2015

Fourth Year Teachers' Perceptions of the Student Teaching Practicum in Abu Dhabi

Kabrina Rochelle Johnson
Walden University

Walden University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Kabrina Johnson

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Brett Welch, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Dan Cernusca, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Jean Sorrell, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2015

Abstract

Fourth Year Preservice Teachers' Perceptions

of the Student Teaching Practicum in Abu Dhabi

by

Kabrina R. Johnson

MEd, Houston Baptist University, 2006

BS, University of Texas at Austin, 2001

Final Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2015

Abstract

A local college in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates began a Bachelor of Education program in 2008 to train prospective teachers to deliver a bi-literate education in Arabic and English to students in Abu Dhabi schools. Because there had been no examination of preservice teachers' perceptions of their practicum experience, a project study was designed to analyze the perceptions of a group of preservice teachers regarding the final practicum and whether that experience enhanced their ability to deliver educational practices to better serve students. This phenomenological study was guided by experiential learning theory, as preservice teachers learned from their experiences in a professional setting. The research questions addressed preservice teachers' experiences during the practicum and how those experiences contributed to their professional growth. Individual face-to-face interviews of 8 preservice teachers were the means of data collection. Transcripts of audio recorded interviews were coded to determine themes related to the practicum experience. The data revealed that preservice teachers felt that the practicum allowed them to experience the role of the classroom teacher and its day-to-day challenges. Based on the research findings, a project is proposed to assist preservice teachers in assessing students' needs, identifying instructional classroom practices, and planning lessons. Implementation of the project could lead to positive social change by engaging preservice teachers in professional development centered on professional learning communities. This engagement would encourage collaboration with professionals to develop lesson plans to reach all learners. This project has the potential to contribute to preservice teachers' professional growth, which may lead to continuous learning in their professional learning environment.

Fourth Year Preservice Teachers' Perceptions of the Student Teaching Practicum in Abu Dhabi

by

Kabrina R. Johnson

MEd, Houston Baptist University, 2006

BS, University of Texas at Austin, 2001

Final Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2015

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, Darrell and Louise Johnson. They expressed their aspirations for me very early in my childhood, instilling in me the drive to go farther in education than they did and farther than others in my family. They taught me that I could accomplish anything I set my mind to, and not only would I do it, but I would land on top.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my committee members for their guidance and feedback throughout the process. A special thank you to Dr. Brett Welch, my committee chairman, for his encouragement and feedback throughout the entire process, and most of all his flexibility while I was working overseas. I would also like to thank Dr. Dan Cernusca, my second committee member, for his time and valuable feedback. Thanks to Dr. Jean Sorrell, my University Research Reviewer, for stepping in after university changes.

I would also like to acknowledge those whom I began this process with, Dr. Vickie Cook and Dr. Maria Schutt. I would like to thank Dr. Cook for her assistance and feedback on my prospectus and Dr. Schutt for feedback on my proposal.

I would also like to thank the college in Abu Dhabi for allowing me to conduct my research. Thanks to the college's research program chair and academic support staff for providing me with assistance when requested. A special thank you to the preservice teachers who participated in the study. Their excitement and willingness to participate made for an enjoyable research experience.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends for their continued support throughout my entire doctoral program. Thank you to Dr. Chetonya Landry and Desiree James for supporting me from the beginning and checking on my progress while I was overseas. And thank you to my friends who became family while I was in Abu Dhabi. Ronald Stokes, Shelley Wolfe, Nadine Atwell, and Raenice Weakly were my cheerleaders as I neared the end of this work. A special thank you goes to them for supporting me in my efforts.

Table of Contents

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

The teaching practicum has long been regarded as an integral component of any teacher preparation program by colleges and universities, as well as by the students in these programs. In a study by Grudnoff (2011), preservice teachers commented that it was important for them to be "in classrooms instead of just talking about it" (p. 226). The practicum provides preservice teachers the opportunity to be in the classroom, and its purpose is to prepare them through hands-on teaching and learning situations to develop their experience in the classroom while developing instructional and management strategies to support their students' learning. O'Dea and Peralta (2011) pointed out that practicum programs allow preservice teachers to connect what was learned in their education program to real-life experiences in schools. During the practicum, preservice teachers are expected to plan, teach, reflect, and act through the guidance of a supervisor and mentor teacher. The supervisor and mentor teacher greatly affect the progress of the preservice teacher during this time, as they are expected to provide support, guidance, and inspiration. The professional environment in which preservice teachers are placed, combined with how they learn to teach, shapes their understanding of teaching in the professional setting (Cuenca, 2011, p. 118).

A preservice teacher is expected to learn from his or her mentor teacher, as the mentor teacher serves as a role model, modeling teaching abilities for the preservice teacher. Fayne (2007) found that many preservice teachers saw their mentor teacher as someone to collaborate with, someone who would provide materials and give suggestions, and someone willing to discuss teaching practices. These are simply a few

identified strengths of a mentor, which contribute to an enjoyable practicum experience for preservice teachers and explain how preservice teachers view their relationships with mentor teachers. Many preservice teachers use that relationship as a means for assessing their practicum experience; their practicum experience is assessed in the same way in which they assess their mentor's performance. O'Dea and Peralata (2011) found that preservice teachers who had an enjoyable practicum experience had a positive relationship with their mentors. Similarly, there has been an identified link between a positive assessment of a mentor and the positive perception of a preservice teacher's achievements during the practicum (Caires, Almeida, & Viera, 2012).

While mentor teachers are seen as just that—mentors—university supervisors are often seen as evaluators. One could question whether a supervisor adds value to the practicum experience for preservice teachers. Others point out that it is difficult to determine a supervisor's impact on the practicum due to other influences during this time (Cuenca, 2010). But regardless of how one sees the university supervisor, it is important to note that the supervisor plays a role in the development of preservice teachers. The supervisor holds the responsibility of assessing preservice teachers' performance while helping them put learning from the classroom into practice (Cheng, Cheng, & Tang, 2010). Supervisors hold the responsibility of visiting the teaching site, observing lessons, and following up with postobservation conferences to assist in the development of preservice teachers. While it may be impossible to gauge the impact supervisors have on preservice teachers, it is important to point out that effective supervisors are those who spend time with preservice teachers and provide them with feedback. Effective supervisors respect students' ideas (Fayne, 2007), and they take into account the

experiences of preservice teachers (Cuenca, 2010). In valuing these experiences, supervisors assist preservice teachers in dealing with the successes and failures that are experienced during the practicum.

When preservice teachers begin their practicum experience, they move from learner to teacher, developing their skills within a profession and being supported at that time by university supervisors and mentor teachers. Teacher education programs are responsible for providing this experience to preservice teachers. Because the practicum experience is meant to provide an opportunity for preservice teachers to take on the role of teacher without restrictions, able to experiment with what they have learned, it is imperative that there is an understanding of whether or not they feel those opportunities exist during their practicum experience. In examining the practicum, it is important to understand how preservice teachers view their experiences and whether they feel their learning has been facilitated during the practicum, whether simply from being in the field or from having assistance and support from university supervisors and mentor teachers. In order for teacher education programs to continually support the growth of those they are training, an understanding of preservice teachers' perspectives must be gained.

Definition of the Problem

In 2008, a local college in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates began a Bachelor of Education program, preparing teachers to implement the New School Model (NSM), an education reform initiative implemented by the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). The college's purpose for the program was to train teachers to better understand the NSM as well as to reinforce the belief that all students are capable of learning and that ultimately the teacher is responsible for that learning. NSM's major goals are to improve

the quality of teaching through hiring teachers who have been professionally trained to deliver bi-literate education to improve the education of students in both English and Arabic. This is the reason that students enroll in the Bachelor of Education program; they are expecting to learn how to deliver educational practices that change what is currently happening in classrooms to better serve students in the country.

Most teacher education programs are structured to create a divide between theoretical investigation and practical experiences because preservice teachers complete curriculum courses before their practicum (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010). However, the local college in Abu Dhabi has found a teacher education program structure that supports students in translating theory to practice. During each of their 4 years of study at the college, preservice teachers participate in a practicum experience. Given this structure of the teacher education program, preservice teachers are better able to connect theory to practical experiences, as their course work is concurrent with their practicum experiences. With each year, the expectations and roles of preservice teachers increase, and they take on greater classroom responsibility, ultimately becoming classroom teachers for a period of time. The first year of the practicum can be described as the *observation phase*, where preservice teachers gain greater knowledge of the teaching and learning process in real-world context, with this knowledge helping to shape their beliefs about teaching and learning. The following 3 years involve preservice teachers taking more active roles in the classroom: teaching small components of lessons, teaching small group lessons, and teaching full lessons with the responsibility of being the classroom teacher. The year 2012 was the year that the first cohort graduated from the program, but there have been no data collected or feedback reported from students to identify whether

students feel that the program prepared them to take on the full responsibility of being a teacher. Because the practicum greatly influences the type of teacher one will become (Rhoads, Radu, & Weber, 2011), it is important to understand whether preservice teachers feel that their training during the practicum has prepared them to become New School Model teachers.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Policymakers in Abu Dhabi recognized that they had challenges in their educational system. As Kirk (2010) reported, Abu Dhabi's educational system began with religious schools; once it became clear that Abu Dhabi needed to build a better educational system, it relied on educational expertise from overseas. Overseas influence pushed a desire for globalization, and globalization meant incorporating English as the medium of instruction into the educational system so that students could compete with other students across the globe. Thus, Abu Dhabi developed a 10-year strategic plan that focused on addressing the challenges of education. From this plan, the NSM was born in the hope that it would change what was happening in classrooms in terms of both teachers and students. The plan was introduced in kindergarten through third grade during the 2010-2011 school year and is expected to be implemented in all grades and all schools by the 2015-2016 school year (Pierson, 2011).

With the implementation of NSM came the need for teachers who have been professionally trained in NSM. As Abu Dhabi continued to rely on an expatriate teaching force, this situation presented an opportunity to train Emiratis at local colleges and universities in NSM. This training is expected to produce strong Emirati teachers who

can contribute to the strength of the nation (Badry, 2012, p. 110), giving them the opportunity to set high expectations for students while creating meaningful learning experiences that reflect the culture and heritage of the United Arab Emirates. The practicum is the experience in which Emiratis have the opportunity to develop skills while in a preparation program in order to become experts in their field. As expressed by Dada (2012), experience can be the best teacher when paired with knowledge and skills; however, without knowledge and skills, experience is a lost opportunity for teachers in training and a bad experience for their students (p. 122).

During the practicum, preservice teachers have the opportunity to integrate theory learned in coursework with practice to develop their identities as teachers (Ferber & Nilas, 2010, p. 62), so it is important to point out that the experience is an important tool in preparing future teachers. During Year 4 of the BEd program, preservice teachers are expected to demonstrate an understanding of ADEC's NSM. The practicum provides them with the opportunity to link theory from the NSM to practice in real-world contexts. During this time, preservice teachers begin to develop or transform their beliefs about teaching and learning as they develop their pedagogical and content skills. With all that takes place during the practicum, it is important to examine whether preservice teachers feel that their experiences during this time contribute to their professional development.

Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature

The teaching practicum is one of the most important experiences of students in colleges of education. Over the years, researchers have studied this component of an education program, seeking to prove that it is an integral part of the education curriculum for undergraduate students. The practicum is meant to provide preservice teachers with

opportunities to experiment with what they have learned, trying out new ideas. After this experimentation, reflections occur and discussions are had with supervisors and mentors. Through discussions and reflections, preservice teachers can make changes to the ideas they have tested.

The challenge of practicum programs is to help preservice teachers put what they learned in their education program into practice (Cheng et al., 2010). However, studies have found that there is a gap between theory and practice. In their study, Cheng and colleagues (2010) found that pretraining experiences can have a stronger impact on preservice teachers than their education program does. One participant in the study noted that there had been negative experiences prior to training but turned those negative experiences into models of what not to do once becoming a classroom teacher. This same participant described the BEd program as being influential because the university lecturers served as role models for teaching. This was because the university lecturers were putting theory into practice, modeling for preservice teachers what should be implemented in classrooms. Models such as these can improve the quality of teacher education programs, helping preservice teachers identify the gap between theory and practice.

Other studies have examined how preservice teachers' experiences have supported them in becoming professional teachers. For example, a study conducted at a university in Africa indicated that the practicum is an essential element in teacher education, yet the researcher found that the practicum did not allow preservice teachers opportunities to try out new ideas or discuss teaching and learning with those they were close to in the practicum (Mitka, 2011). While this study found that the practicum was an

essential element of teacher preparation, another study, conducted in New Zealand, concluded that the practicum may not be an important experience for preservice teachers (Grudnoff, 2011). The teachers interviewed in this study viewed the practicum as an important part of their learning, yet they felt that their experiences did not support them in becoming a teacher.

Program features to support preservice teachers. It is imperative that practicum experiences be structured to support preservice teachers in becoming teachers. Researchers have sought to determine which structures best support preservice teachers, investigating the involvement of university faculty. Wyss, Siebert, and Dowling (2012) investigated practicum programs that incorporated the involvement of university faculty on a daily basis and a program that focused on faculty involvement prior to the practicum, with no involvement during the practicum. Preservice teachers in the study were enrolled either in an 8-week schedule with daily faculty supervision or in a 4-week block schedule with no faculty supervision. From the perspectives of the preservice teachers, the study found that the practicum experience did increase the preservice teachers' comfort level in areas regarding the classroom and teaching regardless of their schedule. The study also found that there were benefits of daily faculty supervision, with preservice teachers reporting higher comfort levels in the areas of lesson and unit planning and dealing with conflict in the classroom. However, the researchers pointed out that the gains could be due to the scheduling structure as well, and simply the presence of the supervisor.

Strand and Johnson (1990) discussed the problems with practicum experiences in regard to physical education teachers, pointing out mentor teachers, college supervisors,

and programs as sources of issues during the practicum. Within physical education, it is said that many teachers are not teaching, yet universities send preservice teachers to sites where they may not have the opportunity to put knowledge, concepts, and skills gained in the classroom into practice. Often, this occurs because university personnel are not sure of what takes place at the campuses to which preservice teachers are assigned, having set up partnerships over the phone or via email with campuses and teachers who agreed to have preservice teachers at their sites. Once preservice teachers are onsite, university supervisors are often limited in their knowledge of what to observe in classrooms and lack experience in supervision, frequently not providing structured supervision or feedback. When situations like this occur in a practicum program, they illustrate how lack of a systematic program can poorly affect the practicum experience. It is important that an experience is set that positively influences preservice teachers' first experiences with the teaching career.

Definitions

Practicum: The practicum refers to the teacher internship course taken as part of a program for initial teacher preparation (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2008). During the course, preservice teachers apply content knowledge, observe, assist, and take on the practice of being a classroom teacher, planning lessons and units, assessing students, managing classrooms, and taking on professional responsibilities. During the practicum, students are assessed using classroom observations and are required to complete a portfolio with observations, lessons taught, and work that shows reflective practices based on the school experience.

Preservice teacher: According to NCATE (2008), a preservice teacher is a student enrolled in a program for the preparation of teachers. These students work under the supervision of a college faculty member and a certified teacher. They are expected to follow school policies and procedures at their assigned campus while working in collaboration with their mentor teacher.

Supervisor: Supervisor refers to an education faculty member who has the responsibility of being a mentor while supervising students during the practicum (NCATE, 2008). The supervisor is expected to guide, support, and supervise preservice teachers during the teacher internship. The supervisor is expected to spend a minimum of 5 hours per week on the school campus; this time is devoted to meeting with preservice teachers, observing lessons and providing oral and written feedback, and discussing the preservice teachers' work with mentor teachers.

Mentor teacher: A mentor teacher is a licensed classroom teacher on a P-12 campus where the practicum takes place (NCATE, 2008). Mentor teachers are expected to share their teaching experiences, lesson plans, and teaching materials with preservice teachers. Mentor teachers are also expected to assist preservice teachers in planning and implementing lessons, in addition to providing written feedback on lessons taught by preservice teachers.

Significance of the Study

Practicum experiences are implemented in a variety of disciplines. The purpose of a practicum, regardless of discipline, is to prepare qualified professionals to enter the workforce. This preparation is done as students use their learned knowledge and skills to solve problems in a real-world context. In colleges of education, the practicum is meant

to be students' first contact with the teaching profession. This is the time when preservice teachers are given greater professional responsibilities and are mentored in a school setting by a supervisor and mentor. As stated by Ralph, Walker, and Wimmer (2008), professional work is critically important in a global market (p. 169). Therefore, it is critical to examine preservice teachers' first contact with their profession and to provide detail about what happens during this time and how it affects their professional development and growth.

Research Questions

While it is important to understand what happens during the practicum, it is equally important to understand how preservice teachers perceive their practicum experience. Because the practicum experience is the first contact preservice teachers have with the teaching profession, it is important to examine their experiences to gain a complete picture of what happens during the practicum and how it affects the development of preservice teachers. While there have been studies conducted on the practicum in countries across the globe, the practicum experience of preservice teachers in Abu Dhabi has yet to be explored. In this paper, I seek to describe practicum experiences as seen through the eyes of preservice teachers in Abu Dhabi. The following questions were posed to explore those experiences:

1. How do preservice teachers perceive their professional responsibilities during practicum?
2. How do preservice teachers perceive the influence of mentors on their learning during the practicum?

3. How do preservice teachers perceive the influence of their university supervisor on their learning during the practicum?

Review of the Literature

Teacher education programs are faced with the responsibility of preparing preservice teachers to take on the role of teacher during practicum experiences. These practicum experiences fit into the theory of experiential learning, in which the focus is learning from one's experiences. The idea is that people are naturally inclined to learn if their interests are part of the learning (Kolb, 1998). The practicum experience allows learners to experience a professional environment in their selected field of study. This time is a time for adult learning, and Kolb (1998) associated adult learning with experiential learning because both allow interests to be followed, creating experiences by which an individual can grow. In understanding these learning experiences, one must understand the basis of experiential learning, "creating knowledge from experiences rather than just received instruction" (Bergsteiner, Avery, & Neumann, 2010, p. 30). Permaul (2009) pointed out that learning is more than acquiring skills and knowledge; it is understanding, appreciating, and applying those skills and knowledge.

To address these aspects of teacher education programs and experiential learning, the literature review is presented in several sections. The first section provides information on the theoretical base that supports the problem of the study. The second section addresses teacher education in the United Arab Emirates, specifically teacher training and the push for a teacher force that consists of locals. The next three sections contain literature related to the practicum experience, perspectives on the practicum, the impact of the mentor teacher, and finally the impact of the college supervisor. The sixth

section addresses implications for the development of programs based on the previous research and findings related to practicum programs.

Education Research Complete was used to locate articles to address the majority of sections of the literature review. From here, EBSCO Publishing was used to enter key word search terms, but no particular databases were selected as to allow for a full range of articles to be returned. Google Scholar was also used, as the settings on this particular search engine were linked to Walden University's Library so that articles returned would be available through the university library. Searches on EBSCO and Google Scholar were conducted using the search terms *practicum, teacher education, student teachers, preservice teachers, cooperating teachers, mentor teachers, university supervisor, field experiences, experiential learning theory,* and *constructivism.* Once these search terms were exhausted, I used key words from the titles of articles, words in articles that were synonymous with the search terms listed previously, as well as key words that were listed on some journal articles. Using these avenues for identifying search terms led to *clinical supervision, teaching practice, initial teacher education, teacher candidates, teacher internships, teacher development,* and *service learning* being used as additional search terms in both EBSCO and Google Scholar. The use of these terms returned additional articles as well as articles previously returned with the other search terms. In regard to the practicum and experiential learning, saturation in the literature review occurred once articles that were relevant could no longer be located, and no new information was presented in the articles found.

While searching for literature to address the problem, studies related to the practicum from several countries were found, but no studies that related to teacher

training or the practicum within the United Arab Emirates (UAE) could be located using EBSCO or Google Scholar. The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR) then became a source for locating information related to education in the UAE. The ECSSR houses the UAE Federation Library, which holds materials that are specific to the UAE and other Gulf countries. Using the online service to search English titles, the key terms *teacher training, practicum, teacher education,* and *education development* were used to locate resources to address the section in the review of the literature that relates to the UAE. Twenty titles were returned with no information other than a short description and the contents of each publication. As no titles were available for online review, time was spent at the library to determine what books could be used for the literature review.

Theoretical Framework

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory (ELT) stresses the importance of learners taking an active role in their learning by using experience to bring about meaning and using that understanding for future experiences. ELT is grounded in the idea that learning is a process of learning and relearning and is therefore subject to change over time. Kolb defined the role of the educator as that of one who gives knowledge yet encourages learners to examine their beliefs and test those beliefs to determine how they fit into what was learned. Kolb identified this type of learning as *human adaptation*, where the learner is open to new ideas and experiences, reflects on those same ideas and experiences, then creates ideas to incorporate them into known theories, and finally uses those theories to make decisions. This adaptation happens through experiences, and learning occurs as the learner goes through the process of transforming each experience.

As stated by Hedin and Carroll (2010), simply being in the experience is not sufficient for learning, but doing something with the experience begins the learning process (p. 112). And what is done with experiences is adaptation; it is learning.

Trinh and Kolb (2011) discussed learning as a cyclical process in an article on the Eastern perspective of ELT. They pointed out that experiences are enriched when one goes through the cyclical process, that meaning is given when reflection takes place and there is a change of action. Those actions create a new experience that is richer, broader, and deeper than the initial experience. The focus is on learning and relearning. Because people and things change over time, learning should change over time as well. And while these changes occur, conflict arises, and ELT stresses that learning requires conflict resolution between what has been learned and is known and what has been experienced. This process of conflict resolution is simply adaptation. Adaptation is a recurring theme in ELT, and it is simply thinking, feeling, acting, and reflecting, being the total human being as described by Kolb. Adaptation leads to the development of a learning identity.

In developing a learning identity, the learner must first trust the experiences gone through and recognize that they are opportunities to learn. Next, the learner should focus on their performance over time, seeing experiences as opportunities for improvement in performance. As the learner focuses on performance, failure should begin to be seen as something that is sometimes unavoidable if attempting something new. But these failures are a chance to learn and grow; learners should take that experience, reshape it to experiment with what was learned, and deliberately practice a new action that will result in an improved outcome.

As adults develop, their learning identity develops and experiences are placed at the center of learning. Those experiences are a factor of the learning environment, and the learning environment plays a role in the growth of an individual. The practicum provides an environment for experiences to happen for preservice professionals in a workplace setting. Ralph et al. (2008) pointed out that the practicum is a place where preservice professionals are mentored by their academic faculty and professionals in the workplace. It is at this workplace that preservice teachers have the opportunity to take part in observations and interactions to make meaning of what they have learned in their college coursework and to discover new knowledge. It is a time when the interaction between the learner and environment allows for an adaptation to the soon-to-be professional environment, giving the learner opportunities to think, feel, act, and reflect on what he or she has learned and his or her new experiences.

Teacher Education in the United Arab Emirates

The first study of teacher education in the UAE was conducted in 1988, 17 years after the creation of the Emirates. Al-Banna (1997) conducted the study, which included six schools and a sample of 80 teachers. The study was conducted to understand perceptions of teacher training and teaching. The study found that only 39% of the teachers received some type of initial training, training that may have simply been 2 or 3 days, or training that occurred over the course of 1 year. This inconsistency was due to the fact that there was no system of teacher training prior to teachers entering the field, and there were teachers who entered the profession having never attended courses at a university or college.

It was not until 1989 that the UAE Ministry of Education required teachers of primary schools to be graduates of a college or university. Ministry officials realized that teachers needed the opportunity to implement theory as well as to practice teaching, giving them the chance to reflect on those experiences. It was during this time that the UAE began to develop a teacher training system that was similar to those in other countries. University education departments became responsible for training future teachers and assessing them for 1 year. Officials at the ministry also felt that the only way to improve the education of future teachers was to establish separate colleges and universities that offered 4-year degrees in education.

Currently, expatriates outnumber Emiratis in the population of the UAE, and the country relies heavily on expatriates in the labor force. In the 2010 edition of the *United Arab Emirates Yearbook*, it was reported that 80% of the UAE population was composed of expatriates, and 98% of private sector jobs were occupied by expatriates. Because Emiratis would like to rely less on workers from other countries, there is a strong push for *Emiratization*, programs that have been exclusively created to educate and train locals to enter the workforce in their own country and globally (Kirk, 2010). Emiratization has been implemented in teacher education programs as well because the majority of teachers in the UAE were originally recruited from Arab countries, countries with educational histories, because government officials felt that teachers from similar cultures could be role models for students. However, within the last 5 years, there has been an expansion of the school system and a large number of Western teachers have been recruited for the teaching workforce. With such a strong presence of outsiders, those from other cultures and other countries, government officials felt that they had fostered a perception that

teaching was not a career for Emiratis, and this went against their desire to build a new national identity, one that is developed by national citizens.

Because there are so few Emirati teachers, colleges and universities have set up teacher education programs using expatriate instructors to train local teachers. The colleges and universities in the UAE mainly offer 3-year Bachelor of Education programs, with a few offering 4-year programs. During the first three semesters of the program, preservice teachers take courses in English and Arabic. In Semester 3, preservice teachers take their first human development course. With the push from the ministry to have future teachers experience teaching in a real context, Dada (2012) reported that teacher candidates at one local university spent time in schools during the first two courses of their program. These same preservice teachers visit a number of schools to observe what teaching, learning, and school operations look like in classrooms and schools. By Semester 5, preservice teachers are focused on instructional planning and the daily duties of teachers. For preservice teachers who plan to work with younger students or teach within English language programs, Semester 6 is spent in schools with a focus on language and literacy. Those who will work with higher grade levels spend this semester focused on content development for a selected subject. It is during Semester 7 that every-preservice teacher enrolled in a 4-year program enters a school and classroom, taking on some of the responsibilities of a teacher, working in partnership with the college supervisor and mentor teacher. It is not until their final semester of study, Semester 8, that preservice teachers have a full internship experience in schools, taking over a great majority of teachers' roles and duties in the classroom and school.

Synthesis of Research Literature on the Local Problem

The practicum can be seen as experiential learning in which preservice teachers are exposed to real world classrooms under the supervision of a mentor teacher and college supervisor. As with experiential learning, the practicum is focused on the learner, and the direct experience of what happens in classrooms; then these experiences are used to reflect and theories are developed and applied through experimentation in real world context and the cycle repeats itself (Hedin, 2010). In their study He, Means, and Lin (2006), reported that these experiences provide preservice teachers with the opportunity to observe what happens in classrooms daily and implement what they learned in their college coursework into their practices. The same study also pointed out that most teacher education programs in the United States have incorporated the practicum in their programs so that students have the opportunity to observe and work in classrooms before entering their profession. Practicum experiences are important to the development of future teachers. Because preservice teachers only benefit from the practicum if they were satisfied with how their mentor teacher and university supervisor communicated and interacted with them, it is important to examine studies that have taken the perspective of the preservice teachers into account, examining their beliefs about teaching and whether they feel the practicum has an impact on their development.

Perspectives on the practicum experience. According to Caires et al. (2012), it is important to examine the experiences of preservice teachers because the practicum is a time of exploration that impacts personal and professional development. Using a short version of the Inventory of Experiences and Perceptions of Teaching the Practice (IEPTP) tool, they described the perceptions of preservice teachers learning and

supervision, professional and institutional socialization, emotional and physical impact and career aspects. Participants in the study expressed how stressful the practicum was, but the study also found that preservice teachers felt that they made gains during the time. Preservice teachers expressed their feelings of growth in their knowledge and skill within the profession. The results of the IEPTP also showed that satisfaction in one area of the practicum can lead to satisfaction within other areas. In regards to one area of the practicum, the mentor teacher, the study found that the positive assessment of the mentor teacher was associated with the preservice teachers' positive assessment of self-progress during the practicum.

As the results of the IEPTP showed that being satisfied with one area of the practicum can lead to satisfaction in another area of the practicum, another study showed that the practicum, if structured in a developmental way, helped with preservice teachers' professional growth and development. Choy, Wong, Goh, and Low (2014) examined preservice teachers' perceptions of their practicum across three different practicum experiences. Their practicum experiences moved from observing an experienced teacher to them having full control of the classroom and teaching independently. Upon entering their first practicum, preservice teachers entered with expectations of themselves and the practicum experience without fully knowing what to expect from the practicum. At the conclusion of their teacher observations, preservice teachers gave low ratings for the fulfillment of those expectations. But as they progressed through the subsequent practicum experiences, their expectations and fulfillment of expectations increased as they had the opportunity to plan lessons, teach, and discuss ideas with their mentor

teachers. At the conclusion of their practicum experience, preservice teachers had gained school experiences in teaching to promote their professional development.

Allen and Wright (2014) examined preservice teachers' perception of their professional development during the practicum and found a connection between their perceived professional development and preparedness of the mentor teacher and university supervisor. Preservice teachers surveyed valued the opportunity to integrate theory and practice during the practicum but felt that opportunity was negatively impacted when there was confusion about the roles of the mentor teacher. Although mentor teachers were sent an information booklet that described the expectations of the practicum, it was obvious to preservice teachers that their mentor teachers either did not receive the booklet or did not read the booklet before the practicum began. Preservice teachers often felt that they were responsible for clarifying their purpose in the classroom which was frustrating in the sense that from the beginning, they felt as though they were not receiving the support needed from their mentor teacher. This negative feeling was not solely placed on the mentor teacher, but also extended to the university supervisor as preservice teachers also felt university supervisors did not have a clear understanding of their role either. This misunderstanding occurred because of the lack of interaction between the preservice teacher and university supervisor. Supervisors were required to make contact with the student before the practicum but were only required to visit them on campus if there were difficulties during the practicum. Preservice teachers felt unsupported by their university supervisor because they were not present enough to assist preservice teachers in integrating theory and practice. Preservice teachers felt their

professional development during the practicum could have been more successful if there were clearer understandings of the roles and responsibilities of all involved.

Professional development during the practicum is not always a sit and get learning opportunity where a presenter is giving information. During the practicum, professional development is seen when preservice teachers are learning from the environment in which they are in. Quality professional development during the practicum can introduce knowledge and skills to preservice teachers that will last throughout their teaching careers. A study by Kabilan (2013) aimed to identify preservice teachers' perceptions of their professional development experiences during the practicum. Kabilan examined an international teaching practicum and found benefits of the practicum in regards to preservice teachers' professional development and can extend far beyond the school and classroom settings. Three of the six preservice teachers that participated in the study felt their interpersonal skills progressed as a result of the practicum. The practicum allowed them the opportunity to interact with various people at various levels on campus that were of different races and cultures. The interactions they had with teachers, department heads, and principals allowed them to learn how to interact with people from different countries with different perspectives on how to educate students. Preservice teachers interviewed in Kabilan's study recognized the importance of the interaction between themselves and others in the school community.

Lee et al. (2012) conducted a study that examined preservice teachers' perceptions of the practicum and its influence on preparedness of teaching. The instrument used to measure preservice teacher perception before and after the practicum was based on pedagogical content, planning and preparation, classroom management,

encouraging family involvement, and professionalism. As with the study conducted by Caires et al. (2012), this study also discovered that preservice teachers felt in increase in their knowledge and skills after the practicum experience, although they did not feel an increase in their preparedness for increasing family involvement. This lack of increase in preparedness was attributed to preservice teachers not having complete ownership of a classroom, having fewer opportunities to interact with families. It was pointed out that how preservice teachers feel in terms of preparedness is connected to their teaching practice, so it is important for university programs to create learning experiences in which preservice teachers can be successful.

The teaching practicum is a time where preservice teachers come into their own as a teacher, defining the type of teacher they wish to be. Davis (2013) described this time during the practicum as one where preservice teachers understand more about themselves through their interactions with students in the classroom and their interactions with professionals in the school setting. Her study was focused on exploring the idea of how preservice teachers develop their teaching persona during teaching. She defined persona as a mask, a public identity endorsed during social interactions. To develop this persona, preservice teachers carefully thought about how they wanted to be seen as a teacher by others. The personas most valued by preservice teachers in the study were caring, interesting, likeable, and professional. These personas were ones in which preservice teachers felt they would be comfortable in their role as a teacher. The study found that because preservice teachers were given independence in identifying themselves as a teacher, they were able to develop a persona that was appropriate for

them, one that gave them confidence in front of their students and promoted their success in the classroom.

Trent (2013) also examined how preservice teachers begin to define themselves as teachers. When questioned about the expectations of the practicum, participants identified the practicum as a time to experiment with teacher identity in order to construct their teacher identity. It is suggested that identity is developed through engagement, where preservice teachers participate and experiment in a community to define who they are. Unlike the study conducted by Davis (2013), participants of this study faced some opposition when experimenting with the type of teacher they wanted to be. Preservice teachers reported their mentor teacher being critical of their teaching style or being told that they did not fit in at the campus because their ideas were not suited for the students on campus. This opposition from mentor teachers caused the participants to question whether teaching was the career field they truly wanted to enter. The study concluded that this conflict could reach far beyond the preservice teachers in the study. Davis believed that if preservice teachers fail to create their teacher identity during the practicum, it could lead to a loss of trained and qualified teachers.

While there are studies within the recent years that show the positive impact practicum has had on preservice teachers, there are studies where the opposite can be seen. For example, Ferber and Nillas (2010) conducted a study to examine the challenges and successes of preservice teachers during practicum experiences. The most common problem found was with the mentor teacher, but problems with the university supervisor and the preparedness preservice teachers felt based on their university coursework. Problems with the mentor teacher seemed to have the greatest impact on the performance

of the preservice teacher as the mentor teacher is thought to have the greatest impact on the practicum. Preservice teachers in this study were provided with feedback by mentor teachers but felt more constructive feedback would have helped their learning. The same issue was reported in a study conducted by Rhoads, Radu, and Weber (2011). Preservice teachers in this study also commented on the feedback that was provide to them by mentor teachers, specifically pointing out that they desired more specific and constructive feedback that could help them improve their teaching.

Mitka (2011) found that preservice teachers suffered from role ambiguity, not knowing whether they should be learners or teachers, during their practicum experience when no school-based support was offered. The study found that because preservice teachers were given the assignment of cover teachers, they experienced a full teacher workload. The lack of mentor teachers created an ineffective practicum experience because preservice teachers did not have the opportunity to learn from the experience because there was no collaborative relationship between themselves and a mentor teacher. The study also pointed out that preservice teachers often base their pedagogical practices on the observed behaviors of mentor teachers. Without the assistance of a mentor teacher, preservice teachers were left to implement pedagogies in which they may not have the needed understanding simply from their university coursework. When practicum programs were utilized as a means for covering classes, that is, preservice teachers taking on the full workload of a classroom teacher because of a teacher shortage, they did not have the opportunity to engage in a collaborative process with a mentor teacher, impeding their professional development because of a lack of support.

Although there are studies that examine the perspectives of preservice students during or directly after the practicum, Grudnoff (2011) examined the perspectives of first year teachers. The participants in this study were asked to recount how they perceived the practicum in preparing them to enter the field. It was found that while teachers viewed the practicum as a key component in their teacher preparation, the experiences did not help them with entering the profession. First-year teachers pointed out that the experiences of the practicum were no comparison to the experiences faced once in a classroom solely assigned to them. As a new teacher, they were faced with the responsibility of setting up classroom environments that were conducive to learning; but during the practicum, preservice teachers simply copied or modeled what was already in place. Overall, first-year teachers indicated the practicum provided them with opportunities to practice skills, but it did not provide opportunities to experience the full demands of teaching.

The impact of the mentor teacher. One factor that can play an important role in the success of the practicum for preservice teachers is the mentor teacher they collaborate with during this time. Mentor teachers provide experiences with teaching that preservice teachers cannot receive by simply reading books from their courses (Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2014, p. 20). Chien (2015) found that preservice teachers believed observing their mentor teacher and having conversations with their mentor teachers improved their teaching and instructional knowledge. In addition, data from a study conducted by Izadinia (2015) suggested that preservice teachers need emotional and academic support from their mentor teachers. Because the practicum experience is preservice teachers' first experience with the teaching profession, they go into the practicum without confidence in

their abilities to lead a classroom. To build that confidence, preservice teachers from the study wanted encouragement and support to find their own way of teaching through observing their mentors, being provided with teaching strategies, and receiving constructive feedback from their mentor teachers. Kabilan (2013) also found a link between preservice teachers' confidence and their mentor teacher. He found that preservice teachers expressed their feelings of being more confident in their teaching and an increase in their skills as a result of the time they spent with their mentor teacher who offered guidance in time management, lesson planning, and grading.

During the practicum, preservice teachers have the opportunity to observe mentor teachers. Observing mentor teachers give preservice teachers an opportunity to observe teaching practices, how students to respond to teaching practices, and how teaching practices relate to subject matter. Jenkins (2014) examined what preservice teachers observed when watching mentor teachers. She found a progression in what preservice teachers observed through the course of their practicum. In the early stages of the practicum, preservice teachers' reflections focused on teaching practices, pedagogy. At the beginning of the practicum, preservice teachers were enrolled in coursework. Focusing on pedagogy during mentor observations allowed them to connect their current coursework to what they were seeing implementing in classrooms. At the beginning of the practicum, preservice teachers still see themselves as students, therefore focusing on pedagogy to continue learning before having ownership of a class. As they progressed through the practicum, after having focused attention on pedagogy, preservice teachers were then able to reflect on the mentor teacher and how the mentor teacher's behavior related to the behavior of the students. At this point, as they get closer to being

responsible for a classroom, preservice teachers began to look at the classroom environment through the eyes of a teacher and not a student. Towards the end of their observation period, preservice teachers moved from focusing on pedagogy to focusing on pedagogy and how those teaching practices contribute to student behavior and student learning. As a result of the observation period, preservice teachers are more likely to focus on student learning when they begin teaching during their practicum because they have had the opportunity to see instructional practices in place in the real-world setting of a classroom.

Ibrahim (2013) investigated the various approaches in supervision (directive, collaborative, and nondirective) of preservice teachers. 83.3% of the preservice teachers surveyed in the study preferred the collaborative approach used by mentor teachers. The collaborative approach is one in which both the mentor teacher and preservice teacher have ownership of the classroom. Preservice teachers and mentors share ideas and problem solve as a team. Preservice teachers surveyed in this study were also asked why they felt mentor teachers used this approach. They believed that although mentor teachers are aware that they are new to the profession, preservice teachers had new and innovative ideas that mentor teachers could learn from. Preservice teachers also made note that mentor teachers used the collaborative approach because mentor teachers were aware that preservice teachers are continuously in a learning phase during the practicum and need help in the ways of teaching.

After conducting a study of preservice teachers' issues with their mentor teachers, Lu (2013) concluded that quality teacher development occurs through the selection of quality mentor teachers who are dedicated and willing to assist them in their professional

development needs. Preservice teachers are led to believe that the appointment of a teacher as a mentor teacher signifies a high quality of professional knowledge and skills (Sim, 2011). Therefore, preservice teachers are expecting their mentor teachers to provide a positive professional experience. As found by Izadinia (2015), mentor teachers and preservice teachers should be aware of each other's expectations. Mentor teachers should be aware of preservice teachers' expectations of them during the practicum so they are better able to meet their needs. Just as mentor teachers should be aware of preservice teachers' expectations, the same is true for preservice teachers and their awareness of mentor teachers' expectations of the mentoring relationship during this time.

Appointing a mentor teacher to that role does not always mean a positive professional experience will occur. Mentor teachers are often times not trained for their role as found in a study conducted by Joseph and John (2014). They investigated the experiences of preservices teachers in differentiating instruction during a two-week practicum. The results of the study concluded that several mentor teachers were unable to provide the necessary support in differentiating instruction to preservice teachers because of their lack of training and understanding of the concept. Sometimes no consideration is taken in regards to teacher ability or background when selecting and assigning mentor teachers, thus making the mentoring relationship unpredictable (Farrell, 2008).

Caires et al. (2012) identified the link between a positive assessment of a mentor and the positive perception of the practicum experience. A study conducted by Cuenca (2011) further explored this link and pinpointed areas that were important to the success of the practicum. His study concluded how important it was for the mentor teacher to provide the preservice teacher with teaching materials, introduce them to the routines of

teaching, and allow them to actually engage in teaching. This made preservice teachers feel like teachers and gave them ownership of the classroom. Most importantly, it was noted that allowing preservice teachers to teach allowed them to view teaching as a craft. While developing their craft, being under the supervision of a mentor teacher allowed preservice teachers to make mistakes within a comfortable environment where preservice teachers' learning was supported.

Although Cuenca's study found that preservice teachers were given ownership of the classroom, the same cannot be said for the participants of a study conducted by Rush, Blair, Chapman, Codner, and Pearce (2008). The preservice teachers had the negative experience of the mentor teacher being territorial with students, space within the classroom, and classroom materials. To resolve the issues, the authors pointed out that planning and communication are necessary to overcome these situations. Planning is important because it allows for some discussion on how the practicum experience will operate. Taking the time to plan means thinking in advance about how the preservice teacher will spend their time in the classroom and how classroom responsibilities will be shared. Communication opens the door to a successful experience, but it can only occur when both parties can be heard, and each party has the opportunity to discuss how things are going. There should also be opportunities to share what needs are being met as well as those not being met. The final resolution is that of space within the classroom. It was recommended that a personal workspace for the preservice teacher be assigned. Pridham, Deed, and Cox (2013) found that when given the opportunity to share a workspace with the mentor teacher, preservice teachers felt they had better access to their mentors which allowed for better communication and support, as well as timely feedback.

O'dea and Peralta (2011) found that preservice teachers that had an enjoyable practicum experience had a positive relationship with their mentors. The preservice teachers in this study were given the opportunity to discuss teaching and learning, while being provided with constructive feedback to support their learning. Tillema, Smith, and Lesham (2011) found that feedback was important to preservice teachers. The participants in the study conducted by Tillema et al. (2011) stressed the importance of being provided with feedback on improvement of performance, and advice on the act of being a teacher. Izadinia (2015) found that preservice teachers were accepting of the feedback because it was given by mentor teachers, professionals who have an understanding of being a teacher and could provide real-world advice. This feedback only occurs when there is open communication between the preservice teacher and mentor teacher.

As found in Izadinia's (2015) study, preservice teachers felt that having open communication and a friendly relationship assisted them in defining themselves as a teacher. But these opportunities are not always present during practicum experiences as concluded in several studies. Nilas's (2010) study identified difficulties that arose during the practicum as a result of the mentor-teacher relationship. While the preservice teachers were given feedback, they felt that more constructive feedback would have improved their learning. Chien (2015) pointed out that feedback from mentors should be specific, pointing out exact behaviors while providing recommendations for growth (p. 340). These opportunities for feedback provide the preservice teachers with opportunities to learn about their strengths and weaknesses in regards to their teaching, planning, or instructional strategies. However, opportunities for feedback are sometimes nonexistent.

Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2014) found that sometimes mentor teachers do not spend time with preservice teachers to provide them with feedback. Several preservice teachers surveyed in their study felt they were bothersome to their mentor teacher when asking for assistance in their professional work. Instances such as these make the relationship between preservice teachers and mentor teachers useless and provide no opportunity for preservice teachers to truly learn from those with experience.

When bringing two people together who are unfamiliar with each other, it is expected that there may be some issues that arise during the practicum experience. Lu (2013) found five issues that arose during the practicum of eight preserviced teachers interviewed: (1) lack of teaching opportunities; (2) poor communication; (3) inappropriate classroom practices; (4) misconception of the preservice teacher's role; and (5) interfering in teaching. Although these issues can create a negative relationship between the preservice teacher and mentor teacher, Lu concluded that the relationship can be a positive one if the preservice teacher communicates their problems to the mentor teacher, and works to resolve those problems. Addressing problems with the mentor teachers is preservice teachers first opportunity to be courageous in their professional environment, communicating their needs and concerns to ensure their basic learning needs during the practicum are met.

The impact of the supervisor. While there are many factors that can impact preservice teachers' practicum experiences, it is important to note that college supervisors also impact the experience. College supervisors have the responsibility of assessing preservice teachers' performance, while helping them put learning into practice (Cheng et al., 2010). Their job responsibilities include visit preservice teachers at the practicum site,

observing lessons, and holding conferences to assist in development. Effective supervisors have been identified as those that spend time with preservice teachers, providing them with constructive feedback while respecting their professional ideas (Fayne, 2007). In regards to personal relationships, Tedder and Lawy (2009) indicated that supervisors made valuable contributions to preservice teachers' personal and professional development when these relationships fostered. These relationships are developed in trusting relationships with good communication where support is the ultimate goal. Personal and professional relationships support preservice teachers in becoming a member of the profession, helping them develop knowledge, skills, and the art of being a teacher.

Preservice teachers were surveyed about their university supervisors' supervisory approach in Ibrahim's (2013) study. Over half of the preservice teachers reported that university supervisors used the directive approach in supervising them. In this approach, university supervisors communicated the decisions to preservice teachers. In using the directive approach, supervisors did not provide opportunities for preservice teachers to make their own decisions or guide them in developing solutions to their problems. The university supervisor is the sole decision maker when this approach is used. When asked the reason for the use of this approach, some preservice teachers indicated that university supervisors used this approach because of the lack of time the pair were able to spend together. They felt that because of the lack of time to discuss teaching with preservice teachers, university supervisors' feedback was given in a way that directed preservice teachers in what to do and not do. Other preservice teachers believed that because their university supervisors had more experience and more knowledge, they had to listen to the

advice that was given to them by their supervisor. Ibrahim concluded that the use of the directive approach to supervise preservice teachers challenges the essence of the practicum, allowing preservice teachers to experiment and learn their own way of teaching through discussions with supervisors.

Cuenca (2010) stressed the notion that being a supervisor is more than having knowledge of the teaching profession. Being a supervisor involves engaging preservice teachers in discussions about the craft, and those discussions often take place during pre- and post-observation conferences. During conferences when feedback is offered, it is imperative that supervisors direct the conversation towards guiding the preservice teacher to process information about their performance (Sharp, 1990). Because a preservice teachers' needs are formative, it is important that their needs are addressed. Here, the supervisor acts as a facilitator, allowing the course of learning to be set by the preservice teacher while they ensure implementation, and provide feedback and suggestions along the way, allowing the preservice teacher to reflect on their practice.

Implications

Based on the experiences of preservice teachers during practicum, it is important to note implications of this study for development of programs during the practicum. It is imperative that special attention is placed on areas of the practicum that promote or delay professional learning and performance. Using preservice teachers' perspectives of the practicum, college faculty can design a framework for training supervisors and mentors to adequately support the newly trained, and reduce challenges faced during practicum. Information gathered in the study can assist in the development of programs to support preservice teachers during the practicum so that all students completing a degree in a

Bachelor of Education program can feel their experiences support them in becoming a teacher. Having programs in place that are truly based on the needs of the learner can change the framework of preparatory education programs and practicum components of those programs.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to contribute to current research on preservice teachers' perceptions of their practicum by gaining insight into the experiences of fourth year preservice teachers at a local college in Abu Dhabi. The perceptions that preservice teachers have of their mentors and supervisors were examined. Examining the practicum through the eyes of these preservice teachers provides insight into what factors they believe are important in their development as future teachers, as well as the role their mentors and supervisors played in their development. This study will share the participants' views on how interactions in a real world context shaped their learning and practice to become future teachers.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

This project study was designed to investigate the experiences of preservice teachers during the 4th year of a BEd program in which they participated in a practicum experience in schools.

Research Design and Approach

A qualitative inquiry design was most appropriate for the study, as it allowed me to understand 4th-year preservice teachers' points of view that reflected their practicum experiences. Unlike quantitative research, which would focus on the quantity of experiences lived in the practicum experience, qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning of those lived experiences. In selecting a form of qualitative research, I determined that a phenomenological approach was most appropriate because it would focus on experiences and how those who lived those experiences interpreted them. This approach allowed for a full understanding of the phenomenon, the practicum experience of 4th-year preservice teachers. As suggested by Merriam (2009), this approach is well suited to the study of affective and emotional human experiences (p. 26) and how those experiences are transformed in the minds of individuals. The research questions asked *how* preservice teachers perceive elements of their practicum experience, and a phenomenological approach allowed these questions to be answered through reflections on the experiences, providing factors that affected the practicum experience for these preservice teachers, as they were unknown prior to the study being conducted. This method of research allowed for the examination of a small group of preservice

teachers' practicum experiences, while it also presented information from a real-life situation. The information is presented in a rich description that helps the reader to better understand the practicum experience of preservice teachers in Abu Dhabi, contributing to the existing body of knowledge of the practicum experience.

Setting

Schools in Abu Dhabi are structured according to gender. KG campuses are coeducational, with classes having a mix of girls and boys. But the majority of Cycle I, II, and III schools are either boys' or girls' schools. In recent years, ADEC opened new campuses that are coeducational, but the campuses are structured so that girls and boys do not interact with each other; the girls are on one side of the campus, and the boys are on the other side of campus. Participants were assigned to either a KG1-5 campus or a Cycle I campus. KG1-5 campuses have students as young as 3 years old, with the highest grade being fifth. Cycle I campuses include Grades 1 through 5. All campuses where the participants were assigned were outside the main city of Abu Dhabi, areas that are considered more tribal than those inside Abu Dhabi city limits. Families of students at these campuses are often at odds with each other, and those animosities carry into the classrooms, with fighting and taunting in classes in both girls' and boys' schools.

Participants

The participants were a group of preservice teachers in their final year of a 4 year BEd program at a local college in Abu Dhabi. As the Abu Dhabi government works to develop the educational system, the traditional roles of Emirate women are changing, with more women delaying marriage and having children and more enrolling in college

and graduating before starting a family. Only two of the eight participants were married with families, Rabia and Nadia (fictitious names are used for this study).

Participants were assigned to various campuses in Abu Dhabi with different school structures. Ayesha and Shareen taught fifth grade boys at the same Cycle I coeducational practicum site. Rabia, Saara, and Nadia were assigned to the same Cycle I girls' school. Rabia taught first grade, and Saara and Nadia taught third grade. Fahima, who taught second grade, was the only participant I interviewed from her assigned Cycle I girls' school. A'idah and Aaqilah were both assigned to the same coeducational KG1-5 practicum site. They both taught fourth grade in the girls' section of the campus.

In the final year of the program, the practicum is one of the components of a 12-hour credit course within the degree program. All students enrolled in this course constituted the population for the study. There were 48 students enrolled in year 4, with three sections of 18 students. With qualitative studies, the number of participants can vary and is dependent on the researcher's goal (Creswell, 2012). The goal of this study was to gather the perspectives of all individuals to produce a picture of the realities of the practicum. Therefore, a purposeful sample of eight preservice teachers was selected from the study's population to better understand the experiences of preservice teachers during the teacher practicum. Because it can be time consuming to collect and analyze data in qualitative studies with a large number of participants (Creswell, 2012, p. 209), a sample size of eight kept data collection and analysis manageable.

To gain access to participants, a meeting was held with preservice teachers, the program chair, one of the college supervisors, and myself once the practicum component of the program had ended. The meeting was held during the last 2 weeks of the course

and as students were in the process of completing their final projects and preparing for presentations. The meeting provided the opportunity for the college supervisor to introduce me and facilitated the first meeting between myself and the preservice teachers. Because interviews were the main data collection technique, there were not many opportunities to establish a researcher-participant relationship prior to conducting interviews, so it was necessary to spend some time during the initial meeting to develop rapport with the participants through an activity that acted as an icebreaker and allowed time for participants and myself to get to know each other in a relaxed setting. During the initial meeting, I was able to quickly establish rapport with the preservice teachers because I had a previous professional relationship with the college supervisor and one of the preservice teachers. I had met the college supervisor 2 years prior to my study, as I was a mentor to one of her preservice teachers, and she had been my point of contact with the college. As for the preservice teacher, I mentored her the previous year when she was in her 3rd-year practicum program. They both shared their working experiences with the group of preservice teachers and spoke highly of my passion for wanting to see growth in others.

During the initial meeting, the informed consent was provided to each preservice teacher, detailing the purpose of the study, how data would be collected, and privacy and confidentiality information. Preservice teachers were also made aware that interviews would be audio recorded for the purpose of transcribing the interviews. They were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and in no way would affect their standing in the course or college. My contact information was listed in case questions or comments regarding the study arose after the meeting had taken place.

Preservice teachers were assured that their college supervisors and mentor teachers would be unable to identify them from the data gathered or information reported. Opportunities to express concerns and ask questions during the study were provided as a means to protect the participants' psychological and emotional state. Ten preservice teachers agreed to participate in the study, but eight were selected due to their level of comfort with interviewing in English.

Data Collection

To understand the experiences of the preservice teachers, data were collected through the primary means of data collection in phenomenology, the semistructured interview (Merriam, 2009, p.25). Semistructured interviewing is one of the most commonly used forms of data collection in qualitative studies. As pointed out by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), qualitative interviews encourage participants to share descriptions of phenomena. Therefore, the interviews were for the purpose of collecting data to understand the phenomena so that data could be analyzed and interpreted to understand the experiences and environment of the participants (Warren, 2001, p. 83).

Data were collected through individual, face-to-face interviews with each participant. The use of interviews as a means for collecting data was the best method to determine the participants' feelings and interpretations of their practicum experience. The interviews allowed participants to share their feelings about social and personal aspects of their work in school. More specifically, open-ended questions during semistructured interviews allowed participants to share personal experiences and examples to describe their perspectives of the practicum experience. In qualitative research, the participants are

meaning-makers, and the interview serves as a means to interpret their meaning (Warren, 2001) and develop hypotheses (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Preservice teachers concluded their 10-week practicum experience with 2 weeks of preparing assessment documents, a personal portfolio, and a research project to be submitted to their college supervisor. As these documents were not used as a source of data, it is important to make note of them because they were components of the practicum experience, and students referred to these assignments during interviews. Interviews took place in a conference room secured by the program chair, on the college campus during the final 2 days of the semester as to not disrupt the practicum experience by taking time away from the preservice teachers' time in the actual school setting or from their college course. Because open-ended questions were used as the interview protocol along with probing questions when necessary, the interviews took between 1 and 1.5 hours. Participants were advised of this time frame when scheduling the interviews to ensure that they understood the time commitment for the interview.

Because each participant and I met only one time prior to the interview, it was important to build rapport at the start of the interview by talking with the participant about something unrelated to the study to establish a comfortable interview environment. Once the participant was at ease, she was reminded of the study's purpose and reminded that I was the sole person responsible for collecting interview data. Additionally, I assured participants that the data collected would be labeled with pseudonyms to protect their identities. To get the participant talking at the start of the interview, I asked an open-ended question grounded on the study's topic: "How would you describe your practicum experience?" This question was broad and allowed the participant to discuss what she

wanted to discuss about the practicum, sharing her truth about the experience. The use of an interview protocol helped to keep the interview focused and consistent throughout each of the interviews. Although I developed interview questions in advance, probing questions were also asked during the interview (see Appendix B for the complete interview protocol).

During the interview, an audio recorder was used, so it was necessary to remind the participant of this as stated in the consent form. Along with the recorder, written notes on the participant's feelings related to the practicum were taken during the interview. The participant was also made aware that what was being written consisted simply of key ideas from the conversation.

Once data had been collected, data security was important in maintaining the confidentiality of the participants. Because hard copies of the interview notes existed, I created pseudonyms for the participants prior to beginning interviews. Pseudonyms were used in all data that were written and transcribed. Computer files such as the interview transcripts and recorded interviews were kept on an external drive that was password protected. All data, including interview notes and the external drive, were stored in a password-protected lockbox that could be accessed only by me.

Data Analysis

Because this study focused on understanding the participants' perceptions of reality, it was important that the findings match the data. Although one phenomenon was being studied, the perspectives of several people were taken into account. The interview transcripts recorded how participants understood their world. Therefore, it was important for me, the researcher, to explain how the data were interpreted. An audit trail is an

important aspect of showing how the research progressed (Merriam, 2009). The audit trail details how data were collected and how information from interviews was coded and placed into categories. This detailed account of procedures throughout the study increases the trustworthiness of the study and its results.

Using the audio recordings, I transcribed each participant's interview using the exact words of the participants. After interviews were transcribed, the transcripts were coded to identify comments that related to the research questions. Coding consisted of circling consistent words throughout the transcript, along with making notations next to data. These codes, words, or phrases described chunks of data. Merriam (2009) suggested assigning codes as a way to construct themes. In an attempt to eliminate redundancy in developing themes, I constantly looked for shared meanings between the participants. I compared one participant's words to another participant's words to find repetitive consistencies across the participants' experiences. These emerging themes were placed into a three-column chart; evidence, quotes from interviews, were paired with themes, along with a column for my thoughts as they relate to the theme and quotes (see Appendix D). Using quotes from interviews was important as they provided a point of view for the reader.

Credibility was achieved through the use of member checks. Participants were asked for feedback on my findings. Member checks were used to verify the accuracy of recorded words and ideas expressed by the participants. This was the strongest way to ensure I captured what participants were conveying during their individual interviews. Member checks were also used to identify any misunderstandings I had during those times. An email was sent to participants to review their transcripts and to ask questions

that I had about misunderstandings. Participants were able to identify areas they wanted to clarify or add additional comments. When the information was sent back, corrections were made to the original transcripts. The final strategy in ensuring credibility was self-reflection. As the researcher and someone who has been a preservice teacher and a mentor, I had my own assumptions about the research. The final column of the three-column chart of themes was reserved for my thoughts about the participants' responses. Having this final column allowed me to make note of my assumptions and biases as they related to the practicum experience.

The use of a rich description was important in assisting readers in determining whether this study and its findings can be transferred to their site. Because phenomenological studies allow for the information to be presented in a rich description, it was vital to provide readers with an extremely detailed description of the setting and participants, as well as information that supports the findings (Merriam, 2009). It was also important to record and report discrepant data. Even when there are exceptions to the pattern of data, it was important to note all factors that affect the practicum experience. To present these details and provide such evidence, quotes from individual interviews were presented in the findings section so readers would have a full understanding of the participants and their experiences. Although the study focused on a particular phenomenon, the sample consisted of preservice teachers at a variety of grade levels, allowing for a greater range of understanding of the practicum. This diversity of the sample also allows readers to determine whether the study and its findings can be transferred to their site.

Findings

After reading, rereading, coding, and comparing participants' responses, I identified three key areas that were important to preservice teachers during the practicum. During the practicum, preservice teachers felt the practicum allowed them to experience all the roles of a teacher, and they admitted to being unaware of all the responsibilities teachers have that do not relate to the classroom or instruction. Preservice teachers also felt that their mentor teacher and supervisor's feedback was helpful in their learning.

These three key ideas were developed through looking at the themes that were identified when analyzing interview transcripts in the effort to answer the research questions. Themes that occurred time and time again with each participant and their actual words from the interview have been included to demonstrate how themes relate to answer the research questions.

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions of Their Professional Responsibilities During Practicum

Classroom management. When analyzing the question of how preservice teachers perceive their professional responsibilities, seven of the eight participants discussed managing students as one of their professional responsibilities. Because preservice teachers had the opportunity to manage behavior once they took control of the classroom, they realized that the responsibility of managing behavior was not an easy one. Many of them found difficulty in managing the students' behavior and realized that not having behavior under control would affect the class. Saara stated that "behavior is the most important thing" and continued to discuss how students cannot learn if the teacher does not have control of the class. Another participant, Shareen, reiterated this

belief by stating: “If I lose control from the beginning of the class, [lesson] it’s done.” Because they faced some difficulties with classroom management, the participants felt that they needed more experience with managing behavior before entering their own classrooms.

Being aware of students’ needs. Another responsibility that participants focused on during interviews was getting to know students and their students’ needs. Teachers do not walk in on day one knowing their students or their needs. Time is spent assessing students to determine needs, and the participants felt that getting to know students is important to student development. Participants pointed out that knowing their students was a great responsibility for them. Ayesha discussed how observing students gives “perspective of students, their abilities, their levels, what they are capable of, what they can do.” Another participant, Fahima, mentioned how she was “responsible to help them to learn and support them and provide many things to help them improve.” By observing students, participants found that they were able to “know their personalities, and their weakness point, their strength points,” as pointed out by Saara. Although participants identified getting to know students as a responsibility, they did not feel like they were given enough time to get to know students before being expected to teach as can be seen through Ayesha’s words: “One of my complaints during the practicum is that we come in the first week. The following week, we had to start teaching which seems kind of irregular.”

However, in the real world of teaching, teachers walk into classrooms not knowing all the needs of their students, and they need to take the time, just as the preservice teachers did, to assess and observe students to determine their needs and get to

know them. Participants soon realized how much they had learned about their students at the conclusion of the practicum with Ayesha stating, “At the end of the internship, I know them [students] very well and I know their abilities so as a result I know how to plan and make my plan fit for 26 students.” Although participants felt they did not know students at the beginning of the practicum, they realized that over the course of time, they began to know their students and how to meet their needs.

Lesson plan challenges. Lesson planning was found to be one of the most stressful responsibilities for the participants. While they found that planning was beneficial because it helped in preparation for class, preservice teachers found lesson planning confusing. A major confusion was the format of the plans. The lesson plan template required by the College was different from the lesson plan template used by employed teachers at the practicum sites. Rabia pointed out that the “ADEC plan was easy and clear” because there was a focus on the idea being taught and an example of how it would be taught. Rabia further explained how the College’s template asked for too much detail, asking for detailed accounts of each activity that they would present to students. But Fahima felt that lesson planning assisted with how she “can move in the lesson, move from activity to activity.” Ayesha and Rabia both mentioned the need for more assistance when planning for different learning levels with Ayesha pointing out that “students are supposed to be at a certain level but unfortunately they’re not, so at some point planning gets tricky.” Rabia felt that the format of the College’s lesson plan template did not allow for her plans to “relate to the [learning] level of the students.” Teachers felt they needed more experience with planning for different levels and how to effectively write lesson plans to guide their instruction.

Challenges with instruction in a multilevel classroom. The confusion with lesson planning was due to the inexperience of preservice teachers in differentiating instruction for students. Preservice teachers learned about differentiated instruction in their coursework, but the practicum was the first time they were required to differentiate instruction. Because students are second language learners, there were various English proficiency levels within one class. In a single class, there were students who can speak, read, and write fluently in English while there were others who are still learning English letters and letter sounds like a student in Nadia's class who could not read in English and did not know the English alphabet. For these reasons, preservices teachers were required to differentiate instruction by either teaching the same material using a variety of instructional strategies, or deliver lessons at varying levels based on students' ability. Preservice teachers found the responsibility of differentiating instruction hard, with Ayesha admitting that she was "clueless about differentiation at the start of the internship." Preservice teachers questioned how effective could teaching be with so many levels in one class and found it impossible to meet the needs of all students. Both Rabia and Nadia felt that they needed to "work hard with the low students" but questioned how they could teach all students in a multilevel classroom. This issue was further made clear with Aaqilah stating: "If you have 28 students, different levels, one teacher, how can she [the teacher] do it with no support. There is no support to solve the problems. She can't do it!"

While preservice teachers found it hard to differentiate content, they did express the ability to differentiate in the delivery of content by providing bi-literate education to improve learning. Preservice teachers mentioned repeating content in Arabic after

teaching in English. Nadia said, “Every time I teach, I repeat my teaching twice, once in English and once in Arabic.” Preservice teachers felt this was necessary for two reasons: comfort level and content. In regards to the comfort level, they knew most students were not comfortable in English. As stated by A’idah, “students are more familiar with Arabic than English and can be more specific when speaking.” She continued to explain how she found speaking in both Arabic and English to be especially important in subjects like Science and Math that contain more content vocabulary. Aaqilah reiterated how being a true bilingual teacher reinforced students’ learning when she stated: “Especially in Science, there are many high order, hard words, and academic vocabulary so I translated it for them and I saw their understanding get better.” This is an example of the essence of being a true bilingual teacher. Teachers translating from one language to another is the reason why the New School Model was implemented, and why the government is spending time to educate locals. Preservice teachers accepted the responsibility of providing bi-literate education to improve learning.

Lack of effective professional development. Attending professional development at the campus was another responsibility of preservice teachers. Several preservice teachers found that attending professional development meetings had no impact on their learning and wished it were a responsibility they did not have. Sadly, some of the professional developments were not devoted to the professional growth of the preservice teachers. Several teachers mentioned the meetings addressing things that were covered in their college courses with Saara stating: “Sometimes the PD is a waste of time, talking about things that I already know. We talked about these things in college and listening to a repeat is a waste of our time.” A’idah said that she spent much time in

meetings wishing the meetings covered something else because the information was something that was already learned and felt like she just kept hearing a repeat of what she already knew. Unfortunately, teachers trained in NSM are very likely to attend professional developments that addressed what was covered in their college courses. Professional developments offered at the campus were geared more towards veteran teachers, teachers who were teaching prior to NSM implementation. The information covered is material that they had not been trained in because of the lack of formal teacher training prior to the initiative to change the educational system in Abu Dhabi.

A'idah was the only participant to express an appreciation for the professional developments. She felt they were "really helpful and enriched our knowledge." She also expressed how attending professional developments made her feel like a teacher. She thought of them as another one of her job responsibilities, one of the responsibilities of being a teacher. Her thoughts were very different from Saara's in this sense. When Saara spoke of professional developments, she did not think about them as a teacher responsibility. Saara stated: "We can do more teacher things related to my classroom because this is my main priority." Whereas A'idah believed professional developments were beneficial, Saara and others felt professional developments were not a priority.

Preservice teachers also made mention of being required to attend meetings but then not being given any of the responsibilities that were addressed during the meeting. "They said to us that we had to attend the meeting. And when we got there, it was about External Measure of Student Achievement (EMSA). But during the week of EMSA, we didn't work with the students," explained Aaqilah. Preservice teachers found themselves frustrated on days like these and on days when the meetings would last for just a few

minutes. Nadia explained how some professional development sessions were not related to developing skills within their profession at all. She further explained how meetings would last for five minutes, or how they had meetings for exercise or something related to sports. Short meetings and meetings unrelated to teaching discouraged the interviewed preservice teachers from wanting to attend other meetings because they felt like their time was wasted and they would have much rather been at home with their families or working on upcoming lessons. The majority of preservice teachers commented that much of the information that was covered in the professional developments had nothing to do with their professional growth and felt that general information could have just been emailed to them.

By the end of the practicum experience, preservice teachers found that teachers do more than teach. Not only did they gain experience in what they learned in college, they experienced what was not taught in their courses. In the beginning, they thought they simply had to write plans and teach. However, they quickly found that teachers have many responsibilities that include getting to know the needs of students, managing students, differentiating lessons, and attending professional development meetings.

Mentor Teacher Influence on Professional Learning During Practicum

Complete ownership of the classroom. Research question two explores the influence of mentors on the learning of preservice teachers. The biggest influence made on the preservice teachers was having ownership of the classroom. Mentor teachers relinquished control of their classroom and gave total control to preservice teachers who were there to learn. Aaqilah and Rabia discussed how their mentor teachers told them that the class was theirs. Rabia mentioned that her mentor told her: “You are the teacher. You

are responsible for doing what you want." Aaqilah talked about how her mentor teacher helped her in the beginning but how that changed the last month of the practicum. She stated that her mentor teacher said: "You will do everything by yourself." While preservice teachers expressed appreciation for the help mentor teachers provided in the beginning, they expressed even more appreciation for having total control of the classroom. Saara expressed her appreciation with this statement: "My school mentor told me I had to do everything. She gave me all the responsibilities and that was good because it gave me the experience to be a teacher." Mentors gave preservices teachers the opportunities to act as teachers by allowing them to teach lessons on their own, complete all planning for instruction, be the classroom disciplinarian, and having the opportunity to learn the grade reporting system by entering grades for students on online.

Classroom support provided by the mentor teacher. Preservice teachers found the support they received while in the classroom beneficial to their growth as a professional. As Rabia stated, "I feel lucky with the mentor I had because she cooperated with me. She supported me and gave me information that would help me in the future." She continued to discuss how her mentor teacher met with her twice a week to help her with her planning. Rabia also discussed how her mentor teacher supported her even while she was teaching students. She stated that there were times that she would be teaching and would make a mistake because things were not clear to her. She reported that her mentor teacher was happy to help her in correcting the mistake.

As Rabia, Saara also felt the same type of support in terms of the cooperation between her and the mentor teacher. She reported: "We tried to share all of what we know about teaching, learning, and the students." She discussed how they shared ideas,

even feeling like she was helping her mentor. The fact that she felt like her and her mentor teacher shared ideas- shows that her mentor supported her ideas, giving them value. This feeling could only happen where the environment was one in which there were two teacher leaders involved, one in which the mentor teacher does not tell the preservice teacher how to think but rather they discussed teaching and learning.

On the other hand, Ayesha and Shareen spoke of their mentor teachers as being more of facilitators of learning. Ayesha reported that her mentor teacher gave her "direction" in the way she taught. And Shareen discussed how her mentor teacher did not give her a "direct answer" when she had a question but encouraged her to "play around" with possible answers. The statements of these two preservice teachers showed that their mentor teachers assisted them in forming their own thoughts and owning their learning. Both Ayesha and Shareen were assigned to the same practicum site so it is possible that the culture of this school, or the culture of the English Medium Teachers, is to encourage learners to take the lead by aiding learners in leading themselves.

The role of constructive feedback. Mentor teachers were only required to observe three teaching lessons but preservice teachers said they received feedback after every lesson they taught. This feedback provided them with suggestions to improve teaching and things that their mentor felt went well during their lesson. Ayesha appreciated the "constant feedback" on her teaching, while Fahima appreciated the feedback on her lesson plans. There was an overall sense that feedback was something that they could use to become better teachers, with Nadia stating how her mentor gave her advice to "improve her teaching," and Ayesha stating, "I've had some really solid

feedback that I can build on." Aaqilah said that her feedback was never "bad" but things that she needed to improve on.

Shareen said that, "in the morning, I teach the lesson and after break, I teach the same lesson. After she [mentor teacher] gave me feedback, I tried to work on it." Shareen's comment is an example of how receiving feedback after a morning session can change the way one taught in the afternoon session. Because preservice teachers taught lessons to two classes, they felt fortunate to teach the same lesson twice because received feedback after the morning session. They would use that feedback to improve the lesson in the afternoon. This allowed for immediate application of what was discussed with their mentor. They felt constructive feedback helped them improve their teaching because the feedback was in a positive way, never telling them how bad they were doing but letting them know what they could improve on in the lesson.

Open lines of communication established. Communication was not an issue that many of the preservice teachers discussed when talking about their mentors. In terms of communication, many of the preservice teachers were focused on whether or not they received feedback from their mentor versus how they received the feedback. However two preservice teachers did discuss the variety of ways that their mentors communicated with them. Nadia remembered how she was able to communicate with her mentor via both phone and email, while Aaqilah mentioned being able to communicate with and receive feedback from her mentor via email and WhatsApp, a cellular phone application that is similar to text messaging. These alternative methods of communication made mentor teachers available at times other than when they were with their preservice teacher at the practicum site, often at times outside of working days and hours.

Relevant examples or resources provided to preservice teachers. Preservice teachers found getting relevant examples and resources from their mentors helped with their learning. All preservice teachers mentioned how their mentor being an example was important in seeing how things should be done, especially in their first few weeks of the practicum. Mentor teachers constantly facilitated learning by providing examples of what teachers do daily. Rabia discussed how her mentor teacher would write everything down during the day. Her mentor kept detailed notes on attendance- documenting which students and how many days they were absent. The mentor explained that this was important in parent contact so that if a parent complains about their child's grades, there is evidence that shows how much school the child missed. Ayesha discussed how her mentor teacher modeled getting feedback from students, and how she used this information to differentiate instructional practices on a daily basis in class. Fahima mentioned how her mentor teacher gave her suggestions and examples of how to control behavior by using behavior charts as well as methods for attracting students' attention. A'idah discussed how her mentor teacher liked students to work both as individuals and in groups and observed how her mentor teacher transitioned between the two. A'idah said: "I learned some ways and methods she applied." She was later able to apply these strategies with students while they worked in groups. The examples provided to them by their mentor teachers are what preservice teachers could take to use in their future classrooms. Seeing the practices put in place, made them more meaningful and preservice teachers were able to observe how easy implementation can be.

Overall, preservice teachers found that their mentor teachers gave them direction in the way that they teach. They were provided with models of a good lesson and saw

examples of how to give a solid lesson. Preservice teachers knew that they made mistakes and they had questions about teaching. But their mentor teachers were there to support them and help things become clear by providing them with feedback and allowing them the opportunity to completely take over the class. There was an overall sense that mentor teachers generally wanted to support their learning and wanted to share ideas with them to make them better teachers and prepare them for their own classrooms.

College Supervisor Influence on Professional Learning During Practicum

Preservice teachers did not have as much to say about their college supervisor when compared to how they felt their mentor teacher influenced their learning. As a researcher, I assume that this relates to the fact that preservice teachers did not spend as much time with their college supervisor as they did with their mentor teacher on the practicum site. College supervisors were only required to spend a minimum of five hours per week at each of their practicum sites, and the five hours were split among all preservice teachers on the site.

Open lines of communication established. In investigating how preservice teachers' learning was influenced by their college supervisors, I found that this type of communication was significant in facilitating preservice teachers' learning. Preservice teachers appreciated their supervisors' availability and accessibility in a variety of ways. Nadia and Aaqilah spoke of having the ability to ask questions via email, SMS text messaging, phone, and Whatsapp mobile messaging, and being able to visit the College to sit down for face-to-face discussions. Preservice teachers felt comfortable with being able to ask questions and voice their concerns with their supervisor. Saara remarked: "We were comfortable with him so anything we faced and were alerted about, we could

discuss it with him and he would give us advice that helped a lot." Ayesha discussed how communication was open; "He speaks openly. I told him no sugar coating things. Just tell me the way it is because it is time for me to learn." Remarks like this demonstrated how open lines of communication facilitated the learning process of preservice teachers.

Preservice teachers' learning facilitated. The practicum allowed preservice teachers time to reflect on their learning and the work done at the schools. College supervisors often facilitated preservice teachers' thinking by asking questions as pointed out by Shareen who stated: "After I teach, he starts asking about my feelings about the lesson, what I did well, what I think I did wrong." She went on to further explain how this questioning process helped her think about the next teaching time; she began to think of things she could try in other lessons. Aaqilah also had a college supervisor who used questioning to stimulate the preservice teacher to self-assess and self prescribe. In Aaqilah's case, the supervisor provided her with written questions to assist in facilitating her thinking.

Mentor teacher and college supervisor relationship. While most preservice teachers did not mention the collaborative effort of their mentor teacher and college supervisor, Aaqilah and Rabia both thought this was important in improving their practice. Their mentor teacher and college supervisor work collaboratively to assist them in their learning. Aaqilah discussed how her college supervisor built a "good relationship" with her mentor and how the two often discussed Aaqilah's "skills and knowledge." Rabia felt that her college supervisor and mentor teacher collaborated because her supervisor wanted to see her grow. She stated that her supervisor liked to communicate with her mentor as he wanted to "know what the weaknesses are because

he wants to see the progress." Because college supervisors are not spending time with preservice teachers daily during the practicum, the collaboration between them and mentor teachers was one that allowed them to co-construct suggestions and solutions that assisted the preservice teachers in becoming better teachers.

The role of constructive feedback. When communicating with college supervisors, feedback was mainly what preservice teachers were in search of. Preservice teachers found that receiving feedback that pointed out the positives and negatives was constructive. "When he [the college supervisor] pointed out the negatives, they were things I didn't see and it helped me improve my mistakes," said Nadia. On the same line, Saara pointed out how the college supervisor's feedback helped her "overcome the weaknesses and strengthen the strong points." When looking at the positive and negatives of lessons, Rabia discussed how the college supervisor gave her something to work toward for the next observation because he told her what areas he was pleased with, and what areas he wanted her to focus on more next time. Fahima also pointed out how the feedback included "points to improve myself." She also felt that her college supervisor supported her in improving herself, especially in the area of classroom management. These are illustrations of how college supervisors were looking for growth within preservice teachers and supported them to build upon what they were working on during the practicum.

Relevant examples or resources provided to preservice teachers. As with the mentor teachers, college supervisors provided examples and resources to preservice teachers. Supervisors provided preservice teachers with information in regards to lessons and lesson planning. Aaqilah felt like the examples and resources given was a form of

teaching. Her supervisor would meet with her prior to a lesson and review the lesson stages with her so that she was clear about what she should do during the lesson. Her supervisor "explained what each stage was about and what should be done" during each stage. Because A'idah and Aaqilah were at the same practicum site, they shared the same college supervisor. Her method for helping the preservice teachers was similar with both as A'idah also mentioned receiving suggestions in regards to teaching. As she explained, "She [the college supervisor] gives me some recommendations which are really helpful. For my class, she told me to do this, or suggested doing this." Shareen's college supervisor also gave specifics as to what could be done during lessons. Her supervisor would say: "If I were teaching, I will use this method or this technique." Unlike the preservice teachers' mentor teachers, college supervisors were sometimes instructive, simply offering suggestions and solutions to improve teacher practice.

From the interviews, it was clear that college supervisors and preservice teachers had a mutual respect for each other. That mutual respect fostered strong relationships that were about open communication. Because preservice teachers felt their supervisors were readily available to them, they felt that no stone had gone unturned during their practicum because someone was there to support them on their journey of being a teacher. Feedback was honest because supervisors stated the facts as they were but did not put preservice teachers on the defense. It was also found that supervisors were able to provide feedback that was constructive, pointing out what could be improved on. These aspects indicate how supervisors contributed to the development of those future teachers.

Conclusion

To understand the experiences of preservice teachers during their fourth year of a B.Ed. program in which they participate in a practicum experience in schools, semi-structured interviews were utilized to gather information on experiences during the practicum. The questions used in the interview protocol elicited responses that provided a picture of how preservice teachers viewed their practicum experience. The purpose of this study was to identify what happens during the practicum as told by those experiencing it, and using a qualitative approach paired with individual interviews assisted in gaining a better understanding of the practicum for a group of preservice teachers. After analyzing the data and interpreting the results, it is imperative that a framework be designed to support preservice teachers in their areas of difficulty. Challenges faced had nothing to do with lack of support from mentor teachers or university supervisors but were in the day-to-day responsibilities of a teacher.

While preservice teachers had a strong knowledge of pedagogies, the data showed that they were not sufficiently trained in the areas of assessing students' needs, determining best instructional practices for classroom use, and planning instructional lessons. Because it is important that the practicum provide an opportunity for preservice teachers to combine their knowledge of pedagogy with classroom context, a program must be designed to prepare teachers not only for the act of teaching, but the preparation that happens even before a lesson is taught. College faculty can design a framework to adequately support the newly trained, and reduce challenges faced during practicum. Information gathered in the study can be used to assist in the development of different activities where preservices teachers are expected to develop their professional

knowledge in the areas of assessing students' needs, determining best instructional practices for classroom use, and planning instructional lessons.

Section 3: The Project

Description and Goals

The purpose of this project is to create a culture of collaboration at the practicum site to assist in reducing the challenges faced by preservice teachers during the practicum. A framework that supports preservice teachers in their day-to-day responsibilities is one that encourages opportunities for collaborative professional learning. Creating a professional learning community (PLC) prior to the start of the practicum can lead to the professional growth of both preservice teachers and their mentors, as well as other members of the teaching community on practicum sites. Because the project is based on collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and ideas, every aspect of the project provides the opportunity for members of the community of learners to learn more about their craft. And while they are learning more about their craft, it is important to encourage the development of critical thinking and problem solving; therefore, collaborative learning activities such as Six Thinking Hats and the Tuning Protocol offer variety in maintaining the focus of collaboration while participants use their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

All of the teachers on campus, administrators, and preservice teachers make up the community of learners. The project has been developed to not only be beneficial to preservice teachers, but also to be beneficial to all teachers on campus as well as administrators. Although not given the title of mentor, all teachers and leaders on the campus are mentors because they have interactions with preservice teachers during grade-level meetings, campus meetings, and school activities. Therefore, it is important to include everyone in the process.

What takes place on each day of the project has one central goal: to provide professional development on the professional learning community (PLC) model of collaboration to help preservice teachers better understand their responsibilities of assessing students' needs and planning lessons to meet those needs while engaging in discussions around best practices prior to beginning their final practicum. The practicum is a means for preservice teachers to link theory and practice, and the addition of a PLC component prior to the practicum beginning provides preservice teachers with an opportunity to develop professional skills and knowledge specific to the practicum site and students they will be working with through actual practice. Preservice teachers will be able to begin their practicum with additional knowledge they can use when they enter the classroom as teachers during the practicum.

Learning Objectives

To achieve the goal of building a culture of collaboration through PLCs, I have defined learning objectives for each day of professional learning. On Day 1, the participants will (a) understand the purpose of PLCs; (b) determine how the school can improve collaboration among educators; and (c) identify best instructional practices and determine how those practices can be used in their classroom. On Day 2, the participants will (a) analyze sample student work to identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to the goal of the assignment; (b) understand collaboration through coplanning and coteaching; and (c) coplan and develop a coteaching lesson plan for future instructional use. On the final day, the participants will (a) analyze standardized test data and identify strengths and weaknesses in learning standards; (b) understand collaboration through

vertical team planning; and (c) develop subject area vertical plans for selected learning standards.

Learner Outcomes

At the conclusion of the project, participants are expected to be able to transfer what they learned in the professional development to the school context. After participating in the professional development activities, participants should be able to (a) identify ways to use new instructional practices in their classrooms; (b) complete a coplanning template to develop a lesson plan for collaborative teaching that meets the diverse needs of students; and (c) complete a vertical team planning template to develop a continuum of knowledge and skills across the grade levels and identify how each grade level can support the others to ensure student success from one grade level to the next..

Rationale for the Project Genre

Because the challenges faced by preservice teachers are due to the day-to-day responsibilities of a teacher, it was important to select a professional development model that would immerse preservice teachers in some teachers' day-to-day responsibilities that they did not have practice with in their college coursework. Some of those responsibilities are assessing students' needs, determining best instructional practices for classroom use, and planning instructional lessons based on students' needs and grade-level standards. The project selected is based on practices that will ensure growth in these areas within preservice teachers through collaboration among those currently in the profession and those entering the profession. Just as Kolb's (1984) ELT stresses the importance of learners taking an active role in their learning through experiences, this project encourages active learning as participants collaborate and engage in dialogue

about the practices of teaching. Preservice teachers use their coursework knowledge of theories and combine it with the experiences and knowledge of those currently working in the profession to make meaning of the world of teaching in context. The project allows preservice teachers to gather new information, knowledge, skills, and behaviors while learning is facilitated as the presenter involves them in the learning process.

In developing a project that focused on collaborative professional learning, I drew upon the ideas of Merriam (2008) and Brookfield (2010). To foster adult learning, reflection and dialogue must be encouraged in context, within the workplace (Merriam, 2008, p. 97). Brookfield argued that learning happens through a partnership between the learner and the facilitator. The facilitator is there to motivate participants to learn; the key is to provide participants with the tools needed to engage in learning "without needing teachers standing over them directing their activities at each stage of the proceedings" (Brookfield, 2010, p. 236).

As professionals are introduced to and participate in professional learning communities, they participate in activities that allow them think about their past experiences. At this point, as Brookfield contended, learning happens through volition (Galbraith, 2004). It is while participating in PLCs that professionals make the decision on what to re-evaluate and how to re-evaluate it. As learners re-evaluate past experiences, they form new or revised meanings of those experiences, which in turn creates an environment where learners take on greater responsibility for their learning. Participating in PLCs provides an opportunity for learners to see the connections between what they are learning and what is occurring in their profession.

Rationale for Content of the Project

Trif and Popescu (2013) conducted a study to examine preservice teachers' perceptions of professional development and found that preservice teachers believed it was important to participate in learning activities that allow for personal reflection and an opportunity to learn in a community of professionals (p. 820). After analyzing the data, they found that it would be beneficial to provide learning activities that would provide preservice teachers just that and that would offer them more support in the day-to-day responsibilities of being a teacher. These included understanding students' needs, writing lesson plans to address the various learning levels within one classroom, and being exposed to useful and purposeful professional development. There is no one better to support preservice teachers in these areas than those who currently hold these responsibilities. The content of the project is problem focused and allows participants to (a) provide answers to each other, (b) use their past experiences to provide solutions to problems or questions, (c) talk about why ideas and concepts are important, and (d) apply what was learned immediately in their classrooms. The content of the project will allow both preservice teachers and teachers to collaborate to prioritize standards and build knowledge of practices for classroom use, creating an atmosphere where everyone learns together to better serve students. Learning activities that occur during Days 2 and 3 are especially beneficial to campus administrators as they are introduced to alternative activities that can be used during campus professional development programs because completed activities can be used immediately and relate to the current work happening on the campus.

Review of the Literature

In developing the project, I focused on how preservice teachers could develop their professional knowledge in the workplace setting. The focus was professional learning, and professional learning as defined by Gallant and Mayer (2012) is individual inquiry, critical reflection, and an evaluation of practices while being focused on skills of the profession (p. 300). Using EBSCOhost, I searched the databases Education Research Complete, Academic Search Complete, and ERIC for articles. I used the search terms *professional learning, collaborative learning*, *teacher collaboration*, *teacher practicum learning,* and *workplace learning. Professional learning and collaborative learning* led me to several articles on communities of practice. After reading several of those articles, I made the connection between communities of practice and professional learning communities, an initiative that I was involved in for 4 years when I was an instructional leader on an elementary campus. Communities of practice and professional learning communities are both based on collaborative professional learning, but professional learning communities are focused on collaboratively building the skills 21st century teachers must possess to improve results on campuses (Hoaglund, Birkenfield, & Box, 2014). Based on the intended focus of the project, professional learning for preservice teachers, it was determined that using *communities of practice* and *professional learning communities* as search terms would yield articles to assist me in the development of my project.

Communities of Practice

Wenger (1998) defined *communities of practice* (COPs) as groups of people who engage in collaborative learning about something they do and want to learn to do better.

In COP, three characteristics are important: domain, community, and practice. The *domain* represents shared interest, and being a member of the community also means being committed to the domain and committed to learning for everyone in the community. The *community* consists of the people in the group who engage in activities for the purposes of helping each other, sharing information, and learning. The *practice* is simply the resources, experiences, and tools those members of the community share. Participating in a community of practice is what facilitates learning (Wenger, 2000).

Developing COPs is thought to be beneficial in building partnerships within schools and teacher education programs. Sim (2010) pointed out that such a partnership's focus is workplace professional development. Through action research, dialogue and inquiry about particular professional needs occur among all participants. Participants are then able to share and examine experiences that have occurred in the workplace, create their own understanding of those experiences, and later apply their new knowledge in context.

Wenger (1998) identified the first application of COP in education through teacher training. These communities are seen as peer-to-peer professional development activities that affect educational practices in three ways: internally, externally, and over the lifetime of students. Internally, COPs are organized around subject matter. Externally, COPs connect experiences in the community beyond the school. Over the lifetime of students, COPs focus on topics that facilitate lifelong learning in students. In schools today, COPs have become professional learning communities where practitioners work to improve performance in education.

Communities of practice in teacher education programs were described as an opportunity for experienced teachers to support preservice teachers in becoming skilled in the profession (Levine, 2010). During the practicum, preservice teachers have the opportunity to learn by observing and discussing practices with experienced teachers before they are given complete control of the class. Communities of practice support the idea of gradually releasing control to preservice teachers because gradual release of teacher responsibility gives them opportunities to engage in practice, determining what it means to be a teacher in context. As preservice teachers continually engage in practice, they improve on what they know and can do, moving from people merely looking in to people who are active participants in practice.

Rigelman and Ruben (2012) conducted a study to examine professional collaboration within school and university partnerships. The study had three foci, the creation of a professional learning community, connecting theory to practice, and eliciting student thinking to further learning. The protocols implemented in the study involved both the preservice teachers and mentors. While working in professional learning communities, preservice teachers and mentors went through a collaborative lesson planning cycle where they examined and refined instructional practices through protocols to promote collaboration and protocols that mentor teachers could use to guide preservice teachers. The university continuously implemented field-based assignments throughout the practicum to allow preservice teachers to use research-based practices learned in their coursework in the school classroom. Preservice teachers were asked to share their findings with their mentor teachers as a means of reflection and an opportunity for growth. Participants of the study soon recognized that being a teacher meant building

strong relationships and learning communities with students and peers. They study found that preservice teachers grew as they continuously examined their practices, and as they examined their practices with others. As one participant put it, teaching is "a field that revolves around continuous collaborative learning" (Rigelman & Ruben, 2012, p. 988).

Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) examined how a group of new teachers could be valuable support to one another through Wegner's COP framework. For two weeks out of a month, participants from across a district gathered together to discuss their lives as teachers. Their study introduced the Beginning Teacher Program (BTP). Sessions of the BTP included community building and skill building. The program encouraged participants to reflect and listen to others and connect with their classroom lives. The study revealed that talk centered around sharing resources and problem solving. The BTP allowed for the opportunity for new teachers to discuss their understandings of being a teacher. Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) found that novice teachers benefit from this type of professional development, but stressed that novice teachers may no longer need this type of support once they have gained more experience in the classroom. That experience did not mean that an individual no longer needed to be a member of a community of practice. It simply means that the community of practice changes, and that the individual may define their own community of practice to participate in.

Chalies, Escalie, Bertone, and Clarke (2012) examined a triad of preservice teacher, the mentor teacher, and the university supervisor in the context of professional learning. The preservice teacher was to learn the rules of teaching through interaction with their mentor teacher and university supervisor within a community of practice. Their community of practice was based on a professional development sequence that focused

on the preservice teacher's lesson observation and a training visit, a post-lesson interview with either the mentor teacher and university supervisor or simply the mentor teacher. The study found that these interviews allowed the preservice teacher to learn the rules of the community as links were made between theory and practice as rules were applied in the classroom.

Teacher education programs are tasked with getting preservice teachers involved in practicing the core teaching skills. Daniel, Auhl, and Hastings (2013) investigated one such program, a program that not only allowed preservice teachers a chance to practice core skills of teaching but also gave them the opportunity to engage in ongoing critical reflection. As preservice teachers participated in critical reflection, they were also involved in critical dialogue with their peers. Through their reflection and dialogue, a community of practice emerged as they developed an understanding of teaching from the collective experiences of their peers. Within their community of practice, preservice teachers were able to critique instructional practices and gather new information to increase their knowledge and skills. Daniel and colleagues concluded that engaging in critical reflection and dialogue provided a context for preservice teachers to develop their teaching knowledge and skills (p. 170).

Pridham et al. (2013) mentioned teaching as a community of practice in their study. The purpose of the study was to identify how practicum experiences allowed for engagement in communities of practice as preservice teachers worked with peers, university supervisors and experienced teachers in multi-disciplinary teams. The authors found that communities of practice occurred during meetings on campus, informal interactions, and extracurricular activities. They concluded that preservice teachers

should participate in staff meetings and curriculum planning, but stressed that time and opportunities must be made available for preservice teachers to meet and plan with members of the community. As indicated by the results of the study, communities of practice in the school setting are most effective when preservice teachers have continued dialogue with university supervisors, and are able to meet in multi-disciplinary teams. These interactions are a means for professional development that allow preservice teachers to learn about the work of teachers from multiple perspectives across the school environment (Pridham, Deed, & Cox, 2013, p. 61).

Professional Learning Communities

Dufour and Eaker (1998) described a professional learning community as a group of professionals engaged in constant study and continuous practice (p. xii). PLCs have been deemed as the new approach to professional development for educators. This new approach is one in which teachers share their ideas, study together, and make decisions about data (Huffman & Hipp, 2003, p. 10). From a sociocultural perspective, PLCs connect the group to individual members as they each play a role in developing the other (Van Lare & Brazer, 2013). Without individual context there is no group context; and without group context there would be no opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. PLCs constitute job-embedded learning where members of the community learn from each other, and through collective inquiry develop their professional skills and knowledge that turn into action. Action is seen as experimentation where ideas are developed and tested. Professional learning communities allow for experimentation of the curriculum and those experiments are seen as opportunities to learn through new experiences and a greater awareness of the learning environment.

As PLCs encourage participants to examine workplace practices, teacher leadership is developed that creates change in schools and enhances student learning (Watson, 2012). The changes seen in schools can be seen as a result of the changing roles of the preservice teacher, university supervisor, and mentor teacher when PLCs are implemented during the practicum (Cornu, 2010). In traditional practicums, preservice teachers were focused on gaining knowledge from their mentor teacher and university supervisor. According to Cornu (2010), when learning communities become a part of the practicum, preservice teachers are expected to contribute to the relationship they have with their mentor teachers and university supervisors. Preservice teachers are expected to collaborate with a group that has now become their peers, making them not only responsible for their own learning but also responsible for their peers' learning as they are expected to also contribute their knowledge and experiences to the group. Because preservice teachers need support in developing skills that encourage cooperative learning, active learning, and cooperation in PLCs, the role of the university supervisor shifts from assessor to teacher. As preservice teachers become responsible for professional learning during PLCs, the teaching of Dewey's reflective attitude and skills by university supervisors is recommended (Cornu, 2010, p. 199). A study that examined collaborative learning in teacher education found that collaborative learning is not used frequently in teaching methods courses, and preservices teachers did not regularly receive training in the use of the strategy (Ruys, Keer, & Aelterman, 2010). Therefore, preservice teachers have limited experience with collaborative learning and have not had the experiences of using skills necessary for effective collaboration. To learn how to work collaboratively with others and be able to explore understandings on a deeper level, preservice teachers

must learn listening and responding skills that show trust, respect, and support so that learning for all is encouraged. Finally, in PLCs the role of the mentor teacher still includes supporting preservice teachers' learning by providing feedback but also includes mentor teachers having the ability to assess preservice teachers. As mentor teachers are present in classrooms with preservice teachers, they are able to observe their skills and ability to teach, allowing them to make decisions about their performance.

PLCs in teacher education programs have been envisioned as the link between preservice teachers becoming professional teachers and embracing their new role as such (Hoaguland et al., 2014; Kagle, 2014). Hoaguland et al. (2014) focused their study on a teacher education program that provided preservice teachers an opportunity to engage in authentic experiences to learn how to be collaborative learners. Even before entering the real world of teaching, preservice teachers were provided with the opportunity to practice skills necessary for the work they will do in their profession. In their PLCs, preservice teachers had the opportunity to collaborate while analyzing student data, research best instructional practices, develop solutions to problems, and implement what they learned. These skills are seen as crucial in the teaching profession, and this teacher education program established a means for laying that foundation before preservice teachers became professionals.

Several studies have identified key components for successful PLC implementation in schools (Kagle, 2014; Linder, Post, & Calabrese, 2012). PLCs for preservice teachers are necessary for building pedagogical skills for future classroom use, creating reflective practitioners, and addressing the realities of the real-world classroom setting. Linder, Post, and Calabrese (2012) found that the successfulness of PLCs was

attributed to studying a topic in depth, having a university faculty member as a facilitator, and having the opportunity to implement new instructional strategies and later being able to discuss and evaluate those practices. They encouraged the formation of PLCs to develop partnerships between schools and universities. If university faculty can commit to engage with others who have common interests, positive relationships can be built where university faculty become learners while teachers bring their knowledge to the group. University faculty members are key to successful implementation as they have experience working with adult learners and are knowledgeable in the art of teaching.

PLCs with experienced teachers can be very different from PLCs that involve preservice teachers. Experienced teachers already have pedagogical skills and have faced the realities of the classroom, but preservice teachers are still working to become teachers. For this reason, Kagle (2014) believed that some adaptations should be made when implementing PLCs in a teacher education program. She also believed that a professor of a course should act as a facilitator in PLCs. She stressed the professor, as the PLC facilitator, can be more directive and proactive with preservice teachers as they are apprentices learning how to be reflective in their practice. She also found that the use of a protocol is effective to keep reflective conversations focused, and following a protocol provides the opportunity for all participants to be active during the collaborative process. Just as the practicum expects preservice teachers to link theory to practice, preservice teachers are asked to link what was learned from the protocol to their practice or future practice. Such reflections provide the opportunity for preservice teachers to reflect and build knowledge through their experiences about the act of teaching to improve their practice.

Past research indicates the need for school and university partnerships to be developed to better support the learning of preservice teachers. Partnering between the school and university will foster collaboration to encourage professional learning through the development of communities of practice or professional learning communities. Professional learning activities should include the participation of preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. During these learning activities, mentor teachers and university supervisors offer their expertise to preservice teachers in understanding the link between theory and practice. In turn, the group becomes one that is collaborative, allowing preservice teachers the opportunity to reflect and dialogue about their experiences and the group's experiences. Through dialogue, participants become aware of others experiences in the workplace, sometimes conflicting, bring awareness of the workplace in many different areas (Watson, 2014). Through the implementation of PLCs, teaching no longer happens as a private activity because the doors of every classroom are open to all PLC participants as their experiences are shared. Practicum programs that include a PLC component can not only provide experiential learning, but can provide skill based training where preservice teachers can design a curriculum with their peers and other teachers through the context of dialogue and critical reflection (Pradham, 2011, p. 19).

Project Description and Implementation

Learning Resources

The proposed project consists of an eight hour per day, three-day professional development program. The important resources include the agendas for all days, the PowerPoint presentations, and handouts for all activities. It is important to secure a

meeting location for the professional development. As professional development happens at least once a week on practicum sites, they have available meeting rooms. Campuses are also equipped with projectors in these rooms and a projector is needed for the PowerPoint presentations. Therefore, one selected practicum site will be utilized for the three-day sessions. This will provide preservice teachers with their first visit to the practicum site, and an opportunity to work with teachers and administrators before their practicum on the campus begins.

As I will facilitate the trainings, there are materials that I will provide to the group. Chart paper and markers will be needed for the full course of the training. Materials for the first day will be provided by me and will include PowerPoint presentation slides on norm setting, classroom instructional practices with handout, Six Thinking Hats activity, and Professional Learning Plan with handout. Other materials will include handouts for sharing knowledge, colored hats for each group, chart paper and markers. Materials for the second day will include one presentation and handout on co-teaching and co-planning, Tuning Protocol poster, and co-teaching lesson plan template. Teachers will be asked to bring in student work samples and grade level learning outcomes. The final day of the training will require administration to provide copies of EMSA data, and I will provide a handout to accompany the presentation on vertical teams, as well as providing a template for the vertical-team planning task.

Potential Barriers

As ADEC moves toward international standards, they have instituted full-day professional development training programs to assist teachers, usually happening prior to the beginning of the school year or during the last week of school. Professional

development programs during the school year are often one to two hours on ADEC practicum campuses because they take place at the end of the school day. While American teachers are accustomed to full day trainings because that is the norm in Western culture, Arabic teachers may be unreceptive to eight hours of training for three consecutive days during the school year if they are expected to simply sit and take in information. The school culture influenced the choice for the format of the training, with teachers and preservice teachers working cooperatively in groups or pairs because socializing, in the Arabic culture, is important when in groups. The use of cooperative learning will allow participants to be actively involved in their learning as interaction, the use of social skills, and group processing will be promoted (Wlodkowski, 2008).

Time is a second barrier to project implementation. The project requires three days of training during the school year. Teachers at the practicum site are currently on campus at that time and are available, but preservice teachers are being asked to prolong their Practicum III experience for an additional three days. The time is available as the last week of Practicum III is designated as a time for independent work although their course assignments and projects have been submitted. As the Practicum Coordinator is responsible for initiating policy and procedures for program development, I am asking for the three days of training to be included in the Practicum III calendar for the last week of the semester.

The final barrier is people as a resource. As I have the lead role in implementing and delivering the proposed project, there may be times when I am unavailable and someone else is needed as the facilitator. The Practicum Coordinator is the best suited to take on this responsibility, as he is responsible for conducting pre-practicum orientations

and monitors the practicum program. Also, an established relationship exists with ADEC as well as the school principal and administrators on campus so no permissions would be needed for the Coordinator to participate in activities on the campus. The project developed and its resources will have been presented to the Practicum Coordinator as a Train the Trainer session.

Timetable

To prepare preservice teachers for their final practicum experience, implementation of the project will take place at the end of the first semester, which is also the conclusion of their Practicum III. That time is a few weeks before preservice teachers begin Practicum IV during the second semester of the school year. The end of preservice teachers' first semester coincides with the end of the first trimester at ADEC schools. Therefore the training will take place the last three days of the ADEC trimester in December.

Roles and Responsibilities

I have the lead role in implementing and delivering the proposed professional development described in this project. I will work with the practicum site's administration team and college supervisor to finalize the suggested date and times of the training, and discuss how best to communicate those details to participants. Once the dates and times are finalized, administrators and the college supervisor will notify participants of the details and encourage their full participation during the sessions. At the conclusion of the proposed professional development, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the professional development activities will take place. I have planned for and developed evaluations to be completed at the conclusion of each of the training days. The

college can use the information gathered from these evaluations to evaluate the effectiveness of the training, and how it has prepared preservice teachers to enter their final practicum, determining whether the implementation of the PLC model of collaboration is one that would enhance their current practicum program.

Instructor responsibilities. As I have developed the training and am responsible for implementing it, the following responsibilities are the key ones:

- Create PowerPoint slides, handouts, and materials
- State learning objectives and goals for each training session
- Assist in the creation of norms and states participation guidelines to create a climate of respect
- State benefits of tasks
- Promote interaction
- Provide immediate feedback
- Provide opportunities to share

Learner responsibilities. Throughout the training, participants are asked to take part in the learning process by participating in collaborative work. Therefore, learners have specific responsibilities that indicate learning, as follows:

- Actively listen
- Participate in discussions
- Commit to the learning tasks
- Ask questions for clarification
- Relate learning to work environment

- Follow established norms

Project Evaluation

The intended goal of the training is to provide preservice teachers with opportunities for collaborative learning, and opportunities to engage in discussions around best practices to meet the needs of all students. As evaluations will occur at the end of each day's training, they will be summative. The evaluations will measure participants' learning and their ability to use new knowledge and skills gained from the professional development sessions. Because an evaluation must be one that can determine whether the actual outcomes matched the intended outcomes (Suskie, 2009, p. 12), having participants answer questions that allow them to reflect on their learning provides an opportunity to determine what participants have learned, which leads to being able to evaluate the training's intended and actual outcomes. Although the professional development opportunity has been created to assist preservice teachers, it is important to have input from the teachers and administrators on campus. All campus administrators and teachers on campus have interactions with preservice teachers, therefore making them apart of the practicum experience. They will also participate in the learning activities so it is important to determine whether these activities have an impact on them and whether they believe them to be beneficial for continued or future use.

During the first training session, participants are to engage in discussions around best practices and identify how those best practices can be implemented into their classrooms. At the conclusion of day one, participants will be asked to reflect on what they have learned about best practices and which they are most likely to implement in

their class. This will allow participants to provide their honest opinions and ideas about what they have learned and how it can be implemented in context.

At the end of day two, participants will have a completed product, a lesson plan for future use. After learning about co-planning and co-teaching, participants are expected to complete a co-teaching template using the information presented during the training. Participants will complete a questionnaire that evaluates their learning and their ability to apply what they learned. Opinions and perceptions about learning and the ability to apply what they learned will be scored on a scale of one to three with the descriptors of *no, somewhat,* and *definitely*.

The final evaluation will assess participants' overall learning and experience during the professional development. The final evaluation will consist of four open-ended questions that allow participants to provide their perspective of their learning after the training:

1. How has the training helped you to understand the need to work collaboratively?
2. How has the training encouraged you to question teaching and learning practices?
3. How did examining students' strengths and weaknesses allow you to examine student learning?
4. How has the training encouraged you to share the responsibility for teaching and student learning?

The final section of the evaluation will allow participants to add personal comments as it relates to what they believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the training.

Implications

The project developed for this project study has the potential to influence professional learning that takes place on practicum sites and provide preservice teachers with professional development that will assist them both during their practicum and in their profession. Although preservice teachers felt they gained valuable experience from the practicum, there were areas they felt they struggled with and this was due to lack of preparation. While coursework provides preservice teacher with theory, it does not provide them with practice. Practice is the purpose of the practicum, and preservice teachers should receive practice in all areas of the school context. Preservice teachers had no prior practice with assessing students' needs, planning lessons to meet the various needs of students, or determining the best instructional practices to implement to meet the needs of students. Therefore, the proposed professional development plan is meant to enhance the current practicum in place by providing preservice teachers with those experiences, preparing them prior to their first day in the classroom. Although preservice teachers will have never met their students, this project provides them the time to get to know their future students and the needs of those students through samples of student work, dialogue with teachers, and data provided by mentor teachers and administrators that will be used in the professional development. The largest impact of this project will be on how professional development is implemented on campus, and how preservice teachers plan for instruction. The PLC Plan calls for a more collaborative environment and that collaboration will take place between mentor teachers and preservice teachers. As the majority of preservice teachers indicated the lack of campus-based professional development that they felt contributed to their growth, the practicum site will also be

asked to provide professional development time for preservice teachers and mentors to meet once per week to review student data and plan lessons based on the data. Providing them with this time gives them the opportunity to work on material that can be implemented immediately and is connected to their learning of becoming a teacher. Continuous learning will be promoted through the work of the mentor teachers and preservice teachers as they use the tools introduced to them throughout the PLC training.

Conclusion

An explanation of the proposed project was provided in Section 3 of this project study. The materials presented in the project were informed by the results of the research study and a project-specific literature review that focused on professional growth in the context of professional environment. The information gathered in the research study assisted in the development of a professional development program to support preservice teachers both before and throughout the practicum. The proposed PLC model of collaboration has the potential to create a learning environment for all involved and can bring about sustainable change on practicum sites.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

From an interdisciplinary study, Ralph et al. (2008) found that the goal of practicum programs "was to provide students with increasingly greater professional responsibilities in their respective practice environments as they progressed through the years of their undergraduate preparation" (p. 161). The practicum at the local university used in this project study was designed to prepare preservice teachers through teaching and learning situations that could help them develop expertise in the classroom. The teaching and learning situations in the practicum happen in a learning environment where preservice teachers are supervised by their college's faculty and supported by a school mentor and other members of the school faculty. This practicum time is critical in the growth of individuals, as it provides the social context for preservice teachers to apply and understand learned knowledge from the classroom. The proposed project provides additional opportunities for learning to happen within the community of learners. Preservice teachers are now being given an opportunity to interact with the school environment prior to the start of the practicum to increase their learning as it relates to assessing students' needs and planning lessons to meet those needs.

Project Strengths

The research study had two major purposes:

1. Examine preservice teachers' first contact with the teaching profession.
2. Gather information that can assist in the development of programs to reduce challenges during the practicum and increase professional growth.

The purpose of the project, based on preservice teachers' perspectives revealed in the research study, is to increase the effectiveness of the practicum experience by providing preservice teachers with additional experiences centered around collaboration with school professionals regarding students' needs and how best to plan for and support meeting those needs. The interview data indicated issues related to the effectiveness of the practicum for preservice teachers, and campus-based professional development that did not contribute to professional growth. The proposed implementation of PLCs is intended to correct this problem within the practicum program by providing opportunities for preservice teachers to take part in professional development activities related to their professional learning in regard to assessing students' needs and planning lessons, and it also provides alternative professional development activities that can be used on the practicum site.

The strengths of the project are its potential support for collaborative efforts between the practicum site and the college through opportunities for collaborative learning. With the college revising the end of the Practicum III schedule to include 3 days of training and the practicum site providing opportunity and space for professional development activities, preservice teachers and mentors have the opportunity to work and study collectively to improve teaching with the opportunity to get better at their craft. As promoted by Wegner's (1998) COP, these collaborative sessions will allow those involved to problem solve, solicit information, and ask about their professional experiences. PLCs will allow preservice teachers, along with those who have supported them, to build knowledge of instructional best practices and skills in assessing their future

students' instructional needs. As a professional knowledge base and experiences are built, preservice teachers will begin to refine and better understand their role as teachers.

The project developed does create a partnership between the practicum site and the college through both offering their full support and cooperation in implementing the project. However, participation of college faculty is absent. Although the project involves teachers and administrators from the practicum site, it does not include participation of the college supervisor or college faculty in the activities. The project was developed for a certain purpose, collaboration among those at the practicum site. However, the literature (Cornu, 2010; Kagle, 2014; Linder et al., 2012) supports the participation of university supervisors and university faculty in PLC implementation during the practicum, as they are able to offer their expertise in linking theory to practice and have experience with working with adults. However, college supervisors are assigned to several students at different practicum sites, so the dilemma of having them provide additional support to only a portion of the preservice teachers they work with exists.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

Because the proposed project requires changes in the practicum, I felt it best to implement things on a small scale, as this would be less likely to disrupt the work of both the practicum site and the college. However, with some additional planning, the project's limitations can be remediated by requiring the participation of college faculty who teach theoretical courses and the participation of the college supervisor. To eliminate the issue of only a portion of preservice teachers receiving additional support, a PLC could be established that involves all preservice teachers and faculty from the practicum sites assigned to the college supervisor. The addition of all preservice teachers, all practicum

sites, college faculty, and the college supervisor would allow for a diversity of experiences yet would show how things are common within any school context. Rigelman and Ruben (2012) established PLCs of varying sizes, and the perspective of one of their participants reinforces the idea of having more people involved in the PLC. The participant believed that learning experiences increased when more people were involved in the process (Rigelman & Ruben, 2010, p. 985). With careful planning and scheduling with practicum sites and the college, the project could be implemented on a larger scale to increase the partnership between practicum sites and the college, in addition to increasing learning for all.

Project Development and Evaluation

Through interviews, several problems encountered by preservice teachers in the practicum were identified, but it is impossible to address every issue in a single project design. Therefore, in trying to identify program ideas, I learned to sort and prioritize ideas that would have an influence on the practicum and every entity involved in the practicum. In the realm of teacher education, professional development sessions are for the purpose of supporting educators and helping them develop their professional skills; therefore, a 3-day professional development program was created. I wanted to ensure active learning so that the focus would be on application—how the information could and would be used in future practice. As an educator, I have used the backwards design model to write lesson plans, but developing this project gave me the opportunity to use that same model for adult learning. I learned that use of the design is very much the same in developing activities for adults as it is in developing classroom lessons. I still started with determining the results I desired for participants, followed by determining

assessment evidence and finally creating learning experiences based around the results I wanted to achieve.

Designing the learning experiences was not something I struggled with because of my past experiences with facilitating professional development sessions. What was trying was developing evaluations that were specific to each day's learning activities. In facilitating full-day sessions, there are a number of things that could be assessed. Therefore, in designing evaluations, I had to ask myself what would matter at the end of the sessions and what I felt would make the professional development sessions successful based on what participants would know and be able to do as a result of their learning. Therefore, it was important for me to determine how to evaluate their transfer of learning. Transfer of learning occurs when program participants can successfully apply what they have learned in a training program (Caffrella, 2002, p. 216). Because learning happens by doing, participants are able to implement what they have learned from training sessions before the conclusion of the proposed project. As participants are asked to provide their personal reflections and reactions at the end of each day, their learning and transfer of learning are monitored.

Scholarship

Scholarship is about discovery, thinking about problems and learning about those problems. I was a student of education many years ago; most of what I know about the practicum is from my experience in the United States. In completing this study, I had the opportunity to think and learn about the education of future educators in a country that I am not a native of. Having the opportunity to learn about the practicum experience in Abu Dhabi gave me a new perspective on the practicum. What I found was that although

I had studied at a university in the United States, many of the practicum experiences I had were similar to those of the participants in my study. Although we were from different cultures and different countries, we had the same highs and lows during the practicum, celebrating when students made achievements and questioning both our abilities and ourselves when students we taught did not succeed. Another commonality that I found was that the preservice teachers in Abu Dhabi appreciated and wanted feedback from their mentors and university supervisors, just as I had when I was in my practicum. We were looking for that feedback to help us get better at our craft. More importantly, we all had a strong understanding that the practicum gave us a chance to do the work of real teachers, placing us in an environment where we could practice what we had learned and get a first-hand account of what it is like being a teacher, even if only for a short period of time.

In terms of discovery related to the development of the project, I discovered that PLCs are not widely used in practicum programs. Very few studies have been published in recent years that focused on PLCs during the practicum. This caused me wonder why, exactly, that is, and that led me to think about exactly when the idea of PLCs was introduced. I discovered that strategies for creating PLCs in schools were introduced by Dufour in 1998, not even 20 years ago, indicating that the idea and use of PLCs in schools are still relatively new. So why is research lacking in the area of PLCs in the practicum? The answer is simple.

In education, reform efforts are implemented, and when they do not get the desired results, reform initiatives are abandoned and others are implemented. Like other reform initiatives, PLCs have the possibility of failure in schools with seasoned

professionals. So if there is a possibility of failure with them, how is it conceivable to get results from preservice teachers, those not in full-time practice and with very little experience in the school setting? My academic work in developing this project study helped me identify the possibility of a PLC being successful with preservice teachers; that success comes from allowing them to take part in learning activities they will encounter during their practicum. The fact that I have asked myself questions during my academic work shows my growth in scholarship. I have grown in questioning what is important in a real-world context and have developed ways to contribute to that importance.

Leadership and Change

In completing this project study, my vision was situating practicum programs in a place in which they would truly support the needs and goals of preservice teachers and help them in becoming teachers. After implementation of the proposed project, I expect to see change at the local college in Abu Dhabi and on future practicum sites. Therefore, I consider myself a transformational leader because I have provided the local college with new ideas that will empower the next group of practicum students to excel far beyond earlier levels of accomplishment. As a transformational leader, I have explored the possible options available for practicum programs and have directed a path to make my vision possible. My hope is that leaders of the local college in Abu Dhabi will commit to long-term planning and analyze internal and external factors to continually improve their practicum program. If they can demonstrate this high level of commitment, they will stimulate the potential of students enrolled in the BEd program and produce new

members of the teaching profession who feel truly prepared to take on the challenges of teaching.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

This project study required me to put aside what I have encountered in past experiences about the practicum program and its benefits, and sometimes lack thereof. Through reading and analyzing past research, as well as conducting research of my own, I now have a richer knowledge of the practicum as experienced by preservice teachers. In gaining that knowledge, I had to step out of my comfort zone. I am a person who follows steps; there is an order to everything. In working with the research template, I worked on sections as I could once Sections 1 and 2 were approved. For example, I felt overwhelmed in trying to write Section 3 and just could not get started. So I started completing Section 4 because I felt more comfortable in reflecting on my experiences, and analyzing how my experiences helped me to better understand the research process, my topic, and myself as a researcher. The benefits of not working in a linear fashion provided me with time to analyze myself as a scholar, leading to a better synthesize of the research findings presented in Section 3. At the conclusion of completing Section 3, I was able to revisit Section 4 and enhance this portion of the paper, as I was able to better link the information to the proposed project.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

This project study gave me the opportunity to put into practice what I learned about research. I had the opportunity to become the researcher, the person who conducted research to answer research questions I developed based on a real-world problem presented in professional literature and at a local level. Just as preservice teachers were to

connect their classroom learning from their education program to real life experiences, myself as the researcher did the same thing. I connected what I learned about research through my studies at Walden University and put that learning into practice as I developed research questions, collected and analyzed data, and used that data to develop a project.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

In developing the project, I focused on using a variety of strategies to encourage development of critical thinking and problem solving. As a project developer, I had to spend time thinking about the outcomes and objectives of the project. I had to pay close attention to ensure the activities put in place would produce the desired outcome, encouraging transformation in participants' skills, knowledge, and attitude. Throughout the process of project development, I better understood how formal and informal evaluations could strengthen a project. Developing a project provided the opportunity to employ formal (questionnaires and a reflection activity) and informal strategies (observing and listening to dialogue) to evaluate project development. Developing the project proposed allowed me to better understand how I could use teachers' behaviors, attitudes, and actions to evaluate their development while participating in the project.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

The purpose of this project was to create a shift in the practicum experience through collaborative inquiry. Partnerships between schools and colleges that focus on collaboration can bring about sustainable change among those involved. The proposed partnership promotes continuous improvements in teaching and learning, creating a learning environment for educators where the school community learns together so that

they can grow professionally and better serve their students. Social change does not come easily or quickly, but schools and colleges that participate in the project will encourage a positive social change as everyone participates in a PLC. The result of this social change could be an increase in professional discourse between stakeholders that focus on problem solving, and peers offering assistance to each other.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Because the practicum is seen as one of the most important components of coursework in education programs, it is imperative that preservice teachers not only have the opportunity to practice their skills in teaching but to also have the opportunity to collaborate while building those experiences. In building a program that supports Professional Learning Communities, schools and colleges promote the idea that examining their practices is what teachers do; and not only is it what they do individually, they do it with their colleagues. By examining those practices in a community of learners, they have the opportunity to learn from their successes and failures. By the end of a practicum experience, preservice teachers will have a community of colleagues that have helped them learn and grow professionally to impact their future work in classrooms. The project provides an opportunity for preservice teachers to develop skills necessary for effective teaching. But those skills go beyond delivering a lesson, and the project provides the opportunity for preservices to take practice in what it necessary before lesson delivery, analyzing data to determine students' needs and planning the lesson. Future research should examine the effects of the project study on preservice teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PLC component during the practicum and whether it assisted with the problem areas that they identified. Future research could also explore

other avenues of collaboration to support professional learning among preservice teachers to better meet their needs as learners and teachers.

Conclusion

Regardless of the college or practicum site, all preservice teachers progress from learner to teacher. The highs and lows that occurred during their introduction to the real world of teaching are meant to help them grow professionally. Not only should preservice teachers have an opportunity to practice their newly learned craft, they should also have opportunities to learn from those who have come before them as well as those who are walking with them. Colleges can continue to practice the same routine of practicum experiences: lesson planning, reflections of teaching experiences, observations, and feedback, or they can create a component within their practicum program to create a support system for preservice teachers that does not simply include their college supervisor and teacher mentor. Opportunities for collaborative learning that include preservice teachers, college supervisors, and mentor teachers can be a meaningful addition to professional learning.

References

Al-Banna, H. (1997). Teacher training in the UAE: Problems and prospects. In K. E. Shaw (Ed.), *Higher education in the Gulf: Problems and prospects* (pp. 101-118). Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press.

Allen, J. M., & Wright, S. E. (2014). Integrating theory and practice in the preservice teacher education practicum. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 20*(2), 136-151.

Badry, F. (2012). Education in the UAE: Local identity and global developments. In Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (Ed.), *Essentials of school education in the United Arab Emirates* (pp. 85-106). Abu Dhabi, UAE: The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research.

Bergsteiner, H., Avery, G. C., & Neumann, R. (2010). Kolb's experiential learning model: Critique from a modeling perspective. *Studies in Continuing Education, 32*(1), 29-46.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Brookfield, S. D. (2010). *Developing critical thinkers: Challenging adults to explore alternative ways of thinking and acting.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Cafferella, R. (2002). *Planning programs for adult learners: A practical guide for educators, trainers, and staff developers.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Caires, S., Almeida, L., & Vieira, D. (2012). Becoming a teacher: Student teachers' experiences and perceptions about teaching practice. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 35*(2), 163-178. doi:10.1080/02619768.2011.643395

Chalies, S., Escalie, G., Bertone, S., & Clarke, A. (2012). Learning "rules" of practice within the context of the practicum triad: A case study of learning to teach. *Canadian Journal of Education, 35*(2), 3-23.

Cheng, M. M. H., Cheng, A. Y. N., & Tang, S. Y. F. (2010). Closing the gap between the theory and practice of teaching: Implications for teacher education programmes in Hong Kong. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 36*(1), 91-104. doi:10.1080/02607470903462222

Chien, C. W. (2015). Preservice English teachers' perceptions and practice of field experience and professional learning from expert teachers' mentoring. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 21*(3), 328-345. doi:10.1080/13540602.2014.953817

Choy, D., Wong, A. F. L., Goh, K. C., & Low, E. L. (2014). Practicum experience: Preservice teachers' self-perception of their professional growth. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 51*(5), 472-482. doi:10.1080/14703297.2013.791552

Cornu, R. L. (2010). Changing roles, relationships and responsibilities in changing times. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(3), 195-206. doi:10.1080/1359866X.2010/493298

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Cuddapah, J. L., & Clayton, C. D. (2011). Using Wenger's communities of practice to explore a new teacher cohort. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(1), 62-75. doi:10.1177/0022487110377507

Cuenca, A. (2010). In loco paedagogus: The pedagogy of a novice university supervisor. *Studying Teacher Education, 6*(1), 29-43. doi:10.1080/17425961003669086

Cuenca, A. (2011). The role of legitimacy in student teaching: Learning to "feel" like a teacher. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 38*(2), 117-130.

Dada, R. (2012). Training and development of educational staff. In Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (Ed.), *Essentials of school education in the United Arab Emirates* (pp. 109-132). Abu Dhabi, UAE: The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research.

Daniel, G. R., Auhl, G., & Hastings, W. (2013). Collaborative feedback and reflection for professional growth: Preparing first-year preservice teachers for participation in the community of practice. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 41*(2), 159-172.

Davis, J. S. (2013). Storying the student teaching experience: Trying on teaching personae. *Clearing House, 86*, 121-124.

DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education, 40,* 314-321. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x

DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Farrell, T. (2008). "Here's the book, go teach the class": ELT practicum support. *Regional Language Centre Journal*, *39*(2), 226-241. doi:10.1177/0033688208092186

Fayne, H. R. (2007). Supervision from the student teacher's perspective: An institutional case study. *Studying Teacher Education, 3*(1), 53-66. doi:10.1080/17425960701284016

Ferber, T., & Nillas, L. A. (2010, Summer). Through the eyes of student teachers: Success and challenges in field teaching experiences. *National Teacher Education Journal, 3*(2), 61-86.

Galbraith, M. (2004). *Adult learning methods: A guide for effective instruction*. Malabar, FL: Kreiger Publishing Co.

Gallant, A. & Mayer, D. (2012). Teacher performance assessment in teacher education: an example in Malaysia. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International research and pedagogy, 38*(3), 295-307. doi:10.1080/02607476.2012.668330

Grudnoff, L. (2011, August). Rethinking the practicum: Limitations and possibilities. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(3), 223-234. ` doi:10.1080/1359866X.2011.588308

He, W., Means, T., & Lin, G. (2006). Field experience tracking and management in teacher development programs. *International Journal of Technology in Teaching and Learning, 2*(2), 134-147.

Hedin, N., & Carroll, B. H. (2010). Experiential learning: theory and challenges. *Christian Education Journal, 7*(1), 107-117.

Hoaglund, A. E., Birkenfeld, K., & Box, J. A. (2014). Professional learning communities: creating a foundation for collaboration skills in preservice teachers: *Education, 134*(4), 521-528.

Huffman, J. B., & Hipp, K. K. (2003). *Reculturing schools as professional learning communities.* Lanham, MD: ScarecrowEducation.

Ibrahim, A. S. (2013). Approaches to supervision of student teachers in one UAE teacher education program. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 34,* 38-45.

Izadinia, M. (2015). Student teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions and expectations of a mentoring relationship: do they match or clash. *Professional Development in Education, 2015,* doi:10.1080/19415257.2014.994136

Jenkins, J. M. (2014). Preservice teachers' observations of experienced teachers. *The Physical Educator, 71*, 303-319.

Joseph, S., & John, Y. (2014). Practicum experiences of prospective teachers in differentiating instruction. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 1*(3), 25-34. doi:10.14738/assrj.13.136

Kabilan, M. K. (2013). A phenomenological study of an international teaching practicum: Preservice teachers' experiences of professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 36,* 198-209.

Kagle, M. (2014). Professional learning communities for preservice teachers. *National Teacher Education Journal, 7*(2), 21-24.

Kirk, D. (2010). *Development of higher education in the United Arab Emirates*. Abu Dhabi, UAE: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). The process of experiential learning. In *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (chapter two). Retrieved from http://academic.regis.edu/ed205/Kolb.pdf

Kolb, D. A. (1998). Experiential learning: From discourse model to conversation. Lifelong Learning in Europe, 3(3), 148-153.

Kolb, D. A., & Yeganeh, B. (2011, September 13). *Deliberate experiential learning: Mastering the art of learning from experience.* Retrieved from http://learningfromexperience.com/media/2012/02/deliberate-experiential-learning.pdf

Lee, J., Tice, K., Collins, D., Brown, A., Smith, C., & Fox, J. (2012). Assessing student teaching experiences: Teacher candidates' perceptions of preparedness. *Educational Research Quarterly, 36*(2), 3-19.

Levine, T. H. (2010). Tools for the study and design of collaborative teacher learning: the affordances of different conceptions of teacher community and activity theory. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 37*(1), 109-130.

Linder, R. A., Post, G., & Calabrese, K. (2012). Professional learning communities: practices for successful implementation. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 78*(3), 13-22.

Lu, H. L. (2013, January). Preservice teachers' issues in the relationship with cooperating Teachers and their resolutions. *US-China Education Review B, 3*(1), 18-28.

Mapolisa, T., & Tshabalala, T. (2014, July). Experiences during teaching practice: perspectives of Zimbabwean primary school student teachers. *Journal of Education Research and Studies, 2*(2), 16-23.

Merriam, S. B. (2008). Adult learning theory for the twenty-first century. *New Dimensions for Adult and Continuing Education, 119,* 93-98.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mitka, P. (2011). Trainee teachers' experiences of teaching practicum: Issues, challenges, and new possibilities. *Africa Education Review, 8*(3), 551-567. doi:10.1080/18146627.2011.618715

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. (2008, February). *Professional standards for the accreditation of teacher preparation institutions.* Retrieved from http://ncate.org/Portals/0/documents/Standards/NCATE%20Standards%202008.

Ogilvie, G. & Dunn, W. (2010). Taking teacher education to task: Exploring the role of teacher education in promoting the utilization of task-based language teaching. *Language Teaching Research, 14*(2), 161-181. doi:10.1177/1362168809353875

O'Dea, J. A. & Peralta, L. R. (2011). Perceptions of the teaching practicum among human movement and health education preservice teachers in Australia: The role of university coursework, university-school partnerships and e-learning. *Waikato Journal of Education, 16*(1), 77-92.

Permaul, J. S. (2009). Theoretical bases for service learning: implications for program design and effectiveness. *New Horizons in Education, 57*(3), 1-7.

Pierson, L. (2011). Comprehensive New School Model education in the UAE. In Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (Eds.), *Education in the UAE: Current status and future developments* (pp. 17-26).Abu Dhabi, UAE: The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research.

Pridham, B. A., Deed, C., & Cox, P. (2013). Workplace-based practicum: enabling expansive practices. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(4), 50-64.

Pradhan, J. S. (2011). Restructuring teacher education in 21st century. *International Journal of Education and Allied Sciences, 3*(2), 17-20.

Ralph, E. G., Walker, K., & Wimmer, R. (2008). The clinical/ practicum experience in professional preparation: preliminary findings. *McGill Journal of Education, 43*(2), 157-172.

Rhoads, K., Radu, I. & Weber, K. (2011, August). The teacher internship experiences of prospective high school mathematics teachers. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education, 9*(4), 999-1022.

Rigelman, N. M., & Ruben, B. (2012). Creating foundations for collaboration in schools: Utilizing professional learning communities to support teacher candidate learning and visions of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28,* 979-989. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2012.05.004

Rush, L. S., Blair, S. H., Chapman, D., Codner, A., & Pearce, B. (2008). A new look at mentoring: Proud moments and pitfalls. *Clearing House, 81*(3), 128-132.

Ruys, I., Keer, H. V., & Aelterman, A. (2010). Collaborative learning in preservice teacher education: An exploratory study in related conceptions, self-efficacy and implementation. *Educational Studies, 36*(5), 537-553. doi:10.1080/03055691003729021

Sim, C. (2010). Sustaining productive collaboration between faculties and schools. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 35*(5), 18-28.

Sim, C. (2011, May). "You've either got [it] or you haven't- Conflicted supervision of preservice teachers. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(2), 139-149. doi:10.1080/1359866X.2011.560653

Strand, B. N., & Johnson, M. (1990). The pre-student teaching practicum: Don't leave it to chance. *Physical Educator, 47*(4), 197-204.

Sharp, C. (1990). Supervision of student teachers: The role of the college supervisor. *Education, 111*(1), 53-57.

Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide* (2nd ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Tedder, M., & Lawy, R. (2009). The pursuit of "excellence": mentoring in further education initial teacher training in England. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 61*(4), 414-429. doi:10.1080/136368209003363634

Tillema, H. H., Smith, K., & Leshem, S. (2011). Dual roles- conflicting purposes: A comparative study on perceptions on assessment in mentoring relations during practicum. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 34*(2), 139-159. doi:10.1080/02619768.2010.543672

Trent, J. (2013). From learner to teacher: practice, language, and identity in a teaching practicum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 41*(4), 426-440. doi:10.1080/1359866X.2013.838621

Trif, L., & Popescu, T. (2013). Preservice teacher trainees' perceptions of professional development. *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences, 76*, 816-820.

Trinh, M. P., & Kolb, D. A. (2011). Eastern experiential learning: Eastern principles for learning wholeness. *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal, 27*(4), 29-43.

Van Lare, M. D., & Brazer, S. D. (2013). Analyzing learning in professional learning communities: A conceptual framework. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 12*, 374-396. doi:10.1080/15700763.2013860463

Vine, P. (Ed.). (2010). *United Arab Emirates yearbook*. Mayfair, UK: Trident Press Ltd.

Warren, C. A. B. (2001). Qualitative interviewing. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Ed.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 83-102). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Watson, C. (2014). Effective professional learning communities? The possibilities for teachers as change agents of change in schools. *British Educational Research Journal, 40*(1), 18-29. doi:10.1002/berj.3025

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice; Learning, meaning, and identity.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization, 7*(2), 225-246. doi:10.1177/135050840072002

Wlodkowski, R. (2008). *Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Wyss, V. L., Siebert, C. J., & Dowling, K. A. (2012). Structuring effective practicum experiences for preservice teachers. *Education, 132*(3), 600-606.

Appendix A: The Project

Project Outline

Day 1

8:00 AM – 8:25 AM	Sign in/ Breakfast
8:25 AM – 8:30 AM	Poll Questions
8:30 AM – 9:30 AM	Norm Setting
9:30 AM – 10:30 AM	Professional Learning Community Plan
10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	Creating and Sharing Knowledge Questions
10:45 AM – 11:30 AM	Large Group Consensus of Creating and Sharing Knowledge
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Lunch
12:30 PM – 1:00 PM	Instructional Practices Presentation
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM	Six Thinking Hats Group Activity
2:30 PM – 2:45 PM	Groups Present Key Findings from Activity
2:45 PM – 2:50 PM	Participant Reflections
2:50 PM – 3:00 PM	Closure

Classroom teachers, please bring an example of student work from one subject area, either, Reading, Writing, Science, or Math, for Day 2.

Day 2

8:00 AM – 8:25 AM	Sign in/ Breakfast
8:25 AM – 8:30 AM	Findings from Teacher Reflections
8:30 AM – 9:30 AM	Tuning Protocol (looking at student work in Reading/ Language Arts)

9:30 AM – 9:40 AM	Break
9:40 AM – 10:40 AM	Tuning Protocol (looking at student work in Math)
10:40 AM – 10:50 AM	Break
10:50 AM – 11:50 AM	Tuning Protocol (looking at student work in Science)
11:50 AM – 12:55 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Introduction to Co-Teaching and Co-Planning Presentation
2:00 PM – 2:45 PM	Co-Planning Session
2:50 PM – 3:00 PM	Discussion of Co-Planning Session/ Closure

Teachers sign up for subject area teams as they exit.

Day 3

8:00 AM – 8:25 AM	Sign in/ Breakfast
8:25 AM – 8:30 AM	Focus Question- How could meeting in subject area teams improve student learning?
8:30 AM – 8:45 AM	What are Vertical Teams?
8:45 AM – 9:30 AM	Analyze Grade Level EMSA Data
9:30 AM – 9:45 AM	Break
9:45 AM – 10:45 AM	Comparing Grade Level EMSA Data

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM	Share subject area strengths and weaknesses
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Lunch
12:05 PM – 2:00 PM	Vertical Team Planning
2:05 PM – 2:45 PM	Share Vertical Team Plans
2:45 PM – 3:00 PM	Closure

Project Tools and Instruments

Day 1

Poll Questions

Please let me know if you are a-

- English Medium Teacher (Expatriate)
- English Medium Teacher (UAE National)
- Arabic Medium Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- Administrator
- Preservice teacher
- Other

  Specify_____

How much teaching experience do you have?
(You have been the sole classroom teacher responsible for providing instruction to students.)

- None
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11+ years

Survey- Professional Learning Community Module

Day 1

Creating and Sharing Knowledge

Now that you have been introduced to a Professional Learning Community (PLC), take 15 minutes to reflect and record your responses to the following questions-

1. How can the school establish or improve regular visits among teams and across other grade levels?

2. How can the school establish or improve the communication between educators to share concerns, best practices, or other knowledge?

3. How can the school establish or improve making mentors available to those who need assistance in dealing with issues and adjusting to new practices?

Reflective Activity- Best Practices Module

Day 1

Your Reflections

Please take 5 minutes to explore your learning about best practices from today and think about how you could use any of these strategies in a classroom with students.

What have you learned about best practices through today's activities?

What best practice are you most likely to implement in your classroom? Why? How?

Please turn in as you leave.

Day 2

Tuning Protocol

5 minutes	*Introduction:* Facilitator briefly introduces the protocol purpose and timing.
10 minutes	*Presentation:* The presenter explains the assignment given and how it was assessed. Provide copies of the student work to the group members. Group members only listen and take notes as needed.
5 minutes	*Clarifying Questions:* The group members ask clarifying questions to help them understand the context of the student work.
15 minutes	*Examine Student Work:* Group members examine student work, making note of how it fits the goal of the assignment, or how it does not fit the goal of the assignment. Everyone is silent during this time.
15 minutes	*Warm and Cool Feedback:* Group members share feedback by making comments and suggestions on the student work. The presenter is silent and takes notes. Warm feedback expresses how the work fits the goal of the assignment. Cool feedback expresses disconnects or suggestions for the work.
5-10 minutes	*Presenter's Response:* The presenter responds to the comments/questions he/she chooses. Participants are silent.
5 minutes	*Debriefing:* Presenters share: How did the Tuning Protocol process help my thinking? What frustrations, misunderstandings, positive reactions were experienced?

Template- Co-Planning and Co-Teaching Module

Day 2

Co-Teaching Lesson Plan

Teacher 1: _____ Teacher _____

Subject/ Topic: _____

Date:_____

Lesson Components	**Time Allotment**	**Teacher 1 Role**	**Teacher 2 Role**
Objectives:			
Outcome:			
Materials:			
Engagement:			
Teaching/Learning Procedures:			
Closure/ Assessment:			

Assessment of Learning

Day 2

Questionnaire

Please indicate your title: _____

The following scale will be used for the questions in this questionnaire-

1= *No* 2= *Somewhat* 3= *Definitely*

Think about the Tuning Protocols when you examined student work samples. Please circle a rating based on your reaction to the activity.

1. Were the activities helpful in assisting you in understanding some grade level standards? 1 2 3
2. Were the activities helpful in assisting you in understanding how students can be assessed in different subjects? 1 2 3
3. Did the activities assist you in identifying the ability level of students? 1 2 3
4. Did the activities make you question expectations for students? 1 2 3
5. Did the activities make you question how teachers can assist students in meeting expectations? 1 2 3
6. Did the activities make you think about how the assignment could be changed to better assess the standard? 1 2 3

If you answered ***No*** to any of the above questions, please explain why you feel the activities did not assist you in learning.

Now think about the presentation on co-planning and co-teaching and circle the rating based on your opinion of the presentation.

1. Did the presentation contribute to your knowledge of and skills in co-teaching and co-planning? 1 2 3
2. Was it clear how using co-planning and co-teaching can help meet the various needs of students in one class? 1 2 3
3. Was it clear how co-planning and co-teaching encourages collaboration among those responsible for student learning? 1 2 3
4. Could you relate the material to your future work in planning and teaching? 1 2 3

If you answered ***No*** to any of the above questions, please explain why you feel the presentation did not assist you in learning.

Finally, think about your co-planning session and circle a rating based on your opinion of lesson planning.

1. Did you have a clear understanding of your role and responsibility for the lesson after planning? 1 2 3
2. Did you provide input on what standard would be taught? 1 2 3
3. Did you provide input on how the standard would be taught? 1 2 3
4. Did you provide input on accommodations to be used for individual students or

groups of students? 1 2 3

5. Did you provide input on how students would be assessed? 1 2 3
6. Do you feel that you can implement the plan successfully? 1 2 3
7. Do you feel the plan will help meet the needs of all students in class? 1 2 3

If you answered ***No*** to any of the above questions, please explain why you feel you did not have input while planning?

Template- Vertical Team Module

Day 3

Vertical Team Planning

Select the standards that are of the most concern and address how those standards should be addressed in each grade level in order for students to be successful in every grade level.

Grade Level	Standard	Priorities (What do students need to learn in the previous grade level to be successful?)
1st		
2nd		
3rd		
4th		
5th		

Project Evaluation

Day 3

PLC Evaluation

Please reflect on your learning over the last three days and respond to the following questions.

How has the training helped you to understand the need to work collaboratively?

How has the training encouraged you to question teaching and learning practices?

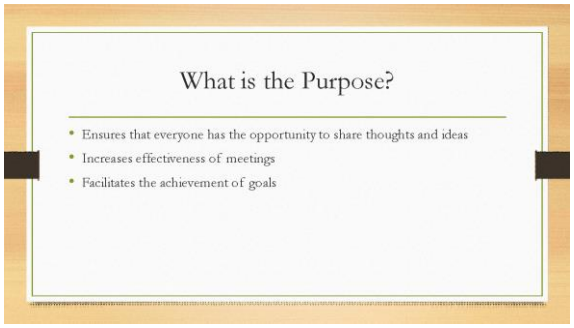
How did examining students' strengths and weaknesses allow you to examine student learning?

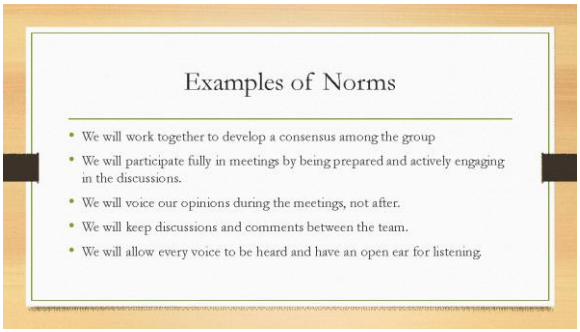
How did the training encourage you to share the responsibility for teaching and student learning?

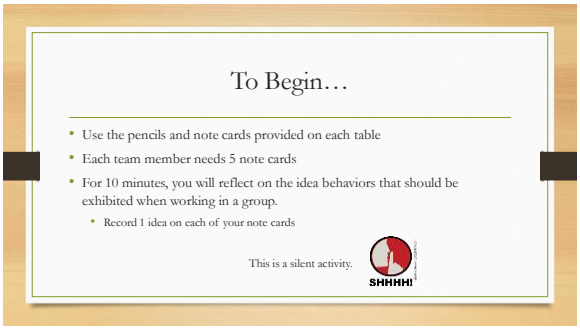
Please add any final comments as they relate to the strengths and/ or weaknesses of the professional development:

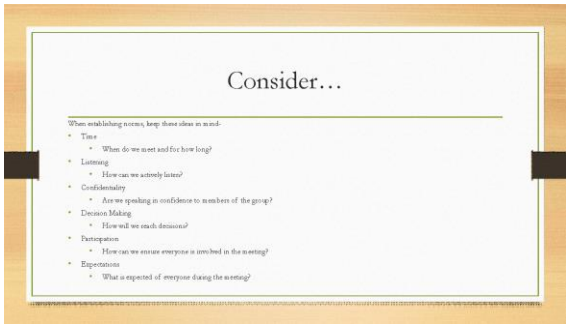
Presentation- Professional Learning Community Module

Day 1







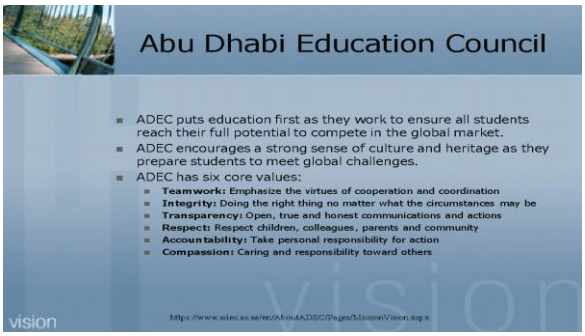


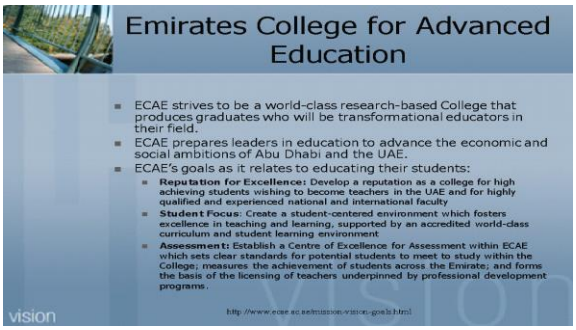
Group Leaders…

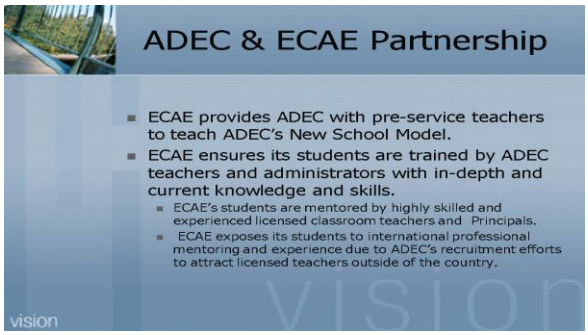
- Collect all cards and shuffle together
- Read each card aloud and place it face up on your table so everyone can see the card.
  - Members should discuss each card.
  - Determine if there are any similarities among the cards read and group them together.

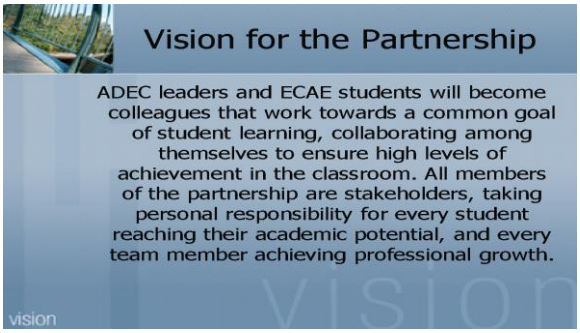
Recorder…

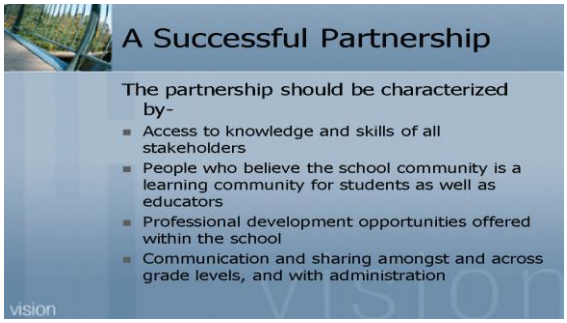
- Write the norms suggested by members of the team on chart paper
- Review the norms with the team.
- Discuss what norms can be supported by all members of the group and place a check mark next to the adopted group norms.

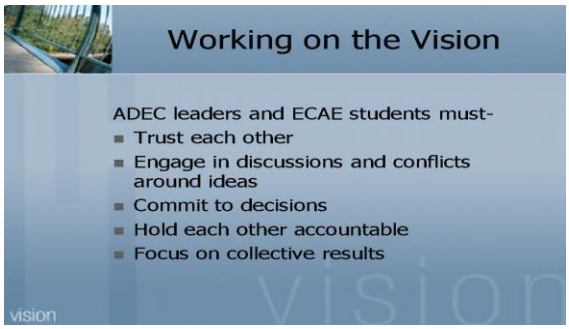


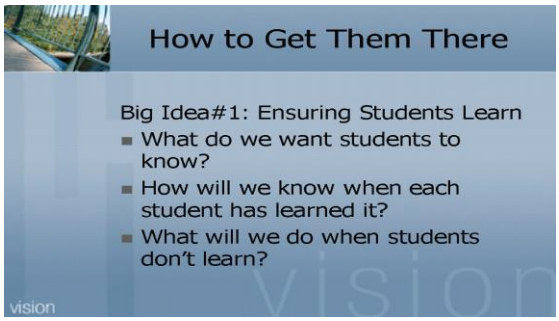

Emirates College for Advanced Education
ECAE strives to be a world-class research-based College that produces graduates who will be transformational educators in their field.
ECAE prepares leaders in education to advance the economic and social ambitions of Abu Dhabi and the UAE.
ECAE's goals as it relates to educating their students:
Reputation for Excellence: Develop a reputation as a college for high achieving students wishing to become teachers in the UAE and for highly qualified and experienced national and international faculty
Student Focus: Create a student-centered environment which fosters excellence in teaching and learning, supported by an accredited world-class curriculum and student learning environment
Assessment: Establish a Centre of Excellence for Assessment within ECAE which sets clear standards for potential students to meet to study within the College; measures the achievement of students across the Emirate; and forms the basis of the licensing of teachers underpinned by professional development programs.
vision

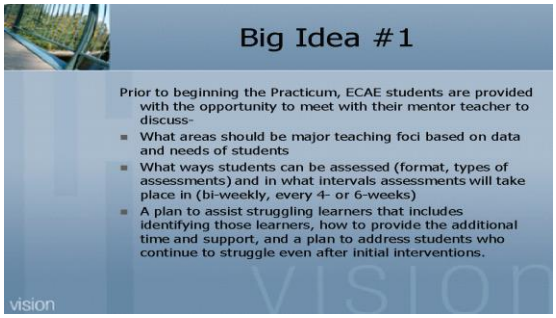

ADEC & ECAE Partnership
ECAE provides ADEC with pre-service teachers to teach ADEC's New School Model.
ECAE ensures its students are trained by ADEC teachers and administrators with in-depth and current knowledge and skills.
ECAE's students are mentored by highly skilled and experienced licensed classroom teachers and Principals.
ECAE exposes its students to international professional mentoring and experience due to ADEC's recruitment efforts to attract licensed teachers outside of the country.
vision

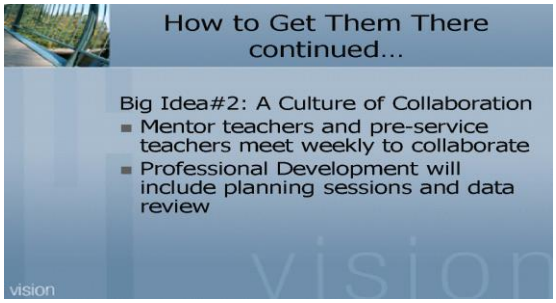

Vision for the Partnership
ADEC leaders and ECAE students will become colleagues that work towards a common goal of student learning, collaborating among themselves to ensure high levels of achievement in the classroom. All members of the partnership are stakeholders, taking personal responsibility for every student reaching their academic potential, and every team member achieving professional growth.
vision

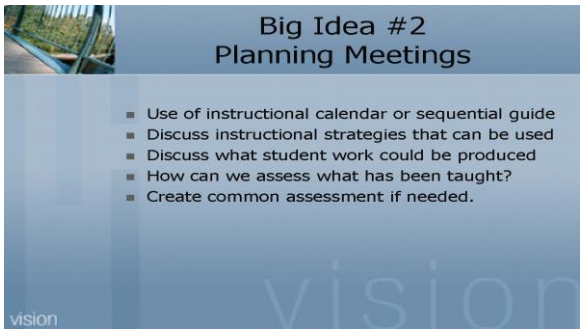

A Successful Partnership
The partnership should be characterized by-
Access to knowledge and skills of all stakeholders
People who believe the school community is a learning community for students as well as educators
Professional development opportunities offered within the school
Communication and sharing amongst and across grade levels, and with administration
vision

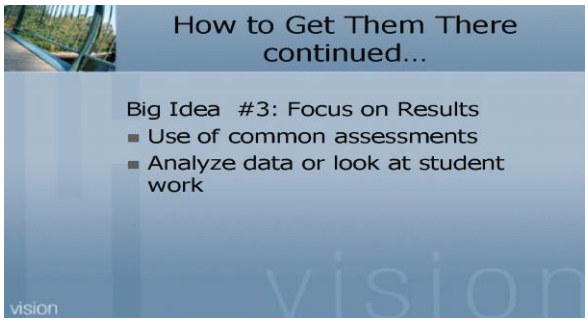

Working on the Vision
ADEC leaders and ECAE students must-
Trust each other
Engage in discussions and conflicts around ideas
Commit to decisions
Hold each other accountable
Focus on collective results
vision

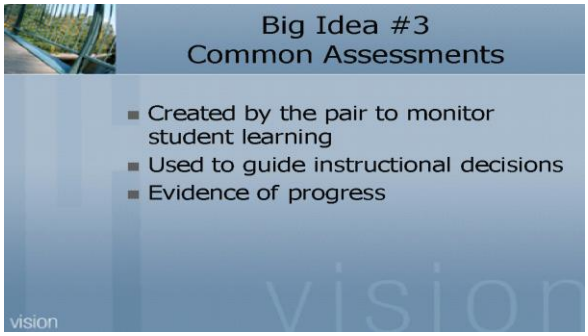

How to Get Them There
Big Idea#1: Ensuring Students Learn
What do we want students to know?
How will we know when each student has learned it?
What will we do when students don't learn?
vision

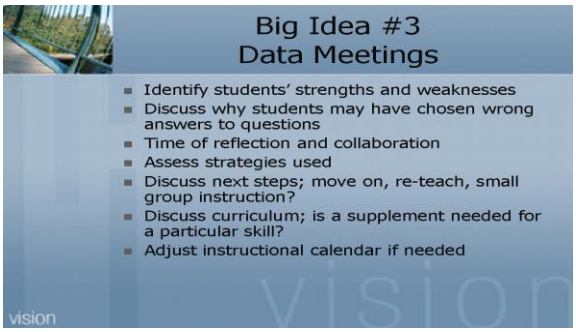

Big Idea #1
Prior to beginning the Practicum, ECAE students are provided with the opportunity to meet with their mentor teacher to discuss-
What areas should be major teaching foci based on data and needs of students
What ways students can be assessed (format, types of assessments) and in what intervals assessments will take place in (bi-weekly, every 4- or 6-weeks)
A plan to assist struggling learners that includes identifying those learners, how to provide the additional time and support, and a plan to address students who continue to struggle even after initial interventions.
vision

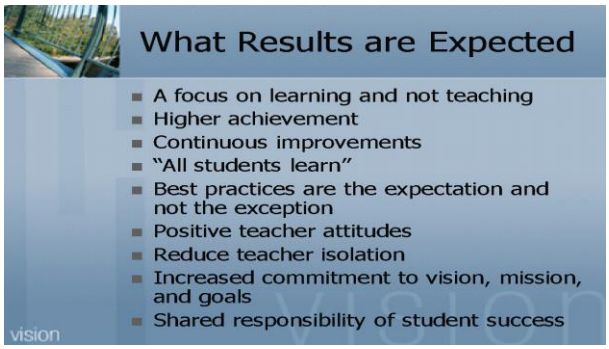

How to Get Them There continued...
Big Idea#2: A Culture of Collaboration
Mentor teachers and pre-service teachers meet weekly to collaborate
Professional Development will include planning sessions and data review
vision

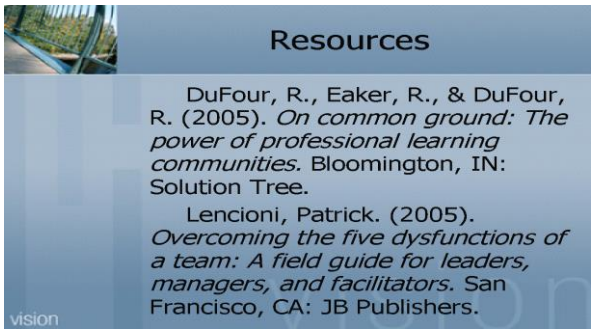

Big Idea #2
Planning Meetings
Use of instructional calendar or sequential guide
Discuss instructional strategies that can be used
Discuss what student work could be produced
How can we assess what has been taught?
Create common assessment if needed.
vision
vision

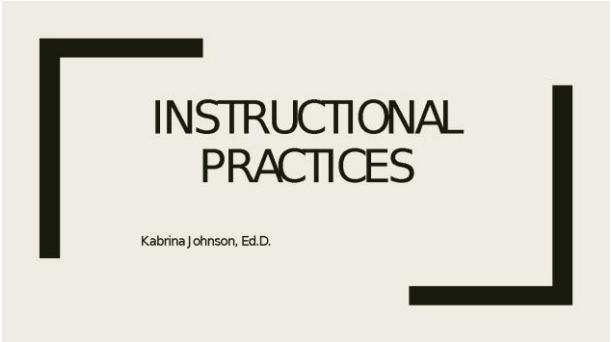

How to Get Them There
continued…
Big Idea #3: Focus on Results
Use of common assessments
Analyze data or look at student work
vision
vision

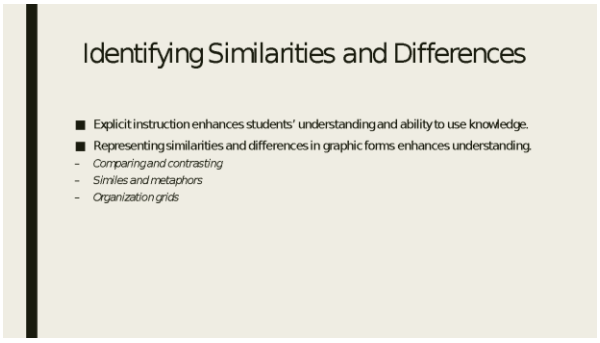

Big Idea #3
Common Assessments
Created by the pair to monitor student learning
Used to guide instructional decisions
Evidence of progress
vision
vision


Big Idea #3
Data Meetings
Identify students' strengths and weaknesses
Discuss why students may have chosen wrong answers to questions
Time of reflection and collaboration
Assess strategies used
Discuss next steps; move on, re-teach, small group instruction?
Discuss curriculum; is a supplement needed for a particular skill?
Adjust instructional calendar if needed
vision
vision

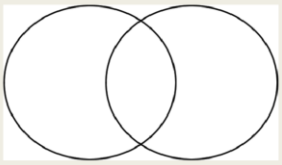

What Results are Expected
A focus on learning and not teaching
Higher achievement
Continuous improvements
"All students learn"
Best practices are the expectation and not the exception
Positive teacher attitudes
Reduce teacher isolation
Increased commitment to vision, mission, and goals
Shared responsibility of student success
vision


Resources
DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & DuFour, R. (2005). On common ground: The power of professional learning communities. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
Lencioni, Patrick. (2005). Overcoming the five dysfunctions of a team: A field guide for leaders, managers, and facilitators. San Francisco, CA: JB Publishers.
vision


INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES
Kabrina Johnson, Ed.D.


Identifying Similarities and Differences
Explicit instruction enhances students' understanding and ability to use knowledge.
Representing similarities and differences in graphic forms enhances understanding.
Comparing and contrasting
Similes and metaphors
Organization grids

Similarities and Differences
Comparing and Contrasting



Similarities and Differences
Similes and Metaphors

- Simile
- shows comparison between two different things
- uses "like" or "as"
  - *Her cheeks are red like roses.*
  - *Watching the show is like watching grass grow.*
- Metaphor
- two very different objects are compared using a common characteristic
- portrays a person, place, thing, or action as something else
  - *Her voice is music to my ears.*

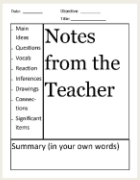
Similarities and Differences
Organizing Grids

Summarizing and Note Taking

- Summarizing requires students to analyze information in order to delete, substitute, and keep information.
- Awareness of text structure enhances summarization skills.
  - *Somebody Wanted But So*
  - *Organizing Grid*
  - *Cornell Notes*

Summarizing and Note Taking
Somebody Wanted But So

Summarizing and Note Taking
Cornell Notes



Nonlinguistic Representation

- A variety of activities produce nonlinguistic representations (think Multiple Intelligences)
  - *Any type of graphic organizer*
  - *Illustrations*
  - *Movements*
  - *Song*

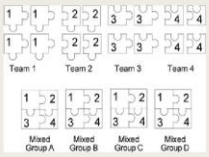
Cooperative Learning

- This is not the same as group work.
- Activities involved are content specific.
- Strategies focus on social skills, team building, and class building.
- CL strategies have these characteristics:
  - *Positive Interdependence*
  - *Individual Accountability*
  - *Equal Participation*
  - *Simultaneous Interaction.*

Cooperative Learning
Think Pair Share

Cooperative Learning
Say Something

Cooperative Learning
Jigsaw



While you were teaching…

- Please share how you have used one of instructional practices with students?
  - *What did you expect from students?*
  - *How did it engage students in learning?*

6 THINKING HATS

Kabrina Johnson, Ed.D.

Your Learning

Participating in this activity will-

- help you to create a shared identity with group members
- help you reflect on your actual perspective while presenting a perspective that could be the exact opposite
- provide you with new ways of thinking
- allow you to move towards a more rounded view of an idea or concept
- encourage you to see ideas and concepts from different perspectives in the future

Blue Hat

- You are the manager.
  - Ensure everyone stays in their roles.
  - Ensure the process is followed.
- Control the process by-
  - direct members to think as the green hat when difficulties arise
  - when a plan is needed, move people to black hat thinking

White Hat

- You give the facts.
- What can you learn from what you already know?

Yellow Hat

- You are optimistic.
- What are the benefits of the strategy?

Black Hat

- Your are full of judgment.
- What are the bad points of using the strategy?
- State why it won't work.

Green Hat

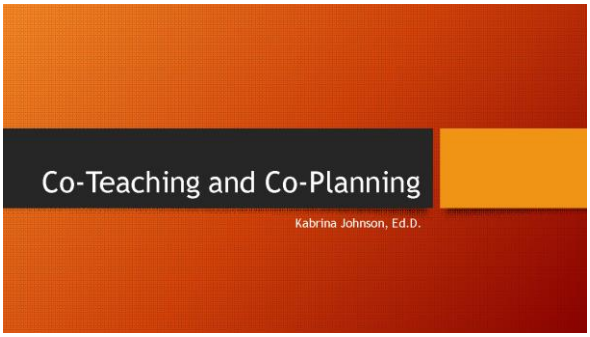
- What are creative solutions to the problems presented by the black hat?

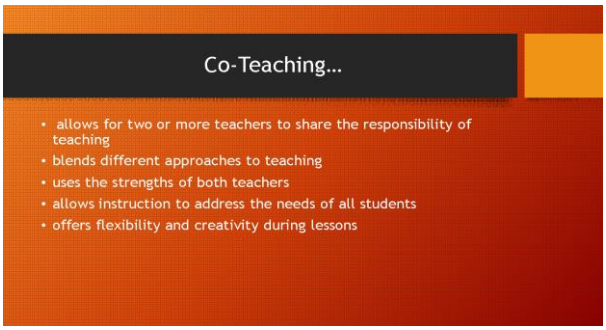
Red Hat

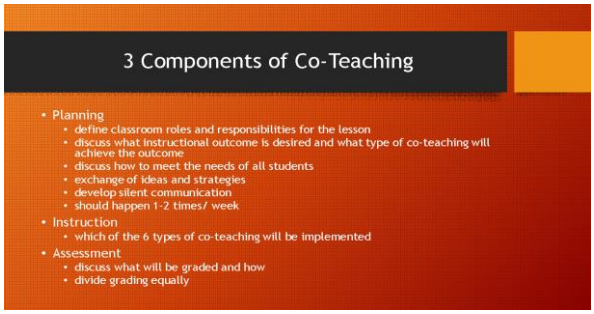
- You are guided by your feelings.
- You can respond using your-
  - emotions
  - likes
  - dislikes
- Think about how other people will react to using the strategy.

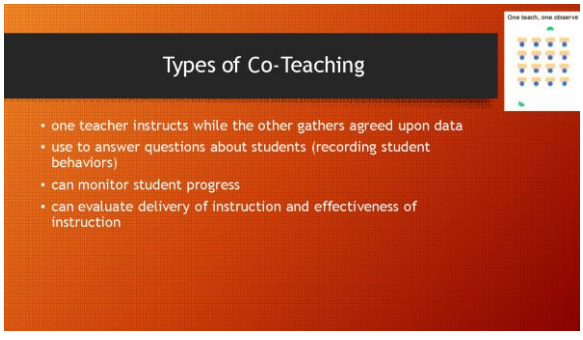
Presentation- Co-Planning and Co-Teaching Module

Day 2

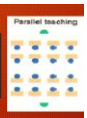








Types of Co-Teaching



- both teachers present lessons simultaneously to two groups of students
- lower teacher-student ratio because class is divided in half
- same content is taught but the delivery is different
- increases student participation
- both teachers share an equal responsibility for instruction

Types of Co-Teaching

- one teacher instructs while the other circulates the room
- observe student understanding
- students receive assistance during the lesson
- active monitoring of student behavior

Types of Co-Teaching

- class divided by content
- lower student-teacher ratio
- both teachers responsible for instruction
- groups rotate stations
- increases student participation
- teachers can closely monitor understanding and student behavior

Types of Co-Teaching

- one teacher teaches larger group while the other provides instruction to a smaller group
- opportunity for enrichment or intervention
- smaller group receives modifications or accommodations to meet their needs
- smaller group can get immediate feedback

Types of Co-Teaching

- both teachers work together to deliver instruction
- both teachers responsible for classroom management
- allows a variety of teaching strategies
- teachers demonstrate their expertise of a subject
- instructional conversations can take place

Co-Planning

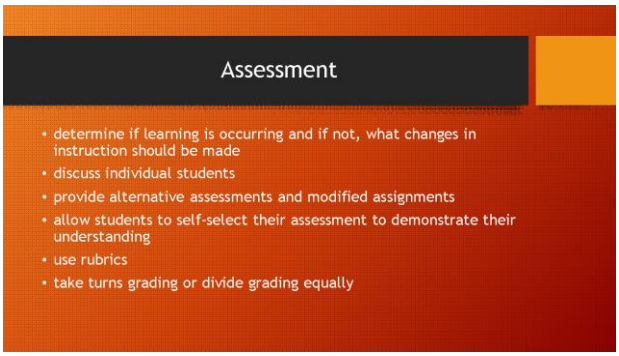
- teachers jointly plan and coordinate instruction
- help one another by providing their expertise on subject matter
- has 3 major components-
  - planning
    - standards
    - assessments
    - accommodations or modifications
    - instructional strategies
  - instruction
  - assessment

Planning

- determine standards to be addressed
  - What will be taught?
  - How can the standard be broken into smaller units?
- determine teacher roles and responsibilities
  - What does each teacher need to prepare for the lesson?
- determine instructional technique that will be most effective
  - How will we teach it?
  - What modifications or accommodations needs to be made for individual students or student groups?
- determine how standard will be assessed
  - How will formative and summative assessments be used?

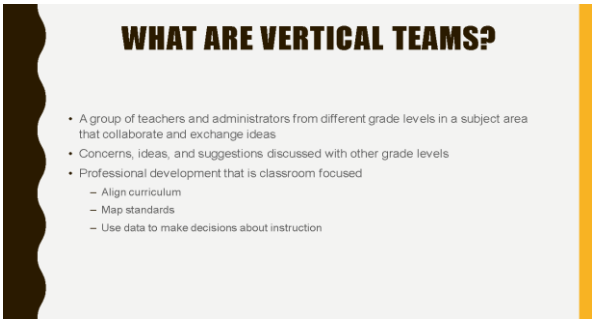
Instruction

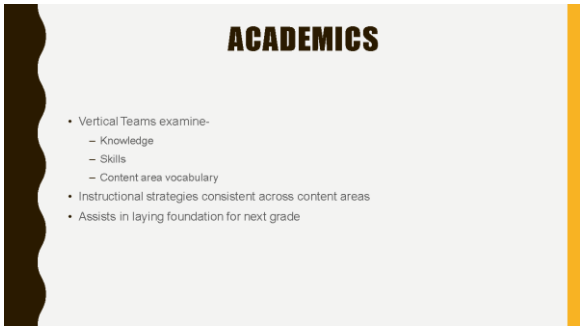
- Implementing one or several of the 6 types of co-teaching
- agenda with objectives is posted
- use a variety of learning styles
- use of signals to communicate, teacher-teacher or teacher-students
- teacher talks to discuss lesson progress and any changes that may need to be made immediately

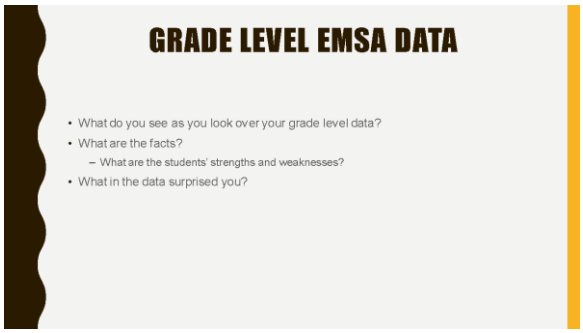

Assessment
• determine if learning is occurring and if not, what changes in instruction should be made
• discuss individual students
• provide alternative assessments and modified assignments
• allow students to self-select their assessment to demonstrate their understanding
• use rubrics
• take turns grading or divide grading equally

Presentation- Vertical Teams Module

Day 3







LOOKING AT DATA ACROSS GRADE LEVELS

Discuss what your grade level discovered from looking at the data then discuss-

- What patterns are seen across grade levels?
  - positives
  - negatives
- What do you think contributes to these patterns?
- How can we support learning to correct problems?

FIRST TEAM TASK

Now that EMSA data has been analyzed, discuss and answer the following-

1. What are the major issues that your Team will address?
2. As a team, what do you all want to accomplish for your students and yourselves?
3. Develop two goals for your team for this year.
4. How will you accomplish your goals?
5. How will you measure the success of reaching your goals?

SECOND TEAM TASK

- You will work as a team to develop a continuum of knowledge and skills that continues to build through the grade levels.
- With your team, discuss and chart the knowledge and skills that are needed for students to be successful in your content area.
  - Knowledge- what students will know
  - Skills- what students will be able to do

THIRD TEAM TASK

- Now that you have identified, the key knowledge and skills for your content area, you will work with the team to identify priorities for students to be successful in each year of the course.
  - Discuss what students need to know when coming into your course in order to be successful.
  - How is this addressed in the current curriculum standards?
  - If it is not addressed in the current standards, how can it be weaved into units?
- Use the template to chart grade level priorities.

Appendix B: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research interview about your fourth year practicum experience. I am investigating the perceptions of preservice teachers to better understand how those preservice teachers view their practicum experience, and if they feel it has contributed to their professional growth and preparedness in being a classroom teacher. You were chosen to participate in this research interview because you are currently enrolled in the four-year B.Ed. program at your local college and are a fourth year practicum student. Please read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be part of the interview.

This interview is being conducted by Kabrina Johnson, a doctoral student at Walden University. I am also a teacher in Abu Dhabi, teaching at a Cycle 2 Girls School.

Background Information:

Practicum experiences are a major component of education programs. The basis of a practicum is to prepare qualified professionals to enter the workforce. This preparation is done as students use their learned knowledge and skills to solve problems in a real world context. The practicum is the time when preservice teachers are given greater professional responsibilities and are mentored in a school setting by a supervisor and mentor. Therefore, it is critical to examine preservice teachers' first contact with their profession, providing detail about what happens during this time and how it effects their professional development and growth.

Procedures:

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one, audio-recorded interview. The interview will serve as a means for me to better understand your experiences during the practicum. Along with the recorder, I will be writing notes and these are simply key ideas from your responses. The interview will last between one and one and a half hours, and will take place at an agreed upon time.

Once I have transcribed the audio recording, I will meet with you for the purposes of ensuring I have captured your words and thoughts accurately. This meeting will last between 30 and 45 minutes.

Voluntary Nature of the Interview:

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the interview. No one at your college or campus will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the interview. Also, participation or non-participation in the interview will not affect your course grade or standing at the college or with the Abu Dhabi Education Council.

If you decide to join the interview now, you can withdraw at any time with no penalty. If you feel stressed during the interview, you may stop at any time, and you may skip any questions that you feel are too personal or make you feel uncomfortable.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Interview:

There is the minimal risk of psychological stress during this interview. If you feel stressed or uncomfortable during the interview, you may stop at any time. There are no benefits to you from participating in this interview but your participation will assist me in gathering information to assist in the development of programs to support preservice teachers during their practicum.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this interview.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this interview project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the interview. Your college supervisor and mentor teacher will be unable to identify you from any data gathered or information reported as pseudonyms will be used in place of your name.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me via email at kabrina.johnson@waldenu.edu. If you want to contact someone privately about your rights as a participant, you may email Dr. Leilani Endicott at Walden University. You can contact her at irb@waldenu.edu.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

☐ I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time, and understand the researcher's role. I am 18 years of age or older, and I consent to participate in the interview.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Participant's Signature _____

Participant's Email _____

Practicum Site _____

Researcher's Signature _____

استمارة الموافقة

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في لقاء البحث عن تجربة التدريب العملي للسنة الرابعة. أنا أتحقق تصورات المعلمين المتدربين في حرم جامعي واحد حول التدريب العملي و رأيهم في التدريب العملي لهم، و إذا ما شعروا أنها ساهمت في النمو المهني و التأهب لمهنة معلم الصف . تم اختيارك للمشاركة في هذه المقابلة البحثية لأنك المسجلين حاليا في السنة الرابعة في كلية التربية و أيضا مسجل في التدريب العملي الرابع . يرجى قراءة هذا النموذج وطرح أي أسئلة لديك قبل الموافقة على أن تكون جزءا من المقابلة.

وتجرى هذه المقابلة من قبل كابرينا جونسون ، وهي طالبة دكتوراه في جامعة والدن . وأنا أيضا معلمة في أبوظبي ، وأدرس في أحد مدارس مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم للحلقة الثانية.

معلومات أساسية :
التدريب العملي هي العنصر الرئيسي في برامج كلية التربية. أساس التدريب العملي هي إعداد معلمين (مهنيين) مؤهلين للدخول في الميدان العملي. ويتم إعداد الطلاب لاستخدام المعرفة و المهارات المكتسبة في حل المشاكل في سياق الواقع. التدريب العملي هو الوقت المناسب لإعطاء المعلمين المتدربين المسؤوليات المهنية أكبر و إرشاد في المدرسة من قبل المشرف و معلمة. لذا ، فمن الأهمية دراسة والنظر في صلة المعلمين المتدربين الأولى مع مهنتهم ، وتوفير التفاصيل حول ما يحدث خلال هذه الفترة ، وكيف أنها تؤثر في تطورهم المهني.

الإجراءات :
إذا قمت بالموفقة، سوف يطلب منك أن تشارك في مقابلة مسجلة صوتية. المقابلة هي بمثابة وسيلة بالنسبة لي لفهم خبراتكم بطريقة أفضل خلال التدريب العملي . مع التسجيل ، وسوف يتم كتابة الملاحظات و هي ببساطة الأفكار الرئيسية من ردودكم. ومدة المقابلة ما بين ساعة إلى ساعة و نصف، و سيعقد في وقت متفق عليه .

بعد كتابة إجاباتكم من التسجيل الصوتي ، سوف ألتقي بكم لضمان ما تم كتابته من كلماتك و أفكارك أنها صحيحة ودقيقة. و هذا الاجتماع سوف يستمر ما بين 30 و 45 دقيقة.

طبيعة التطوع للمقابلة:

مشاركتكم في هذه المقابلة هو تطوعي. وهذا يعني أن الجميع سوف يحترم قراركم ما إذا كنت تريد أو لا تريد في مشاركة في هذه المقابلة. لا أحد في الكلية أو الجامعة سوف يعاملك بشكل مختلف إذا قررت أن لا تشارك في المقابلة. أيضا ، فإن المشاركة أو عدم المشاركة في المقابلة لن يؤثر بالطبع درجة المساق أو المادة أو وجودكم في الكلية أو مع مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم .

إذا قررت الانضمام المقابلة الآن ، يمكنك الانسحاب في أي وقت من دون أي عقوبة. إذا كنت تشعر بتوتر خلال المقابلة ، قد تتوقف في أي وقت، ويمكنك تخطي أي من الأسئلة التي تشعر بأنها شخصية جدا أو تجعلك تشعر بعدم الارتياح.

مخاطر وفوائد في المقابلة :

هناك خطر ضئيل من الإجهاد النفسي خلال هذه المقابلة . إذا كنت تشعر بالتوتر أو بعدم الارتياح أثناء المقابلة ، يمكنك التوقف عن المقابلة في أي وقت. لا توجد أي منافع لكم من المشاركة في هذه المقابلة . و لكن مشاركتكم سوف تساعدني في جمع المعلومات و التي تساعد في تطوير برامج لدعم المعلمين المتدربين خلال التدريب العملي لهم.

التعويض:
ليس هناك تعويض للمشاركة في هذه المقابلة .

السرية:
أي المعلومات التي تقدمها ستكون سرية . فإن الباحث لا يستخدم المعلومات الخاصة بك لأية أغراض خارج هذا المشروع . أيضا ، فإن الباحث لن يبرز اسمك أو أي شيء آخر يمكن أن يعرف شخصيتك في أي تقارير من المقابلة . المشرف أو الموجه في الكلية ومعلمة المدرسة غير قادرين على التعرف عليك من أي البيانات التي تم جمعها أو المعلومات المبلغ عنها كما سيتم استخدام أسماء مستعارة بدلا من اسمك.

الاتصالات و الأسئلة:
قد تسأل أي أسئلة لديك الآن . أو إذا كان لديك أسئلة في وقت لاحق ، يمكنك الاتصال بي عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني kabrina.johnson @ waldenu.edu . إذا كنت ترغب في الاتصال بشخص ما من القطاع الخاص عن حقوقك كمشارك ، يمكنك مراسلة الدكتور ليلاني انديكوت في جامعة والدن . يمكنك التواصل على البريد الإلكتروني irb@waldenu.edu

الباحث سوف يعطيك نسخة من هذا النموذج للحفاظ على سجلاتك .

بيان الموافقة :

☐ لقد قرأت المعلومات الواردة أعلاه . لقد تلقيت إجابات على أي سؤال لدي في هذا الوقت، وفهمت دور الباحث.

عمري 18 سنة من العمر أو أكثر ، و أوافق على المشاركة في المقابلة.

اسم المشارك

_____

توقيع المشارك

_____

البريد الالكتروني للمشارك

_____

موقع التدريب العملي

توقيع الباحث

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Semi-structured individual interviews were utilized to gather information from participants in regards to personal experiences and examples during the practicum. The interview began with me thanking participants for their participation, then a reminder to participants that I would be recording the interview. I finally reassurance was given that there would be complete anonymity and no record of their name would be used in the research report. A reminder was also given that although their practicum took place over four years, the questions I asked only related to their practicum during their fourth year of study.

The interview protocol consisted of 11 main questions, with probing questions asked when clarification or a further explanation was needed. The 11 main questions during the interview were:

1. How would you describe your practicum experience?
2. What successes did you encounter during the practicum?
3. What challenges did you face during the practicum?
4. How did you overcome your challenges?
5. How have your ideas about teacher responsibilities changed as a result of your practicum experience?
6. How would you describe your relationship with your mentor teacher?
7. How did your mentor teacher assist you in your learning during the practicum?
8. How would you describe your relationship with your college supervisor?
9. How did your college supervisor assist you in your learning during the practicum?

10. What aspect of the practicum do you feel had the greatest impact on your learning?

11. What aspect of the practicum do you feel had the least impact on your learning?

Probing questions that asks respondents to clarify or expand on topics that they initiate may include:

1. Could you explain that?
2. What do you mean when you say…?
3. Could you walk me through that experience?
4. You stated… could you give me an example of…?

Appendix D: Sample Three-Column Theme Chart

RQ 1: How do preservice teachers perceive their professional responsibilities during practicum?

Theme	Quote	My Thoughts
managing students	"I faced difficulty in managing the students' behavior because I just rely on the teacher's behavior chart."	Preservice teacher had not come to find strategies that were her own to implement. What information in discipline management is included in their classes prior to the practicum? And is there an understanding that without management, no learning can take place?
teaching a variety of levels	"There was one student that didn't read, didn't even know the alphabet so I need to work hard with her." "Every time I teach, I repeat my teaching twice, one English and one Arabic."	Because these are second language learners, there are various levels in the classes. Some students who can speak, read, and write well in English and others who are still learning letters and sounds in English. This is true bilingual teaching and this was the reason NSM was implemented so that local teachers could provide bi-literate education to improve learning.
lesson planning	She was not aware that "one teacher for one subject do the whole week and they share the lesson plans."	In Cycle 1 schools teachers are responsible for teaching three subject, so teachers often divide the lesson planning as to not have to write three plans but maybe just one or two.
teachers do more than teach	"I thought the teacher just makes a lesson plan and teach." "But when I came to the school, I found that a	If it were only that simple!

	teacher has many responsibilities instead of teaching." "When I make my own weekly lesson plans and own resources, worksheets and also when I prepare the class." (found these duties to be helpful) "Prepare the class in terms of prepare tables for learning centers, or prepare the boards, and design the boards."	Doing the actual work of a teacher is what helps you become a better teacher and knowing what to expect. Setting up classrooms and having materials ready creates a classroom and atmosphere that encourages learning
professional development	"I think surely not helpful. I attend all of them, and some of them not related to professional development. We may stay five minutes and then they say to us, "Go." And sometimes it's for exercise, something for sport." "Yeah, about assessments. Everything they told us about it, we know it. Also when they talk to us about how to read a story to students. We know it."	PDs not devoted to professional growth or school business are a waste of time when people would much rather be home than at school late in the day. Some information can simply be sent via email. Teachers trained in NSM are very likely to attend PDs for learning that have already done in their college coursework. For veteran teachers, much of the information is new and they have not had the training or the background knowledge. The College and practicum site should discuss PDs that will be offered. If it is a PD that has been addressed in coursework, preservice teachers should have the opportunity for other learning, perhaps meeting with their mentor teacher. Mentor teachers are EMTs

		who are also well versed in much of the training that is provided to teachers.