method to other students.	4.25	0.59
This teaching method promotes deeper learning and awareness.	4.34	0.57
I am open to more community-based learning in my future academic journey.	4.21	0.61
Composite Mean	**4.22**	**0.63**

Theme 6: Challenges & Difficulties

Table 8 presents descriptive statistics for the Challenges & Difficulties theme. Students reported moderate levels of challenges in the module. Individual item means ranged from $M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.00$ *("I experienced stress or discomfort while participating in community learning tasks*") to $M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.99$ *("I felt unsure about how to approach tasks during community-based activities")*. The composite mean was $M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.01$, suggesting that students generally found the activities manageable, although some variability existed in perceived difficulty and stress. These findings indicate that while challenges were present, they were not substantial enough to detract from the overall positive learning experience. This aligns with previous research noting that although community-based learning provides rich experiential opportunities, students may encounter logistical, cognitive, or emotional challenges that require appropriate guidance and scaffolding (Baker, 2019).

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics for Challenges & Difficulties Items (N = 80)

Item Statement	M	SD
I felt unsure about how to approach tasks during community-based activities.	3.16	0.99
I struggled to apply what I learned in class to real-world community settings.	2.91	1.02
I found it difficult to stay motivated when working outside the classroom.	2.78	1.02
I experienced stress or discomfort while participating in community learning tasks.	2.59	1.00
I found community-based activities more demanding than regular classroom assignments.	2.98	1.03
Composite Mean	**2.88**	**1.01**

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that using community as a classroom approach significantly enhanced Dzongkha language proficiency, engagement, reflective practice, skills development, and overall positive perceptions among first-year pre-service B.Ed. students. The treatment group outperformed the control group in post-test scores, supporting the hypothesis that students exposed to community-based learning achieve higher learning outcomes than those taught through conventional classroom instruction. The thematic survey responses further indicate that students perceived the approach as relevant, motivating, and practical, while the challenges encountered were generally manageable.

These results highlight the effectiveness of embedding learning in authentic community contexts, providing students with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-life situations. The study confirms that a community-based approach to Dzongkha language instruction strengthens linguistic competence, cultural understanding, and professional readiness, bridging the gap between classroom learning and practical application.

Overall, the study provides strong evidence that community as a classroom is a viable and impactful pedagogical strategy for enhancing both academic and experiential learning outcomes in pre-service teacher education.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for Stakeholders

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are suggested for teacher educators and institutions:

- **Institutional Implementation:** Teacher education programmes should integrate community as a classroom approaches into Dzongkha modules. The study showed that students exposed to community-based learning achieved higher language proficiency and reported greater engagement and practical skill development.

- **Scaffolding Support:** Educators should provide guidance and structured preparation to help students manage challenges encountered during community-based activities. Survey results indicated that while challenges were moderate, support can enhance confidence and effectiveness.

- **Cross-Disciplinary Application:** Given the positive impact across both arts and science streams, a community-based approach could be applied to other subjects and modules to promote experiential learning and active student engagement.

- **Reflection and Feedback:** Structured reflection sessions should be included to maximise mindfulness, self-awareness, and transfer of skills from community experiences. The findings highlighted that reflection and awareness improved significantly through the intervention.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Future studies could examine the long-term effects of community-based learning on Dzongkha language proficiency, professional readiness, and pedagogical skills. The present study demonstrated immediate benefits, but sustained impacts require further investigation.

Overall, the study provides strong evidence that suggests using the community as a classroom is an effective strategy for enhancing linguistic proficiency, experiential learning, and professional preparedness in pre-service teacher education. These recommendations aim to support broader implementation and further investigation of this pedagogical approach.

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