

Life Long Education: Professional Development Guideline for Partnership in Practicum Placement of English Teacher Candidates in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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Abstract. This study aims to explore partnership in practicum placement of English teacher candidate in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The purposes of the research were to (1) investigate problems, weakness and obstacles of practicum placement of English teacher candidates in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and (2) set up professional development guideline for partnership in practicum placement. The sample in this study comprised of 7 English teacher students, 7 mentor teachers and the head of the department of English, Faculty of Education. Interview form was employed as a research tool to collect data. Then the data were analyzed by using frequency to describe the characteristic of the sample and content analysis method to investigate the problems, weakness and obstacles. The results revealed that learning management plan is the most important factor affecting the professional development of the English teacher; next are the factor of classroom management, passion for teaching and classroom action research performance. Learning management and classroom management, which concerned instructional design, teaching technique, instructional media, measurement and evaluation, classroom management technique and student behavior management plan.

Keywords: Teaching Professional Practicum, Professional Development, Teacher Candidate, Partnership

1. Introduction

Education is defined as fundamental to national development and growth. Education is also a process and tool of which is to construct sustainable development. Teachers are crucial component in the educational process. In this respect, efficiency teacher is as a pioneer valuable leading to the successful educational process. The competencies required for effective teaching must include being knowledgeable in content and skill in methods; as well as having positive attitude toward teaching profession. In order to achieve effective professional teachers, teachers must possess knowledge and skills in practicum, learning content, educational psychology, communication, teaching methods, technology and innovation in teaching, classroom management, and measurement and evaluation [1, 2, 3, 4, 5].

With the spread of English as an international language, the roles of English teachers have changed and professional development for English teachers is undoubtedly important in English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts. English teachers in the era of globalization must have competency in grammar, sociolinguistics, discursively and strategically proficient in English language [6]. Moreover, those teachers need to have awareness about language learners, processes of learning, classroom teaching strategies, and adequate experience and practice in English language[6].

The practicum is considered as an integral component of teacher education program. Richard and Crooker (1988) stated that the teaching professional practicum facilitates and enhances student teachers' knowledge, skills and experiences and, more importantly, it is an opportunity to continue academic and professional growth [7]. Farrell (2008) added during the teaching professional practicum, the student teachers are able to gather actual teaching experience [8]. Although the English teacher education program provides a practicum and teaching professional internship for all teacher candidates, it is found that the English teacher candidates still lack of professional knowledge and skills [6, 9]. In regard to this matter, professional development has been the focus of educational researchers, with the purpose of understanding the obstacles that exist during the practicum. Accepted method of Educational and practicum research is to study student teachers' opinions [8]. Recent researchers have investigated pre-service teachers' opinion about their authentic teaching performance. For example, Chan and Leung (1998) found that examining students' voice while performing their teaching professional practicum is the key to develop teaching profession [8].

The partnership between teacher candidates, mentor teacher, and university supervisor is able to support students' effective professional development. Studying the voice of these three partners can possibly lead to a clear understanding on problems and barriers effecting pre-service teachers' effective professional development and problem solving guideline and strategy to prepare pre-service teachers for effective professional teacher in the future [10].

English Department of Faculty of Education, Suan Sunanda Rajabhat University makes a great effort to produce effective English teachers who are professional and skillful in teaching. However, it is found that the English teacher candidates still lack professional knowledge and skills of English teacher such as classroom management, learning management plan, and performing classroom action research. Considering the problems and barriers that exist in English teacher candidates' performance, professional development for English teacher candidates of Suan Sunanda Rajabhat University need to be examined carefully and redefined. Specific areas of examination and redefinition and the objectives of this research are to:

- investigate problems, weaknesses and obstacles of practicum placement of English teacher candidates in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
- set up professional development guidelines for partnership in practicum placement of English teacher candidates in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

2. Participants and Methods of Analysis

This study was an exploratory conducted in Faculty of Education of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in Thailand. Selection of participants was purposive. According to Erlandson et al. (1993), purposive sampling is central to naturalistic research [11]. Participants were 7 English teacher candidates, 7 mentor teachers and 1 university supervisor. Small samples are used in this qualitative research. Indeed, small group characterizes single-subject designs, which are routinely utilized in quantitative approaches [12]. Data were collected through interviews with English teacher candidates, mentor teachers and the university supervisor. The interview questions were based on the competency base for professional teachers that was categorized into 4 main issues including of learning management, classroom management, passion for teaching, and classroom action research competency. The research tool was approved as content validity (IOC of each item ranged 1.00).

3. Findings

Table 1: Investigating of the difficulties affecting English teacher candidates

Main Issues	Participants			Total	Related Sub-issues
	English Teacher Candidates	Mentor Teachers	University Supervisor		
Learning Management	7	6	1	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate teaching strategy • Communicative language teaching approach • Content expertise • Appropriate use of teaching material • Content related curriculum and indicator • Motivation enhancement in English learning
Classroom Management	7	4	1	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student behavior problem • Lack of appropriate classroom management approach
Passion for Teaching	7	3	1	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher demeanor • Teacher responsibility
Classroom Action Research Performance	7	-	1	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stating research problem • Research writing skill

Table 1 classifies the professional development difficulties. An overview of the professional development guidelines for partnership in practicum placement of English teacher candidates in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University was presented in Table 2.

Table 1 shows that (1) Learning management plan is the most important factor affecting the professional development followed by (2) the factor of classroom management, (3) passion for teaching and (4) classroom action research performance.

Table 2 Overview of Professional Development Guideline for Partnership in Practicum Placement of English Teacher Candidates

Main Issues	Related Sub-issues	Professional Development Guidelines for Partnership in Practicum Placement of English Teacher Candidates	Expected Outcome
Learning Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate teaching strategy • Motivation enhancement in English learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing learning management by covering English teaching techniques and student motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates gain knowledge about the variety of teaching technique such as, Interactive and Direct instruction, Story Mapping, Bottom-up Total Physical Response (TPR), and Card game or Flashcard approach, in order to select appropriate techniques for different teaching context.
Classroom Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student behavior problem • Lack of appropriate classroom management approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing courses relating to English classroom management skill enhancement and student behavior problem solving strategies. • Supporting the preparation of pre-service teachers through mentoring system - offering advice for classroom behavior management by using open-ended questions to encourage critical thinking, idea and opinion expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates are able to develop their classroom management skill effectively. • Candidates are able to select the most appropriate strategy to cope with student behavior problem • Candidates are able to learn from the mentor's direct experiences in classroom management strategy.
Passion for Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher demeanor • Teacher responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the importance of a mentor in terms of offering both formal and informal advice • Establishing mentoring system • Organizing activities about developing candidates' academic skills and personality development • Encouraging candidates to inquire and think about problems of English learning that their students may have • Instigating the candidates to be a role model for their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidates are able to learn from their mentor's direct experience and apply the mentor's advice in learning activities management, and classroom control strategies. • Candidates are able to establish and foster positive relationship with the student

		students in terms of ethic and morality, dress code, and good behavior and discipline	
Classroom Action Research Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stating research problem • Research writing skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize problem identification, research methodology and writing strategy for classroom action research • Organizing follow-up action research training for candidates • Supporting teacher candidates' action research by establishing center for classroom action research or "Action Research Clinic" that provides the support advice and resources • Emphasizing the importance of the role of a mentor and university supervisor in classroom action research to offering advice and guidelines • Creating classroom action research award to encourage the candidates to conduct high-quality classroom action research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates' action research meets high standard and expectation of the English teacher preparation program. • Candidates are able to establish a community for assisting and exchanging ideas about conducting classroom action research

4. Conclusion

In an attempt to set up professional development guidelines for Partnership in Practicum Placement of English teacher candidates, the paper explored the difficulties affecting English teacher candidates' professional development. Based on the findings, it can be concluded as follow:

Learning management is essential skill for professional English teacher. English language teacher need to have a clear understanding in the nature of second language acquisition or second language learning process of learners as well as language teaching methodology and instructional strategy. Additionally, it is inevitable for professional English language teachers to possess the ability in developing their own teaching style, managing learning activity, and performance, and adjusting their role to correspond with different kinds of student.

- To accomplish effective professional development, it is important for English language teacher candidates to have expertise in content and teaching techniques. Particularly, teachers need to use experience-learning technique and interactive instruction strategy, as well as the strategy for enhancing students' motivation in classroom.
- Selecting appropriate teaching material, such as study documents, computer programs, and multimedia. Fursternberg and Morgenstern (1992) insisted that the progression of English language teaching and learning depends on technology and innovation [13].
- According to the result of this study, English teacher candidates are still lack of classroom management skill. Candidates are unable to control classroom by themselves. The students tend to take advantage of any situation to demonstrate power over the teacher candidates. Therefore, courses relating to classroom management and student behavior problem solving strategy should be established
- In teaching practice, the English teacher candidates' roles and functions should include those of teacher, advisor and companion to the students. Moreover, the English teacher candidates should be a life-long learner and stay up to date on new technology for teaching and learning.

- Establishing the positive relationship with the students is a challenge for the English teacher candidates because it is an effective way to indirectly motivate students. The current study found the English language teacher candidates had an advantage in creating positive relationship with the students because of the small age gap between them.
- Interactive instruction strategy should be taken into consideration in creating positive English learning environment. The teachers perform as the facilitator in the classroom. In the other words, the teacher moves the responsibility for learning from the instructor to the student. Interactive instruction strategy allows the students to create an explicit list of learning objectives and establish a framework, which fits their knowledge.
- The English teacher candidates should be skillful in classroom action research. This research reflects thinking, innovative creativity and knowledge in learning management.
- In summation, professional development in the practicum should emphasize developing learning management skill, classroom management skills, passion for teaching, and classroom action research performance.
- The findings of the current study might not be inadequate for professional development. However, the findings of the study can be integrated into teacher preparation programs as a problem-solving guideline.

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6. References

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