Journal of Research and Reflections in Education
June 2015, Vol.9, No.1, pp 1 -16
http://www.ue.edu.pk/jrre

The Practicum Status in UE Campuses during B.Ed. Programme: TEs' Perceptions

[1] Syed Manzar -Abbas, [2] Lijie Lu

[1]Assistant Professor Lahore Leads University, Pakistan
[2]Professor in the College of Education Science, Northeast Normal University, Changchun, China

(Email: manzar_14@yahoo.com)

The purpose of the study was to explore; how much the teacher educators give importance to different practices, processes, and regulations of practicum?, what are the communication and coordination issues among the practicum participants?, what are the participants' perceptions about the value for practicum in teacher education programmes?, and to identify participants' discernment about their own and each others' roles and expectations. Descriptive survey was used to investigate the problem. From six campuses of the University of Education (UE), 59 teacher educators were selected randomly. All the processes, practices, and regulations of practicum were regarded important giving the highest rank to written communication followed by collaborative practices and the lowest to duration of practicum. The participants gave due importance to practicum while they were unclear about each others' roles during practicum. Overall they expressed dissatisfaction for the current model of practicum.

Key words: Pre-service teacher education, practicum, supervisors, student teachers, survey study, Pakistan

Introduction

Practicum is regarded as a vital part of teacher education by educators and researchers (Smith, 2010; Goh, Wong, Choy, & Tan, 2009; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005), novice teachers (Hascher, Cocard, & Moser, 2004), and by the student teachers (STs) (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). The practicum not only bridges the gap between theory and practicum (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003) if integrated and made in line with methodology courses (Goh et. al., 2009; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005) but also provides the real field for the development of prospective teachers' teaching competence (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). In the study by Smith and Lev-Ari (2005), the 91% of the STs regarded practicum helpful in preparing them for teaching.

Practicum has been regarded as the quality determiner for teacher education programmes (Nancy, 2007). It is a leading tool for lesson preparation, students' achievement, and teachers' retention (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], 2010). The STs get practical know-how of the profession and can exploit this experience to confirm their suitability for the profession (Kiggundu & Nyimuli, 2009). The practicum increases STs' vocational confidence (Caires & Almeida, 2005), self esteem (Hascher, Cocard, & Moser, 2004), confidence in ability to change pupils' learning positively (Oh, Ankers, Llamas, & Tomyoy , 2005), and teaching competence of primary STs (Goh et. al., 2009) and secondary STs (Chan & Leung, 1998).

Nonetheless importance of practicum, the quality of practicum has not yet got much ground in pre-service teacher education programmes (Kiggundu, 2007; Hill, Ball, & Schilling, 2008). The literature underscores the integration and alignment of practicum with other components of a teacher education program (Samaras & Gismondi, 1998). The placement of STs should be in innovative contexts and the schools having collaboration with the education faculty (Goodlad, 1994; Teitel, 1997). The practicum should be offered in different contexts or schools (Darling- Hammond, Wise, &

Klein, 1995) and the field experiences should be administered using cooperative techniques sending STs in groups rather than individually (Samaras & Gismondi, 1998).

If we talk about the innovative practices used during practicum in the world, we come to know that portfolio, action research and attendance of parent-teacher meetings and faculty meetings is *sine quo non* of a teacher education programme. These practices are used to help the student teacher to get practical and concrete knowledge of the profession, but the situation is quite different in Pakistani teacher education institutions. We can hardly find any institution where such kind of practices are being used.

Portfolios are becoming the essential part of any teacher education programme developing reflective practitioners (Foot & Vermette, 2001), which have been adopted by the teacher education institutions (Plaiser, Hachey, & Theilheimer, 2011) and have been referred as the best alternative assessment method and critical learning tool for past two decades (Strijbos, Meeus, & Libotton, 2007; Cimer, 2011). Portfolio is important in developing prospective teachers because it helps them in reflecting back on their successes and weaknesses, critical thinking, and their commitment to improvement and change (Rickards, & Guilbault, 2009). Portfolios help prospective teachers to make links among artifacts, learning, and self (Yancey, 2009). Along with traditional portfolios, digital portfolios are taking more attention by the teacher education institutions (Plaiser, Hachey, & Theilheimer, 2011). Currently the portfolios are part and parcel of teaching practicum in preservice education programs in most of the countries of the world.

Action research is an application of research method to solve a local school problem (Mills, 2007). It helps the STs to make them reflective practitioners in developing teaching skills and expertise (Zambo & Zambo, 2007). According to Oja and Smulyan (1989), action research develops flexibility and open-mindedness in the teachers (as cited by Zambo & Zambo, 2007). It develops critical thinking, practicality, and is used as a tool for professional development in the teacher education programmes (Mills, 2007). According to Elliott (1993) action researcher "takes the school as a learning unit (as cited by Sales, Traver, & Garcia, 2011)". With the help of action research the teachers can collaborate with each other (Dooner, Mandzuk, & Clifton, 2008; Zwart, Wubbles, Bergen, & Bolhuis, 2007) and can develop learning communities in the institutions (Busher, 2005).

In different countries of the world (Like America, Canada, Australia), attendance of parent-teacher meetings and faculty meetings are also required by the student teachers during practicum while teaching in the schools. Attendance of both kind of meetings can help the student teachers to improve their interpersonal communication skills and confidence. The attendance of parent teacher meetings help student teachers to know about the socio-economic background of the students which helps them to understand the individual differences of the students. They can communicate to different type of people through different kind of professions and walks of life. They can also know about the different problems faced by the students at home that can help them to guide student in a better way.

Besides enhancement in the interpersonal communication, the student teachers can understand process of decision making by attending faculty meetings at schools. They can also observe the different problems of the schools. The student teachers can have a practical knowledge of management, academic, and problem related to finance, faculty, and society. In this way they can develop their beliefs about the profession and about their suitability for the profession more pragmatically.

The role of mentor in practicum is regarded very important during the practicum. There should be orientation session or proper training programme for mentor teachers (Knowles, Cole, & Presswood, 1994). Beck and Kosnik (2002a) conducted a study with STs and found seven important elements of practicum among which six were related to mentors. The seven components were: 1) emotional support from mentor, 2) compeer relation with mentor, 3) collaboration with mentor, 4) flexibleness in teaching, 5) mentor's feedback, 6)mentor's sound approach towards teaching and learning, and 7) challenging but moderate work load during practicum (Beck & Kosnik, 2002a). Moody (2009) conducted a study in Ireland and found that STs declare four main elements important for practicum which are; mentor's support, choice of using own teaching method, positive feedback, and evaluation approach.

The burning issues in practicum research encompass appropriate duration of practicum (Carpenter & Blance, 2001); the worth and value of supervision and guidance and evaluation done by mentors and supervisors (Beck & Kosnik, 2002a; 2002b; Fairbanks, Freedman & Kahn, 2000; Laboskey & Richert, 2002); the collaboration between school and university (Long, 1997; Martinez 1998); and emphasis on reflective practices rather than mastery over skills (Clarke 2006; Crasborn et al. 2008; Geen & Harris, 2002).

Teacher Education in Pakistan

In Pakistan, teacher education is offered by Government Colleges of Elementary Teachers (GCETs), Government Colleges of Education (GCEs) (both public and private), Regional Institutes of Teacher Education (RITEs), and Education faculties or departments of universities (both public and private). According to the data available on NACTE website, there are 34 public and 29 private universities that are working as teacher education centers along with 334 affiliated colleges (both public and private) throughout Pakistan. The universities work as autonomous bodies, while the colleges are under the curricular and administrative control of the provincial Departments of Education (Ahmed, 2012).

Teacher education is basically a provincial subject. As mentioned above the universities are autonomous in the curricular and administrative control but the colleges are under the control of provincial Departments of Education. The pre-service teacher education is also offered both by universities and colleges or degree awarding institutes. Primary school teachers (PSTs) are trained by Government Colleges for Elementary Teachers (GCETs), which are controlled by Provincial Bureaus of Curriculum in Balochistan and Sindh. Khyber Pakhtunkhaw (KPK) has 20 teacher training institutes which are supervised by Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education, while the Punjab has developed Directorate of Staff Development (DSD), which oversees 35 GCETs in Punjab. Four provincial institutes of teacher education (PITE) were also established in Pakistan; one in each province (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). DSD is now working on developing four years standard based teacher education programmes. For interim purposed the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) programme was started in 2011in four GCETs and then in September 2012 extended to 20 GCETs of Punjab and in 2014 the B.Ed. (Hons.) degree has been started in all the GCETs in Punjab. The universities whether public or private, which have Department of Education are also offering four year B.Ed. Honors Program along with other programs.

Pakistan Teacher education is confronting a myriad of problems like: lack of funding, insufficient facilities in TE institutions, short duration of training, more focus to theory than practice, low instructional quality, no implementation for suggestion reforms, substandard assessment system, and lack of research and assessment for TE programs (Dilshad, 2010; Dilshad

& Iqbal, 2010). The programs offered by the TE institutes provide deficient subject matter, obsolete methodology, lacking critical and creative teaching skills, and inadequate instructional communication (Pre-STEP/USAID, 2010: 1). Inconsistency in policy, low standard curriculum, low quality teaching are also the main issues of teacher education reported by many researchers (i.e. Bilal & Khan, 2012; Mahmood, 2014).

The student teaching or practicum is the ignored area in Pakistan both by the policy makers and the researchers. So the literature for practicum is scarce. Now some of the universities have started four years B.Ed. (Hons) programme, but still the quality of practicum is questionable. In Pakistan mostly the practicum is just a pass time activity (Gujjar, Ramazan, & Bajwa, 2011). Some of the universities are only providing one month duration to STs for field experiences, which is even less than the traditional nine month B.Ed. course. The supervision by the university faculty is quite ignorable and the mentoring by the school teachers is nominal.

The Context of the Study

The study was delimited to one university, the University of Education (UE) Lahore in the Punjab. The UE, first ever the education specialized university in Pakistan, was set up on September 10, 2002 (UE, About UE). The UE has 10 campuses throughout the Punjab province. The main purpose of UE is to train " dynamic leaders and practitioners in teaching, research and management (UE, Vision and Mission)." The UE offers education degrees from undergraduate to PhD. While the study was conducted in the beginning of 2011, at that time, most of the campuses were offering one year B.Ed. programme (14+1). So this study was only delimited to one year B.Ed. programme.

The practicum in UE campuses is mostly offered in April every year. In some campuses (i.e. UE Multan), the scaffolding model of practicum is being observed but most of the campuses (D.G. Khan, Jauharabad, Lower mall Lahore, Okara etc.) are following the traditional practicum model which comprises only one month block practicum. According to scaffolding model the practicum experiences are integrated throughout the year consisting at least seven weeks duration *in toto* (UE-CPBEP, 2009: 21). The traditional one block practicum comprises only one month duration for school experience.

First the scaffolding model was implemented by the university in all the campuses but then it was abandoned deeming it impracticability. The timing, for both the block practicum in the scaffolding model and in the traditional practicum model, is also critical, because in April new school session starts. So, the new admission are ongoing and, most of times, the school students even do not have books. This situation marginalizes the scope and worth of practicum experience.

Purpose of the Research

As mentioned earlier that in Pakistan there is dearth of research on practicum. Especially the TEs perceptions are rarely discerned by the researchers and in Pakistan the TEs play dual role; the role of supervisor and mentor because the schools teachers' role is almost near to zero percent in Pakistan. The study explored the opinion of participants of practicum about its activities and processes and understanding of their and others roles and responsibilities in conducting practicum.

Research Questions for the Study

The following research questions directed the study.

1. How much importance the participants give to different activities and processes of the practicum?

2. How much clarity the participants of the practicum (supervisors, cooperating teachers, and student teachers) do have about their own roles, responsibilities, and expectations and about those of

the others?

3. What steps can be taken to improve the collaboration between the participants and the institutions involved (Teacher Education institution and practicing schools)?

4. What steps and activities can be recommended to improve the administration of practicum?

Method

Participants

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The study was delimited to B. Ed. one year programme offered in UE Lahore, Pakistan. Among ten campuses of UE, six campuses were selected as clusters using random sampling technique. In the selected clusters researchers distributed 10 surveys in each one using equal allocation random sampling technique. From 60 distributed questionnaires 59 were responded and given back to the researchers.

Measurement

Two kinds of scales were used by the researchers to investigate the problem. One of the questionnaires (Qr-1) was developed to collect respondents' opinion about the level of importance of different elements, processes, and practices. The respondents were asked to rate their opinion over four point rating scale; Not Important, Less Important, Important, and Very Important. The other questionnaire (Qr-2) was developed to ask respondents show their level of agreement over a five point Likert scale; Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The important themes about which the respondents were asked were: communication; collaborative and cooperative practices and participants' roles within these; setting standards for the selection of mentors, and attendance of faculty and parent-teacher meetings by the STs.

Validity and Reliability

Both the questionnaires were pilot tested and then evaluated by the experts. The internal consistency of QR-1 and QR-2 was Cronbach's Alpha 0.76 and 0.89 respectively

Results

Demographic Data Analysis

As mentioned above, 60 subjects were selected from six campuses in different regions of the province. The mean of the age of participants was 37.92 years, SD 11.72, and Range 38 (ranged from 22 to 60). The data about gender, in-service training, and qualification of the subjects is given below (table 1).

Table 1

Frequency distribution based on gender, in-service training, and qualification

	Gender		**In service training**		**Qualification**		
	Male	Female	Yes	No	Master	M. Phil	PhD
Frequency	25	34	25	34	48	10	01
Percentage	42	58	42	58	81	17	02

The subjects were also asked to provide their experience regarding teaching B. Ed. classes and also regarding overall teaching career. Both kind of experience was asked in three categories; below one year, 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-10 years, and more than 10 years. The analyzed information has been given in the table 2.

Table 2

Teaching experience of participants; overall and teaching B. Ed

Teaching Experience		<1 year	(1-3) years	(4-6) years	(7-10) years	10> years
B. Ed.	Frequency	13	13	13	6	14
	%age	22	22	22	10	24
Overall	Frequency	9	7	14	9	20
	%age	15	12	24	15	34

Qr-1 Data Analysis

Qr-1Q was developed to know about the level of importance teacher educators give to the variables regarding communication and coordination, standards and regulations, suggested STs' practices during practicum, and administering the practicum. Factor analysis was done to load the items on four factors. For factor analysis, Maximum Likelihood method was used for extraction with Direct Oblimin (with Kaiser Normalization) as a rotation method. The value of KMO (.78) was meritorious and Bartlett's test (1074.77) with p = .000 was significant, both of which indicated that it was quite adequate to conduct factor analysis. Goodness of fit test (X^2 = 270.9) was significant at .01 with p = .002. Among 25 items, eight (8) were loaded for communication and coordination, five (5) for standards and regulations, four (4) for new suggested practices for STs, and eight (8) for practicum administration (appendix A).

Almost all the variable were regarded as important, except only one; "minimum length of 15 weeks for one block practicum" with mean score 2.83, which was ranked at last (rank = 25). For all other items the mean score was more than 3.00. But the highest ranked items were regarding written communication; written objectives and expectations and written responsibilities and evaluation criteria (mean scores 3.59 and 3.53). The suggestion of " Provision of an orientation session on mentoring skills for cooperating teachers (mean = 3.51) " was ranked third followed by "A collaborative partnership between school and university to provide a program for mentoring and instruction during the practicum (mean = 3.49) ". Fifth rank was given to " Binding of schools by law to accept the student teachers for practicum (mean = 3.47)". The next rank (6th) & 7th 8th) was given to "two meeting of STs with principal and mentors" and "team approach by ST, mentor and supervisor to overcome weaknesses (mean = 3.46)". "Weekly meetings of the triad; supervisor, mentor, and ST " and "Involvement of mentors in planning and structuring the practicum" ranked 9 (mean = 3.44) followed by "weekly evaluation of STs by supervisors", "Developing, administering, and scoring at least two tests during practicum ", "setting standards for facilities in practicing schools", and "Evaluation of supervisors and mentors" ranked 10th with mean score 3.34. "Action research as part of practicum", "integration of practicum throughout teacher education programme", and "involvement of government for collaboration between schools and universities" was ranked 11th scoring mean = 3.32. Developing ‘progress report’ and ‘reporting to parents’, ‘portfolio as assessment tool’, ‘conducting practicum yearly’, ‘attendance of three faculty meetings by STs’, ‘establishing suitable match between mentor and ST’, ‘provision of stipend to mentors’, ‘setting standards for mentors’, and ‘attendance of three parent meetings by STs’ ranked

12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th respectively.

Table 3

Significant difference on gender basis by t test (df= 57)

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	*t*	*p*
1. Weekly formative evaluation of STs by supervisors	Female	34	3.18	.83	1.97	.054
	Male	25	3.56	.58		
2. Govt. role for collaboration between schools and universities to conduct practicum	Female	34	3.12	.88	2.46	.017
	Male	25	3.60	.50		
3. Integration of practicum throughout the teacher education program	Female	34	3.47	.56	2.35	.025
	Male	25	3.12	.60		

*The value is significant at alpha level .05

The gender based analysis illustrated that the cohorts had significant difference over three items (table 3). Both the cohorts regarded the practice important but the degree of importance differed significantly. First two items were regarded more important by the female participants, while the third was regarded more important by male participants. The Chi Squared value for "weekly evaluation of STs by supervisors" was not significant ($\chi^2 = 3.82$; $p = .28$), and for other two items; "Government role for collaboration between schools and universities ($\chi^2 = 6.59$; $p = .085$)" and "integration of practicum throughout the teacher preparation programme ($\chi^2 = 5.0$; $p = .082$)", Chi square was marginally significant. It means, to find gender influence, it needs further investigation.

The qualification-wise analysis was done only for M. Phil and Master qualified participants, because only one candidate had PhD degree. Hence, t-test was applied to discover the significant difference between the responses of both the cohorts (table 4).

Table 4

Significant difference on qualification basis by t test (df= 57)

	Degree	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Involving mentors in planning and structuring practicum	Master	48	3.38	.57	2.1*	.05
	M. Phil	10	3.73	.47		

Partnership between school and university to ensure better practicum program	Master	48	3.42	.68	2.57*	.017
	M. Phil	10	3.82	.41		
Setting minimum standards for mentors	Master	48	3.02	.64	2.01*	.049
	M. Phil	10	3.45	.69		
Providing written responsibilities and evaluation criteria to every participant	Master	48	3.46	.62	2.38*	.026
	M. Phil	10	3.82	.41		

*The value is significant at alpha level .05

The above table disclosed that the Master and M. Phil participants had significant difference for four items. M. Phil participants expressed more importance for all these four items than Master participants did. This difference may indicate that because the M. Phil teachers were more qualified so they might be well aware of the importance of these processes, regulations, and practices. Even, Master teachers also regarded these functions important but the degree of importance expressed by M. Phil. teachers was higher than that of the Master teachers. For all the four items the difference is significant at alpha level .05.

Data analysis for in-service training revealed that the participants who had got in-service training regarded "Making progress report and reporting to the parent by STs" more important than that of the participants who did not get in-service training. The mean score for trained participants was 3.47 with standard deviation .66 and that for the untrained participants mean score was 3.08 (SD = .81). Student t-test value was 2.03 which was significant (p = .047) at alpha level .05. More than 50% (55.9%) of the trained participants regarded it very important and 35% important, while 32% of untrained teacher regarded making progress report very important and 48% important. Nobody from the trained participants regarded progress report developing "not important" and 9% regarded it less important, while among the untrained participants, 16% regarded it less important and 4% "Not important".

ANOVA was run to know the significant differences between respondents' responses on the basis of overall teaching and teaching B. Ed. classes experience. There was no significant difference between the responses of the participants on the basis of teaching experience to B.Ed. classes. But on the basis of overall teaching experience, the cohorts differed only for one item; integration of practicum throughout the teacher education programme. (See tables 5 & 6).

Table 5

ANOVA on the basis of overall teaching experience (integration of practicum throughout the teacher education program)

	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	4.482	4	1.121	3.69**	.010
Within	16.399	54	.304		

Groups		
Total	20.881	58

**The value is significant at the .01 level.

Table 6

Tukey HSD (integration of practicum throughout the teacher education program)

(I) overall teaching exp	(J) overall teaching exp	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
below one year	1-3 years	-.921(*)	.278	.014
	over 10 years	-.628(*)	.221	.048

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

For the integration of practicum throughout the teacher education programme ANOVA found the F (4) = 3.69 which was significant at alpha level .01. To know that which group has significantly differed from the other, Tukey HSD was applied. Tukey HSD disclosed that the significant difference was found between the participants having overall experience below one year with the participants having overall teaching experience of 1-3 years and over 10 years. Both the later mentioned cohorts (1-3 years & > 10 years) regarded integration of practicum more important than the participants with experience less than one year. The difference between <1 year experienced cohort and 1-3 years experienced cohort was significant at .014 while the difference between the responses of < 1 year experienced and > 10 years experienced participants was significant at .048, both of which had *p* value less than alpha .05.

Qr-2 Data Analysis

The QR-2 consisted of 22 items including one for overall satisfaction. Overall analysis reflected that the practicum stakeholders (STs, cooperating schools' heads [CS heads], and Supervisors) duly valued practicum. The mean scores about the clarity of roles for STs, CS heads, and Supervisors were 4.08 (SD = 4.42), 3.49 (SD = 1.29), and 3.49 (SD = 1.13) respectively. For the next ten items; clear communication between supervisor and mentor, CS heads and supervisors, CS heads and STs, and CS heads and coordinators, the mean scores were 3.42 (SD = 1.16), 3.32 (SD = 1.17), 3.29 (SD = 1.20), and 3.25 (SD = 1.17) respectively. But the communication between supervisors and STs were not smooth and clear. For the item "There is clarity of communication between supervisors and STs ", mean score (M = 2.86; SD = 1.15) was second last in ranking. The items about discernment of mutual expectations like--CS heads savvy of mentors' expectations from them, that of Mentors for STs' expectations, STs for mentors' expectations, and CS heads for supervisors' expectations; the means cores were 3.29 (SD = 1.12), 3.19 (SD = 1.21), 3.14 (SD = 1.17), and 3.10 (SD = 1.13) respectively, while for supervisors' savvy for STs' expectations was not clear and the mean score for that statement (Supervisors know STs' expectations) was 2.93 with standard deviation 1.19. And the mean for "supervisors clearly know mentors' expectations from them" was 3.00 (SD = 1.15).

For the clarity of participants own and others' roles there were five items asked in the questionnaire. Among them for the four statements most of the participants disagreed. The participants agreed only for the statement that STs are clear about their role in practicum where mean score was 3.14 and SD 1.29, which shows here also the agreement is just marginal. Majority disagreed for

the statements; mentors are clear about supervisors' role, mentors have clarity about their own role, STs are clear about supervisors' role, and supervisors are clear about mentors' role, where mean scores were 2.97 (SD 1.14), 2.93 (SD 1.13), 2.90 (SD 1.16), and 2.85 (SD 1.13). Especially the coordination and communication between supervisors and mentors is too poor.

In QR-2 two general questions were also asked from the participants; "CSs and teacher training institutions have better mutual coordination" and "Overall you are satisfied with the current practicum model". For the mutual coordination between the institutions, the participants remain indecisive (M = 3.0; SD = 1.2) while for overall satisfaction they showed their dissatisfaction (M = 2.8; SD = 1.3) for the current model of practicum, which was ranked last of all.

For the exploration of gender influence, the QR-1 was subjected to t-test. The findings revealed that the cohorts differed in their opinion for three variables (table 7).

Table 7

Difference between opinion of male & female teacher education (n=60)

Statements	Gender	N	Mean	SD	*t*	*p*
Supervisors are clear about mentors' role	Female	34	2.44	1.08	3.54**	.001
	Male	25	3.40	.96		
Mentors are clear about sup role	Female	34	2.71	1.06	2.1*	.041
	Male	25	3.32	1.18		
Supervisors are clearly aware of STs expectations	Female	34	2.68	1.09	1.98*	.053
	Male	25	3.28	1.24		

* The value is significant at alpha level .05.

**The value is significant at alpha level .01.

The female participants disagreed that the supervisors were clear about mentors' role in practicum. The *t* value [$t(57) = 3.54$] was significant at alpha level .001. The value of Chi Square (χ^2) test of independence ($\chi^2 = 12.27$; $p = .015$) was also significant at alpha level .05. For mentors' clarity about supervisors' role, the female disagreed and the difference [$t(57) = 2.1$] was significant ($p = .041$) at alpha level .05. The cohorts also differed over supervisors' clarity about STs' expectations, where female disagreed and vice versa.

On the basis of received and not received inservice training, student t-test was applied to know the significant differences. Both the groups showed only marginal difference [$t(57)=1.85$; $p=.069$] over the item "mentors clearly know STs' expectations". The participants who had got in-service training disagreed (M = 2.94; SD = 1.21) to the statement while their counterpart agreed (M = 3.52; SD = 1.16). The Chi Square value was also marginally

significant (χ^2 = 8.09; p = .089). Hence, this needs further investigation.

Because among the subjects of the study only one had PhD degree, so excluding that one, other two groups (Master & M. Phil) were subjected to t test for qualification based analysis. Both of the groups differed in their opinion over two statements, which were both about CS heads. First, the communication between CS heads and STs was differed only for intensity, where the intensity of M. Phil degree holders' response (M = 3.91; SD = 0.83) was stronger than that of Master degree holders (M = 3.15; SD = 1.24). The difference [t(57) = 2.4; p = .021] was significant at alpha level .05. For the statement "CS heads know supervisors' expectations" the cohorts differed, but the difference was marginally significant [t(57) = 1.86; p = .069].

For analyzing data on the basis of teaching experience; overall and B.Ed. classes, the QR-2 was subjected to one way ANOVA. No significant difference was found on the basis of teaching B.Ed. classes, while on the basis of overall experience the groups differed marginally (F = 2.26; p = .075), only for one item; STs give due value to practicum. (Table 8)

Table 8

ANOVA based on overall teaching experience " STs value practicum very much"

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	162.04	4	40.51	2.26	.075
Within Groups	968.54	54	17.94		
Total	1130.58	58			

To discern that which groups differ, post-Hoc Tukey HSD was applied with one way ANOVA. As we can see in the above table, the participants having overall teaching experience of 1-3 years differed from the groups having overall teaching experience below one year, 4-6 years, and over 10 years, but the difference was marginally significant between each pair of groups, where value of p is .093, .095, and .059 respectively.

Discussion and Conclusion

Almost all of the practices, processes, and regulations were declared important or very important by the participants, but the written communication was ranked the highest of all. After written communication, at second, collaborative and cooperative practices were given much importance by the subjects of the study. At third number in ranks, ‘evaluative practices’ were given high importance. Giving stipend to mentors, setting standards for the selection of mentors, and attendance of parent-teacher meetings by the STs during practicum were ranked third last, second last, and last of all respectively.

The participants revealed that the main stake holders of the practicum are not clear about their own and each others' roles and expectations. The last ranked item was about the overall satisfaction about current practicum programme. The study also revealed that the STs, CS heads, and supervisors value practicum, which were ranked first, second, and third respectively.

If we view the findings of QR-1 and QR-2 together with each other, we can easily notice that in QR-1 they gave highest rank to written communication and in QR-2 the role clarity came up as a problem, which also endorses the need for written communication. In the study by Azeem (2011) only 22% responded that they were informed about rules and regulations of schools and 30% said they had orientation session before going for practicum. In all the academically advanced countries and also other countries of the world, the roles and responsibilities are written in Handbook which is provided to every participant

of practicum. If we provide written communication, the communication gap can be finished or at least reduced to minimum.

After written communication, in QR-1, collaborative and cooperative practices were ranked second by the participants and in QR-2 the participants remained undecided and uncertain about the item "there is sufficient coordination between CSs and teacher training institutions". So, again seeing both the findings in line with each other, we can easily infer that there is intense need of coordination between faculty of education and the practicing sites, but the coordination between the both institutions is missing. In different countries (i.e. China, Canada, Australia etc.) of the world, the education faculties have close collaboration with practicum sites (cooperating schools). The study by Azeem (2011) revealed all the participants (100%) were not told about facilities in schools. Without a strong and close collaboration, the achievement of objectives of practicum is just like a dream.

Gender-wise analysis shows that for QR-1the cohorts differed in the intensity of opinion for three statements; weekly STs' evaluation by supervisors, government role in collaboration, and integration of practicum throughout the programme. Where for the last mentioned statement, the degree of females' response was stronger than that of males' otherwise male responded stronger than the females in first and second statements. For QR-2 the cohorts also differed in three statements, among which two were supervisors' clarity and one about mentors' clarity. We can see that for all the statement female respondents disagreed while the male agreed to the statements. We have mentioned earlier that the role clarity emerged as a problem in the study. Here we can see that the females do not agree for role clarity which may indicate that the role clarity is main problem for the females. For the statement; supervisors are clear about mentors' role the Chi Squared [χ^2 (4) = 12.27; p = .015] value is also significant, but for the other two statements Chi Square is not significant. Therefore it needs further research to know the gender's influence over TEs' perceptions about clarity of roles.

The difference on the basis of qualifications revealed that the TEs having M.Phil. degree have stronger opinion for the importance of processes, regulations, and practices. It might indicate that because of the higher qualification, the participants know the importance of practices, and give more value to them as compared to participants with low qualification. The difference for QR-2 is for the two items which are about CS heads. For the communication between CS heads and STs both agree the difference lie in degree of agreement. For CS heads know supervisors' expectations the M.Phil. degree holders disagree while the Master degree holder agree to the statement. Because the respondents themselves are supervisors so this finding has importance and implication. It needs further research to find out the influence of qualification over TEs' perceptions about CS heads.

The TEs who have taken in-service development training declared "progress report development and its reporting to parents" as very important and the TE without in-service training have regarded it just important. It indicates that TEs having in-service training give more value to the progress report development by the STs. This finding also has implication for further research.

The ANOVA for overall teaching experience disclosed that the participants differed in degree for integration of practicum, where more experienced gave more importance to the process of integration than the participants having less than one year experience. The participants who have less than one year experience didn’t experience the process of practicum yet, so there is possibility that after they go through the process of experience, may be, they will change their perception.

The study concluded that ‘the clarity of

roles' is important and there is a dire need for written communication to every participant of the practicum. It is also concluded that there is lack of cooperation and collaboration between the participants and the institutions (education faculty and practicing schools), which demands for more collaborative and cooperative practices and regulations.

While generalizing the results, it should be kept in mind that the study was only delimited to UE, Lahore. Because only TEs were included in the study so the inclusion of others participants (mentors, heads, and STs) may influence the results.

The study has implications for the policy makers, education faculties, and practicing schools. The policy makers and education faculties can take sound measures to make communication better between the participants of the practicum; i.e. written communication should be compulsory. The policy take some policy measure to fill the gap in coordination between the schools and teacher training institutions; like involvement of practicing schools in planning and administering the practicum process. Developing some regulations for the sake of coordination and involvement of HEC or District government can also help in improving the collaboration between institutions. To arrange some development workshops for the faculty of practicing schools especially for the mentors can also help in not only improving the coordination between the institutions but also in enhancing the clarity of roles and better communication between the participants.

The study also has implications for the researchers and it raised some questions for further investigation. For instance, for weekly evaluation, government role in collaboration, and integration of practicum; is there any gender influence over the TEs perceptions? Does gender influence the perceptions of TEs about clarity of roles or the role clarity is only problem for females? What is the influence of higher qualification over TEs perceptions?

References

Academy of Educational Planning and Managment. (2009). *Pakistan Education Statistics 2008-09.* Islamabad: Ministry of Education.

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2010). *The clinical preparation of teachers: A policy brief.* Washington, DC: National Press Club.

Azeem, M. (2011) Problems of prospective teachers during teaching practice. Academic Research International, 1 (2), 308-316.

Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2002a). Components of a good practicum placement:Student teacher perceptions. *Teacher Education Quarterly , 29* (2), 81-98.

Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2002b). Professors and the practicum: Involvement of university faculty in pre-service practicum supervision. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(1), 6-19.

Busher, H. (December 2005). The project of the other: developing inclusive learning communities in schools. *Oxford Review of Education , 31* (4), 459-477.

Caires, S., & Almeda, L. S. (2005). Teaching practice in initial teacher education: Its impact on student teachers' professional skills and development. *Journal of Education for Teaching , 31* (2), 111-120.

Carpenter, L., & Blance, B. (2001). Teaching internships and the learning community. In T. Townsend & R. Bates (ed.) *Handbook of Teacher Education*, (pp. 301-14) Dordrecht, NL: Springer.

Chan, K.-w., & Leung, M.-t. (1998). Hong Kong pre-service teachers focus of concerns and confidence to teach-A perspective of teacher development. *Online proceedings of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE).* Adelaide, Australia.

Cimer, S. O. (2011). The effect of portfolios on students' learning: student teachers' views. *European Journal of Teacher Education , 34* (2), 161-176.

Clarke, A. 2006. The nature and substance of cooperating teacher reflection. Teaching and Teacher Education 22, no. 7: 910_21.

Crasborn, F., Hennissen, P., Korthagen, F. & Bergen, T. (2008). Promoting versatility in mentor teachers' use of supervisory skills. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24* (3), 499-514.

Darling-Hammond, L., Wise, A. E., & Klein, S. P. (1995). *A license to teach: Building a profession for 21st century schools.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Dilshad, M., & Iqbal, H. M. (2010). Quality Indicators in Teacher Education Programmes. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences , 30* (2), 401-411.

Dilshad, R. M. (2010). Assessing quality of teacher education: A student perspective. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences , 30* (1), 85-97.

Directorate of Staff Development. (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved December 27, 2012, from http://www.dsd.edu.pk/pages/contents/12

Dooner, A. M., Mandzuk, D., & Clifton, R. A. (2008). Stages of collaboration and the realities of professional learning communities. *Teaching and Teacher Education , 24*, 564-574.

Fairbanks, C., Freedman, D., & Kahn, C. (2000). The role of effective mentors in learning to teach. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51* (2), 102-12.

Foote, C. J., & Vermette, P. J. (2001). Teaching portfolio 101: Implementing the teaching portfolio in introductory courses. *Journal of Instructional Psychology , 28* (1), 31-37.

Geen, A., & Harris, C. (2002). Student perceptions of collaborative teaching in initial teacher education and training. *UWIC Education Papers, 1* (May): 1-11.

Goh, K. C., Wong, A. F., Choy, D., & Tan, J. P. (2009). Confidence levels after practicum experiences of student teachers in Singapore: An exploratory study. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy , 6* (2), 121-140.

Goodlad, J. I. (1994). *Educational renewel: Better teachers, better schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gujjar, A. A., Ramzan, M., & Bajwa, M. J. (2011). An Evaluation of Teaching Practice: Practicum. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences , 5* (2), 302-318.

Hascher, T., Cocard, Y., & Moser, P. (2004). Foget about the theory-practice is all? Student teachers' learning in practicum. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice , 10* (6), 623-637.

Hill, H. C., Ball, D. L., & Schilling, S. G. (2008). Unpacking pedagogical content knowledge: Conceptualizing and measuring teachers' topic specific knowledge of students. *Journal of Research in Mathematics Education , 39* (4), 372-400.

Kiggundu, E. (2007). Teaching practice in the Greater Vaal Triangle Area: The student teachers experience. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning , 4*, 25-35.

Kiggundu, E., & Nayimuli, S. (2009). Teaching practice: a make or break phase for student teachers. *South African Journal of Education,29, , 29*, 345-358.

Knowles, J. G., Cole, A. L., & Presswood, C.S. (1994). *Through pre-service teachers' eye: Exploring field experience through narrative and inquiry*. New York, NY: Macmillan College Publishing Company.

Mills, G. (2007). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (3rd ed.). New York: Merill Prentice Hall.

Laboskey, V., & Richert, A. (2002). Identifying good student teacher placements. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 29* (2), 7-34.

Long, J. (1997). Mentoring for school-based teacher education in Australia. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 4*(3), 11-8.

Martinez, K. (1998). Pre-service teachers adrift on a sea of knowledges. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 26*,(2), 97-106.

Moody, J. (2009). Key elements in a positive practicum: insights from Australian post-primary pre-service teachers. *Irish Educational Studies , 28* (2), 155-175.

Nancy, L. (2007). Critical thinking dispositions as an outcome of undergraduate education. *The Journal of General Education , 56* (1), 17-33.

Ngidi, D. P., & Sibaya, P. T. (2003). Student teacher anxieties related to practice teaching. *South African Journal of Education , 23* (1), 18-22.

Oh, D. M., Ankers, A. M., Llamas, J. M., & Tomyoy, C. (2005). Impact of preservice student

teaching experience on urban school teachers. *Journal of Instructional Technology , 32* (1), 82-92.

Plaisir, J. Y., Hachey, A. C., & Theilheimer, R. (2011). Their portfolios, our role: Examinining a Community College Teacher Education Digital Portfolio Program From the Students' Perspective. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education , 32*, 159-175.

Pre-STEP/USAID. (2010). *Rationalization of Pre-service Teacher Education Programme of Pakistan.* Islamabad: Pre-STEP.

Sales, A., Traver, J. A., & Garcia, R. (2011). Action research as a school-based strategy in intercultural professional developement for teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education , 27*, 911-919.

Samaras, A. P., & Gismondi, S. (1998). Scaffolds in the field: Vygotskian interpretation in a teacher education program. *Teaching and Teacher Education , 14* (7), 715-733.

Smith, K. (2010). Assessing the Practicum in teacher education – Do we want candidates and mentors to agree? *Studies in Educational Evaluation , 36*, 36-41.

Smith, K., & Lev-Ari, L. (2005). The place of the practicum in pre-service teacher education: the voice of the students. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education , 33* (3), 289-302.

Strijbos, J., Meeus, W., & Libotton, A. (2007). Portfolio assignments in teacher education: A tool for self-regulating the learning process? *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning , 1* (2), 1-16.

Teitel, L. (1997). Changing teacher education through professional development school partnerships: A five-year follow-up study. *Teachers College Record , 99* (2), 311-334.

UNESCO-IBE. (2011, July). *World Data on Education 7th Edition: Pakistan.* Retrieved December 27, 2012, from International Bureau of Education: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/services/online-materials/world-data-on-education/seventh-edition-2010-11.html

University of Education. (n.d.). *About UE*. Retrieved December 25, 2012, from http://www.ue.edu.pk

University of Education. (n.d.). *Vision and Mission*. Retrieved December 25, 2012, from http://www.ue.edu.pk

University of Education-CPBEP. (2009). *Professional practice manual for teaching practice: Handbook for cooperating teachers.* Lahore: University of Education-Canada Pakistan Basic Education Project.

Zambo, D., & Zambo, R. (2007). Action Research in an Undergraduate Teacher Education Program: What Promises Does It Hold? Action in Teacher Education , 28 (4), 62-74.

Zwart, R. C., Wubbels, T., Bergen, T. C., & Bolhuis, S. (2007). Experienced teacher learning within the context of reciprocal peer coaching. Teachers andTeaching: Theory and Practice , 13 (2), 165-187.

Appendix A

QR-1: Factor loading by Maximum Likelihood with Direct Oblimin

Factor 1	1. Availability of written responsibilities and evaluation criteria 2. Evaluation of the performance of supervisors and cooperating teachers 3. Two meetings of ST, mentor, and the principal to discuss STs' progress 4. Integration of practicum throughout the teacher preparation program 5. Administering the practicum at yearly (every year) basis 6. Providing clearly written objectives and expectations to each participant 7. Using team approach (ST, supervisor, and mentor) to correct weaknesses 8. Weekly meetings of ST, mentor, and supervisor to provide feedback
Factor 2	1. Setting standards for the availability of facilities in the practice schools 2. Binding of schools by law to accept the STs for practicum 3. Setting minimum standards for mentors' selection 4. Govt. role for collaboration between schools and universities to conduct practicum 5. Provision of a stipend for mentors, with specified goals
Factor 3	1. Attendance of minimum three parent-teacher conferences by STs 2. Required attendance of minimum three faculty meetings by STs 3. Developing, conducting and scoring tests at least twice during practicum 4. Making progress report and reporting to parents at least twice by STs
Factor 4	1. Involving mentors in planning and structuring the practicum 2. Provision of an orientation session on mentoring skills for mentors 3. Action research as a part of practicum programme is 4. Portfolio as the part of practicum evaluation process is 5. Partnership between school and university to ensure better practicum program 6. Weekly formative evaluations by the supervisors 7. Establishing a minimum length of fifteen weeks for practicum 8. Establishing a suitable match between the ST and mentor