

**SHARING OF CRITICAL TEACHING
INCIDENTS IN A TESOL PRACTICUM USING
FACEBOOK**

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2020

**SHARING OF CRITICAL TEACHING
INCIDENTS IN A TESOL PRACTICUM USING
FACEBOOK**

by

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirement
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

December 2020

DEDICATION

To the most appreciated person in my life; my father, S.V. Rama Naidu

*I dedicate this piece of work to my late father who has been my constant source of
inspiration.*

Appa, this is for you.

My lovable and respectful mother; Madam S.Govindammal

My beloved husband; Jegathesan Subramaniam

My siblings; R.Kunavathe, R.Muraaly & R.Ragu Naidu

My children; J.Mithunan, J.Mithran & J.Haripriyai

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I begin by expressing my thanks to GOD for giving me the determination, strength and patience that made it possible to complete this piece of work.

I acknowledge my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my beloved supervisor, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan for his boundless advice; constant support and encouragement that finally made this work come to light.

I also would like to extend my gratitude to the TESOL PSTs (2016) of USM, Penang for voluntarily becoming the participants of this research. My special appreciation is extended to them for their support, co-operation, effort and time in facilitating the collection of data.

To my wonderful children, thank you for bearing with me and my mood swings and being my greatest supporters. To my husband, thank you for not letting me give up and giving me all the encouragement I needed to continue.

My heartiest thanks go to my mother, sister and brothers for their inexhaustible love, understanding, sacrifices, encouragement, prayers and unlimited support.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CoP	Community of Practice
CTIs	Critical Teaching Incidents
GPA	Grade Point Average
ICT	Information and Communicative Technologies
LMS	Learning Management System
PSTs	Pre Service Teachers
SC	Social Constructivism
TEI	Teacher Education Institutions
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
SISC+	School Improvement Specialists Coaches Plus

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PERKONGSIAN INSIDEN PENGAJARAN KRITIKAL DALAM PRAKTIKUM TESOL MENGGUNAKAN FACEBOOK

ABSTRAK

Praktikum merupakan komponen utama dalam Pendidikan Perguruan. Para guru pelatih diharap dapat mengaplikasikan pengetahuan teori kepada praktikal semasa praktikum. Kajian literatur terkini mendedahkan bahawa para guru pelatih (GP) menghadapi kekangan kontekstual yang ketara semasa praktikum. Mereka mengalami pelbagai insiden yang menjadi titik perubahan dalam kehidupan mereka sebagai guru. Insiden - insiden tersebut diklasifikasikan sebagai 'Insiden Pengajaran Kritikal' (IPK.) Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti; (1) IPK yang dialami oleh para GP TESOL semasa praktikum, (2) menyelidik kesan IPK terhadap para GP TESOL semasa praktikum dan (3) mengkaji keberkesanan penggunaan Facebook dalam membantu untuk menangani IPK sebagai Komuniti Pengamal Pembelajaran semasa praktikum. Seramai 10 siswazah TESOL dari Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Artifak dari Facebook, jurnal refleksi dan temubual berstruktur digunakan untuk meneroka pengalaman professional para GP serta mengenal pasti IPK yang dialami oleh mereka. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan untuk mengumpul data kajian selama dua bulan. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan kaedah kajian Tematic Braun dan Clarke. Sebanyak lima IPK dikenalpasti melalui kajian ini adalah, sikap negatif pelajar terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris, kekurangan komitmen, penggunaan bahasa ibunda, kemahiran pembelajaran yang lemah dan faktor luaran. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan, IPK menyebabkan para GP TESOL hilang motivasi dan sekaligus menyebabkan

rancangan pengajaran menjadi tidak efektif. Keputusan kajian juga menunjukkan perkongsian IPK di Facebook membantu para GP menjalankan kaedah pengajaran yang berkesan, perkongsian idea yang bernas, menjana sikap bekerjasama dan berkolaborasi agar mereka dapat menjalani praktikum yang lebih berkesan. Kajian ini telah menjana beberapa implikasi teoretikal, pedagogi dan pelaksanaan polisi untuk Institusi Pendidikan Guru, universiti dan para penyelidik. Oleh itu, dapat disimpulkan bahawa perkongsian IPK dalam praktikum TESOL menggunakan Facebook dapat meningkatkan potensi para GP TESOL serta perkembangan kemahiran pengajaran mereka.

SHARING OF CRITICAL TEACHING INCIDENTS IN A TESOL PRACTICUM USING FACEBOOK

ABSTRACT

Practicum is attributed as the core component in any Teacher Education programmes. The PSTs are expected to transform the knowledge gained in the theoretical part into practice. Recent literature reveals that the PSTs are experiencing severe contextual restraints on daily basis during practicum. They experience incidents that become turning points in their teaching lives and are deemed as ‘critical’. These are termed ‘critical teaching incidents’ (CTIs). This research seeks to find out; (1) to find out the CTIs experienced by the TESOL PSTs during their practicum, (2) to investigate the consequences encountered due to the CTIs experienced by the TESOL PSTs during their practicum and (3) to examine the usefulness of Facebook as a platform to share the CTIs in their TESOL practicum. A number of 10 final year TESOL PSTs took part in this research. The artefacts from Facebook, reflective journals and online structured interviews provided the opportunity to access the PSTs professional landscape to reveal the CTIs experienced in practicum. The use of multiple analysis approaches provided different lenses to interpret the CTIs. A Qualitative research method was employed in this research to gather the data for duration of two months. The data was analyzed using Braun and Clark’s thematic approach. Students’ negative attitude, lack of commitment, use of mother tongue, poor proficiency and external factors are the CTIs identified in this research. The results also revealed the consequences of CTIs faced by the PSTs; lost motivation and ineffective lesson planning. The results also indicated that, using

Facebook to share the CTIs during practicum enables the TESOL PSTs to conduct effective teaching, exchange ideas, promote teamwork and collaboration to address the CTIs as a CoP. This has generated several theoretical, pedagogical and policy implications for the teacher education institutions, universities and researchers, Therefore, it can be concluded that sharing of CTIs in a TESOL practicum using Facebook would improve the TESOL PSTs potentialities and develop their teaching ability.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sharing of Critical Teaching Incidents in a TESOL Practicum Using Facebook

1.1 Background of the research

The TESOL teacher education programme strives to develop professionals who are prepared to encounter the challenges of the 21st -century education. The programme aims to equip the TESOL PSTs with the required skills and knowledge so that they would be able to carry out the practicum effectively in schools. The TESOL teacher education programme is coupled with the practicum to provide the TESOL PSTs with guided teaching experience to enable them to comprehend the wide scope of teachers' role (Tuli & File, 2009). The practicum is attributed as the most valuable component as it becomes the transition period in the life of TESOL PSTs as it leads them to experience a range of professional experience to be recognized as a qualified teacher (Mohd Sofi et al., 2018).

During the practicum phase, TESOL PSTs are often confused between the theory they have learned and what they observe in the classroom: the reality of practicum. According to the Malaysian Education Blue Print (2013-2025), even though the Malaysian Education system has many excellent teachers, yet a study conducted in 2011 yield that only 50% of the teaching-learning were delivered efficiently in the classrooms, because the lessons did not engage the learners sufficiently, and the teaching embraces a passive lecture format delivery.

According to Tuluca and Cecen (2015), practicum is a training ground for the PSTs to bridge the learned theory with practice as it enables the TESOL PSTs to apply their theoretical knowledge into actual practice to make them positively

inclined towards the teaching and learning process, thus making them reflective practitioners. According to Liaw (2012, p.152), ‘practicum enables the PSTs to be aware of conflicts between his or her beliefs and the actual reality of the classroom’ (Ulvik & Smith, 2011, p.520) ‘as it provides them with a genuine experience of teaching. It’s not sufficient enough to observe others or to study about teaching; they need the practical experience to gain the ability to apply the knowledge to a greater scheme as future teachers.’

Even though practicum is considered to be the most crucial part in any teacher – training programme as it cements the relationship between taught courses and the real school environment experiences (Zengeya Makuku et al., 2013, p.48), ‘still there are inconsistencies between what the TESOL PSTs have learned and the reality in classrooms.’ Hudson, Peter and Nguyen (2008) also agree that there is instability between the classroom reality and the PSTs’ university education.

According to Zailani (2013), the attempt of learning to teach is a crucial phenomenon within which there are many unknown and unexpected CTIs need to be taken care of otherwise they would lead towards more complicated issues during the teaching practicum. CTIs are events that are unanticipated and unplanned taking place in a lesson that can evoke the insight into other aspects of the teaching-learning process (Richard & Farrell, 2005). Yet, being aware of the CTI is not easy; CTI is different for each PST even though they are in the same environment. One PST’s CTI may not be a CTI for other PSTs; furthermore, it can happen at any time in the classroom and it is difficult to take an immediate action to solve the CTIs (Prada Castaneda & Zuleta Garzon, 2013).

Even though the teaching and learning process is seen as an essential part for the PSTs during their teaching practice, unfortunately, it is fraught with CTIs that can affect the TESOL PSTs teaching performance (Groundwater-smith, 1993 as cited in Dobbins, 1996). They find difficulties in delivering the lessons effectively to their students as the CTIs influence the development of their teaching process in practicum. The Ministry of Education claimed that only PSTs who can demonstrate high competencies in their ongoing coursework and teaching practicum will be hired. This is to make sure that only the qualified teachers enter the education system (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013-2025). Therefore, to produce PSTs who are efficient and committed, a community using the social network such as Facebook is important to enable them to share and solve the CTIs encountered during the practicum. Facebook as a speedy and effective platform for communication, sharing of knowledge and information would create a new foundation for co-operation and teamwork (Baruah, 2012).

1.2 Problem Statement

Practicum is considered to be an integral and most valuable part of teaching training programme at Teachers' Training Institutes in Malaysia as it yields the avenue for the PSTs to gain professional competencies in preparation to become trained teachers. During this period, the PSTs are expected to apply the principles and theories of teaching that they have acquired into practice. According to Yazan (2015, p.173), the PST try out their teaching skills, take on professional roles, learn from experienced teachers, negotiate their growing pedagogical knowledge, and apprentice into the profession.'

Even though practicum should serve as a bridge that provides the TESOL PSTs with concrete experiences to create professional identity and enhance personal competencies, yet they were unable to accept the practicum as learning experience (Dobbins, 1996), as there are inconsistencies between what the PSTs have learned and the real-life situations in classrooms.

Normah et al. (2014) highlighted that the PSTs were lack of motivation and perceived the practicum as a hardship and felt disheartened. They prefer sitting for the final exam rather than attempting to go through a practicum. The PSTs did not perceive their practicum as a 'learning time' but rather to be a 'testing time', where errors are misinterpreted as 'failures' (p.126).

Sua and Raman (2007) find that poor proficiency in the English language also leads to CTIs that hamper the teaching learning process during practicum. Due to that, whatever planned by the PSTs in their lesson plans always fail to match up with the realities in the actual classroom (Bhargava, 2009). Normazidah et al. (2012) agreed that the CTIs occur due to the students' limited vocabulary as the availability of English reading materials is inadequate and limited opportunity to use English outside the classrooms. Therefore, they tend to express their discomfort and anxiety to communicate in English, despite the acknowledgement on the importance of English for the future.

An effective teaching-learning is vital in ensuring the objectives of the lessons are achieved and the input of the lesson is well delivered to enhance the students' understanding and acquisition. The TESOL PSTs find it very burdensome to confront and manage the tactful children during their teaching process. According to Goh and Matthews (2011) the TESOL PSTs also felt that they were unprepared to

face the students' negative behaviours that disrupt their lessons. They were shocked to see students who misbehave in the classrooms. These children cause disturbance during the teaching-learning process hindering effective delivery of lessons and preventing other children from learning as well.

Liaw (2012) finds that the ability to manage students with negative behaviours in the classrooms is the most painful and struggled component to every TESOL PSTs during their practicum period. As a result, the entire lesson conducted would end up as a failure for the TESOL PSTs. This type of CTI would prolong for the entire practicum if it is not addressed and rectified.

TESOL PSTs are encountering a lot of CTIs in teaching the mixed ability students within the time limit. At times they were unable to complete the teaching process successfully as the planned activities failed to be carried out effectively. Al-Shammakhi and Al-Humaidi (2015) state that this happens because the TESOL PSTs are ill-equipped with methodologies and the skills required to handle the mixed ability students. Therefore, they are unable to sort out a solution for the CTIs experienced. Normah et al. (2014, p.122) claimed that 'not all PSTs find their practicum to be a satisfying and valuable one. Some PSTs hide their CTIs from their peers to avoid themselves to be seen as failures by their peers'.

TESOL PSTs are trained to carry out students' centered lessons but when it comes to real classroom situations during their practicum, these TESOL PSTs are confronted with the teacher-centered reality in the classrooms, teachers are expected to impart all the knowledge and the students only become the obedient listeners. Students expect the teachers to be the sole provider of all information and assume their role is just to accept. This assumption does not focus on one aspect but at a few

at a time making the practicum to be more difficult and challenging (MK Kabilan & Raja Ida, 2008). Students' passive involvement and lack of commitment in the learning process hinders effective teaching and learning process in the classrooms. Hiew (2012) states that students become passive because they fear the negative judgment from their peers. This becomes a CTI that hindered effective English language learning development among the students.

Teaching and learning process is not successful without students' maximum participation in the classroom. Teaching in this type of situation creates a stressful situation as among the CTIs that TESOL PSTs face in today's diverse classroom includes students not paying attention in class and not participating actively (Melor et al., 2008). The TESOL PSTs have no one to share the CTIs they are facing in their teaching and learning process. They are left without guidance or facilitation to continue their practicum with frustration. Goh and Matthew (2011) even cautioned that the CTIs encountered by the TESOL PSTs were real and could cause frustration in their practicum.

Thyab (2016) finds that when English becomes the second language, then the use of mother tongue arises in the teaching-learning process in the classrooms. TESOL PSTs are trained to conduct lessons completely in the English language without the using any mother languages. PSTs are prohibited from using other languages in an English language classroom. In schools, teachers use the easy way to teach the English language, teaching English using the mother tongue approach. Koucka (2007) claimed that she had witnessed teachers using mother tongue to teach the English language. Therefore, students are immune to learning English in their mother tongue and it is hard to mould them back to the actual approach. Teachers claim that the exclusive use of English language in classroom situation failed to

improve their students' English proficiency but rather left them feeling dazed and confused (MK Kabilan & Raja Ida, 2008).

Hazita (2006) claims that students get limited exposure of English language in Malaysian classrooms. Students tend to get only 30-45 minutes of exposure to English daily in the classrooms. It was found that students encounter difficulties in comprehending and communicating in the target language effectively. Even Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad had voiced his concern about the poor state of English proficiency among students from the primary up to the university levels. 'Students tend to have low self-efficacy and self-esteem when using the English language. This decreases their motivation to participate actively in the English classrooms' (Wei & Elias, 2011, p.241). The students' passive participation in learning English language becomes a CTI for the PSTs in conducting the teaching-learning process during practicum.

Tuli and File (2009, p.107) state that, 'practicum should help TESOL PSTs to explore and understand the teaching world and enable them to venture the difficulties of handling the CTIs that they might experience in their future'. Therefore, it is essential to develop alternative innovative practicum experiences in our TESOL teacher training programmes if we want to produce future TESOL teachers who are capable of finding solutions to the CTIs they experience in an English language classroom. The experiences gained would be able to solve problems, promote teamwork and create a better link between the PSTs and their supervisors.

Sharing the TESOL PST CTI in the Web 2.0 Social Networking tool, Facebook, would enable them to share ideas, opinions and find solutions for the present challenges during practicum to prepare them to become effective future

TESOL teachers. Changes are required in the field of TESOL practicum to provide opportunities to the PSTs to develop their teaching practice and to mould them to become better educators in the future. According to Bhargava (2009), a continuous innovation is essential in teacher-training programmes so that they would be able to embrace the changing needs of 21st-century education. Sharing and discussing provide a helping hand for the PSTs to exchange questions, seek answers from peers and reflect on their shared personal concerns.

The web technology has made greater scope for students to express themselves as the sharing of information becomes easier and feedback has become quicker. People from all over the world get connected through Facebook (Facebook, 2015). Roblyer et al. (2010) find that university students are very open in using social networks such as Facebook and other technologies to support their studies.

Fang and Hsieh (2013, p.148), argues that 'PSTs during their practicum courses need opportunities to interact, collaborate and reflect with other PSTs who encountered the CTIs during practicum', unfortunately, it's difficult as they are not at the campus. Therefore, the online networking platform, Facebook, could be used to bridge the TESOL PSTs as a Community of Practice (CoP) to express experiences, seek help, reflect and refine their teaching process during their practicum with each other. This would enable them to develop better ways to reach out for more effective teaching-learning process in their practicum.

1.3 Aim of the Research

This research intends to examine the sharing of CTIs in a TESOL practicum using Facebook. The TESOL PSTs, when get placed in a school, they are often isolated from their lecturers as well as from their peers preventing them from

discussing, sharing and solving the CTIs and create a deeper understanding of their teaching process during practicum. Venn et al. 2000, as cited in Karsenti et al. (2006) have proved that PSTs have less or no opportunities to share their CTIs with their peers. Kostas and Sofos (2013, p.345), state that, ‘PSTs, during their initial preparation program, would receive support from their lecturers and their course mates, however, collegial support and peer interaction fade out once they attempt to their practicum’. During the practicum, the PSTs have lesser time to collaborate with their peers as they are overwhelmed with new responsibilities in their practicum schools.

According to MK Kabilan et al. (2010) by building learning communities to work collaboratively to construct new knowledge, PSTs would be able to overcome the CTIs during their practicum. Facebook could act as a platform to encourage progress among the CoP to develop effective communication and collaboration. By engaging the PSTs as a CoP on Facebook, would provide the connections with their peers, to engage them with the sharing of CTIs during the practicum.

Sharing the PSTs CTIs with other PSTs who are experiencing the same situation would help the PSTs to break out of their isolation shells during the practicum. Facebook as a source of communication and collaboration would enable effective sharing of CTIs among the TESOL PSTs as a learning community during their practicum.

1.4 Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follow:

- a) To investigate the CTIs faced by the TESOL PSTs during their practicum.
- b) To find out the consequences faced by the TESOL PSTs due to the CTIs.

- c) To examine how the Facebook enables the TESOL PSTs to address the CTIs as a Community of Practice during their practicum.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions are as follow;

- a) What are the CTIs encountered by the TESOL PSTs during their practicum?
- b) What are the consequences faced by the TESOL PSTs due to the CTIs encountered during the practicum?
- c) To what extend does the Facebook enable the PSTs to address the CTIs as a Community of Practice during their practicum?

1.6 Rationale of the Research

Practicum is the key component in a TESOL practicum. It provides the TESOL PSTs with the actual teaching and learning experience and guides the PSTs to become socialized into the profession. The task of teaching is complicated as it involves a wide range of personal characteristics, professional skills and specialized knowledge (Cole & Chan, 1987, as cited in Haliza & Koh, 2008).

Despite of these complications, the TESOL PSTs are also confronted with CTIs in their practicum (Normah et al., 2014). The CTIs faced if not identified and rectified during the practicum; would make the PSTs to proceed with the weaknesses as future TESOL teachers. There has been generally a growing cognizance of the necessity to develop and improve the PSTS practicum for productive functioning in the future.

Alkhalwaldeh (2008) claimed that teacher education studies failed to equip the PSTs with the teaching essence and related skills that are important for the

profession. In such circumstances, the practicum makes the PSTs to be apart from each other and prevents them from communicating and sharing the CTIs faced. The gap found in this issue can be bridged using a social platform as Facebook.

Facebook would enable the TESOL PSTs to share the CTIs they face in the teaching-learning process and find solutions to overcome the CTIs during the eight weeks' practicum phase. Generally, whatever CTIs faced during practicum are overlooked by the PSTs as they concentrate more on accomplishing the practicum rather than finding ways to overcome the CTIs faced.

The rationale of this research is to explore the possibilities of sharing the TESOL PSTs CTIs in the teaching and learning process during their eight weeks of practicum using Facebook. It is also to encourage the TESOL PSTs to utilize the Web 2.0 technology to improve on their teaching process as it is considered as the core component in a TESOL practicum.

Apart from that, it is also to reconstruct the role of the TESOL practicum by helping the TESOL PSTs to be professionally involved in the teaching-learning process by sharing the CTIs on Facebook and learning from their peers in that same practicum. A study by Kayri and Cakir (2015) yields that PSTs need to be connected through a popular communication means such as Facebook, so that they would be able to gain the knowledge, skills and expertise in their field. The PSTs should learn to appreciate the use of Facebook to gain guidance from their peers during the practicum.

This research is to provide the TESOL PSTs with an innovative practice using Facebook to improve the TESOL PSTs pedagogical (teaching and learning process) quality and make it be an essential part of the TESOL PSTs education

programme. Facebook as the most popular social platform allows the PSTs to share their thoughts, feelings, opinions and communicate without hesitation to others as these communications take place virtually. Apart from that, the PSTs also would be able to discuss and gain new knowledge and information related to academic contents from their peers (Nurul Farhana & Zaidatun, 2013).

It is hoped that by sharing the CTIs on Facebook with their peers from other schools during the practicum would help them to find solutions to the CTIs faced in the teaching and learning process; whereby they would adopt and adapt ideas and suggestions to enhance the quality of their teaching rather than leaving the CTIs to become fossilized without any remedies.

According to the Malaysian Education Blue Print (2013-2025), teaching is considered as an elite and prestigious profession that hires only the best 30% of graduates in Malaysia as teachers. The PSTs performance and competency during their practicum decide their career development opportunities in the teaching field.

1.7 Significance of the Study

It is expected that this research would give a new dimension in the sharing of CTIs in a TESOL Practicum using Facebook. The result of this research can be used as a guide for future TESOL PSTs during their practicum in schools to improve their teaching and learning process in the classroom context. Munoz and Towner (2009) found that pieces of evidence are there to prove that Facebook has contributed positive benefits to the teaching process during practicum.

It is significant to share the TESOL PSTs CTIs during their practicum on Facebook as their experiences on CTIs during practicum may assist their peers to improve on the teaching process and as a preparation to become future teachers

whereby the shortfalls during the TESOL practicum can be identified for future improvements. It is also essential to find out the TESOL PSTs opinions on sharing the CTIs in a TESOL practicum using Facebook and its impact on TESOL practicum. It is believed that successful practicum would promote effective teaching and the desire to become a better teacher in the future. The PSTs not only require personal skills, knowledge, community support, rules of engagement, appropriate assets, tools but also the correct network in order to develop in the teaching profession (Mtika, 2008).

As a whole, it is to investigate the sharing of CTIs in a TESOL Practicum using Facebook so that steps could be taken to help them to overcome the CTIs before they attempt to real teaching world. Furthermore, sharing of CTIs on Facebook would enable the TESOL PSTs who are apart from their friends and lecturers to share their problems or any important teaching points to improve on or to solve upon during their practicum period. As argued by, Mtika (2008, p.32), ‘PSTs who are attempting to the world of teaching for the first time might face difficulties in finding solutions to their CTIs’.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This research cannot be generalized to all TESOL PSTs from all teaching institutions as it focuses only on University Science Malaysia TESOL PSTs. This research focuses on Sharing of CTIs in a TESOL practicum using Facebook to help the TESOL PSTs to improve on their teaching and learning process as a preparation towards better future teachers. Therefore, it cannot be generalized to other challenges faced during the practicum to all TESOL PSTS from all teaching institutions in Malaysia. Furthermore, this research focuses only on the Sharing of CTIs in a TESOL practicum using Facebook and cannot be generalized to other social networks.

1.9 Definitions of Terms

The definitions of the terms used in the study are described in this section:

1.9.1 TESOL PSTs

TESOL PSTs are the student teachers from the Educational School, University Science Malaysia who are the final year students and would be going for their practicum as it is the requirement of their Education course. They would graduate as trained English Language teachers after completing their studies and practicum in schools.

1.9.2 Critical Teaching Incidents (CTIs)

Critical incidents can be both positive and negative classroom events. For Tripp (1993) incidents happen but critical incidents are created by the way we look at a situation. To make something as a critical teaching incident is a value judgement we make, and the basis of the judgement is the significant we attach to the meaning of the incident. A critical incident is something which we interpret as a problem or a challenge in a certain context. A critical incident is any unplanned event which takes place during the class. It is something we interpret as a problem or challenge in a particular context, rather than a routine occurrence. The incident is said to be critical because it is valuable and has some meaning. In other words, incidents happen but critical incidents are created because of their importance. It could be an answer, a disturbance, a discipline problem, a funny moment, a remark, a comment etc that disrupts the teaching-learning process in the classroom. A critical incident in teaching refers to a particular occurrence that has taken place during a lesson. Teachers make it critical because they think it important and want to utilize it for future reference. They take such situations to be critical because they learn something from them. The critical teaching incident in every lesson can be utilized to create a better understanding of the teaching and learning in the classrooms.

1.9.3 Practicum

Practicum is the core component in the initial preparation of the PSTs who wish to take up teaching as their future profession. It is also considered to be the major component in any teacher education programmes as it provides the PSTs with real life experience to help them to become effective classroom teachers (Normah et al., 2014). The PSTs develop their teaching skills and start collecting experiences to enrich their professional wisdom. It is not enough to read about teaching or to observe others teach. PSTs need to practice themselves because practical knowledge and wisdom are held by the individual and cannot easily be transmitted from person to person. They need to know-how, and by connecting the skills of teaching to knowledge, through reflection, they will gradually start developing practical wisdom. It is an important stage for the PSTs to make contact with the lively world of their profession, helping them reinforce, expand and improve what they have learnt in the pedagogical institutions. The PSTs are sent to schools and guided by the university lecturers and mentor teachers. The TESOL PSTs in this research would experience a eight weeks of practicum to experience the authentic way of teaching in schools assigned to them before attempting to real world of teaching.

1.10 Summary of Chapter 1

Chapter One provided an orientation of the research by outlining the context and research background of the study. It presented the research objectives and questions that guided the study and described its purpose and focus. It highlighted further the researcher's impetus to undertake the study by presenting the rationale and significance to conduct the research. A summary of the different chapters below serves to provide an understanding of what was discussed in each chapter.

Chapter two contains the review of literature in the area of the study and the theoretical framework that framed the study. The literature reviewed focused on the PSTs' practicum, the CTIs during practicum was explored to gain an understanding of the different perspectives and examined the incidents that PSTs deem as CTIs. The role of Facebook as an education tool was explored to be adapted into the practicum to share the CTIs. It also introduces the related research on CTIs in practicum. The theoretical framework of this study was built on three learning stories; Connectivism, Social Constructivism and Community of Practice. A conceptual framework was used to show how the PSTs responded to the CTIs as they interacted in the Facebook as a CoP.

Chapter three outlines the methodological processes of the study. This study adopts a qualitative mode with phenomenological approach as it is the most appropriate to explore the PSTs CTIs' experience during practicum. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the research participants. Three types of instruments; Facebook artefact, reflective journal and structured online interview were used as multiple approaches allow multiple perspectives and meanings to emerge. Multiple methods and theories were used to ensure the trustworthiness and increase the understanding of the research process.

Chapter four represents the data analysis of the study. The data from Facebook artefact, reflective journals and structured online interview were analyzed to answer the research questions. The analysis process was guided by the research questions, theoretical framework and literature CTIs in practicum. For the purpose of analysis, the CTI were organized into themes that addressed how the PSTs responded to the CTIs, the consequences of the CTIs and how they were addressed as a CoP. The participants' responses reflected their feelings and emotions as they get engaged with the CTIs in practicum.

Chapter five being the final chapter provides an exposition of the key findings of the study and the emerging insights that contributed to the thesis of the study. The study limitations, contributions of the study and its implications comprised the concluding components and direction for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with the research framework of the study, followed by the discussion of multiple concepts that serve as the backbone of the study in a conceptual, theoretical and empirical way. Prior research conducted on the concept and issues raised on the CTIs in practicum are also discussed here. It presents the related literature on teaching practicum, CTIs in practicum, technologies utilized in practicum, reflections in practicum, conceptual framework of the research and related past research on practicum, use of Facebook in practicum and theories that underpin the research done on sharing of CTIs in a TESOL practicum using Facebook.

2.2 Practicum for Teachers' Training

Practicum is the core element of teacher education that provides the PSTs with the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired into action. Teacher training institutions worldwide, including Malaysia, are under pressure in preparing their PSTs for the real world of teaching. Practicum provides an avenue for this expectation to be achieved. Dweikat (2013) states that, only teachers who are competent and have faith in their roles would be able to contribute to the improvement of the nation and future generation. The PSTs need to be equipped with the knowledge, relevant educational experiences, a range of skills and positive attitudes so that they would be able to play their roles successfully and cope up with the challenges of the globalized world.

Celik (2008) claims that practicum is essential in teacher education as it contributes to the development of the PSTs before they attempt to the actual teaching profession. Noeline (2014) agrees that practicum allows the PSTs to apply the knowledge learnt into the real teaching process in schools. It stands as a yardstick for the PSTs to evaluate and reflect on their strength and weakness in planning lessons, lesson delivery, preparing teaching aids, managing classrooms and other aspects that lead to effective teaching and learning (Komba & Kira, 2013).

Hamaidi et al. (2014) also find that it is only during the practicum, the PSTs would learn to teach with the guidance of the mentor teacher and their university supervisor. During the practicum, the PSTs not only involved with aspects inside the classrooms but also outside the classrooms. This is the opportunity for them to apply the theories into practice. Yet, it is found that they are struggling, losing patience and working hard to conduct effective teaching learning process in the practicum.

2.2.1 Role of practicum

Teacher education strives to develop PSTs who are capable of handling the challenges of 21st century classrooms. It aims to develop the knowledge and skills of the PSTs as a preparation to conduct effective teaching in schools. Due to that, teacher education is coupled with a vital component called practicum. Practicum enables the PSTs to get the opportunity to learn and understand a teachers' role better. Tuli and File (2009) claimed that these experiences are essential in molding the PSTs to confront the actual teaching environment.

Practicum is the core component in teaching preparation that provides the PSTs with initial teaching experience. It prepares the PSTs to face the classroom realities. Practicum offers an authentic context for the PSTs to practice their skills,

knowledge to improve their teaching competencies. It is clear that the primary role of practicum is to give a chance to the PSTs to prepare themselves as future teachers (Merc, 2010). Tuli and File (2009) also agreed that practicum provides PSTs with the skills, which is essential in teacher education.

A good quality practicum in PSTs teacher education programmes emphasizes on preparing quality teaching professionals. Practicum allows the PSTs to embrace the responsibilities of a teacher in a classroom. PSTs confront the students as they are and turn the theories learned into practice. It offers the PSTs an opportunity to gain experiences by participating, observing, sharing and teaching under the guidance of more experienced teachers (Nakpodia, 2011).

According to Eyers (2004) a high quality practicum bridges the theory with the professional practice and develops the PSTs knowledge and pedagogical skills. PSTs would be able to gain teaching experiences with a variety of students in different contexts. It also enables the PSTs to evaluate the role of practicum, its purposes, their performances and expectations during practicum as it encourages motivation and involves continuous evaluation and flexibility.

Mensah (2004) states that practicum must have in-built flexibility in teacher education to enable the PSTs who experienced it would be able to meet the future demands. In any teacher education, the structure of a practicum decides the role of a practicum. Practicum strengthens the development of teaching competencies and enables self-reflection among the PSTs. It promotes sharing and encourages teamwork to form the Community of Practice to enhance collaboration and promote successful learning.

Practicum establishes student teacher relationship between PSTs and their students and provides an avenue to evaluate their potentials as teachers. In other hand, practicum provides experience to overcome discipline problems and classroom management issues. It enhances the creation of new ideas, knowledge and positive attitudes about teaching and develops the techniques, skills and methods of teaching. It also acts as a yard stick for the PSTs to self-evaluate and discover their strength and weakness to provide constructive critics to develop their teaching skills (Akhbar, 2002, as cited in Gujjar et al., 2011).

2.3 Reflection in Practicum

Reflection is known as the key to learning as it allows us to rethink and analyze our experiences, correct our mistakes, continue with our success and use the new knowledge to modify our experience. Reflection is widely acknowledged as it enables learning by understanding the situations and through changing ideas. It reveals the problems and issues found in teaching and leads towards development of new ideas to plan a better learning process. It also encourages analyzing issues from different angles to promote better understanding of the issue, its assumptions, values and perspectives (Priya et al., 2017). It is essential for professional development and crucial to a successful teaching process.

Reflection is emphasized in practicum as it motivates the PSTs to gain knowledge about their professionalism through their experience. Lucas (2012) regarded reflection as a highly valued learning tool for the PSTs during their practicum. Reflection makes teaching to become a rewarding experience as it helps the PSTs to be aware of their teaching process. If they fail to reflect, then they would be teaching in the dark without realizing whether it is effective or need to be modified. It involves the process of planning, practicing, assessing and re-planning

teaching (Brooke, 2014). According to Black and Plowright (2010), reflection creates an understanding of the practicum and develops the PSTs professional knowledge.

Hindman and Stronge (2009) state that, reflection enhances professional development which begins in the classrooms as it acts as a facet for the PSTs to critically examine themselves. It guides the PSTs to analyze their experiences, interrogate the issues/problems and find solutions to solve the problems. Apart from that, reflection helps in altering lessons to solve the unplanned incidents and reflecting on the lessons again.

Friesen and Kristjanson (2007) find reflection can critically analyze the PSTs experiences to improve their professional practice as future teachers. Reflection helps to develop their teaching framework. Ajani-Makam (2015) defines reflection as a constructive critic; it is the evaluation of CTIs that contributes to professional development that enables to analyze the PSTs strengths and development that enables them to continuously change and improve their practicum. In teaching, reflection is a tool to understand the teaching reality, values and beliefs (Lee, 2005).

Due to the importance of reflection in practicum, paper journaling was emphasized during the teaching practice for the PSTs (Brooke, 2014) to express their thoughts and to create dialogues; to show their understandings and beliefs. Yet, paper journaling was criticized for its limitations. The PST personal journals are often to neglect opportunities for collaborative learning, it only acts as a tool for grading and failed to provide any solutions on the CTIs they encountered in teaching.

2.3.1 Online reflection in practicum

Reflection involves the process of planning, practicing, assessing and re-planning teaching. Brooke (2014, p.58), proposes that ‘online reflections do create a great impact to PSTs reflective practice capabilities’ during the practicum. Shoffner (2009) also supports the integration of technology in reflection as it enables the PSTs to widen their perception and develop their teaching process during practicum. The adoption of modern and innovative technologies is important to attain quality improvement in practicum in important. Cameron and Campbell (2010) and Gujjar et al. (2011) find that the quality of practicum can be enhanced using innovative technology.

Kostas et al. (2013) find that technology based community was established using email and Learning Management System; then under the Web 2.0; Blogs, WIKI, Twitter and finally Facebook was proposed as one of the means to support the PSTs during practicum. Technology opens the door for the PSTs to optimize the use of reflection and become the natives of new possibilities and awareness in the teaching dimensions (Romeo et al., 2012). Cornu et al. (2000) state that technology opened new spaces for learning to teach, new approaches to facilitate learning and new possibilities for serious pedagogical engagement in practicum.

Practicum reform or redressing the practicum using technology based groups such as Facebook for reflections would support the PSTs and enhance the quality of practicum (Kostas et al., 2013) as it allows the PSTs to have a greater sense of support and belonging through timely encouragement, advice, solutions to problems, and professional conversations (Paris et al., 2015). Technology enables the PSTs to get the opportunity to participate and establish a collaborative approach as a community of practice.

2.4 Critical Teaching Incidents (CTIs)

CTI is an incident that is not dramatic but significant as it often makes a teacher to pause and give a thought or evokes questions to her or himself. Farrell (2008) explains that CTIs could be any event that happens in the classroom and when the PSTs reflect on these CTIs, they would discover new knowledge about their teaching. CTIs are uncontrolled, unplanned and unanticipated (Woods, 1993). The CTIs may have made the PSTs to question the aspects of their beliefs, values, attitudes or behaviour about teaching and learning process.

Incidents happen all the time but it only becomes CTIs when the individuals involved attaching a particular effect to them (Joshi, 2008). Carroll et al. (2005, p.234) defines 'CTI as extreme ineffective behaviour that hinders a teacher's progress in performing a task. In a teaching setting, CTIs can be an incident that disrupts a lesson that is going particularly well and difficult to handle, demanding and involve conflict, hostility, aggression or criticism with students. It can be an answer, a disturbance, a discipline issue, a remark, a funny act etc that challenges the teaching learning process in the classrooms. Finch (2010) concludes that from a PSTs perspective CTIs occur due to students delayed reactions to lesson content or as flashes of awareness that arrive in an unexpected situation, as a consequence of or triggered by the teaching-learning process.

2.4.1 Critical Teaching Incidents in Practicum

The PSTs determines the success of any teacher institutions. They are the main focus of research related to education. This is because the quality of PSTs has a great impact on students 'achievement in school. The Education Development Plan 2006 – 2010, highlighted that the teaching quality needs to be improved in order to uplift the teaching profession (Zailani, 2013).

Teachers are responsible for the abundance of duties, the teacher preparation programmes must provide adequate training to the PSTs to assure that they are well prepared for the teaching profession. However, past research found that PSTs are not trained adequately; therefore, they are consequently experiencing CTIs in their classrooms (Al-Hiar et al., 2015). In achieving effective preparation and development during the first teaching experience, it is essential to observe the CTIs faced and solutions applied by the PSTs to overcome them (Castaneda & Garzan, 2005).

Mutlu (2014) finds that the PSTs are often found confronting many CTIs when they start their careers as teachers, which is attributed as an ineffective aspect of practicum conducted in teacher training institutions. Practicum provides the opportunity for the PSTs to be with the students in a real classroom environment, unfortunately, they encounter difficulties in getting along with the students and dealing with the CTIs occurred during their teaching. Cameron (2010) claimed that the practicum for PSTs is not on par with the requirements of 21st century education. The theories learnt in universities mismatch the reality of classrooms causing criticism on the PSTs efficacy. Therefore, if the PSTs while on practicum, are aware that they are lack of experience and in need of more knowledge, they can always learn practically from their mentor teachers (Gujjar et al., 2011).

Zailani (2013) claims that the practicum provides the PSTs with the opportunity to utilize the knowledge gained into practice and undeniably a lot of CTIs are expected to arise. Teaching is a very complex activity, therefore many unexpected and unknowns CTIs arise in practicum for the PSTs to venture. It is the nature of PST to bring their personal and professional perspectives to the classrooms but in reality practicum experience differ for each PST depending on their