

27006

A CASE STUDY OF THE PRACTICUM COMPONENT IN AN ELT DEPARTMENT IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

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The focus of this study is the practicum course in an ELT Department. The study is descriptive and data is collected through a questionnaire and interviews.

The first goal of the study was to obtain a picture of the practicum and to describe the existing model of the practicum course in the ELT Department at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. The second goal was to identify the problems which exist in the practicum.

Previous studies on the practicum in Turkey were used as a basis for developing questions for the questionnaire. These questions are related to the motivation of student teachers, observation focus, and the relationship between the student teachers and their supervisors as well as their cooperating teachers.

A questionnaire was created and administered to all 46 student teachers taking the practicum course in the ELT Department at METU. Following this, five student teachers as well as three supervisors were interviewed. The interview questions were prepared in order to more deeply explore some of the responses given in the questionnaire.

The findings reveal that student teachers are motivated and that they have positive ideas about their supervisor and cooperating teachers. The student teachers do not have a particular area to focus on when they observe other teachers teach. There are also no systematic follow-up discussions to these observations. Other problems which came up are mainly related to the time allocation of the practicum, the lack of opportunities for the student teachers to experience teaching, the attitudes of the administrators in the cooperating high schools, and the workload of the student teachers and the supervisors.

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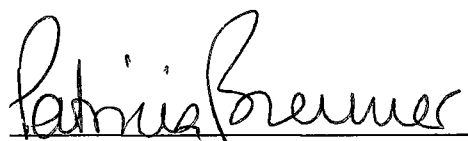
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The most important element in the process of teaching a language is the teachers. Teacher training therefore is very important. This importance has resulted from the great demand for teachers and at the same time has created an unlimited area for research.

In Turkey, teacher training is carried out in two stages. First, basic courses in the field of English Language Teaching are given to the students. At this preparation stage for the teaching profession the students are equipped with theories and teaching methodologies. The second stage is teaching practice, referred to as the the practicum, which generally takes place in the last semester of the last year (Altan, 1990).

The main goal of a the practicum is to provide student teachers with a real teaching context. In addition to observing the teaching situation, being in a real teaching situation helps to close the gap between theory and practice.

The importance of the practicum has been emphasized by many experts. There are a number of studies on teacher training, with recent studies focusing on the improvement of teacher training and the practicum. A review of the literature shows that there are problems in the practicum component of teacher training programs. In her review of literature, Kagan (1992) states that the practicum components in the U.S.A. are generally inadequate in length and number and stand apart from the content of the course work.

Similar to Kagan, Altan (1990) has found that most universities in Turkey have only one semester of the practicum in the last year in their English Language Teaching Departments. He also has a description of the nature of the practicum in Turkey and concludes that many things have to be reconsidered, including the time allocated to the practicum, selection of supervisors and cooperating teachers.

In her article on the practicum in Turkey, Vancı-Osam (1992) states that there are "weak points" in the practicum due to organizational and administrative decisions. One of these weak points is the insufficiency of the amount of methodology and practice teaching courses and the shortness

of time allotted to them. These problems are more difficult to solve compared to other problems such as over-crowded classes, student teachers' previous learning experiences, lack of motivation, and difficulty in establishing coordination for practice teaching with the teachers at high schools.

In addition to these problems, Vancı-Osam (1992) received input on the practicum from student teachers through different sources such as questionnaires, appraisal reports and informal interviews. Results indicate that the student teachers can not easily make a transfer from theory to practice, that they also think that there is too much theory and too little application, and that observing the cooperating teachers is unimportant and not profitable for them.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate some of the problems that Altan (1990) and Vancı-Osam (1992) have stated. Altan has looked at the practicum in a wider scope and compared it with the literature, and Vancı-Osam has described the practicum in an ELT program and suggested solutions to problems. This study attempts to investigate the practicum course in the ELT program at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey to see the whether student teachers in this program also consider these aspects mentioned by the two researchers to be problems. In addition, observation focus, which has been claimed to be of great importance by many researchers will be looked at. Lack of observation focus may be a problem which is related to the observation period. Also, the relationship between supervisors and cooperating teachers is examined.

The purpose of this study is, therefore, first, to describe the practicum in an ELT Department and to find answers to the following questions:

- 1- Are student teachers motivated?
- 2- Do student teachers have goals and focus in their observations of real classroom settings?
- 3- What kind of a relationship do student teachers have with their supervisors and their cooperating teachers?
- 4- What kinds of skills do student teachers gain through their the

practicum experience?

Answers to these questions both from the point of view of student teachers and the supervisors will be sought in this study. The answers to these questions will be analyzed in detail to provide a description of the practicum in Turkey. In order to realize this goal, the methodology chosen for this study is the case study. Data is collected through a questionnaire and in-depth interviewing.

The researcher hopes that this study will be of interest especially to administrators, supervisors, and people in the Ministry of Education who are responsible for many decisions involved in the process of teacher training. The study confirms that the practicum has to be reorganized and reconsidered by the administrators and the Ministry of Education. The supervisors may find the study useful in seeing what problems their student teachers have. Perhaps the results will lead them to consider what they can do on the issue.

Limitations

The results of this study are limited

- a- to the time of the study since the regulations on the practicum may change.
- b- to the practicum component at Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey. As Altan (1990) has found, many universities in Turkey have similar the practicum components, but as Vancı-Osam (1992) has stated many universities have modified their practicum components. The results of the study may not apply to some programs.
- c- to the training of EFL teachers. Some basic similarities may exist with other disciplines but this study will not be providing information about other disciplines.

Definition of Terms:

Student teachers: These are undergraduate students who are studying to receive their B. A. in Foreign Language Teaching. They are in their last year and taking the practicum course, which is in the last semester.

Practicum: This is the term that will be used to refer to the course student teachers take to integrate teaching theory and practice.

Practice teaching: This term will be used to refer to the field teaching which student teachers do.

Field Experience: This term will refer to the student teachers' visits to high schools in order to observe real classroom settings and practice student teaching.

Coordinating teacher: (also referred to as the cooperating teacher and the classroom teacher) This refers to teachers in the high schools whom the student teachers observe and work with.



CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Teacher education is a field of many disciplines, as it is concerned with the education of prospective teachers and practising teachers among several areas of research in teacher education, the study of preservice training has been a concern. As a result, there have been many theories and practices suggested by the experts in the field.

Pretraining is one of the phases of teacher preparation that Doyle (1985) mentions as being investigated by researchers recently. The other phases of teacher education which the literature is organized around are preservice, induction, and inservice (Nemser, 1983). This study will focus on undergraduate teacher training programs, in other words, preservice teacher training.

It is quite confusing to see that despite their importance, not much attention has been given to teacher education programs or to the design of these programs. According to Kagan (1992) the design of teacher training programs is a process dictated by tradition, bureaucracy, or the ideas of persuasive individuals. The efficiency of teacher training programs, which will be discussed in the last part of this chapter, was studied by Kagan in 1992.

Practicum in Teacher Education

Teacher education programs have a crucial and indispensable element: the practicum. Practicum is very important in terms of combining theory and practice (Ferguson, 1989). According to Goodman (1985) "Although much controversy has surrounded the ways in which future teachers have been and are prepared, the one component of teacher education that traditionally has been considered valuable is field experience (e.g., Conant, 1963; Joyce, Yarger, Howey, Harbeck, and Kluwin, 1977)." (p.42).

The importance of practice teaching or field experience can be explained by the notion which Applegate and Lasley (1982) explain as a tacit assumption that preservice teachers learn best by doing. Applegate and Lasley also cite Zeichner (1980) in stating that practical school experience necessarily contributes to the development of better teachers.

According to Applegate and Lasley (1982), field experience is considered to be worthwhile since:

Students see field experiences as one of the most valuable phases of their preparation (Ryan et al., 1980), as a time to experience the "real" world. Teacher educators see them as opportunities for students to practice skills they have learned during their professional education course work.

Practicum is the major opportunity for the student teachers to feel what teaching is (Richards & Crookes, 1988). According to Beyer (1984), the student teaching experience has become an almost universally accepted part of programs in teacher education. It is expected to provide "real life" experience in enabling students to explore teaching methods and styles, become familiar with the demands of teaching, and acquire the skills and values necessary to function adequately in that setting. The general consensus seems to be that the greater the number of hours spent in a classroom, the better prepared the student teacher will be (Beyer, 1984).

The limited amount of experience and professional content received by prospective teachers has been of great interest to many researchers. As Doyle (1985) states, research on preservice focused on:

. . . the conflict between the theoretical character of the professional curriculum and candidates' concerns for survival and practical techniques (see Fuller, 1969), and the role and impact of student teaching (Zeichner, 1983).

The role and impact of student teaching is important because the practicum is based on experience that student teachers have during their practice teaching. Yet, experience alone is not necessarily a good teacher, as Feiman-Nemser and Buchman ((1983), cited in Koehler (1985)), have stated.

Although experience is valuable, Goodman (1989), as quoted in Ferguson (1989), claims that placing students in practicum sites does not alone provide neophytes with valuable, relevant experiences.

Goodman (1985) thinks that

Through research and evaluation, educators must attempt to understand

this process of learning to teach. We need to go beyond stated principles and ideologies and explore the empirical reality of professional preparation as it unfolds over time. . . . Developing quality teacher preparation programs requires more than just a conceptual framework. We must see how our assumptions and intentions are manifested in practice (p.47).

There are certain dangers in the practicum like the dangers of "uncritical acceptance" that Beyer (1984) has discussed. Students should not emulate what they see and consider whatever they observed as the 'unchangeable'. The fact that student teachers emulate what they see may be due to the fact that "real task in student teaching is often that of pleasing a cooperating teacher to receive a favourable evaluation" (Tabachnick, Popkewitz, and Zeichner 1979 as cited in Doyle, 1985, p.31).

Whatever the reason may be, it is important to provide student teachers with alternatives to automatically emulating what they see. One possibility is reflective thinking strategies, which many researchers have claimed to be necessary. Otherwise their learning will be "shallow and imitative", which is "superficial and ephemeral" (Kagan, 1992).

Reflective Teaching

Goodman (1989) states that in recent years, several teacher educators have convincingly argued that teacher preparation programs and practices should be designed to help preservice teachers become more thoughtful and reflective (e.g., Beyer, 1984; Goodman, 1984; Gore, 1987; Krogh, 1987; Mackinnon, 1987; Ross & Kyle, 1987; Wildman & Niles, 1987; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Reflective teaching can help prevent many problems such as imitation and shallow learning, as mentioned earlier.

Reflective teaching can be traced to Dewey (1904-1933), and to the notion of having thoughtful and alert teachers (Gore, 1987). Through a reflective approach student teachers can translate theory into practice more effectively (Ferguson, 1989). In order to be able to reflect on their experiences, student teachers need guidance. Johnson (1992), for example, has shown the need for second language teacher preparation programs to provide opportunities for preservice ESL teachers to understand the dynamics of how they think and act as they learn to teach.

In her paper Karen (1984) mentions the importance of action research to enable student teachers to understand and solve classroom problems. The importance of identifying a problem, reflecting on it, and the contributions of peer discussions are the major points discussed. The final word is that the focus of their experience was on the process of understanding what is happening in the classroom and developing strategies that will work for the "uncertain future" (Karen, 1984).

Freeman (1982) focuses on the distinction between training and development. He considers the former as building specific knowledge and the latter as the focus on the individual teacher and on the process of reflection and examination. He argues that training views teaching as a finite skill, one which can be acquired and mastered, whereas in development teaching is a constantly evolving process of growth and change. The major distinction, however, lies in the fact that training addresses certain immediate needs and development has broader, long term concerns: how a teacher can be encouraged to grow. On this basis he claims that "To give a man a fish will feed him for a day, while teaching him to fish will allow him to feed himself for a life time."

Aspects of the Practicum

Observation

As they learn to teach through practice teaching, student teachers have to observe experienced teachers. This is the first and most important phase of the practicum. This process has been scrutinized by many researchers (Fanselow, 1988; Freeman, 1982; Gebhard, 1992; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1986; Maingay, 1988; Richards and Lockhart, 1992; Parker, 1991; Sheal, 1989; Williams, 1989).

Richards & Lockhart (1992), state that for student teachers, observation is an opportunity to observe experienced teachers. Richards and Crookes (1988) state that observation "is a basic element of the oldest model of teacher training--learning through apprenticeship" (p. 18).

Ryan (Allen and Seifman 1971) remarks that an effective student teaching program combines observation and participation. The trainee is assigned to a specific teacher and over a period of time gets increasing responsibilities under the cooperating teachers' direc-

tion. Observation without careful preparation and thorough follow-up can become nothing more than an inefficient time consuming activity (Altan,1990).

Observation Focus.

Observation should have a focus because the value of observation increases if the observer knows what to look for. In addition to this, observers should use specific procedures. Williams (1989) proposes the use of limited and focused content which should be discussed and determined in advance.

Feedback.

One of the crucial aspect in observation is feedback. After their observations student teachers should reflect on their observation and discuss it with their peers as well as their supervisor. According to Parker (1991), feedback can be more useful if student teachers first have an opportunity to reflect on their observations. In addition to discussions with peers and supervisors, cooperating teachers should also have conferences. Brown (1960), as cited in Altan (1990), suggests that daily conferences permit the student teachers to check why something is not clear in their minds.

While student teachers are reflecting on their experience they should be encouraged to "see the other side of the coin" as Fanselow (1988) states in his text Contrasting Conversations. It is very important to understand that "what we see is not what takes place but what we value as important to see; observing is selecting" (Fanselow, 1988). Peer discussion and being able to focus on alternatives become crucial since seeing alternatives helps the student teachers to avoid automatically imitating other teachers.

Maingay (1988) warns against imitation of 'ritual teaching', which he defines to be teaching without thinking. In order to avoid this he suggests that teachers should be made more aware of alternatives.

Practice Teaching

Practice teaching is used to refer to the actual teaching period of the student teachers. As Altan (1990) states, "Learning by doing seems to be the basic to the student teaching experience." Altan (1990) lists the

strengths of student teaching as follows:

- 1- It allows the neophytes to test themselves in a real world of classroom.
- 2- It ideally provides a gradual, controlled entrance into classroom teaching. This regulated entrance allows the novice to take increasing mastery.
- 3- It is the profession's competence test.
- 4- It is the arena in which the neophyte tests out theory and professional knowledge.
- 5- It is normally one of the few opportunities student teachers have to receive supported feedback and analysis of their teaching from both university and public school supervisor."

Practice teaching has its weaknesses, too, which Altan cites from

Ryan (Allen and Seifman, 1971). These weaknesses are:

- 1- Student teaching is a label and does not represent any particular level of teaching competence or the mastery of any skills or strategies.
- 2- Many experts agree that it is unclear what student teachers learn about teaching. They learn how to adapt themselves to a system. According to Loreson's research (1967) the students learn how to match the demands of the supervisory team.
- 3- There is a gap between the knowledge gained in the education courses and the demands of student teaching.
- 4- The cooperating teachers provided by the schools are usually untrained and chosen without purpose. And also the university supervisors lack commitment needed for effective supervision.
- 5- As there are so many student teachers to be supervised, the supervisor, even well trained, can only provide 'first-aid services.'

A Model for the Improvement of The practicum

Gebhard and Oprandy (1986) offer multiple activities which can be beneficial in the practicum. They argue that student teachers can profit from the integration of multiple activities. These multiple activities are:

- 1- practice teaching
- 2- observing teaching
- 3- doing projects on the investigation of teaching
- 4- talking about teaching
- 5- reading about teaching
- 6- keeping a journal

During observations they also emphasize the importance of focus.

Keeping journals and follow up discussions on observations - both of other teachers, peers and self-observations - can help to improve the skills of the student teachers to reflect on and understand their experience.

All of the studies mentioned have valuable proposals to improve practice teaching. Literature on practice teaching reveals that practice teaching does indeed need improvements.

Kagan (1992) has arrived at very interesting conclusions on the basis of her review of the literature. Practicum programs are generally inadequate in length and number and stand apart from the content of course work, and information presented in courses is rarely connected to candidates' experiences in the classrooms. The three primary tasks which student teachers should try to accomplish during their short practicum (Kagan, 1992) are as follows:

- a- acquire knowledge of pupils;
- b- use that knowledge to modify and reconstruct their personal images of self as teacher;
- c- develop standard procedural routines that integrate classroom management and instruction.

Kagan (1992) claims that preservice programs fail to address these tasks.

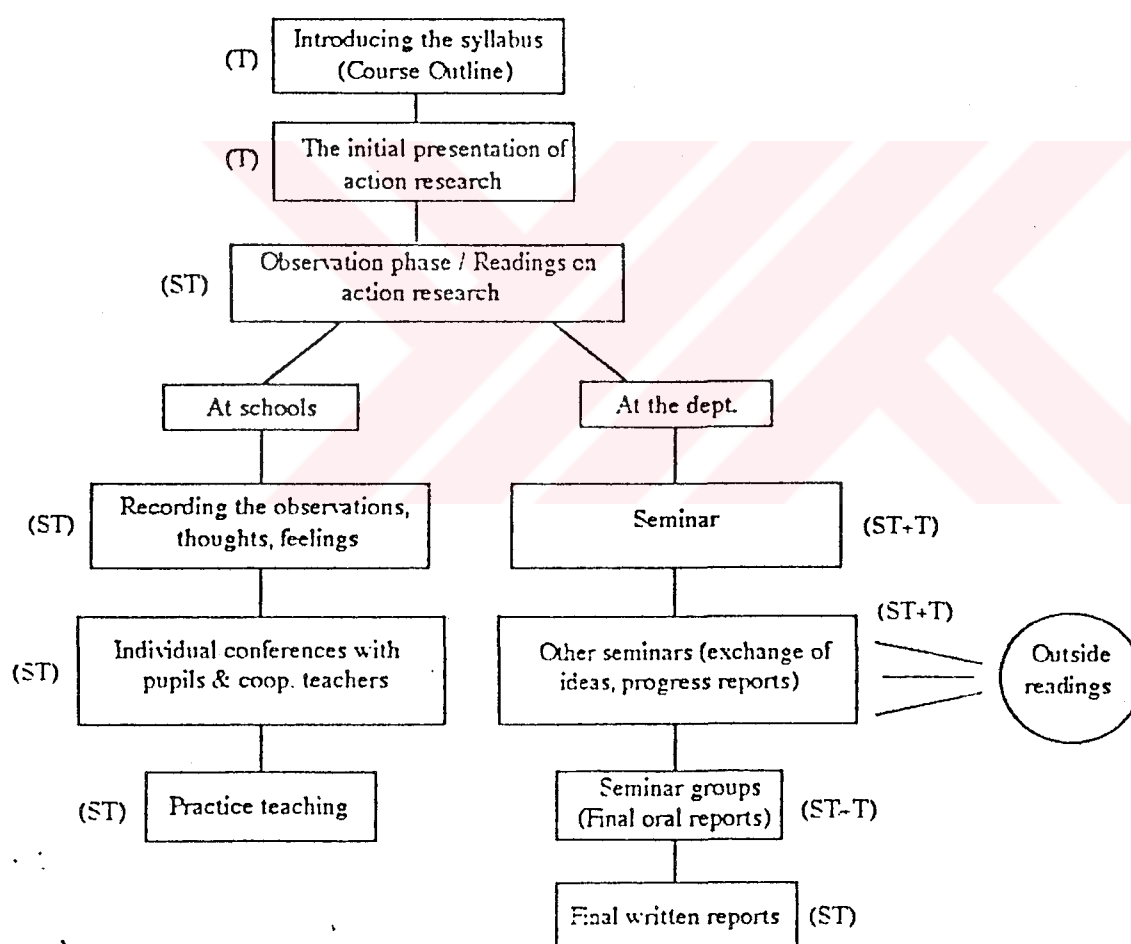
In investigating the practicum in Turkey, Altan (1990) concludes that there are many things which should be changed in the practicum. He refers to YÖK's (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu) regulations about the practicum component for the ELT Bachelor's Degree (23 August 1983), which is one month for the practicum during the second semester of the last year. His study shows that this must be reconsidered. According to some researchers as cited in Gebhard and Oprandy (1986), "teacher preparation should be based on efforts to understand what works, not on preconceived ideas or common sense notions

component that she is involved in as a supervisor. They are:

- a- organizational and administrative decisions
- b- over-crowded classes
- c- previous learning experiences
- d- lack of motivation
- e- difficulty of establishing coordination with cooperating teachers
- f- lack of self confidence and initiative

In her paper she proposes a model to solve some of these problems (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Basic steps to be followed in the suggested model



The advantages of this model are: The student teachers "will feel more secure and confident as they will know how to identify, analyse and approach

The advantages of this model are: The student teachers "will feel more secure and confident as they will know how to identify, analyse and approach particular problems in class", and the tasks will always be challenging, "emphasizing self satisfaction and creativity". In addition, student teachers will not be only passive participants but also active problem solvers. The student teachers will become more thoughtful about their teaching and finally, become aware of their pupils' thinking and learning.

This model seems to be the solution to some problems she has stated; however, some problems which she has mentioned above may not be solved with this model such as insufficiency of time. All of these problems constitute serious obstacles to preparing individuals for "real life" in teaching.

This study attempts to investigate some of the problems that Vanci-Osam mention in her study, which are the insufficiency of time for the practicum, and lack of motivation. This study will also focus on observation focus and follow-up discussion of observations as mentioned in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study aims at describing a practicum component of a teacher education program in Turkey. This chapter focuses on the sources of data, the instruments, the procedures and methods of data analysis. The study is descriptive, offering a picture of the practicum through survey and interview data. The goal of the study is to find out the characteristics of the practicum and to present an overall picture of the existing procedure in the practicum. Consequently, the best design for this purpose is descriptive design.

Sources of Data

The questionnaire was administered to 46 student teachers at METU. Five of the student teachers who volunteered were interviewed. Three supervisors were also interviewed in order to introduce a different point of view to the study.

Supervisors

The supervisors who were interviewed conduct the practicum component of the Foreign Languages Education Department, and teach other courses as well. The supervisors, all with PhDs in English Language Teaching, conduct research on the practicum and administer questionnaires to revise and improve the practicum. One of the supervisors has presented a paper on the practicum recently.

Student teachers

The student teachers who responded to the questionnaire are in their last semester of a four year undergraduate teacher training degree. Before they began their undergraduate degree, they had to pass an English proficiency exam. They have taken linguistics courses, literature courses, and methodology courses. In their fourth year they also have to submit a thesis to receive their B.A. The age range of the respondents is between 21-26. The participants consist of 13 males and 33 females.

Instruments

In this study two types of instruments are used: a questionnaire and an interview.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into three parts and consists of a total of 24 questions (Appendix A). In the first part the questions deal with motivation. The second part of the questionnaire is devoted to observation and the last part consists of questions evaluating the instructors' performance. The type and number of questions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Topics of Questions and Their Numbers.

Topic	Section	Number of Questions
Motivation	Part I	6
Observation	Part II	5
Discussions	Part II	4
Supervisors	Part III	9

Part I includes certain factors which may influence motivation of student teachers such as their future goals, their choice of department, their belief in the necessity of the practicum, and their relationship with the cooperating teacher.

In the next part the first five questions inquire about observation focus. Observation focus refers to any specific issue that the student teachers will observe in a classroom in one observation hour. The second half of Part II consists of questions dealing with discussions of the student teachers' observations of the real classroom setting and of the cooperating teacher.

The last part is devoted to evaluation of the supervisors. This section is longer due to the researcher's belief that supervisors can influence the practicum more than any other factor.

The Interview

The interview questions deal with the perspectives, feelings and opinions of the student teachers and supervisors. The questions dealing with perspectives require descriptions of the existing procedure in the practicum, whereas the second type of questions require reflection and reaction to these perspectives. One example of the first type of questions asked of supervisors is: "How do you chose your coordinating teachers?" An

example of the second type is the question: " What is your opinion about this selection process? (of the coordinating teachers)"

The interview type chosen for this study is a combination of a standardized open-ended interview format and the informal conversational approach. This combination was preferred because although the researcher had some questions prepared in advance, she did not want to limit the participants or herself. So the researcher prepared some open-ended questions for the supervisors (Appendix B) and for the student teachers (Appendix C). During the interview the researcher asked extra questions as the conversation brought up different, unexpected topics. One striking example occurred during the interview with the first student teacher, who told about an interesting memory of his practicum. The event itself was quite meaningful to the student teacher; therefore, the researcher asked all the student teachers about a memory they have of their practicum and found some quite interesting information.

The Procedures

The Questionnaire

The first steps in the study were to prepare the questionnaire, pilot it, and to administer it.

The Preparation of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was prepared after referring to various sources, including questionnaires prepared by the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at Middle East Technical University. The ELT Department administered a questionnaire to the students in the department in order to gather information about the existing syllabus and to use this information in revising the syllabus. Again in this same department another questionnaire with the same objectives was administered to the faculty members. A third questionnaire referred to is the evaluation of the instructors, administered by the Department of Foreign Languages. The fourth questionnaire was prepared and administered by Middle East Technical University for the evaluation of all the courses and instructors at METU. Another questionnaire which the researcher examined is the questionnaire prepared and used by Altan (1990) in his MA TEFL thesis at Bilkent University. The final questionnaire used as a reference is the questionnaire on the

practicum which was prepared and administered by the supervisors in the FLE Department at METU. The questions were prepared after an examination of these sources and a review of literature. In addition to these the researcher used her own experience as a practicum student to form the questions.

Piloting of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted at Hacettepe University among seven student-teachers who were taking a practicum course not associated with this study. The researcher asked one of the student teachers at Hacettepe to administer the questionnaire. The student teacher administered the questionnaire and gave them back to the researchers. Some of the questions were altered in accordance with the results of the piloting. In the first draft of the questionnaire the first part consisted of questions inquiring about level of proficiency. These questions have been taken out since they had little connection to the scope of this study. In the first draft all the responses were Yes or No. Since the questions in parts I and III deal with the degree of the response, upper case letters are used to indicate strong agreement or disagreement.

Administration of the Questionnaire

After the questionnaire took its final form, it was administered to all the student-teachers at METU, Department of Foreign Language Education. The questionnaire was administered twice since the student teachers were divided into two sections. The number of participants who volunteered was forty-six. The student teachers were asked sign a consent form prepared by the researcher (Appendix D). Two instructors in the department willingly gave fifteen minutes of their class hour for the administration of the questionnaire. The researcher administered the questionnaire and was available to the participants for any possible questions during its administration. There were some difficulties with questions 8 and 9, which related to observation focus and observation forms (Appendix A). The researcher told the student teachers that observation focus referred to a specific aspect of the lesson determined by either the student teachers or the supervisors to be observed in each observation session, and that observation form included information about that aspect either in a

checklist format or some other format.

Limitations of the Questionnaire

During both administrations of the questionnaire there was pressure on the participants to complete the questionnaire as soon as possible. In one case, although the researcher had asked for fifteen minutes due to time spent handing out the questionnaires and the consent forms, it took more, so the researcher had to ask the participants to complete the questionnaires quickly since she did not want to take too much time from the class hour. In the other case the researcher chose to administer the questionnaire during the last ten minutes of the class hour so that the student teachers could continue after their instructor left. However, there was a group of students awaiting use of the room since they were going to have an exam there, so the student teachers tried to complete the questionnaire as quickly as possible. These factors may have influenced the results since the student teachers may not have had sufficient time to think about the questions. While they were returning the questionnaires to the researcher, some participants in fact proposed talking about the questions when there was time available. Some wrote on the questionnaire that they thought it was a good questionnaire and that they hoped it would help to revise some aspects of the practicum which needed changing. Since they had to leave they did not mention what needed changing. Some of them came to the researcher and claimed that many things could be mentioned on this subject but that they had not had time to detail their thoughts.

The Interview

The preparation of the interview questions followed a similar procedure to that of the questionnaire. The questions were prepared, piloted, and administered.

The Preparation of the Interview Questions

The interview questions were prepared after the questionnaire and after a first and quick look at the results of the questionnaire. The questions are based on the results of the questionnaire, which had been administered previously.

The Piloting of the Interview

The researcher piloted the interview questions at METU with an instructor who has formerly taught the practicum course, and with three student teachers. Each of the four was interviewed individually. The interviews were recorded and each interview took around thirty minutes. Some questions were added to the existing list of questions in accordance with the suggestions of the participants in the piloting. The supervisor suggested that the interview should include questions about student teachers' awareness of teaching. Whether the student teachers had a sense of their own teaching behaviours and whether they were equipped with the 'tools' they might need in their future career as teachers are some aspects considered by the supervisor to be related to awareness. This suggestion was accepted by the researcher. There were no suggestions from the student teachers.

The Administration of the Interviews

The researcher interviewed three supervisors and five student teachers at METU. The interviews took 30-40 minutes per participant. Each interview was recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews were carried out by the researcher herself. Each participant was interviewed individually, with one exception. The exceptional case was the simultaneous interview of two student teachers because they had done their practice teaching together. The interviews were conducted in English except for one participant who preferred to speak in Turkish.

Methods of Data Analysis

The results of the questionnaire are analyzed according to the frequency rates of the responses and presented in tables in the following chapter. The responses to the interview questions are transcribed and summarized. The researcher gives the responses to the questionnaire and interview questions in detail, as they serve as the major basis for the discussion.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The goal of this study was to find the problems of student teachers in their practice teaching. In order to achieve this, a questionnaire (Appendix A) was administered to the student-teachers. Forty six student teachers were given the questionnaire. The next step was the in-depth interviewing of five student-teachers. In order to add another point of view to the study three supervisors were also interviewed.

First the researcher will present the findings of the questionnaire. The responses to the questions are presented one by one both in tabular and text form.

Following the presentation of the questionnaire results, the chapter continues with the presentation of the interview data both in tabular and textual form. The interviews have been appended in their original form.

Presentation of the Questionnaire Responses

The Results of Part I

The questions in Part I were prepared in order to get information on the student teachers' motivation. The first two questions inquired about the goals of student teachers. Nearly half of the student teachers initially wanted to become teachers of English. The next question was related to the future goals of the student teachers. The professional goals of the student teachers are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Professional Goals of the Student Teachers

Possible Goals	Percents
a-Teacher of English	28%
b-M.A. in ELT	6%
c-M.A. in Literature	13%
d-Both a and b above	20%
e-Both a and c above	17%
f- Other	20%

(Note: Since some student teachers have given more than one answer, these percentages do not total 100%.)

In Table 2 a total of 65% of the student teachers want to become teachers of English, choosing either M.A in ELT or in Literature, and 28% want to be teachers of English without any academic studies. Twenty percent of the participants want to continue with their academic studies in ELT and be a teacher of English at the same time, whereas 17% of the participants plan to carry on their academic studies in literature and be a teacher of English at the same time. These numbers total 65% of the participants who plan to become teachers of English.

The next item asked the student teachers' opinions on whether they thought practice teaching was useful and necessary. A decisive majority of the student teachers (89%) think that it is.

In asking about the student teachers' opinion on the time allocated for practice teaching, the results are divided. Nearly half think that time is sufficient, and nearly half think that it is not.

As regards the relationship between the cooperating teacher in the high school and the student teachers, the majority of the respondents think that they have a good relationship with their cooperating teacher. This question is also related to the motivation of the student teacher, as the researcher believes that the relationships with the supervisor and the cooperating teacher may increase or decrease the motivation of the student teachers. According to the results of the first part in the questionnaire, the student teachers are motivated for the practicum course.

The Results of Part II

In Part II of the questionnaire there are two sections. The first section deals with observation focus and the second section deals with discussions following observations.

Questions in the first section of Part II inquired about whether the student teachers knew why they were observing classes in high schools, whether they had a specific topic to observe, and whether they had a form to fill in about that topic which they were to observe. A decisive majority (97%) agreed that they knew why they were visiting schools and doing observations.

The researcher wanted to know whether the supervisors assigned specific topics for each observation session. The student teachers were

not clear about the question and the researcher explained "topics" as a specific aspect of the lesson that they were going to observe. The results show that there are some differences among the practices of the supervisors. Nearly half of the participants responded that they were given a specific topic to observe and the remaining half responded otherwise. Further, the researcher wanted to know whether the student teachers had a form (any kind of a document such as a checklist) to complete for each session. The purpose of such a form would be to guide them in their observations. Unfortunately, response are not conclusive, because some student teachers thought they were being asked about the form they were given under the title of "Guidelines For Observation Report" (Appendix E). The researcher told them that she was asking about a form for each observation, not the general outline they were given by their supervisors. Nearly half of the responses were positive and the remaining responded negatively. The fact that they did not have a focus for their observations may be a problem.

In addition to focus, post activities or discussions are important follow-ups to observation. The first section of Part II indicated that student teachers had no observation focus for each observation session. The second section of Part II inquired about the period after the observations. These questions relate to the interaction among student teachers, supervisors and cooperating teachers.

In Table 3, although a great majority of the student teachers indicate that they do not decide on what they are going to observe, it is clear that most student teachers discuss their observations with their peers, their supervisors, and/or their coordinating teachers.

Table 3: Observation and Post Observation Discussion

	Yes(%)	No(%)
Chose own topic to observe	15%	85%
Reflect on observation before discussion	67%	22%
Discuss observations in class with peers	67%	33%
Discuss observations with supervisor	59%	37%
Discuss observations with cooperating teacher	63%	33%

Observation focus and discussion of the observations are two major components of observations which in fact constituted the second research question of this study. Since the first research question on motivation was answered positively, the other research questions gained more significance in identifying problem areas of the practicum. The lack of observation focus for each observation focus and the fact that 33% of the student teachers do not discuss their experience may be a problem in the practicum.

The Results of Part III

The last part of the questionnaire is about student teachers' opinions of their supervisor. The results show whether or not the supervisors are efficient according to the students and also answer the third research question in an indirect manner. This issue is detailed in the interviews; however, the questionnaire results are important in that the number of participants in the questionnaire is higher. The student teachers' evaluations of their supervisors are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: The Student Teachers' Evaluations of Their Supervisors

Instructor	YES	yes	no	NO
sensitive to their problems	54%	41%	3%	-
available outside class	48%	39%	13%	-
well organized	52%	45%	3%	-
sufficient in terms of subject knowledge	83%	17%	-	-
presents up-to-date information	69%	24%	4%	3%
stimulates thinking	53%	43%	4%	-
discusses several points of view	54%	42%	4%	-
interacts in a friendly manner	74%	24%	2%	-
regards students' needs	56%	37%	7%	-

Table 5 shows the degree to which student teachers are satisfied with their supervisors. The supervisors seem to be the 'positive aspect' of the practice teaching under scrutiny in this study.

Summary of the Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire inquired about the motivation of student teachers, observation focus and discussions following observations, and finally student teachers' evaluation of the supervisors. These are the first three research questions of this study. The findings are that student teachers are motivated and that they have no problems with their supervisors. One problem that student teachers may have is the lack of observation focus. Observation focus has been given much importance by researchers, as mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study.

Presentation of Interview Data

Interviews with the Supervisors

In order to provide a description of the practicum, and to collect information on the research questions, three supervisors were interviewed. When these participants were asked to explain their goals in the practicum,

they expressed the most common goals as those listed below by frequency of mention:

All three supervisors:

- a- For student teachers to observe samples of poor or good teaching.
- b- For student teachers to integrate theory and practice.
- c- For student teachers to try their hand at teaching in a real classroom atmosphere.

Two supervisors:

- d- For student teachers to acquire skills of classroom management and to familiarize themselves with the students.

One supervisor:

- e- To encourage successful students to become teachers of English.
- f- To teach student teachers how to prepare lesson plans.

In order to realize these goals there are various tasks that the student teachers have to complete, which will be mentioned later. At this point, the important issue is the balance between the tasks set for the goals and time in which to complete the tasks. The supervisors were asked about the time allocated to the practicum and all three supervisors agreed that time allocated for the practicum is not sufficient.

When the supervisors were asked about the kinds of skills that student teachers gain through the practicum, they focused on two areas:

a- Theoretical background on teaching methods. The student teachers have two semesters of ELT methodology before they do practice teaching. In the first course on ELT methodology they are given a theoretical background on teaching methods. In the second course, the students are trained in making lesson plans and doing micro teaching and mini presentations on a given topic.

b-Awareness of observing a classroom. At the beginning of the semester the student teachers are given general guidelines to follow in their observations.

How the supervisors selected their coordinating teachers and what their opinions were on this selection constituted the next questions. As far as the interview data is concerned the supervisors do not select the coordinating teachers. Instead, supervisors get in touch with the schools

to inform them of the number of student teachers they have. If the high school accepts the student teachers, then the supervisors write to the Ministry of Education to get official permission. However, in recent years the supervisors have directly gotten in touch with the schools. Then the head of the English teachers selects teachers who teach at convenient times and assigns the student teachers to observe those teachers, who become the cooperating teachers.

Although they do not seem to be particularly satisfied with the selection of the teachers, the supervisors do not have any strong objection to the existing system. One of the supervisors thought that it would be better if they themselves had an opportunity to select the cooperating teachers.

In order to provide information on the quantity of feedback that supervisors give, the supervisors were asked the amount of time they see their student teachers individually during the practice teaching period. The supervisors observe their student teachers once each and have a formal feedback session following this observation. In addition to this, weekly class meetings of two hours enable the supervisors to see their student teachers as a group.

Student teachers have to consult their supervisor before they prepare their lesson plan for supervisor observation. These consultations may be considered to be very few from the point of view of the student teachers, but when the number of students each supervisor has to deal with is considered, it sounds quite overwhelming. The number of students per supervisor is:

Supervisor X	16 student teachers
Supervisor Y	17 student teachers
Supervisor Z	30 student teachers

The researcher does not have information on the discrepancy in the number of student teachers handled by each supervisor.

During the interview one supervisor mentioned his additional course load. All supervisors mentioned that they do not seem to have enough time for each student teacher due to the high number of student teachers and their own course loads.

The supervisors were asked to describe their student teachers in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. All the participants claimed that the student teachers have theoretical background on methodology. They are motivated, disciplined and take the process seriously. Their weaknesses in general are lack of practice and lack of creativity and self confidence, according to the supervisors.

Finally, the supervisors were asked to evaluate the practicum, what the strengths and weaknesses of the program were and what they suggested for the improvement of the program. The common point in the responses was the shortness of the period of practice teaching. Other issues stated are quality of the staff who teach the practicum course as the strength of the practicum and selection of the high schools and the cooperating teachers as the weakness of the practicum.

According to one supervisor, the quality of the staff and their motivation and efforts are the only strength of the practicum. Their students also demonstrated the same belief with higher percentages in the questionnaire results mentioned earlier. In the next section of this chapter student teachers' opinions about their supervisors are presented in detail. Their ideas are quite consistent with the questionnaire results and the interviews of the supervisors.

The supervisors agree that it would be better if they had a chance to select the schools the student teachers will visit and the teachers they will work with. The existing system of how the high school and the cooperating teachers are arranged is a weakness of the practicum.

The recommendations of the supervisors are:

- 1- One of the supervisors suggests that student teachers should have the methodology courses during the 3rd year. Then in the first semester of the 4th year they should do their practice teaching, and the second semester of the 4th year should function as a follow-up in which student teachers discuss their experience and get feedback on it. The other two supervisors believe that the period of the practicum should be at least two semesters.
- 2- School Administrations should be ready to accept and treat student teachers as teachers. If, for example, they need photocopying services or other kinds of materials, the school should help them as if they were their

regular teachers. The student teachers should feel at home when in the schools so that they can get the idea of what it is to be a teacher.

3- The Ministry of Education should have a place for practice teaching in the school programs. One supervisor suggests that there should be some schools especially assigned by the Ministry of the Education for this purpose because practice teaching is an important aspect of the improvement of teaching in all areas, not only in English. In addition, it should be possible to visit schools on different days of the week so that a variety of teachers can be observed. Most universities do practice teaching in the schools in Ankara, so it is difficult to find a proper place for all the students.

4- Student teachers should do more observations at different institutions other than the high schools. The supervisors mentioned unanimously that they had started to send the student teachers who are still in their third year to the preparatory school at METU for observations. They agreed that having observations in different settings is useful for the student teachers.

5- Student teachers should be involved in action research. One of the supervisors thinks that student teachers can be made more creative and self confident through action research. They have started doing it but the insufficiency of time was an obstacle.

6- Student teachers should be videotaped during their practice teaching. The video taping of student teachers' teaching can be beneficial to the student teachers in terms of getting detailed feedback from the supervisor and peers as well as of course as providing material for self-analysis.

When they were asked if they had anything to add, the supervisors mentioned two important issues here. The first one is the evaluation process in the practicum. The "lion's share" is given to the one observation of the student teacher by the supervisor. The supervisor observes the student teacher for one hour and gives a grade. The classroom teacher is also asked to evaluate the students and give a grade. The observation of the supervisor is 50% of the final grade.

Summary of the Interviews with the Supervisors

The supervisors all agree that time is a critical issue and suggest that the time allocated for practice teaching should be increased. The selection of high schools and the cooperating teachers does not work very well. The supervisors have some recommendations which will be mentioned in detail with reference to the literature in the next chapter.

Interviews with the Student Teachers

The most important people in this study are the student teachers. Their point of view is important in terms of what is working and what is not in the practicum. Five student teachers were interviewed. Four of them spoke in English and one of them spoke in Turkish.

The student teachers were first asked to describe their practice teaching. All the participants mentioned observations of experienced teachers as the most important activity. Two participants stated that time for practice teaching was not sufficient. Two student teachers stated that they enjoyed observations and practice teaching. One of the participants thinks that the observation period is too long and was bored seeing the same thing over and over again. One of the student teachers considered the observation period as an opportunity to see the problems related to teaching. She reported that she was disappointed to see a group of students with little motivation. Although student teachers had a general guideline for observations, they were not given specific topics to observe for each observation session and they said they did not have any form to fill in for each observation session.

These results confirm that student teachers do not have an observation focus, which seems to cause boredom and lack of motivation.

When the student teachers were asked about their relationship with their cooperating teacher, two of the participants evaluated their relationship with their cooperating teacher on the basis of feedback. They stated that they had detailed feedback on their teaching. One of the participants claimed that the cooperating teacher wanted to impose her ideas on him and that he had to fight for his own ideas. One student teacher reported that his cooperating teacher was very tolerant and gave no feedback. Two of the student teachers wanted more feedback from the

cooperating teacher.

These responses show that there is no standard for the cooperating teachers in giving feedback and guiding student teachers. Some of them give detailed feedback, some give none, some teachers want to guide too much and some teachers do not interfere at all. There is a diversity in the attitudes of the cooperating teachers.

As for their relationship with their supervisor, all the student teachers thought that their supervisors were very good, understanding and encouraging which is consistent with the questionnaire results and the results of the supervisors' interviews.

The student teachers were then asked how they felt during their observations and student teaching. All the student teachers who have completed their assessed teaching stated that they were very nervous when they were observed teaching for several reasons. First of all they were going to be evaluated. Next, they were teaching for the first or second time. Finally, the topic they were to teach was assigned by the classroom teacher. The student teachers who have not been evaluated yet felt nervous for the same reasons.

When the student teachers were asked about observation focus they mentioned some guidelines given by their supervisors (See App.E). Other than that they all stated that they had some ideas about aspects of the classroom they would like to focus on. None of them were given specific topics to observe for each session. The majority stated that they prepared some questions themselves before they went to observations.

Following that, the student teachers were asked about the procedures they follow after the observations. One of the participants stated that after she observed the cooperating teacher she looked at her notes and organized them. Others stated that they did not do anything.

The next topic was the kind of feedback the student teachers get after their teaching and the source of feedback. A majority of the student teachers agreed that they do not get enough feedback from the cooperating teachers. They get feedback from their supervisors after their assessed teaching.

When the student teachers were asked how they felt about being evaluated after one observation they all agreed that being evaluated after teaching only one hour is not appropriate. They stated that anything might occur on the day of evaluation such as being too nervous, ill, or being assigned a difficult topic to teach. Their point was that such an evaluation may not be representative of their teaching.

Many of the student teachers had common memories of the positive reactions from the pupils in the classes where they did one or two hours of teaching. In relation to this, when the researcher asked them if they had an idea of what kind of teachers they would be, all the student teachers said that they had an image of themselves as teachers which had existed prior to their practicum experience. The practicum did not change this image.

Finally when the student teachers were asked if they had anything to add, various points came up. One of the participants thinks that the administration should have a "solid" idea of what to expect from the practicum.

All of the student teachers repeated the fact that time is not sufficient. They also stated that their workload prevented them from profiting from the experience. Half of the student teachers also mentioned the thesis they had to write. The assignment of the thesis topics was done according to the advisor and they had some complaints about the assignment. This, however, is not directly related to the scope of this thesis. Nearly half of the student teachers mentioned the negative attitude of the administration of one high school. They also added that this attitude prevented them from going to that high school for extra observations.

One of the participants had her teaching videotaped, which she thought was very useful in observing her own teaching and getting feedback from the supervisor and peers. A majority of the participants also added that student teaching is more useful than observing experienced teachers. A final remark made by the majority of student teachers is the fact that the administration and the cooperating teachers do not view them as real teachers and do not seem trust them. They reported that although they had taught one topic in their student teaching hour, they later learned that

the teacher had taught the same thing over again.

Summary of the Interviews with the Student Teachers:

The student teachers have positive ideas about their supervisors. They do not have observation focus and they all think that the actual student teaching period is short. Videotaping of the student teachers' teaching is also mentioned to be positive and student teaching is considered to be more beneficial than observations. The negative attitude of the administration and the staff in the high schools has also been mentioned by the student teachers.



CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Data

In this chapter the results of the questionnaire and the responses given to interview questions will be discussed in relation to the findings of the literature review. In the first part of the chapter the questionnaire results will be discussed. In the second part, the interview data will be discussed. Calls for future research will then be pointed out, followed by the conclusion.

Questionnaire results

Since the major concern of the questionnaire was to gather information on the motivation of the student teachers, the observations they do during their practice teaching, and their relationship with their supervisor, it will be convenient to treat these aspects in the same order in the discussion.

Motivation

Lack of motivation, which is a potential danger for any education program, does not appear to be significant, according to the responses to of the questionnaire. Most student teachers want to become teachers of English, and most of them think that practice teaching is necessary and useful. According to the percentage of positive responses (92%), student teachers have no problems with their cooperating teachers as far as their relationship is concerned. This indicates that the student teachers do not have a lack of motivation due to their relationship with their cooperating teachers.

There is no dominant opinion on whether the amount of time allocated for practice teaching is sufficient.

Observations

As far as the questions and the responses to these questions in the questionnaire are concerned, we may conclude that student teachers do not have a specific topic to observe in each observation session and that they also do not have a form such as a checklist to fill in in observation sessions. Many researchers (Fanselow, 1992; Gebhard, 1986) state that observation focus is very important. In order to profit from the observation period student teachers should know what they are observing and

for what reason.

In addition to the importance of observation focus, feedback and discussion following observations are emphasized by many researchers (Parker, 1991; Gebhard, 1986). The data in this research reveal that most student teachers discuss their experiences with their peers, their supervisors, and their coordinating teachers.

Observation focus and post observation are emerging directions for research on practice teaching. The effects of observation focus and post observation on the efficacy of practice teaching needs further research.

Supervisors

The results show that the supervisors involved in the practicum under study are experts in their fields. Nearly all the student teachers think that their supervisors have thorough knowledge on the subject and suitable approaches and personality for such a demanding task. Being a supervisor in a teacher preparation department is not only demanding but also has an impact on the student teachers. Supervisors can have great influence on student teachers' immediate field experiences as well as their future careers. The success of the practicum is largely dependent on the kind of supervision provided, as Altan (1990) states.

Interview Data

Interviews with the supervisors:

The goals which are mentioned by the supervisors as presented in the previous chapter are consistent with the eight objectives that Richards and Crookes (1988) have identified in their research. These objectives, in order of importance are:

- 1- To provide practical experience in classroom teaching.
- 2- To apply instruction from theory courses.
- 3- To provide opportunities to observe master teachers.
- 4- To give feedback on teaching techniques.
- 5- To develop increased awareness of personal teaching style.
- 6- To develop lesson-planning skills.
- 7- To develop ability to select/adapt material.
- 8- To become familiar with specific methods. (p.11)

All of the goals stated by the supervisors are to be realized in a one semester course. This time allocation is not sufficient, according to the supervisors. The general opinion of the extreme insufficiency of the time allocated to practice teaching is also supported by the reports that student teachers write at the end of their experience. There is a reference to engineering students made by the student teachers in their reports. The student teachers claim that engineering students have field experience each summer for two or three years, and each summer this field experience lasts four or six weeks. The crucial question is: "Is teaching less important than engineering?" They also add the comment that teachers deal with people whereas engineers deal with machines.

There are several reasons why one semester of practice teaching is considered to be "in no way" satisfactory. According to the data presented in Chapter Four, if the information given by the supervisors and the student teachers is combined, the students teachers have to:

- adapt to real school classroom atmosphere
- observe classroom teaching
- write an observation report
- prepare a lesson plan for a topic assigned by the cooperating teacher
- familiarize themselves with students' attitudes
- be aware of the classroom problems
- write a self-evaluation and course appraisal report.

These are the tasks to be completed in a period of around 3 months. Field experience begins in the first week of March and continues (every designated day of the week) till around mid-May (Appendix D).

We may argue that the time given can not be sufficient for the assigned tasks to be completed in an efficient manner. There is, however, another factor which may influence the success of the practicum. In addition to practice teaching, the student teachers have to take at least four courses and write a thesis. It is obvious that the student teachers live through quite a challenging semester under great "pressure".

Since student teachers have so many things to do, it can be very difficult for them to go to observations. However, as Beyer (1984) points

out, the greater the number of hours students spend in the practicum the better prepared they will be. He also states that more experience will bring more proficiency in teaching. It is also logical that the trainees are the mirrors of the trainers and the training department, as Altan (1990) suggests. If the aim of a teacher training department is to prepare effective teachers of English, its approach, design of syllabus and practice should be consistent with the aim.

Altan's thesis shows that nearly all the universities in Turkey seem to have similar time allocation for practice teaching which is standardized by the regulations of the Ministry of Education as stated in Chapter Four.

The quality of the staff and their motivation and efforts are the only strength in this practicum, as expressed by the supervisors themselves. Their students have also demonstrated the same belief in the questionnaire results mentioned earlier. In the next section of this chapter student teachers' opinions of their supervisors will be dealt with in detail. Their ideas are quite consistent with the questionnaire results and the interviews of the supervisors.

The supervisors agree that it would be better if they had a chance to select their schools their student teachers will visit and the teachers they will work with. The existing system of arranging the high school and the cooperating teachers is a weakness of the practicum.

After mentioning the weaknesses, the supervisors were asked for their recommendations, which are:

- 1- The period of the practicum should be at least two semesters.
- 2- School Administrations should be ready to accept student teachers as teachers.
- 3- The Ministry of Education should have a place for practice teaching in the school programs.
- 4- Student teachers should do more observations at different institutions.
- 5- Student teachers should be involved in action research.
- 6- Student teachers' practice teaching should be videotaped.

These recommendations, except for number 2 and 3, are consistent with the literature. In Chapter Two, the studies of experts in the field of teacher training have similar recommendations. Numbers 2 and 3 are

specific to Turkey and need further research. Uninformed or negative educational administrations and staffs seem to be the cause of recommendations 2 and 3. This issue has been identified as one of the important problems in the practicum, an issue which has been neglected despite its importance. As stated in Altan (1990), there must be a cooperative relationship among the supervisor, cooperating school and the student teachers. However, it is not sufficient to look at the practicum only from the point of view of the student teachers and the supervisors. The cooperating teachers' opinions should also be investigated. Applegate and Lasley (1982) state that problems of the cooperating teachers had not been investigated until their study. As far as this study is concerned, especially the high schools should be investigated in terms of their problems and the impact of having student teachers in their schools.

Interviews with the student teachers:

The major idea consistent with the supervisors' interviews and the questionnaire results is the fact that time for practice teaching is not enough. The student teachers also think that the actual period to do practice teaching is not enough, whereas the time allocated for observations is too long. Teaching only once or twice in order to gain experience in teaching is quite insufficient according to the interview data. This issue could be investigated by doing a study of two groups of student teachers. One group would take a practicum course including 21 hours of observation and one or two hours of teaching, which in fact are done for the evaluation of the student teachers. The other group would observe less and practice teach more. The final evaluation results could be compared to determine the influence of longer practice hours on the preparation of student teachers.

The fact that student teachers think that there are too many observation hours may be the result of the lack of observation focus in each session. Since they do not know exactly what they are going to observe they may feel bored or feel as if they are "going on a picnic" as one student teacher stated. Since they do not know what they are actually going to observe and they haven't prepared anything prior to observation and will not prepare for any immediate follow up, they feel as if they are

just spending time during the observation sessions. Observation focus and its positive impact on the observers' experience were mentioned earlier in Chapter Two. The importance of observation focus should also be investigated further to see the degree of its influence on the observation.

The attitudes of the cooperating teachers and the school administration seem to have negative influences on the prospective teachers. Since many treat student teachers as students and outsiders, student teachers may not want to go to particular schools, as one student teacher said. One of the supervisors mentioned the necessity of planning in a more systematic manner so that the high schools are not influenced negatively by having student teachers. This new planning would have to be done by the Ministry of Education.

Finally, the workload of the student teachers during their practicum is an issue which the department administration should consider seriously and make an effort to reduce.

Recommendations for future research

The relationship between motivation and practice teaching needs further study. This study has shown that there is also a gap in literature on the relationship between the student teachers and the cooperating teacher.

Time allocation and the degree of success of the practicum is also another area which needs more research. This study has also found that observation focus and post observation is an emerging direction for research on practice teaching. The effects of observation focus and post observation on the efficacy of practice teaching needs further research.

Conclusion

This study has investigated the practicum component of an English language teaching department in Ankara, Turkey. There are several problems which have been discussed in detail, which point to various topics that need to be surveyed. In fact, as Vancı-Osam (1992) states, the practicum should be put on the operating table. Considering the importance of the practicum in teacher education and also the importance of teacher education in the language teaching process, those in charge should be aware of the existing problems and become involved in making constructive changes.

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APPENDIX A

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON PRACTICE TEACHING

This questionnaire has been designed to gather information about the practicum component in the ELT programmes.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Please tick the appropriate response.

I.

1- Was this Department in your first 10 choices in the University Entrance Exam?

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

2- Was your initial goal to become a teacher of English?

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

3- After having nearly completed your education what do you intend to do after graduation?

a- to be a teacher of English ___

b- to work for an M.A. degree in ELT ___

c- to work for an M.A. degree in Literature ___

d- both (a) and (b) above ___

e- both (a) and (c) above ___

f- other (please specify) ___

4- Do you think Practice teaching is necessary and useful for you?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

5- If Yes, do you think the time allocated for practice teaching is sufficient?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

6- Do you have a good relationship with your cooperating teacher in the high school you are visiting?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

II.

Before you started going to observations in high schools

7- you clearly knew why you were visiting schools and observing classes

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

8- for every observation session you had a specific topic to observe (e.g. Teachers' instructions, error treatment, etc.)

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

9- you had a form to complete about the topic

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

10- You prepared the form beforehand with your supervisor

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

11- You chose your own topic to observe

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

12- You discussed your observations in class with your classmates

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

13- You discussed your observations with your supervisor

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

14- You discussed your observations with your cooperating teacher

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

15- You reflected on your observations before you discussed them with anybody

a- Yes ___ b- No ___

III.

16- Do you think you can find problems and questions?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

17- is available outside the classroom for individual questions and discussions about the course?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

18- is well organized?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

19- has thorough subject knowledge?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

20- presents up-to-date information?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

21- stimulates students to think for themselves?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

22- discusses several points of view?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

23- interacts with students in a friendly manner?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

24- regards students' needs?

a- YES ___ b- yes ___ c- no ___ d- NO ___

Comments:

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

APPENDIX B

Interview questions for the supervisors

- 1- Could you please explain your goals in practicum?
- 2-What do you think about the time allocated for practice teaching?
- 3- Is it enough?
- 4- Is the place of practicum in the syllabus appropriate(last semester of the last year)?
- 5- What tools have you provided the student teachers with?
- 5- How do you choose the coordinating teachers?
- 7- What is your opinion about this selection?
- 8- During the practicum, how many times do you see your student teachers individually?
- 9- Could you please describe your student teachers? What are their strengths and weaknesses, now that they have completed their training?
- 10- How about the practicum, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and what are your suggestions for the improvement of the programme?
- * Would you like to add anything that I have not covered?

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions for the student-teachers.

- 1- Can you please tell me the most important activities in your practicum.
- 2-How do you feel during your observations and student teaching?
- 3-Can you describe your relation with the coordinating teacher?
- 4-Do you think your relationship with the coordinating teacher and your supervisor affects in anyway your experience?
- 5-Do you have specific goals in your observations?
- 6- What are the procedures you follow after the observations?
- 7- How about being evaluated after your teaching? What do you feel about this?
- 8- What kind of feedback do you get after your teaching and from who? and how often?
- 9- Do you have peer observation and discussion, in other words do you work with your peers during your experience?
- 10- Do you feel ready as a teacher?
- 11- Can you describe yourself as a teacher?
- 12- How did your observations affect you?
- 13- What is the most important thing that you have learned through your practicum?
- 14- When did you start teaching?
- 15-Can you just recall some interesting events which occurred during your teaching?
- 16- Is there anything that you would like to add which I have not covered?

APPENDIX D
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Student-teachers

We are asking you to participate in a study to explore your experience in the practicum component of your education. The researcher will administer two questionnaires. In addition, she will ask some of you to participate in a few short interviews.

Your participation in this study is VOLUNTARY and you may withdraw from participation in the study at any time. All information will be held in strict confidence and will have no bearing on your standing as a student at METU in the Department of FLE. The real name of the interviewed participants will not be used in the study to ensure confidentiality. There is no risk in participating in this study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below. This form will be maintained separately from the data collected for this study.

MA TEFL Student Nuray Lük Yılmaz

Advisor Patricia Brenner

I have read the information on the form and consent to volunteer to be a participant.

I understand that participation is completely confidential and have the right to withdraw at any time.

Name: (Please print)

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX E

Social Climate	Always	Sometimes	Not enough/ Not applicable
a. The teacher demonstrates interest in and concern for each student. (e.g. s/he knows and uses their names, is aware of the students who finish a task early and deals with them.)			
b. The students are comfortable and relaxed with the teacher and each other. (e.g. there is some humor and fun)			
c. The students know each other by name and enjoy exchanging information.			
d. The students volunteer and cooperate in the activities and the tasks assigned by the teacher.			
e. The teacher uses the physical environment to enhance language learning and social interaction.			
Variety in Learning Activities			
a. Appropriate use of several language skills is required in this lesson (listening, speaking, reading, writing).			
b. Audio-visual aids or other supplementary materials are used to enhance the lesson.			
c. There is appropriate variation in student grouping (individuals, whole class, pairs, groups, etc.)			
d. There is appropriate variation in input (i.e. there are different written models, prose passages, types of activities, etc.)			
e. There is appropriate variation in pacing (i.e. easy activities/fast pace; harder activities/slower pace.)			
Opportunity for Student Participation			
a. The teacher delegates tasks to students whenever possible (e.g. calls roll, answers questions of other students, passes out papers, etc.)			
b. The teacher distributes turns evenly among all students in class so that every student is involved at some point.			
c. The teacher appropriately utilizes techniques and drills that maximize student talk time and minimize teacher talk time.			
d. The teacher makes use of games/competitions/songs to enhance student participation.			

Material/Classroom Set-up	Always	Sometimes	Not enough/ Not applicable
. The material is relevant, appropriate and interesting with respect to the students' age and aims.			
. The classroom set-up is effective and economical.			
Teacher Input			
. When the teacher asks questions or gives tasks,			
i. they are appropriate to the aims.			
ii. there is a manageable number.			
iii. the instructions are easy to understand.			
. The activities/tasks lead naturally to the target structure/items.			
. The teacher introduces any necessary vocabulary effectively beforehand.			
. The teacher provides the students with brief illustrations or examples, and uses various eliciting techniques instead of extended explanations or lecturing.			
Feedback and Correction			
. The teacher helps the students to control their own output (e.g. their replies or written work) whenever the focus is on form or accuracy.			
. The teacher effectively elicits self-correction of errors whenever possible (e.g. gestures, asking for repetition, etc.)			
. The teacher elicits constructive peer correction when self-correction has not been effective.			
. The teacher pinpoints the source of error without actually correcting the error.			
. The teacher strikes a happy balance between (i) correcting so much that students become inhibited and (ii) not correcting any of the errors that occur.			

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