AN EVALUATION OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN THE BACHELOR OF TEACHING PROGRAMME

by

LINDA LIANG PENG YAEP

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EDMP	Education Development Master Plan
FPN	*Falsafah Pendidikan Negara* (National Education Philosophy)
GTP	Government Transformation Plan
INTASC	The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
ITEM	Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia
KPLI	*Kursus Perguruan Lepasan Ijazah* (Post-Graduate Teaching Course)
MOE	Ministry of Education
MTS	Malaysian Teacher Standards (also known as SGM, *Standard Guru Malaysia*)
NKRA	National Key Results Area
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PISMP	*Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Pengajaran* (Bachelor of Teaching Programme)
PKPG	*Program Khas Pengsiswazahan Guru*
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SBE	School-based Experience

TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TDA	Training and Development Agency
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TED	Teacher Education Division
TEIs	Teacher Education Institute(s)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

PENILAIAN PENGETAHUAN DAN KEMAHIRAN PENGAJARAN BILIK DARJAH GURU PRA-PERKHIDMATAN UNTUK PROGRAM IJAZAH SARJANA MUDA PERGURUAN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menilai pengetahuan dan kemahiran pengajaran bilik darjah guru pra-perkhidmatan Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Perguruan, iaitu sebuah program yang sedang dilaksanakan di Institut Pendidikan Guru dan telah dirancang khas untuk melatih guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan yang akan dianugerahkan ijazah apabila tamat pengajian. Guru-guru tersebut akan mengajar di pra-sekolah dan sekolah rendah. Penilaian *outcome* adalah fokus utama kajian ini. Standard Guru Malaysia yang telah dipadan dan digariskan pada sebuah struktur pengajaran berkesan adalah penanda aras untuk kajian penilaian ini. Penilaian proses adalah fokus kedua kajian. Dua peramal yang terdiri daripada faktor peluang untuk belajar di dalam persekitaran pembelajaran aktif dan faktor kualiti penyeliaan praktikum, turut dikaji. Kajian tinjauan yang meliputi soal selidik digunakan untuk mendapatkan maklumbalas daripada 641 responden tentang kesediaan pengajaran di dalam bilik darjah dan faktor-faktor program. Peserta-peserta kajian terdiri daripada guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan semester akhir. Pemerhatian di dalam bilik darjah juga dilakukan untuk menyokong dapatan daripada kajian tinjauan bagi penilaian *outcome* program. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan amat bersedia untuk komponen-komponen yang terdapat dalam domain perancangan dan persediaan kecuali dalam menghasilkan pentaksiran murid yang dikenal pasti hanya sebagai bersedia. Guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan ini juga lemah dalam merancang kumpulan pengajaran. Menariknya, dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan amat bersedia dalam semua komponen domain persekitaran bilik darjah, iaitu sebuah domain yang seringkali menjadi kesukaran kepada guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan dalam dapatan lain-lain kajian yang sama. Dapatan kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan amat bersedia untuk komponen komunikasi dengan murid-murid yang terdapat dalam domain pengajaran. Namun, walaupun guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan ini didapati bersedia dalam komponen-komponen yang lain dalam domain pengajaran tetapi secara perbandingannnya, mereka didapati lemah dalam menggunakan pentaksiran dalam pengajaran, menggunakan soalan-soalan berkualiti, menggunakan kumpulan pengajaran untuk memastikan kejayaan hasil pembelajaran dan membuat perubahan pelajaran. Pada keseluruhannya, dapatan kajian membuktikan bahawa guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan amat bersedia dalam pengajaran bilik darjah. Dapatan kajian turut mendapati bahawa kedua-dua faktor kajian iaitu peluang untuk belajar dalam persekitaran pembelajaran aktif dan kualiti penyeliaan praktikum adalah peramal-peramal tahap kesediaan pengajaran bilik darjah guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan. Namun, faktor peluang untuk belajar di dalam persekitaran pembelajaran aktif ialah faktor yang lebih kuat. Penekanan pada aspek-aspek seperti pentaksiran, penggunaan soalan-soalan berkualiti, kumpulan pengajaran dan perubahan pelajaran sewaktu penyeliaan latihan pratikum, pengajaran mikro, program induksi guru-guru permulaan dan semasa mengkaji semula kurikulum dapat mempertingkatkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran pengajaran bilik darjah guru-guru pra-perkhidmatan.

AN EVALUATION OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN THE BACHELOR OF TEACHING PROGRAMME

ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the classroom teaching knowledge and skills of preservice teachers in the Bachelor of Teaching Programme, an ongoing training programme in Teacher Education Institutes designed specifically for training preschool and primary school teachers. The preservice teachers will be awarded a degree upon their completion of the programme. The outcome evaluation is the primary focus of this study. The Malaysian Teacher Standards mapped onto an effective teaching framework forms the benchmark for this evaluation research. The process evaluation is the secondary focus of the study. Two particular predictors consisting of the opportunity to learn in the active learning environment and quality of practicum supervision were examined. The data collection adopted a survey methodology through the administration of questionnaires to elicit feedback from 641 respondents on their preparedness in classroom teaching and the two predicting factors of the programme. The participants comprised preservice teachers who were in their final semester of study. Classroom observations were also conducted to support the findings from the survey on the outcome of the programme. The findings from this study suggest that preservice teachers were well-prepared in all components of planning and preparation except for the component of designing pupil assessment where they were identified as only prepared. The preservice teachers were also weak in planning instructional groups. Interestingly, this study also reveals that the preservice teachers were well-prepared in all components of the classroom environment domain, a domain reputed to pose difficulties to preservice teachers in many other similar studies. The results of this study also indicate that preservice teachers were well-prepared in the component of communicating with pupils for the instruction domain. However, though the preservice teachers were found to be prepared in other components of the instruction domain, they were relatively weak in using assessment in instruction, using quality questions, using instructional groupings to ensure the success of lesson outcomes and making lesson adjustments. On the whole, the findings attest that the preservice teachers were well-prepared in classroom teaching. The opportunity to learn in the active learning environment and quality of practicum supervision were both predictors of the preservice teachers' preparedness with the former being the stronger one. Further emphasis on assessment, using quality questions, groupings of pupils and learning adjustments during practicum supervision, microteaching, teacher induction programme and through curriculum review could enhance the preservice teachers' classroom teaching knowledge and skills.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Importance of Teacher Education Programmes

Many people believe that anyone can teach, or even knowing a subject is enough to enable one to teach it well. However, the evidence strongly suggests otherwise. In order to teach effectively and to be able to confront the challenges in the teaching endeavour, extensive body of research has indicated that one has to be trained. Studies have shown that teachers who have received training are better able to moot and conclude lessons (Denton & Lacina, 1984), communicate effectively with pupils and relate to pupils' needs and interests (Grossman, 1990). Cook and Pang (1991) have also reported that trained teachers have fewer problems and adjust better during their first year of teaching than the partially trained and untrained teachers.

The prevalent mission of teacher education programmes is to assure that preservice teachers receive an appropriate education that provides the knowledge, skills and abilities to succeed in the classroom. Hence, McNergney and Herbert (2001) pointed out that once teachers have completed their teacher education programme, they are expected to be able to demonstrate required competencies acquired through their classroom experiences, field experiences and standardised assessments.

Teachers who have been trained in teacher education programmes are more effective than those who have not been trained at all (Evertson, Hawley & Zlotnick, 1985; Grossman, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 1991). Notably, by going through teacher education programmes, teachers acquire ways of teaching which relate to methods of improving students' achievements as pointed out by Danielson (2007) in the review on preservice teacher education programmes. Thus, it can be concluded that empirical research supports the need for teacher education to enhance teacher effectiveness.

1.2 Background of the Study

In the 21st century, globalisation, liberalisation and internationalisation will bring with them new, unprecedented challenges for Malaysia. In response to these challenges, Malaysia has promulgated a vision to become a fully developed and industrialised country by the year 2020. Vision 2020's mission is to develop a democratic society that is strong in religious and spiritual values, liberal and tolerant, scientific and progressive, innovative and forward looking (Ministry of Education, 2008).

In tandem with this vision, education is the key to developing the required human capital to propel Malaysia towards achieving developed nation status. To this end, the Ministry of Education (MOE) plays a major role in producing a competent, productive and knowledgeable workforce. Hence, one of the major plans of the Ministry of Education (2008) is to develop an education system that is global, world-class and yet suited to local needs. Consequently, the MOE has implemented a

number of initiatives designed to produce quality teachers. Upgrading the teacher training colleges into teacher education institutes and being able to confer their own degree, the Bachelor of Teaching, is one of the initiatives the MOE has successfully taken in the effort of training and supplying quality teachers.

Education in Malaysia is guided by its National Philosophy of Education which states that

> Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large. (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. xi)

Guided by the National Philosophy of Education, education in Malaysia adopts a holistic approach by emphasising mastery of knowledge, promoting intellectual capabilities and nurturing values in developing quality human capital.

Additionally, the National Mission 2006–2020, the second phase of Vision 2020, gives prominence to education as a vehicle to raise the capacity for knowledge and innovation and nurturing first class mentality (Ministry of Education, 2006). In fulfilling the aspirations of the National Mission, the Education Development Master Plan (EDMP), therefore, was launched on 16 January 2007 to promote the education

agenda under the Ninth Malaysian Plan and is aimed to provide quality education for all. The six strategic thrusts outline the policies, focus, strategies, action plans and indicators to make national education relevant and of high quality. Of these, the second and fifth thrusts have a direct impact on enhancing quality teaching to develop quality human capital (Ministry of Education, 2006).

Fundamental to quality teaching is teachers' content knowledge and instructional skills necessary to teach to achieve high academic standards. Teachers also need to develop various competencies to satisfy the diverse expectations from students, parents, education authorities, the community and the public. Hence, teacher education plays a crucial role in ensuring that the goals of Vision 2020, the National Philosophy of Education and the EDMP, are realised. Wong and Chang (1975, p. v) emphasised that "teacher education is perhaps the most important aspect of educational policy in Malaysia because teachers are responsible for translating educational goals into reality".

The Education National Key Results Area (NKRA) under the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) has been established to improve students' performance in schools in addition to providing them with access to better quality education. Under the education NKRA which was launched on 11 July 2009, two of the four focuses are on the preschool education and primary school education. For preschoolers involving four and five years old, NKRA has set targets to increase enrolment to 87% by 2012 and 92% by 2015 (Prime Minister Department, 2010a). Thus, more classes have to be set up. As for primary education, the Prime Minister Department (2010a) reported that 90% of primary school pupils are expected to

master the basic literacy and numeracy skills by 2020. Thus, to meet the aim of the GTP for education, the focus of the government is to improve both the quality of the new intake of preschool and primary school teachers as well as to upgrade the quality and professionalism of all existing teachers through training programmes. The aims of increasing the percentage of graduate teachers in primary schools from 28% in 2009 to 60% by 2015 and from 89.4% in 2009 to 90% by 2015 in secondary schools significantly emphasise on the importance of teacher education (Prime Minister Department, 2010b). As local public universities have been entrusted to produce qualified secondary school teachers at the degree level, the Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) will have to play an active role in producing quality primary school teachers to achieve the target of the NKRA.

Efforts have been made by the MOE to initiate a new training programme to elevate the output of trained teachers. The Bachelor of Teaching, the core programme introduced by the TEIs will now be under the scrutiny to increase the demand of trained primary school teachers. It is thus of interest to ascertain the contribution of this new Bachelor of Teaching programme in meeting the nation's demand for quality primary school teachers.

1.2.1 Teacher Education in Malaysia

The philosophy of teacher education in Malaysia first established in 1982 has the aim to produce:

> …the teacher, who is noble in character, progressive and scientific in outlook, committed to uphold the aspirations of the nation, and cherishes the national

> cultural heritage, ensures the development of the individual, and the preservation of a united, democratic, progressive and disciplined society. (Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 14)

The training of teachers in Malaysia is done at two levels. Teachers trained to teach in secondary schools are trained by the School of Education or Faculty of Education in the respective public universities while the task of training teachers to teach in primary schools is the responsibility of the 27 TEIs, which come under the purview of the Teacher Education Division (TED), MOE.

The duration of teacher training in Malaysia varies according to the types of training modes. In the public universities, the four-year courses offered for training teachers to teach in secondary schools are, in general, a bachelor's degree in education with specialisation in a major area. In general, this programme is offered to school leavers with *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (with one year foundation programme) or *Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia* or equivalent certificates. Indeed, a search through the portals of some local universities and the leaflets cast some results of the courses provided by these universities. Based on the information which is available on the leaflets and portals of the universities and as a basis to substantiate this discussion, a few examples of local universities and the courses offered are illustrated subsequently. The Faculty of Education in *Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*, for instance, offers Bachelor of Education with Honours, specialising in major areas such as Sports and Recreation and Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) whereas School of Educational Studies in *Universiti Sains Malaysia* offers Bachelor of Education with Honours which concentrate on training

Science and English language teachers. Working collaboratively with other schools in the university, the latter also offers Bachelor of Arts (Education) whereby trainees major in a single school subject and minor in another subject relevant to the secondary school curriculum. The Faculty of Education in *Universiti Malaya* offers Bachelor of Education in TESL and collaborates with two other faculties to conduct Bachelor of Islamic Education and Bachelor of Science programmes. The Faculty of Education in *Universiti Teknologi Mara* offers a variety of Bachelor of Education with Honours in various fields such as TESL, Physical and Health Education, Arts Education and Sciences with specialisation in Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Mathematics. On the other hand, graduates who do not have a degree in education can enrol in the Post Graduate Diploma in Education which takes one and a half years to complete.

At the TEIs, there are several modes of teacher training. Currently, TEIs, in collaboration with local universities or universities in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the United States are conducting a four-year Bachelor in Education degree to train preservice teachers for primary level. Different TEIs collaborate with different local public universities in offering degree programmes and to name a few, *Institut Perguruan Persekutuan* works together with *Universiti Utara Malaysia* and *Universiti Sains Malaysia*, *Institut Perguruan Sultan Abdul Halim* teams up with *Universiti Perguruan Sultan Idris* while *Institut Perguruan Batu Lintang collaborates with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*. Trainees are required to attend the one-and-a-half-year foundation course prior to entering this degree programme. This programme is only offered to school leavers with *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* or *Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia* or equivalent certificates. Graduates who specialise

in areas other than education, can also become primary school teachers upon completion of a three-semester Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) at the TEIs. Teachers without teaching certificates and are currently employed by schools on contractual basis may also apply for the Diploma in Education programme, for instance, *Kursus Perguruan Diploma Malaysia-Kursus Dalam Cuti (KDPM-KDC)* and *Kursus Diploma Perguruan Malaysia-Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan (KDPM-SABK)* programme if they fulfill the minimum requirements. The duration of study is three and a half years and participants are required to attend classes during the school holidays.

In July 2005, the Malaysian Government upgraded the 27 teacher training colleges to Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs). In line with the upgrading of the teaching profession, the TEIs have been given the green light to train preservice teachers at degree levels, the Bachelor of Teaching (also known by its Malay acronym, PISMP). This programme therefore began in 2007 after the first batch of preservice teachers underwent a one-and-a-half-year preparation course.

1.2.2 Bachelor of Teaching Programme in Teacher Education Institutes.

Currently, all the TEIs conduct the Bachelor of Teaching with Honours programme (also known by its Malay acronym, PISMP), which is a four-year full time programme offered to students with *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)* qualifications. The total length of study is five and a half years as students need to attend a one-and-a-half-year foundation course as a pre-requisite.

The basic academic entry requirements for the PISMP programme are determined by the types of courses offered. Candidates must possess a minimum grade of *C* for the major courses applied. Other basic academic requirements for all candidates include obtaining distinctions in three subjects and credits in the Malay Language, History and another subject as well as getting a pass in their English Language.

The Selection and Placement Unit of the Teacher Education Division (TED) is responsible for student intake and placement. This Unit operates with four other sub-units that deal with aspects of shortlisting of teacher candidates, administration of the Malaysian Teachers Selection Test, teacher candidate interviews, and teacher candidate selection and placement for teacher training. The selection procedures are outlined below (Ministry of Education, 2006):

a. Interested candidates apply for the courses online.
b. Short-listed candidates are called to sit for the Malaysian Teachers Selection Test.
c. Candidates who have passed the test are called for an interview.
d. Successful candidates are then informed online.

Teacher education in Malaysia is highly centralised and the curriculum of teacher education is determined by the TED, including the PISMP curriculum. Subsequent background of the PISMP programme reviewed has been obtained through the *Buku Panduan Ijazah Sarjana Muda Perguruan* (Ministry of Education, 2007). The PISMP curriculum has been designed to produce beginning teachers who will be teaching in primary schools with the appropriate knowledge, skills and

attitudes. This programme consists of three areas in preparing teachers, which will be conducted across eight semesters: Compulsory Studies, Core Studies and Elective Studies. The total credit hours required to graduate from the programme is 133 credits.

All student teachers will have to complete the 23 credit hours for the Compulsory Studies. The purpose of this area of study is to equip the student teachers with basic knowledge, generic skills and soft skills required by a prospective teacher. This area also consists of two sub-components, the academic component, namely subjects such as Malay Language (Communication), Islamic and Moral Education and the second component, namely, co-curriculum, requires student teachers to participate in activities to develop their skills in the management of co-curricular societies, uniformed bodies and sports. The subjects, the credit hours of the compulsory subjects and the semesters when they are taught are listed in Table 1.1.

The second area is the Core Studies which comprise the following sub-components: professional studies, student's major and professional practice. In the Professional Studies sub-component which constituted 27 credit hours, student teachers study the theory and practices of teaching in foundational courses such as educational philosophy, pedagogy and educational psychology. The study of school subjects fall under the Major sub-component, consisting of 45 credit hours is aimed at preparing students to teach a number of different subjects. The subjects offered at the selected TEIs are decided by the TED. For instance, not all the TEIs will have trainees undergoing training to teach Mathematics in primary schools, instead the

TED will allocate this responsibility to only a few TEIs. Other TEIs are selected to train preservice teachers to teacher other major subjects.

The third sub-component is the Professional Practice which is accumulated to 14 credit hours and it is one of the requirements for the students to graduate. This sub-component gives trainees the opportunity to connect between theories and practice in a collaborative structure consisting of the supervisors, cooperating teachers and school principals, that is, the entire school environment.

There are three forms of school placements. A one-week block of time is spent in the school-based experience (SBE) which takes place from semester 1 until semester 4, aimed at orienting students to understand how schools work. There is also a four-week, eight-week and twelve-week practicum spent teaching in schools for semesters 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

In the practicum component, student teachers are assessed, amongst others, their classroom teaching knowledge and skill by both the supervising lecturer and their school cooperating teacher. There is an emphasis on clinical supervision (Ministry of Education, 2007). The final assessment is carried out jointly by both the supervising lecturer and cooperating teacher. Students spend four weeks in school for internship in their semester 8, their final semester. During internship, a school administrator and a supervising teacher are assigned to assess each trainee's capabilities in planning, implementing and evaluating activities and projects outside the classroom. Apart from teaching, student teachers are also given co-curriculum responsibilities. The subjects, the credit hours of the professional studies and

professional practice and the semesters when they are taught or executed are listed in Table 1.2 and Table 1.3 respectively.

Table 1.1

Compulsory Studies for PISMP

Code	Subjects	Credit	Semester
WAJ3101	Islamic Civilisation and Asia Civilisation	2	1
WAJ3102	English Language Proficiency I	2	1
WAJ3103	English Language Proficiency II	1	2
WAJ3104	Language Literacy	2	2
WAJ3105	Numerical Literacy	2	2
WAJ3106	Ethnic Relationships	2	3
WAJ3107	Arts in Education	3	4
WAJ3108	Cocurriculum – Cocurriculum Management	1	1
WAJ3109	Cocurriculum – Games	1	2
WAJ3110	Cocurriculum – Uniform Units 1	1	3
WAJ3111	Cocurriculum – Uniform Units II	1	4
WAJ3112	Cocurriculum – Sports	1	5
WAJ3113	Cocurriculum – Societies	1	6
WAJ3114	Character Building for Teachers (Bina Insan Guru)		
	Bina Insan Guru Phase I (45 hours)	*KT	1
	Bina Insan Guru Phase II (10 hours)	*KT	2
	Bina Insan Guru Phase III (10 hours)	*KT	3
	Bina Insan Guru Phase IV (35 hours)	*KT	4
	Bina Insan Guru Phase V (10 hours)	*KT	5
	Bina Insan Guru Phase VI (10 hours)	3(0+3)	6
	Total Credit	23(17%)	

Note. * KT is the accumulated credits (*Kredit Terkumpul*). The total credit is three and will be accumulated over a six-month period. The three credits will be summed up and included in the sixth semester. From *Buku Panduan Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda* (p. 5) by Ministry of Education, 2007, Putrajaya. Copyright 2007 by Teacher Education Division.

The opportunity for trainees undergoing the PISMP programme to connect the theories in the institutes and the practice in school classrooms is vast as they come in many credit hours of practicum and internship. The practicum as well as the internship is one of the most unique structures of the PISMP programme. These components contribute 11% of the total credit hours of the entire programme. The number of credit hours allotted for practicum and internship is relatively longer than

any other teacher education programmes in Malaysia. Some evidences of the credit hours of practicum in the teacher education programmes in local universities which are available on the websites of those universities are listed in Table 1.4.

Table 1.2

Core Studies for PISMP: Professional Studies

Code	Subjects	Credit	Semester
EDU3101	Philosophy and Education in Malaysia (and *SBE)	3	1
EDU3102	Child Development	3	1
EDU3103	Learning and the Learner	3	2
EDU3104	Behaviour and Classroom Management	3	3
EDU3105	Technology in Teaching and Learning	3	4
EDU3106	Culture and Learning	3	5
EDU3107	Guidance and Counselling for Children	3	7
EDU3108	Leadership and Teacher Professional Development	3	8
EDU3109	Teacher and Current Challenges	3	8
	Total	27(20%)	

Note. * SBE is the School Based Experience. From *Buku Panduan Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda* (p. 5) by Ministry of Education, 2007, Putrajaya. Copyright 2007 by Teacher Education Division.

Table 1.3

Core Studies for PISMP: Professional Practice

Code	Subjects	Credit	Semester
	School Based Experience I – Professional Studies		1
	School Based Experience II – Major Studies		2
	School Based Experience III – Elective Studies 1		3
	School Based Experience IV – Elective Studies 2		4
PRK3101	Practicum I	2 (4M)	5
PRK3102	Practicum II	4 (8M)	6
PRK3103	Practicum III	6(12M)	7
INT3101	Internship	2 (4M)	8
	Total	14(11%)	

Note. From *Buku panduan Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda* (p. 6) by Ministry of Education, 2007, Putrajaya. Copyright 2007 by Teacher Education Division.

Table 1.4

Practicum Credit Hours in Some Local Universities

Some Universities in Malaysia	Total credit hours for practicum	Total credit hours for a Bachelor of Teaching Programme	Percentage of credit hours upon the total credit hours to graduate (%)
Universiti Utara Malaysia	8	135	5.9
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	9	128	7.0
Universiti Perguruan Sultan Idris	8	106	7.5
Universiti Tun Abdul Razak	6	132	4.5
Open University Malaysia	6	120	5.0
Universiti Malaya	8	144	5.6

The third area which comprises the Elective Studies, constitutes to 24 credit hours. There are two elective packages offered besides their major. Pedagogical content knowledge and assessment based on Integrated Primary School Curriculum (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah* – KBSR) are the aspects covered in these studies.

The teaching and learning in the PISMP programme is based on the active learning delivery mode (Ministry of Education, 2007). Guidelines and proforma using activities to promulgate active learning are drawn for each subject. Concomitantly, lecturers are to become the facilitators, who both support and model pedagogical approaches that underpin the philosophy of learning in the programme.

Student teachers are assessed in a variety of ways. They typically do coursework that may be short assignments for minor subjects. For their major subjects, they are required to carry out a project in what is termed the knowledge-based coursework (Ministry of Education, 2007). In addition, they are also assessed through a written examination at the end of each semester.

1.2.3 Rationale for Examining the Two Process Features of the PISMP Programme.

The opportunity for active learning environment has been selected to be examined in this research because the mode of delivery and assessment of the PISMP is focused on the active learning concept (Ministry of Education, 2007). The emphasis of PISMP is placed on an outcome-based approach with an integrative curricular format with the teacher educator as a facilitator of active learning methodologies. Rather than relying on what the programme designers propounded about the learning processes of the programme, the research prefers to rely on what trainees report about their experience to gain active learning opportunity throughout the programme. Herman and Klein (1997) have advocated that the opportunity to learn data, especially, can provide policy makers with early feedback on system progress. They further stated that data on trainees' opportunity to learn can provide an interim measure of system progress as well as important data to inform mid-course corrections" (p. 5). Trainees can receive quite different preparation opportunities, with the variation existing both between and within institutions of higher education (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2008). Programme

designers of teacher education may claim to have provided the active learning environment or a large number of strategies in the programme, for example, but trainees' actual experiences may be quite different. In addition, programme designers may also claim to have provided quality support during practicum, however, the trainees may not have received it. As such, these claims provide a ground for this study, whereby it seeks to gather data about the actual active learning environment that the trainees experience and how engaging those experiences predict their preparedness.

According to Zeichner and Conklin (2005), the lack of practicum integration in teacher education programme is the obstacle to educating "qualified teachers" (p. 647). Unlike other teacher education programmes, the structure of the PISMP is unique as one of its key features is the aim to link theory and practice through meaningful authentic professional work through school-based experience, practicum, internship, industry training and service learning throughout the programme (Ministry of Education, 2007). Practicum and internship form a significant portion of the PISMP programme whereby they cover 14 credit hours, which is 11% of the total course. As such, it occupies a substantial part of the programme and it increases the opportunities of being observed whereby the trainee performance can be improved when the trainee is routinely observed on a regular basis; and that positive reinforcement of behaviour and performance by the supervisors is essential for continuous psychological growth and development of the trainee (Biberstine, 1976).

Practicum supervision is, thus, undeniably an important process feature for the PISMP programme. Because of its prominent length of practicum period in the programme which allows the trainee multiple opportunities to learn to teach in supportive environments, the researcher hypothesises that there is an extent of influence of supervision on the trainees' preparedness because cooperating teachers and institute supervisors fulfill significant roles in the trainees' growth in knowledge and practice of teaching. As such, it is the interest of this research to identify the extent of practicum supervision process has on the preservice teacher preparedness of the PISMP programme.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This section stated the issues and problems that propagated the importance of this study. There are three issues that are discussed in this section.

As indicated earlier by the various government policies such as Vision 2020, the National Philosophy of Education, the EDPM, the NKRA through the GDP, education is one of the utmost foci of the Malaysian Government. The 2011 Budget allocation to the MOE for education and training in the Tenth Malaysian Plan constitutes RM 29.3 billion, which is 13.8% of the total public allocation, the highest percentage of the national budget (Mohd Najib Abdul Razak, 2010). In 2012, with an education budget of RM37 billion, the Government has continued to channel the largest proportion of its budget, that is 16% to the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2012). This shows that the government is committed to ensure the

success of the education projects and programmes under the Tenth Malaysia Plan and NKRA.

Regrettably, the amount of attention and the number of sources invested on the education by the government have not harvested the success desired. According to the Tenth Malaysia Plan (Prime Minister's Department, 2010b), Malaysian student performances, as benchmarked by international surveys have been declining. In the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) by Mullis, Martin and Foy (2008), around 20% of Malaysian students failed to meet minimum benchmarks for both Mathematics and Science, compared to only 4% in Science and 7% in Mathematics in 2003 and by 2007, the performance had slipped to below the international average in both Mathematics and Science with a corresponding drop in ranking (Ministry of Education, 2012).

The dilemma continues to perturb the education world because recently Yu (2011) reported that three studies showed that local students are trailing the Asian countries in Science and Mathematics. In addition, 77% of the workforces only receive up to 11 years of basic education at the Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) as reported in the Tenth Malaysia Plan (Prime Minister's Department, 2010b). One of the possible explanations for the low performance may lie with the low quality of the current teacher workforce as the teacher is the most direct link in the delivery of education to students (Wright, Horn & Sanders, 1997; Yee, 2007).

Evidence that supports low teacher quality in Malaysia has been propounded by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2009). Teachers' percentage of lesson time lost to disruptive student behaviour in Malaysia was relatively high compared to the other 23 countries and to aggravate the situation, 30% of teachers in schools lacked of pedagogical preparation and this hindered instruction. Other than that, literature review has often cited that prospective teachers are not able to manage classroom and the discipline of the pupils well and they find planning, dealing with pupils of different abilities and assessing and providing feedback to pupils as challenging (Russell-McKenzie, 2009). These perceptions are likely to be related to the training they receive and this is put forward by UNESCO (2006) which suggests that teacher preparation is associated with teacher quality. According to Levine (2006), current teacher education programmes are largely ill-equipped to prepare current and future teachers especially in facing new realities. Moreover, Murray (2001) and Blomeke, Felbrich, Muller, Kaiser and Lehmann (2008) concur that the public and the policy makers have begun to doubt the effectiveness of teacher preparation in ensuring quality in teaching and believe that many qualified teachers who graduate from these programmes are not competent in their work which again suggests the contribution to the low quality teachers in schools. From this vantage point, trainees who complete the teacher preparation programmes do not leave with appropriate knowledge and practices to be effective in contemporary classrooms. Many prospective teachers enter teaching are increasing ill prepared for what they must accomplish (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Thus, teacher education programmes continued to be cited as the root cause of bad teaching and inadequate learning (Labaree, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005).

Similar criticisms also apply for the teacher education programmes in Malaysia. Rajendran Nagappan et al. (2008) pointed out that the public have raised a number of pertinent issues on teacher education and one of them is the preparedness of preservice teachers.

In the attempt to address the increasing criticism surrounding teacher education programmes regarding their effectiveness, teacher education programmes are seeking to answer the questions circulating about the degree teacher education programme influence teacher effectiveness and produce teacher that have ability to increase pupil learning in measurable ways (Darling-Hammond, 2006). One way to improve teacher education programmes and ultimately pupil achievement, is to evaluate each individual programme by talking to preservice and inservice teachers about their preparations and incorporate their insights, visions and experiences and suggestions in the planning and implementation of teacher education programmes (Forsyth & Tallerico, 1998). This is particularly more so in the Malaysian context as there is limited literature which evaluate the effectiveness of teacher education programmes in preparing trainees for classroom teaching. As pointed out by Cruickshank and Metcalf (1990), "Literature on the conduct, objectives, and the effectiveness of training in teacher education is sparse. ... Given the historic brouhaha over training in teacher preparation, it would be expected that a considerable available related literature would exist. Such is not the case." (p. 491). Therefore, there is a strong need to study the preparedness of preservice teachers to determine if the teacher education programmes are adequately preparing them for the demands and challenges of teaching in the classroom and the dominant

implementation factors that predict the programmes in order to maintain the strength of the programmes or improve the weaknesses and such purposes stand as the first and main problem that provide justification for the necessity of this study.

Since governments have invested resources in different programmes, they have the responsibilities over the efficiency of such resources which therefore, promulgates evaluations of effectiveness (Rossi, 1983). Evaluations of the teacher education programmes (government-funded programmes) such as *j-QAF KPLI (Rendah) LPBS*, *Kursus Perguruan Lepasan Ijazah or KPLI*, *Program Khas Pengsiswazahan Guru (PKPG)* and the inservice teacher training programmes by TED over the years had been conducted to meet the *Pekeliling Perbendaharaan Bil. 14 Tahun 1994*, whereby each programme or activity carried out by the government has to be evaluated at least once in every five years (Malaysian Treasury, 2002). These evaluations were confined to the Malaysian Treasury needs, adhering to the Modified Budgeting System with the purpose of improving and streamlining the agency activity performance especially in managing the resources allocated to the running of the programmes. Each evaluation often examined many aspects of the programme, from curriculum content to management and cost. The scope of the evaluations was wide: they did not cover a specific area. Such evaluations explicate the claim by Stenzel (1991) that evaluation of government-funded programmes are largely done to monitor the compliance and serving government needs, and thus to satisfy the requirement of the policy. Thus, making conclusion from the academic perspective that these programmes have successfully prepared trainees to be competent in classroom teaching may not give a true picture. Even though government-funded evaluations may lend direction, they did not deal directly to the

goal and outcome of the programme which depicted succinct domains of classroom teaching knowledge and skills necessary for programme improvement and this is the second issue that propagates the need for this study.

In order for the PISMP programme to continue to produce quality graduate teachers specialising in primary education, this programme should be evaluated as it has not been done since its inception and hence is the third issue that forms the basis for this study. Each Teacher Education Institute in Malaysia has its own journal publications. Throughout the duration of this research, the researcher has not read any of the publications from the local institutions on an indepth research or report on the evaluation of the PISMP programme and with specific focus on classroom teaching. A search through the database of *Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan* (BPPDP), a venue which archives all research publications in the country, confirms the inexistence of evaluation of the PISMP programme. This is possibly due to the programme which is relatively new as the second batch of trainees only graduated in October 2011. Similar to any other current and ongoing teacher education programmes, it is essential that the PISMP programme undergoes careful scrutiny to address the strengths and the weaknesses of the programme. In addition, they are more the reasons to evaluate this programme as this is a new teacher education programme which trains primary school teachers at degree level at the Teacher Education Institutes. Prior to this programme, these stakeholders in the institutions have the experience and prerogative to train teachers only at the certificate and diploma levels. Hence, it is vital that the programme is evaluated to determine if it is providing the trainees with the knowledge and skills necessary to be competent in the classroom.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the preparedness in classroom teaching knowledge and skills of preservice teachers who have undergone the PISMP programme in Teacher Education Institutes. The preparedness is determined by preservice teachers' self-rating of their classroom teaching knowledge and skills required of a beginning teacher under the different classroom teaching domains. The measurement for the effectiveness of training the preservice teachers is based on the Malaysian Teacher Standards which are operationalised by mapping the standards onto the established Danielson teaching framework which consists of three domains of classroom teaching: planning and preparation for teaching, classroom environment and instruction.

The study also addresses the factors and they are the opportunity to learn in the active learning environment as well as the quality of practicum supervision and they predict the outcome (the preparedness of the preservice teachers in classroom teaching) of the PISMP programme. However, the quest to probe this area is secondary to examining the outcome of the programme and serve to gather further information, specifically focusing on the process involved in the programme. Evaluating the process and the outcome of this programme will provide meaningful and accurate information that could be used to enhance the programme and as advocated by Medley (1982), improvement should be one of the purposes of programme evaluation in teacher education.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to examine the classroom teaching knowledge and skills of preservice teachers who have undergone the PISMP programme at selected Teacher Education Institutes and the factors that predict the outcome of the programme.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1) to determine the level of preservice teachers' preparedness for the different components of the planning and preparation domain.
2) to determine the level of preservice teachers' preparedness for the different components of the classroom environment domain.
3) to determine the level of preservice teachers' preparedness for the different components of the instruction domain.
4) to determine the level of preservice teachers' preparedness in classroom teaching.
5) to determine if the opportunity to learn in the active learning environment is a predictor of preservice teacher preparedness.
6) to determine if the quality of practicum supervision is a predictor of preservice teacher preparedness.