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The Perceptions of Teacher Education in Relation to the Teaching Practicum

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Peter R. Lind

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the perceptions of the student teacher, the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer regarding the adequacy of the practicum for the preparation of the first year primary school teacher. Six triads, or case studies, comprising a student teacher, a visiting lecturer and an associate teacher were selected, each within a different school setting. Using grounded theory, the collected data were analysed and sorted until a conceptual framework emerged. Three key themes were identified: the emotional nature of the teaching practicum; the practicum as situated learning; and the practicum as a professional learning community.

Each member of the triad viewed the final teaching practicum as critical to teacher preparation. To a large extent understandings of the roles played by each member of the triad had been implicit rather than explicit. This study highlighted the importance and complementarities of the roles the members of the triad play. It found that student teachers often rely on the solutions provided by the associate teacher and/or the visiting lecturer, and that they lack confidence in their own ability to solve challenging classroom problems. A professional learning community requires each member of the triad to collaborate actively as a member of the teaching team and collectively reach solutions posed in the teaching of the class. Finally, the student teachers experienced difficulty in meeting the challenges of student needs, particularly in low decile schools; for some the challenges were overwhelming.

The study has implications for other initial teacher education programmes regarding practices to meaningfully bridge the gap between the classroom context and the university programme. It provides insights into the requirements for the implementation of practicum that promote a professional learning community. It challenges the assumptions teacher education providers may have about the current models of teaching practicum in which it is perceived as a site where student teachers simply practise teaching and prove their readiness to assume the mantle of a first year teacher. It contributes to the debate of the role and function of the practicum in pre-service teacher education and the need for a deeper understanding and expectation in its implementation by the university and the school, who should be viewed as professional partners in this endeavour.

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For many teachers and teacher educators, the classroom continues to be the source of rich learning and professional development. T. S. Eliot's famous lines capture the sentiment.

> We will not cease from our exploration
> And the end of our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.
> (Little Giddin: *Four Quartets*)

The search is to discover again what has been found before, and to adapt this to our current needs. It has been an interesting journey. For all the participants, I owe a particular debt of gratitude for their willingness to share their perceptions of the practicum and to help draw fresh insights from the complex, social dynamic of the primary school classroom.

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

The teaching practicum is consistently rated as a vital component of pre-service teacher education by New Zealand student teachers and teachers (Battersby & Ramsay, 1990; Dobbins, 1996; Gray & Renwick, 1998; Julian, 1998; Partington, 1997; Renwick, 2001; Renwick & Vize, 1993). Despite the importance afforded the practicum, there have been concerns about the relationship between schools and tertiary providers (Battersby & Ramsay, 1990; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Renwick & Vize, 1993; Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981).

In particular, Zeichner and Tabachnik (1981) reported the socialising impact of classroom teaching on student teachers. They described the "washout effect" of university teacher education while student teachers participated in sustained periods of teaching practicum. Traditionally, student teachers are provided with professional knowledge in their university study. They are then required to integrate the professional knowledge they learn in the university-based coursework and apply that knowledge in practice. This transfer of learning is problematic and complex, and the battle to transfer theoretical knowledge to teaching practice has remained a consistent theme in teacher education internationally and in New Zealand (Gibbs, 1995; Hargreaves, 2000; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Snook, 1992; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). This thesis examines the perceptions of the student teacher, the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer regarding the adequacy of the practicum for the preparation of the first year primary school teacher.

Background to the study

In 1998, Massey University introduced a three-year pre-service teacher education degree to prepare students to teach in New Zealand primary schools; this is the standard length of undergraduate teacher education programmes in New Zealand. The structure of the degree is built on two key strands: professional practice and educational studies, and curriculum knowledge and practice. The programme (1997) claims:

> The integration of students in education with teaching experience recognises that the purpose of the degree is to enable students to interpret their theoretical knowledge within an applied professional context. (p. 6)

Student teaching is an essential and valued component of the degree.

> Critical reflection, curriculum theory and research will be the basis for refining practices and principles of classroom organisation, planning, assessment, evaluation and management of learning and teaching within a curricula framework. (*Professional Inquiry and Practice Primary Education 36.304* paper outline)

Clearly the link between the integration of professional knowledge learned in the university-based coursework and its application in the classroom is fundamental to the degree, therefore practicum occur in each year of the degree. One of the learning outcomes for the final practicum requires that the student teachers demonstrate that they can successfully.

> Plan for, teach and evaluate the progress of a class across the curriculum areas making use of a critical analysis of relevant literature, curriculum documents and knowledge of theories of learning and teaching. (p. 19, *PIP3 Administration and Assignment Booklet*, 2000)

The final practicum is conducted over a seven-week period and the student teachers are assigned a primary school class under the supervision of an associate teacher and university lecturer, who have been selected by the practicum supervisor of the paper. These three individuals form a triad, and the associate and lecturer are required to work collaboratively to appraise the progress of the student teacher. In one sense, this

group can be viewed as a community of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) described this as "situated learning". It takes as its focus the relationship between learning and the social situations in which it occurs, that is in certain forms of social co-participation.

> It implies a highly interactive and productive role for the skills that are acquired through the learning process. The individual learner is not gaining a discrete body of abstract knowledge which s(he) will then transport and reapply in later contexts. Instead s(he) acquires the skill to perform by actually engaging in the process...(Lave & Wenger, p.14)

This notion of situated learning can be viewed as a professional learning community.

Professional Learning Community

A professional learning community is one in which a group of professionals share values and expectations about students, learning and teaching and work together to improve their practice and student success (Louis, Marks & Kruse, 1999).

The practicum requires that the student teacher, associate teacher and university lecturer work collaboratively to improve the teaching practice of the student teacher. As a professional learning community, Louis et al (1999) would maintain they must address five interrelated variables.

1. They have shared values and expectations of teaching children.
2. They have a collective focus on student learning.
3. They collaborate in the development of skills related to the implementation of professional practice.
4. They de-privatise practice by team teaching and peer coaching through structured classroom observations.
5. They engage in reflective dialogue via in-depth conversations about teaching and learning.

Research Questions

The focus of the study is to examine the perceptions of teacher education in relation to the practicum of six triads, (each consisting of a student teacher, an associate teacher and a university lecturer). It aims to answer three main questions.

1. How does each member of the triad of the final teaching practicum perceive his/her role in preparing the selected student teachers for their first year of teaching?
2. What factors are seen as contributing to or detracting from the selected student teachers' capacity to operate as members of a professional learning community during their final practicum?
3. Can a set of themes be identified that relate to a theoretical framework that explains the way each triad functioned and prepared the student teachers for their first year of teaching?

Research Approach

This is a case study of the third year primary pre-service teaching practicum. As Yin (1994) suggests, a case study may have smaller sub-cases embedded within the study. In this research, there are six such groupings, each within a different school setting and focused on three key participants: the student teacher, the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher. Using grounded theory, the collected data are analysed and sorted until a conceptual framework emerges. "Theory [is] derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process ... Grounded theories because they are drawn from the data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12).

For this study, the procedures advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) has been adopted. They advocate three key steps in developing grounded theory. The first step is to describe an event from the perspective of the participant. In the case of this study, the term "perceptions" has been used. In describing the events of the practicum, the participant has told a story, highlighting the aspects that he or she has seen as important or unimportant. The second step is to organise the data "according to their properties and dimensions and then using description to elucidate these categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 19). Strauss and Corbin (1998) see this as "conceptual ordering" and it is a necessary precursor to the final step, which is "theorizing". They define theory as:

> a set of well-developed categories (e.g., themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, nursing, or other phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 22).

The process of analysis is described as coding the data. The purpose of coding is to make sense of the data by simplifying it and focusing on specific characteristics of the data (Morse and Richards, 2002). From these patterns, key abstractions or themes emerge as the research seeks to identify meaning from the data. These themes then provide the categories against which the practicum can be analysed as a social system to promote a professional learning community.

The Potential Significance of the Study

The current research describes the teaching practicum from the perspective of the student teacher, the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer. It examines the practicum as a social system and the extent to which the practicum is functioning according to the principles of a professional learning community. It is anticipated that the identification of perceptions that promote or detract from a professional learning

community could be used to guide the necessary model(s) for future teaching practicum to promote best practices for associate teachers and visiting lecturers. The research will also identify perceived barriers and potential solutions to bridge the theory-practice gap that remains a perennial concern for teacher educators.

Organization of Chapters

The thesis is organised into seven chapters. The first chapter outlines the purpose and research questions of the study. Chapter two details related research and a review of the literature pertaining to the practicum from international and, particularly, New Zealand studies. In chapter three, the theoretical framework of the study and the ethical considerations that underpin qualitative research such as this are outlined.

The methodology chosen for the study and the procedures for conducting the research have been detailed in chapter four. This includes the process of selecting the sample and the decisions by which the final participants were identified. Also included was the process for conducting the interviews and the reflexive nature of the process outlined. The process of analysis is described as coding the data. The purpose of coding is to make sense of the data by simplifying it and focusing on specific characteristics of the data (Morse and Richards, 2002). From these patterns, key abstractions or themes emerge as the research seeks to identify meaning from the data. These themes then provide the categories against which the practicum can be analysed as a social system to promote a professional learning community. In chapter five, the results of this data analysis are detailed and, in chapter six, the findings are presented for each of the key themes identified in the study.

Finally, chapter seven responses to the research questions are re-examined. Findings are critiqued within the context of the existing literature as well as with regard to issues

raised that could be addressed through future research. Limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations made for consideration in the design of teaching practice that is supported by the findings of this study.

CHAPTER TWO: Review of the Literature

Teacher education has not had a high profile in international educational research (Goodlad, 2002). Zeichner (1999) argues that teacher education research has a chequered history reflective of "the marginal status of the activity of teacher education in colleges and universities around the world" (p.7). Not unlike developments in other areas, teacher education research over the past few decades has evolved through a number of research paradigms (Shulman, 2002; Zeichner, 1999). What is noticeable, however, is the extent to which the history of this research reveals lack of clarity and concensus regarding core strategy and purpose of teacher education as the research paradigm employed is associated with shifts in focus and emphasis. This review highlights these shifts and concludes with recent research emphasising the need for teacher educators themselves to articulate what matters in teacher education (Loughran, 2001).

Early Positivist Research

In the 1970s, hundreds of studies were reported using a process-product approach that focused on assessing the performance of discrete teaching behaviours and their impact on student learning (Goodlad, 2002). The latter was most often measured by standardised achievement tests, which emphasised the links between distinctive features of teaching and student learning revealed by quantitative research methodologies (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986; Zeichner, 1999). In their review of 93 empirical research studies on learning to teach, Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1998) identified this form of research as representative of the positivist tradition. That is,

> the university provides the theory, skills and knowledge about teaching through coursework; the school provides the field setting where such knowledge is applied and practiced; and the beginning teacher provides the individual effort that integrates it all. (p.133)

In other words, a clear gap exists between theory and practice, or the school and the university. The gap needs to be bridged by the student teacher.

The Shift to Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Shulman and colleagues (2002) at the Institute of Research on Teaching (IRT) sought to shift attention from "simple models of stimulus and response to more complex and subtle models involving context, content, and cognition" (p.250). Their research in the early 1980s, focused on the content knowledge of teachers and the way they transformed their knowledge into representations that made sense to their students. Shulman (1986, 1987) and his colleagues described key criteria of teacher knowledge. These were: knowledge of content, pedagogy, curriculum, learners, contexts; pedagogical content knowledge; and knowledge of educational philosophy, goals and objectives. In particular, they focused on the "pedagogical content knowledge" of teachers. Initially this research did not document links between teacher knowledge and student achievement, however, by the early 1990s, there was a shift to a focus on student outcomes.

> This work built directly on the earlier teacher knowledge research…It represented teaching as resting on deep content knowledge as the basis for transforming teacher understanding into pedagogical representation, on the ability to reflect on and learn from one's own teaching experiences, and on the assumption of subject-specific pedagogy. (Shulman, 2002, p.251)

It was argued that teachers needed to demonstrate this pedagogical content knowledge in the context of their own classrooms whenever possible. This resulted in the development of assessment models based on authentic evaluations such as those using classroom-teaching portfolios. The assessment models were always based on the

thinking and actions of accomplished teachers and were termed "wisdom-in-practice". A central question remained: what difference do teachers make to the learning of their students? A comprehensive validation study (Bond, Smith, Baker, & Hattie, 2000) using independent evaluators demonstrated positive links between the Board assessment of the teachers and their students' academic achievement. As Hattie (2002) reports, teachers accounted for 30 percent of the variance in student achievement when other effects such as the student's home background, his or her school, peers, and the leadership of the school were considered. Teachers were second only to the attributes the students themselves brought to the learning situation. "It is what teachers know, do, and care about which is very powerful in the learning equation" (Hattie, 2002, p.6).

Shulman and his colleagues were not the only ones to challenge the behavioural paradigm of the 1970s studies. Lanier and Little (1986) argued that:

> the study of social entities such as teacher education is apt to be advanced least by adherence to the classic natural science modes of inquiry. Meaningful isolation and control of variables in complex social affairs is rarely, if ever, possible and is not recognized, therefore, as a particularly fruitful line of contemporary inquiry in teacher education. (p. 528)

What student teachers actually experienced in their teacher education programmes and how they interpreted and gave meaning to those experiences remained largely a mystery. New research paradigms were necessary and scholars from sociology and anthropology began to take an interest in teacher education (Doyle, 1990).

Qualitative Research on Teacher Education

From the 1980s, qualitative methodologies have dominated teacher education research (Lee & Yarger, 1996). Corrigan and Haberman (1990) consider the identification of the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts in teacher education as critical

and a major task for the researcher. Since the 1980s, teacher education research has looked beyond teacher education programmes and their content to examine changes in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that result from the interaction of student teachers with a teacher education programme (Carter, 1990; Richardson, 1990). Wideen et al (1998) termed these research studies "social critique".

> This tradition is characterized by a recognition that research must view the traditional structures of learning to teach as problematic and at times dysfunctional. (p.133)

Arising from some ideas addressed within post-modern discourse, narrative inquiry is a recent development in teacher education research. It addresses issues of power and voice. Teachers' stories told to other teachers can inform best practice and build a practical knowledge base. Furthermore, narratives of teaching and teachers can communicate easily with the public (Barone, 1992). These approaches have been fuelled by the concern that teachers rarely locate and translate research-based knowledge to inform their practice (Richardson & Placier, 2001). This may be because teachers seek knowledge in a different form than that produced by educational researchers (Huberman, 1985; Leinhardt, 1990). Hiebert, Gallimore and Stigler (2002) state:

> We recognise the inherent difficulties of translating traditional research knowledge into forms teachers can use to improve their practice, and we recognise the value of teachers' craft knowledge. We now ask whether it is possible to build this personal craft knowledge into a trustworthy knowledge base that can be accessed and shared widely in the profession. (p. 3)

A significant step towards achieving this goal has been the development of self-study as a research approach. Self study was highlighted by Munby and Russell (1994), who discussed "the authority of experience".

> We use the term *authority of experience* because of our concern that students never master learning from experience during pre-service programs in a way that gives them direct access to the nature of the authority of experience. If Schon is correct that there is a knowledge-in-action that cannot be fully

> expressed in propositions and that learning from experience has its own epistemology, then our concern is that learning from experience is never clearly contrasted with learning that can be expressed and conveyed in propositions. (1994, p. 92)

Self-study builds on action-research methodology and involves disciplined, systematic inquiry into one's own teaching practice. This has provided the opportunity for teacher educators to articulate what they believe matters in teacher education (Berry & Loughran, 2000).

Theory-Practice Gap

There has been a growing disquiet that teacher education programmes do not adequately prepare student teachers for the complexity of the classroom-teaching role and remains a key challenge for pre-service teacher educators (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Reynolds, 1995). Snook (1992) argues that there are two basic models of teacher education.

> The first sees teaching as a practical craft centred on classrooms and the meeting of children's needs ... the model is limited and is quite inappropriate ... The second sees teaching as a learned profession. Its practitioners have a broad grasp of schooling in its social, historical and political context. They are able to provide expert advice on the theory of education and education policy. Their approach to teaching is informed and critical. Their methods are based on the best research available although they know very well the limitations of this research. They are highly educated in the content they teach. They understand the nature of the various disciplines and their limitations. (p.5)

However, as has already been noted, teachers rarely locate and translate research-based knowledge to inform their practice (Richardson & Placier, 2001) and student teachers are quickly socialised into the practice of the school. Zeichner and Tabachnik (1981) reported the socialising impact of classroom teaching on student teachers. They described the "washout effect" of university teacher education while student teachers participated in sustained periods of teaching practicum. Traditionally, student

teachers are provided with professional knowledge in their university study. They are then required to integrate the professional knowledge they learn in the university-based coursework and apply that knowledge in practice. This is a deductive approach and the transfer of learning is problematic and complex (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). For a start student teachers need to abstract principles and theories and apply these in the specific teaching context of the practicum. They are required to bridge two different cultures, that of the university classroom versus that of the school. In the school, teachers focus on knowledge that is concrete and specific to a particular context and group of learners. In contrast, the university emphasises the identification of patterns of behaviour and knowledge that is more generalizable and hence theoretically applicable in different contexts.

Korthagen and Kessels (1999) have argued that "traditional" approaches to teacher education have been inadequate in their conception. They argue that teaching needs to be viewed through the eyes of the student teacher. Their "Realistic Teacher Education Program" starts with the

> real problems encountered by student teachers during field experiences. The student teacher would then develop his or her own knowledge in a process of reflection on the practical situations in which a personal need for learning was created...the emphasis shifts towards inquiry-oriented activities, interaction amongst learners, and the development of reflective skills... (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p.7).

Further, they argue that this type of discussion has focused on "the question of whether teacher education should start with theory or practice instead of the more important question of how to integrate the two in such a way that it leads to integration within the teacher" (p.4). They contend that there should be no division between theory and practice. Rather that all theorising is embedded within practice, and that any practice is underlain with theory. According to Munby and Russell (1998), an epistemology of practice requires attending to the nature of experiential

knowledge and how it is acquired. To learn to teach means grounding the process of knowledge acquisition directly to classroom practice (Carter, 1990). Schon (1983) was the first to highlight the need to examine the link between teachers' knowledge and their actions:

> When we go about the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life, we show ourselves to be knowledgeable in a special way...Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action. (p.49)

A growing number of researchers have sought to identify the practical knowledge of teachers (Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler, 2002; Meijer, Van Driel & Verloop, 2002). Teachers often express and exchange their knowledge in the narrative mode of anecdotes and stories (Munby, Russell & Martin, 2001). Encouraging teachers to articulate their classroom experiences and the processes by which they make decisions enables their practical knowledge to be examined and shared publicly. This can help to shape approaches in teacher education. In translating this to pre-service teacher education, Korthagen (2001) argues that learning needs to be constructed from practicum experiences faced by student teachers that can be later reconstructed through discussion amongst peers.

Teachers' Practical Knowledge

Early researchers in this area held that teachers possessed a unique body of knowledge that informed their practice (Elbaz, 1983; Clandinin & Connelly, 1985, 1990). Using narrative methodologies, teachers' "voices" could be heard. Schon (1983) argued that teachers' knowledge was evidenced in their actions and that this knowledge is acquired through reflection on their teaching practice. Polyani (1967) had used the term "tacit knowing" to describe knowledge that is implicit and which

cannot be easily articulated by practitioners. Schon (1983) used the term "knowing-in action" to describe this tacit knowledge. Through experience tasks can become routine and automated, and can be dealt with quickly and efficiently. In examining this phenomenon, Schmidt and Boshuizen (1993) coined the term "knowledge encapsulation" to describe the process by which experienced practitioners were able to multi-task efficiently and work to solve work-place dilemmas and challenges. They also recognised that these teachers had a depth of knowledge that was not always explicit.

> Encapsulated knowledge...can be called up immediately in elaborated form...A clear illustration is one of a teacher who characterises a specific student as a "good student" in his or her subject. For the teacher, the concept of a "good student" is very meaningful, and incorporates a number of characteristics of the particular student, the specific subject matter, the prerequisites for the subject and so forth. Although it seems this knowledge is "tacit", it is not far-fetched to state that the teacher can call up this elaborated knowledge should the situation require this, or when he or she is asked to do so (Meijer, p.15, 1999)

Therefore, teachers' practical knowledge underlies their actions and practice (Carter, 1990).

Leinhardt (1988) stated that knowledge is best understood in the context in which it is produced and developed the term "situated knowledge", which she defined as "contextually developed knowledge that is accessed and used in a way that tends to make use of characteristic features of the environment as solution tools" (p.146). Grimmett and MacKinnon (1992) preferred the term "craft knowledge" and saw it as essentially teachers' accumulated wisdom:

> ...a particular form of morally appropriate and sensible know-how that is constructed by teachers...in the context of their lived experiences and work around issues of content-related and learner-focused pedagogy. (p.369)

Meijer (1999) has summarised the characteristics of teachers' practical knowledge from the current literature and research in this area. These characteristics are:

- It is personal, which means that each teacher's practical knowledge is to some extent unique;
- It is contextual, meaning that it is defined in, and adapted to, the classroom situation;
- It is based on (reflection on) experience, indicating that it originates in, and develops through experiences in teaching;
- It is mainly tacit, indicating that teachers often are not used to articulating their knowledge;
- It underlies practice;
- It is content-related, meaning that it is connected with the subject that is taught. (p.19)

Shulman's (1987) work on teacher knowledge informs the debate on the nature of teachers' practical knowledge, particularly his definition of "pedagogical content knowledge" which Borko and Putnam (1996) argue is unique to the teaching profession. Although some researchers have argued that pedagogical content knowledge is grounded in educational disciplines, whereas practical knowledge is seen as grounded in personal beliefs and contextual constraints, Meijer (1999) argues that "pedagogical content knowledge is also personal and its application context-dependent" (p.19).

Critics of this approach to research issue several warnings. Nuthall (2002) argues that teaching should focus on the relationship between teaching and learning, rather than research on teachers themselves and the ways teachers experience and think about teaching because "the practice of teaching remains a cultural ritual, largely uninformed by any body of established research-based knowledge" (p.44). Verloop and Wubbels (1994) caution that narrative research risks becoming nothing more than a collection of accumulated personal stories that cannot be related to each other. Further, there is no general agreement about what constitutes a knowledge base of teaching (Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler, 2002; Meijer, 1999; Nuthall, 2002). In order to achieve this, teachers must share ideas publicly so, firstly, they can be discussed, verified, refuted or modified by colleagues, and, secondly, that it is

accumulated and recorded as a public record (Snow, 2001; Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler, 2002). Teachers' practical knowledge or professional knowledge would most usefully be represented as theories with examples (Yinger, 1999). Theories transcend particular classrooms and contexts. On the other hand, examples keep theories grounded in practice (Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler, 2002).

Teachers' Knowledge at Different Stages of Development

Veenam's (1984) review about the perceived problems of beginning teachers highlights the dramatic and sometimes traumatic transition from being a student teacher to that of a classroom teacher. This transition has variously been called the "reality shock" where invariably "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life" hit the beginning teacher (Veenman, 1984). Comparable findings were reported by Cole and Knowles (1993) and Renwick (2001) that point out significant problems teachers experience once they have left pre-service teacher education. Muller-Fohrbrodt and colleagues (1978) at Konstantz University, Germany, identified a distinct attitude shift that occurs for beginning teachers in their first year of teaching. In general, they adjust to current practices in schools and not to recent scientific insights into learning and teaching. In other words, they become socialised into the school culture. This research is supported by the findings of American colleagues.

> It has now become commonly accepted within the teacher education community that students become increasingly more progressive and liberal in their attitudes towards education during their stay at university and then shift to opposing and more traditional views as they move into student teaching and in-service experience (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981, 1981, p.7)

Beginning teachers are initially strongly influenced by the culture of the school. This may be because teaching has not always been viewed as "an emotional practice" by educational researchers (Hargreaves, 2000).

The Emotional Development of the Teacher

Gibbs (2000) argues that effective teachers require several key attributes.

> Teachers need to be able to survive the demands, threats, challenges and circumstances of teaching. This is particularly true (but obviously not exclusively) true of beginning teachers...Teachers need to have the capacity to be resilient and to persist...Teachers need to have the capacity for innovativeness, and a preparedness to generate new solutions, take on new teaching approaches and be willing to risk failure. (p.2)

Teacher self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of exercising personal control over one's behaviour, thinking and emotions (Bandura, 1982). Teachers who have high self-efficacy tend to persist in failure situations, use innovative teaching approaches, get better gains in children's achievement and have more motivated students (Brookover et al, 1978; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Guskey, 1988).

For pre-service student teachers, self-efficacy can be enhanced: firstly, by ensuring they experience success particularly with pupils' challenging behaviours; secondly, they receive genuine encouragement that they are capable of dealing with difficult problems; thirdly, by observing other teachers deal with difficult situations they receive vicarious experience; fourthly, the perceived authenticity of teaching tasks provides emotional arousal (Gibbs & Aitken, 1996).

Hargreaves (1998) argues that emotional arousal is an important aspect of teaching. The situations that student teachers are confronted with during their practicum elicit a lot of feelings (for example, feelings of fear), concerns, and value conflicts. They cannot be dealt with only at the rational, logical, cognitive level (Korthagen, 2001).

> Emotions are at the heart of teaching. Good teaching is charged with positive emotion ...Good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy. (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835)

Adherents of the narrative tradition of inquiry in studying teaching have similarly emphasized how emotional qualities such as intuition and a caring disposition form an important part of teachers' personal and practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Elbaz, 1991).

Hargreaves (1998) examined aspects of the emotions of teaching and educational change among 32 grade seven and eight teachers in four school boards close to the city of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He concluded:

> Teaching cannot be reduced to technical competence or clinical standards. It involves significant emotional understanding and emotional labour as well. It is an emotional practice. The teachers in our study valued the purposes of educating their students as emotional and social beings as well as intellectual ones. (p. 850)

Tickle (1991) examined the experience of five beginning teachers over a period of one year through reflective journals and interviews. He noted that:

> Throughout these reflective explorations of academic and professional matters, the emotional explorations by the teachers were as prominent as the plethora of detail relating to 'technical' and 'clinical' competencies...The emotional explorations were directly related to the experience of being "halfway there" as learner teachers, and to "going through it" as they acquired what they saw as the necessary experience to emerge from novicehood... that managing one's emotional self was an intrinsic part of managing the pupils' learning... and the idea was succinctly expressed by Debbie:
> "I think you learn to cope with your own emotions, as well. You learn to deal with those things that caused emotional upheaval to start with." (p. 321)

Hargreaves (2000) points to the disturbing neglect of the emotional dimensions in the increasingly rationalized world of educational reform. Woods and Jeffrey (1996) claim creative primary teachers:

> Work affectively to be more effective in the learning situation. They generate relationships that feature excitement, interest, enthusiasm,

> inquiry... discovery, risk-taking and fun ... The cognitive 'scaffolding' is held together with emotional bonds. (p. 71)

Similarly, Harvey and Evans (2003) report that New Zealand primary school teachers who are sensitive to the emotional needs of their classes are rated highly by their pupils.

> Students felt they could connect with and communicate their feelings with teachers when teachers took time to talk, stopped whatever activities they were doing to attend and actively listen, shared about themselves with students, displayed a congenial mood, and expressed positive regard and interest but not excessively offering advice (Harvey & Evans, 2003, p.10).

This research reveals that teachers' practical knowledge emerges and develops with experience. Teacher education programmes may not have fully appreciated that they are preparing teachers in their early stage of teaching and, therefore, before teachers will have the confidence to utilise theoretical knowledge to best advantage. It also highlights the importance of the emotional development of the student teacher. The practicum is not simply a "technical, rational" experience, but an intensely emotional one.

New Zealand Context

McGee (1999) observed that most of the research on initial teacher education in New Zealand has been characterised as "a lot of small-scale 'one shot' studies by individuals, some team research and development work through contracts" (p.85). It had endured as the domain of single purpose institutions controlled by central government agencies for decades beyond the shift to being part of universities that occurred in the United States and Britain. Pre-service teacher education had been based in six colleges of education, and Alcorn (1999) observes "New Zealand teacher education, while it has been the subject of numerous policy reports, has followed a relatively homogenous and straightforward track for the last 50 years" (p.74).

Primary-school student teachers had much of their practicum experience in specially designated "normal" or "model" schools of which there were thirty throughout New Zealand. The normal schools received funding, buildings and additional staffing allocations in order to attract high-calibre teachers with a specific role in teacher education. These institutions established a close relationship, and staff members from the normal schools were often employed to teach in the college of education programmes (Julian, 1998).

However, the 1990s heralded significant changes in New Zealand education. The Picot Report (1988) resulted in legislation that meant schools became governed by boards of trustees, who were elected by the parents of the school pupils. Two government authorities were established. The Education Review Office (ERO) was established to audit schools and teachers, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) was established to design and monitor a framework for all qualifications in the post-compulsory sector. This resulted in massive change for the tertiary sector. Universities no longer had a monopoly as degree conferring institutions. By 1993, primary school rolls were increasing rapidly and the New Zealand Government was encouraging competition among tertiary providers to meet the shortage of teachers. The current government also believed that market forces would raise the quality of teacher education (Codd, 1998). Ramsay and Hodder (1997) identified 26 providers operating out of 50 different sites. In line with the growth in the number of providers has been the growth in the range of programmes. Prior to 1997, graduates of a college of education completed a three-year diploma of teaching course or a four-year conjoint Diploma of Teaching/Bachelor of Education degree. Some students were able to select a shortened two-year option through the recognition of prior tertiary study that was assessed as being related to teaching. By

1997, students entering a pre-service primary teacher education programme could select from a three-year bachelors degree (which included a teaching qualification), a three-year bilingual programme and a one-year graduate diploma. There were a variety of delivery modes including growth in the development of teacher education via the Internet. Julian (1998) notes that the dramatic increase in the number of providers has raised issues about the quality of the teaching practicum experienced by some student teachers, which prompted the Teacher Registration Board (1997) to prepare detailed guidelines. These are summarised by the statement:

> Teaching practice experience must be ongoing and integrated into the formal education programme to enable students to critically reflect on the theory and practice of teaching. A wide range of teaching models representing different sizes and organization of learning centres, different socio-economic environments, and different age groups should be part of the practicum. The practicum must be supervised and assessed by staff of the teacher education institution. (1997, p. 4)

Although teaching practice remains a key component of New Zealand initial teacher education and it continues to have a powerful impact on student teachers (Gibbs, 2003), the growth in the number of providers and the variety of programmes has raised questions about the quality of the practicum for New Zealand student teachers.

The Practicum

The teaching practicum is consistently rated as a vital component of pre-service teacher education by New Zealand student teachers and teachers (Battersby & Ramsey, 1990; Dobbins, 1996; Gray & Renwick, 1998; Julian, 1998; Partington, 1997; Ramsay & Hodder, 1997; Renwick, 2001; Renwick & Vize, 1993). Several New Zealand studies provide evidence of this assertion.

A large-scale longitudinal study tracked the progress of three cohorts of New Zealand student teachers through their teacher education programme and

subsequently tracked one hundred of them into their first year of teaching (Renwick & Vize, 1993). Over half the sample perceived the teaching practicum as the key event of their teacher education, and they retained this view consistently over the four years. They also perceived that their pre-service teacher education should have helped them to cope more effectively in schools than they judged it had (Renwick & Vize, 1993). Partington (1997) concluded from his study of teacher education in New Zealand that:

> Students in teacher education in all places and at all times generally regarded teaching practice as the most important part of their programmes, and all New Zealand's teacher education institutions devote considerable time and effort to ensure practicums are efficient. While there are many reciprocal complaints between the three parties to the practicums (student teachers, associate teachers in the school, and the visiting lecturers) there are more cases when relationships are smooth. (1997, p.221)

Julian (1998) completed a study of five of the teacher education providers who began preparing student teachers after 1988 and who represented as wide a range of difference from the traditional providers as possible. Three of the sample provided a one-year graduate diploma programme. Although this was a new model for primary teacher education, it was not new for secondary education and, indeed most teacher education providers now offer this model. The other two private providers offered three-year programmes focusing on the special characteristics of the institution. That is, one offered a particular emphasis on Christian teacher education, and the other based its programme on tikanga Maori. Using telephone interviews, Julian (1998) surveyed the practicum coordinators of each institution and the teaching practice coordinators of five schools nominated by each of the providers. The results of the study identified that those providers who had established a close relationship with the school (that included the planning of the practicum and the assessment of the student teachers) were rated highly by the school. In the cases where this close working relationship was not established, schools suspected that the motivation of these new

providers might be simply to attract government funding. However, Julian (1998) noted that the majority of the providers in the study had worked effectively with the schools and had developed new practices in the area of the practicum. Some providers had established innovative ways of supervising student teachers on the practicum. One provider employed selected teachers to contribute 50 per cent of the student teacher's course work and to assess the student on the practicum. To do this work, the mentor teachers were released from their classes and also given a fees exemption for post-graduate study in teacher education.

In 2001, Te Puni Kokiri conducted an audit on "the extent to which pre-service teacher trainers equip their students to teach Maori pupils effectively" (p.7). This report recommended "teacher training providers acknowledge the changing demographics of the New Zealand classroom and equip graduates with the skills to teach Maori pupils more effectively" (Te Puni Kokiri, 2001, p.7). This reinforces the need for student teachers to be provided with a range of culturally and economically diverse classroom experiences. Korthagen (2001) argues that student teachers should later reconstruct these practicum experiences through discussion amongst peers. By encouraging student teachers to articulate their classroom experiences and the processes by which decisions were made, they are able to examine their practical knowledge share publicly. This can help to shape future teaching experiences.

The Triad

Despite the importance afforded the practicum, there have been concerns about the relationship between schools and tertiary providers. In 1986, the Department of Education commissioned a comprehensive study "to ascertain the policies, practices and problems of in-school training for Division A [three-year primary] student

teachers at each of the six colleges of education" (Battersby & Ramsay, 1990, p.19). Using a case study methodology, they completed the data-gathering phase by the end of 1987. This involved interviews, surveys and the collation of documentary information such as annual reports from each of the colleges. The colleges were given regular feedback from the researchers, and a preliminary report was furbished for each of the participating colleges to allow them to provide comment and feedback on the research findings. The researchers noted that there were marked similarities between each of the colleges. In particular, they noted that the colleges believed that the practicum was important to relate the theory taught in the college courses to effective classroom practice. All of the colleges ensured that the student teachers had a wide-range of school experiences, which involved "the location of the school (eg. rural and urban), the type of school (eg. three-teacher, integrated) and the ages of the pupils were also taken into consideration" (Battersby & Ramsay, 1990, p.21). Not only did the colleges require that student teachers completed a minimum number of hours in schools, it was also common experience to structure the progression of teaching tasks from small group activities to whole class teaching which culminated in sustained periods of class control in the final practicum. Each student teacher was expected to have teaching practice in all areas of the New Zealand school curriculum and, significantly, all college lecturers were expected to assess student teachers on practicum. There was evidence that the colleges administered the practicum effectively and forged strong links with schools, particularly the "normal" schools.

However, there was a climate of criticism amongst the practicum triad: the associate teacher, the college lecturer and the student teacher. On the one hand, teachers felt lecturers were largely out of touch with the realities of the classroom and, on the other hand, lecturers felt teachers were out of touch with current educational

theory. Meanwhile, the student teachers were critical of both lecturers and associate teachers and felt that they were caught in a theory-practice divide. Associate teachers and lecturers were generally critical of the commitment and application demonstrated by student teachers. The researchers concluded that:

> Trainees [student teachers] have developed a mind-set, which places theory in one compartment and practice in another. The structure of teachers' colleges, the patterning of school-based experiences and the nature of those experiences, the nature of the knowledge presented within teachers' college courses, and an emphasis on a non-critical and non-reflective approach to in-school training all reinforce the dichotomy between theory and practice. (Battersby & Ramsay, 1990, p.26)

By 1997, Ramsay had modified this view stating, "since that [time]...many of the providers have moved to close the gap" but it is still a persistent theme that continues to concern teacher educators (Ramsay & Hodder, 1997, p.34).

Dobbins (1996) in-depth, qualitative assessment of the final year practicum of selected student teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) at an Australian university provided further insight into the workings of the triad and the characteristics of an effective teaching practice. Using a grounded theory research model, she identified five key components of an effective practicum. Dobbins said that the practicum should focus on the classroom, school and community because it challenged the student teachers to view the social context in which educational issues need to be thought about. Secondly, she argued that both the intended and non-intended learning outcomes of the practicum should be valued as important. Both can be powerful in shaping their development as teachers and need to be valued by the university as important learning outcomes. Thirdly, opportunity for reflection needs to be provided in the school day as a critical component of active teaching. Fourthly, student teachers need to be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning by providing flexibility within the practicum for student teachers to follow their

particular learning interests. Finally, the practicum should create opportunities for collaborative learning situations, a notion supported by many teacher educators (Cochrane-Smith, 1991; Hargreaves, 2001; Loughran, 2001; Zeichner, 1992). The traditional individualistic culture of schools with teachers working on their own has been superseded by a model of collaboration and teamwork and student teachers need to be empowered and encouraged to work in this way.

The Role of the Associate Teacher and the Visiting Lecturer

Most teacher education researchers agree that the 'associate teacher' plays a key role in the development of the student teacher whilst on practicum (Beck & Kosnick, 2000; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Glickman & Bey, 1990). Sanders (2000) examined the role played by associate teachers in the practicum experience of four student teachers during a four-week practicum at a large provincial private school in New Zealand. Through observations, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, Sanders concluded that associate teachers needed systematic, professional development to fulfil their role. The experience of associate teachers that she surveyed indicated that they had not received any formalised, in-depth induction to the role of a mentor teacher. Through observation, Sanders noted that the majority of the associate teachers' interactions with the student teachers focused on planning (40%) and modelling (26%). This reinforces other research that supports the need for adequate preparation of associate or mentor teachers (Glickman & Bey, 1990; Collison & Edwards, 1996; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990).

Beck and Kosnick (2000) conducted a two-year study of the practice of a selection of the associate teachers employed by the University of Toronto to supervise their students on practicum. They found that the associates valued the opportunity to

work with student teachers, and the partnership and support they enjoyed from their university colleagues. They also noted that the associates focused on the "nuts and bolts" of teaching. Most of the associates interviewed commented that:

> they expected the campus courses to address practical topics...instruction in topics such as classroom management, special education, unit and lesson planning, assessment and evaluation, knowledge of the curriculum, how to access resources, whole-school responsibilities of teachers and how to get along with parents (Beck & Kosnick, 2000, p.214)

Researchers agree that associates focus primarily on practical knowledge (Bullough & Kauchak, 1997; Maynard, 1996).

Gibbs (1996) asserts that typically New Zealand associate teachers and visiting lecturers use supervisory models of observation and post-teaching conferences to review the progress of a student teacher. These conferences are dominated by evaluative comments of the content of the lesson. There is little emphasis given to the development of critical reflection in student teachers. Often this is because of organisational and logistical pressures, such as the available time allocated to visiting lecturers to observe several student teachers.

As previously noted, the battle to transfer theoretical knowledge to teaching practice has remained a consistent theme in teacher education internationally and in New Zealand. In their longitudinal study of New Zealand pre-service teacher education, Renwick and Vize (1993) report the issue that has perpetuated the theory-practice divide. "Some associates told students that what they were learning in college was a waste of time in the real world of the classroom" (p.92, Renwick & Vize, 1993). This perspective was supported by Fraser's (1995) survey of perceptions of teachers in six 'normal' schools who worked closely with the students and staff of the School of Education, Waikato University. She notes, "the interweaving of teachers' needs and lecturers' needs, expectations and philosophies provided the

greatest source of challenge" (p.76). The professional collaboration between the lecturer and the associate teacher has not been apparent and the student teacher has been caught between two sets of expectations: the practical world of the classroom teacher and the theoretical world of the university.

After completing two studies focusing on the shared understandings of the practicum learning outcomes between the visiting lecturers (VL) and the associate teachers (AT), Haigh and Ward (2004) report "a low level of correlation between AT and VL judgements [that] indicates that the partners may not share an understanding of the meanings of indicator statements prepared by teacher institutions" (p.138). After analysing these perceptions in more depth, they asked:

> Are the expectations and beliefs of all three partners sufficiently similar as to allow for the optimising of the PSTE [preservice teacher education] student's experience to enhance possibility-thinking and risk-taking? (p.143)

Haigh and Ward (2004) found little evidence that student teachers worked in collaborative environments in which they were encouraged to engage in reflective, risk-taking and creative teaching practice. They concluded:

> A more explicit discussion between the three partners regarding the practicum-related expectations of PSTE students, associate teachers and visiting lecturers may lead to a richer understanding of partnership roles and possible reform of the culture of the practicum. Similarly, open discussion of notions of professional agency and cultural reform may lead to a higher degree of shared understanding and expectation between the partners in this critical practicum relationship. (p.145)

Preservice teacher educators need to explore the notion of being a student teacher, an associate teacher or a visiting lecturer with their practicum partners, the schools.

Situated Learning

Howley and Spatigg (1999) argue that student teachers enter a school community that is bound together by the beliefs this community hold about the nature of teaching and

learning. They argue that "teaching" and "teacher education" are two different discourse groups. On the one hand, teacher educators generate knowledge based on research and, as a result of these findings, that teachers should promote learning practices and environments that advance students' understanding and application. On the other hand, teachers value craft knowledge and "figuring out and doing what works to ensure that children behave and learn" (Howley & Spatigg, 1999, p. 143).

Lave and Wenger (1991) noted that "learning is not merely situated in practice – as if it were some independently reliable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived world" (p. 14). Therefore becoming a teacher involves:

> the whole person; it implies not only a relation to specific activities, but a relation to social communities – it implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person. In this view, learning only partly – and often incidentally – implies becoming able to be involved in new activities, to perform new tasks and functions, to master new understanding. (p. 53)

Ovens (2003) completed a case study of the perceptions of the practicum experiences of a group of New Zealand physical education student teachers. He observed that the practicum placed the student teachers in an authentic context and allowed them to participate in the culture of the school. From this experience Ovens argues teacher educators can build powerful learning experiences for the student teacher. There are four key elements critical to this development. Firstly, student teachers need to be exposed to a range of school contexts in which different cultural, social and belief systems operate. Secondly, they need to be involved in the decision-making process required to promote learning in these classes and schools. This requires that they do not simply imitate their associate teachers but "practise and understand the decision-making that underpins the practises and actions in a particular situation" (Ovens, p.85). Thirdly, student teachers need to work in a collaborative relationship that ensures the

practicum is focused, guided and supported. Finally, the process of coaching the student teacher should result in "the tacit knowledge, assumptions and beliefs that underpin practice [are] made explicit so that they can be questioned and discussed and not left to the students to clarify and sort out for themselves" (Ovens, p.85).

In other words, the university needs to provide the opportunities for the student teacher to de-code the messages and beliefs that underpin the school classroom practice and to critically examine these ideas through the lens provided by their theoretical knowledge and insights.

Professional Learning Community

Providing a supportive learning community is important. Schools that promote a professional learning community amongst teachers enhance reflective collaboration (Newmann and associates, 1996). This is promoted through the practices of "team teaching, collaborative preparation, mentoring, multi-age teaching and conversations around student work to reflect upon pedagogies, in-built pedagogical communities and so on" (Lindgard & Mills, 2002, p.79). Student teachers need to be provided with field experiences in schools that promote professional learning communities if they are to be nurtured in an emotionally supportive environment that promotes powerful learning opportunities for them (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). This is in sharp contrast to the traditional model of the school in which classrooms operate as single-cell structures with little professional collaboration and teachers either "sink or swim" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

> A teacher professional learning community emphasises reflective collaboration amongst teachers around their pedagogies, assessment and student learning outcomes...the de-privatisation of practice [is] another central aspect of a professional teacher learning community. Structured time is built in for such conversations. (p.78, Lindgard & Mills, 2002)

Korthagen (2002) argues that teacher education needs to break away from the technical-rationality model of teacher education and the consequent dichotomy of theory and practice. The technical-rationality model focuses on the transmission of knowledge and, according to Schon (1983), it is based on the notion that "professional activity consists in instrumental problem-solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique" (p.21). Although many studies have subsequently shown the failure of this model to strongly influence the practices of graduates of teacher education, it still remains a dominant model (Renwick, 2001; Korthagen, 2002; Wideen et al, 1998). Critiques of teaching quality consistently point a finger at teacher education, implying that if only teacher education were improved, better teaching would be more common (Barone, Berliner, Blanchard, Casanova & McGowan, 1996; Gore, Griffiths & Ladwig, 2001). This political criticism in Britain has led to a significant part of teacher education being moved to schools-based training often using an apprenticeship model in which teacher development is essentially informed by practical experience and the learning of "tricks of the trade" as opposed to any reliance on a theoretical framework (Gilroy, Price, Stones & Thornton, 1994). While this apprenticeship approach may satisfy some teachers, politicians and parents, it does not guarantee success and, as has already been pointed out, may serve only to socialize student teachers into the school context (Wideen et al, 1993; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). In fact this process of socialisation can create a dislike for reflection and theoretical deepening (Cole, 1997).

The professional developing school model requires collaborative partnerships to be established between universities and schools in order to prepare student teachers. This model promotes inquiry and reflective practice as important components of the professional development of North American teachers (Bullough & Kauchak, 1997;

Darling-Hammond, 1994), and is not unlike the "normal school" function in the New Zealand context. Similar collaborative relationships have occurred in England and Wales and enabled meaningful integration of theory into practice (Furlong, Whitty, Whiting, Miles, Barton, & Barrett, 1996).

> On the one hand, these developments mirror a wish to ground teacher education more strongly within practical contexts, but on the other hand, the teacher education faculty involved try to avoid early socialisation to traditional educational patterns...This means that teacher development is increasingly conceptualised as an ongoing process of experiencing practical teaching and other educational learning situations, reflecting on them under the guidance of a more experienced colleague and developing one's own insights into teaching through the interaction between personal reflection and theoretical notions brought in by teacher educators (Korthagen, 2002, p.12).

Korthagen and Kessels (1999) argue that the nature of this theoretical knowledge needs to be clearly analysed. Traditional theory is often generalised and abstracted from the practical situation. For this reason, teachers struggle to apply this to the realities of their classrooms (Schon, 1983). Korthagen and Kessels (1999) termed this theory with a capital "T". Of more use to teachers is the knowledge gained through theory (with a small "t"), which is "particularistic and situational". Crucial to this thinking is the pivotal role of reflective practice, particularly, the critical examination of actual teaching experiences in a systematic way. Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) advocate a three-tier model of teacher development. These are summarised as:

- The *gestalt* level, when actions are typically based on unconsciously triggered needs, values, meanings, feelings and behavioural inclinations. [This is not unlike Schon's (1983) notion of tacit knowledge].
- The *schema* level involves the actor reflecting on action...and on the situation to form concepts, characteristics, and principles that are helpful in describing practice.
- The *theory* level allows the logical ordering and construction of the knowledge formed before as relationships between schema, and their connections into one coherent theory (p.373).

The purposeful design and use of the practicum can help student teachers situate theoretical learning in practice and promote critical reflection. It requires more than an

evaluative analysis of the lesson that a visiting lecturer or associate teacher had just observed. It requires reflection and analysis of the lesson that draws on the student teacher's current understanding of learners and learning theory.

Turnbull (2002) analysed the effectiveness of links between a tertiary system and an early childhood placement of six student teachers, who were on their final practicum from Auckland College of Education. Using Gidden's (1984) theory of structuration and the notion of professional agency, Turnbull sought to identify the links between the college programme and the centres in which the students were placed on practicum. Turnbull (2002) defined professional agency in this context as:

> ...that the student teacher feels capable of operating competently within the systems and structures of the practicum environment. The student teacher interacts effectively in all facets of professional practice; articulates, theorises and critically reflects upon practice; and exercises moral choice and political capacity in applying pedagogical principles based on a developing but clearly defined professional philosophy. The student teacher operates as a team member, and is free, in the main, from feelings of dominance, dependence, or compliance. (p.4)

Turnbull (2004) concluded that there was a mismatch between how the tertiary institution envisaged practices to be implemented and the way they were conducted on the practicum. She noted that:

> The students demonstrated a lack of ability...to reconstruct practice as a result of critical reflection; to utilise effective communication and advocacy skills; and to articulate a beginning philosophy of professional practice" (p.9).

Turnbull (2004) considered the key impediments to achieving system integration in the practicum were "(1) disquiet about the extent to which student teacher preparation for the practicum was addressed in the degree programme; (2) concern about inconsistency in visiting lecturer supervisory practice; (3) and an expressed need for a strong and integrated image of ECTE [Early Childhood Teacher Education]" (p.12).

In the practicum, the student teacher, associate teacher and university lecturer need to work collaboratively to improve the teaching practice of the student teacher.

According to Louis, Marks and Kruse (1996), a professional learning community is characterised by five interrelated variables:

1. In the case of the practicum, the associate teacher, visiting lecturer and student teacher have shared values and expectations of teaching children and a shared understanding of the environment in which they are working and the cultural and social forces that help shape this environment.
2. They have a collective focus on student learning in ways in which intellectual growth and development is promoted, as opposed to activities that simply engage student attention.
3. They collaborate in the development of skills related to the implementation of professional practice, and provide an environment of mutual support.
4. They de-privatise practice by team teaching and peer coaching through structured classroom observations. This requires that they build an environment in which they are able to trust one another.
5. They engage in reflective dialogue via in-depth conversations about teaching and learning.

Summary

Three models of teacher education have been identified in this chapter. Firstly, a deductive approach, in which student teachers presented with theoretical knowledge in their university study, are then expected to integrate the university-based knowledge into the practicum. The university lecturer determines what it is important to learn, on the basis of the available body of knowledge. This is a traditional approach to teacher education and one that Zeichner and Tabachnik (1981) – amongst others - identified as problematic. The transfer of learning from the university classroom to the school

classroom is complex and this transmission model fails to take into account the factors associated with bridging the two different cultures.

The second approach is an apprenticeship model, in which teacher development is essentially informed by practical experience and the learning of "tricks of the trade" as opposed to any reliance on a theoretical framework (Gilroy, Price, Stones & Thornton, 1994). In Britain, a number of tertiary providers have adopted this model and a significant component of teacher education has been moved into schools. The two approaches can be contrasted in their almost exclusive focus on either theory or practice, thus exacerbating the theory-practice divide (Korthagen, 2004).

A third approach focuses on integrating theory with practice. Korthagen (1999) developed a 'realistic' approach to teacher education that is characterised by addressing actual situations encountered by the student teacher whilst on practicum. Through reflection and interaction between peers and lecturers, solutions or theory to meet these 'real' challenges is developed. Hiebert, Gallimore and Stigler (2002) note that teachers rarely access traditional research knowledge to improve their practice. In the school, teachers focus on knowledge that is concrete and specific to a particular context and group of learners. Hiebert et al recognise the value of teachers' practical knowledge and believe "it is possible to build this personal craft knowledge into a trustworthy knowledge base that can be accessed and shared widely in the profession" (p. 3).

Lave and Wenger (1991) coined the term 'situated learning' to explain the relationship between learning and the social situations in which it occurs. This notion of situated learning can be viewed as a professional learning community. A professional learning community is one in which a group of professionals share values and expectations about students, learning and teaching and work together to improve

their practice and student success (Louis, Marks and Kruse, 1999). This encourages a holistic approach to teacher education, which includes the emotional aspects of teaching. Hargreaves (2000) points to the disturbing neglect of the emotional dimensions in the increasingly rationalized world of educational reform. Harvey and Evans (2003) analysed the teaching approaches of selected New Zealand primary school teachers and reported that emotional relationships between teacher and pupils were rated highly. Gibbs (2000) observes that teachers need to be able to survive the demands, threats, challenges and circumstances of teaching. They need to have the capacity to be resilient, to persist, to have the capacity for innovativeness, and a preparedness to generate new solutions, take on new teaching approaches and be willing to risk failure. Turnbull (2002) examined the early childhood practicum as a social system using Gidden's (1984) notion of professional advocacy. She identified the need for integration between the field experience and the tertiary institution. Student teachers, associate teachers and visiting lecturers need to have a shared understanding of early childhood teacher education; that supervisory practices need to be consistent and the preparation of each member of the triad needs to provide opportunity for in-depth dialogue between each of the members.

Therefore, student teachers need to be provided with field experiences in schools that promote professional learning communities if they are to be nurtured in an emotionally supportive environment that promotes powerful learning opportunities for them (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The practicum requires that the student teacher, associate teacher and university lecturer work collaboratively to improve the teaching practice of the student teacher by "sharing their values and expectations of teaching children via in-depth conversations about teaching and learning and a collective focus on student learning" (Louis, Marks and Kruse, 1996, p. 760).

Therefore, the focus of this study is to answer three main questions:

1. How does each member of the triad of the final teaching practicum perceive his/her role in preparing the selected student teachers for their first year of teaching?
2. What factors are seen as contributing to or detracting from the selected student teachers' capacity to operate as members of a professional learning community during their final practicum?
3. Can a set of themes be identified that relate to a theoretical framework that explains the way each triad functioned and prepared the student teachers for their first year of teaching?

CHAPTER THREE: Research Design

In this chapter, the theoretical framework selected for this study is outlined. This requires discussion of the objective of the research, the research design and the method selected. It includes discussion of methodological congruence and the method of data analysis selected for this study.

Theoretical Influences

In selecting the appropriate research design, it is necessary to identify the theoretical perspectives that underpin the study. Epistemology is a way of looking at the world and making sense of it, or, in other words, viewing the nature of knowledge (Crotty, 1998; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Eisner (1991) argues that research is not value free and is driven by the purpose for which the research is being undertaken. In this case, the researcher is seeking to understand the nature of the teaching practicum from the perspective of each of the participants in the triad: the student teacher, the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher. In this way, the descriptions and interpretations of the practicum will inform the themes and theory that emerge from the researcher's analysis of this data. The epistemological stance of this research is social construction.

Social construction

Constructionists hold that meaning is not discovered, but constructed (Crotty, 1998). Crotty defines a constructionist perspective as:

> The view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (p.42)

If it is accepted that individuals construct meaning from their experience and their interaction with their environment, clearly this occurs within a social milieu in which individuals inherit a "system of intelligibility" or, in other words, a socially constructed view of the world (Crotty, 1998, p.54). Geertz (1973) described the process in this way.

> Thinking consists not of 'happenings in the head' (though happenings there and elsewhere are necessary for it to occur) but of a traffic in what have been called...significant symbols – words for the most part but also gestures, drawings, musical sounds, mechanical devices like clocks, or natural objects like jewels – anything, in fact, that is disengaged from its mere actuality and used to impose meaning upon experience. (p. 45)

Social construction emphasises the importance of culture in shaping the way we view the world, in contrast to "constructivism", which focuses on the unique experience of the individual.

> It would appear useful, then, to reserve the term *constructivism* for epistemological considerations focusing exclusively on 'the meaning-making activity of the individual mind' and to use *constructionism* where the focus includes 'the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning.' (Crotty, 1998, p. 58)

How does this relate, therefore, to learning? Socio-cultural theory of learning is built on the work of Vygotsky (1978), who viewed learning as occurring through socio-cultural activity. One of the major elements of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory is his notion of the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). He described this as:

> the distance between the actual development as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86)

Bruner (1996) built on this concept and introduced the idea of scaffolded instruction by which the learner is guided and given interactional support by a tutor or a peer. Heath and McLaughlin (1994) stated, "learners in groups have access to the social

distribution of knowledge and skills through personal, interpersonal and community working together" (p. 473). Learning is facilitated through social collaboration.

Rogoff (1997) describes three ways that learning can occur. It can be simply the transmission of information and ideas from the outside world to the brain, or the acquisition of information and ideas by the brain. In the first case, the world can be seen as active and, in the other, the individual is active in acquiring this knowledge. But Rogoff (1997) proposed a third model: "people change through transforming their *participation* in socio-cultural activities – in which both the individual and the rest of the world are active" (p. 266). Therefore, learning is a collaborative exercise in which learners' ideas are constructed in a community of learning and through participating in a range of activities and contexts.

How does this apply to this study? Bell and Gilbert (1996) suggested that a social constructionist view of learning would encompass the following components:

- People construct knowledge.
- The construction and reconstruction of knowledge is both personal and social.
- Personal construction of knowledge is socially mediated.
- Socially constructed knowledge is both the context for and the outcome of human social interaction. The social context is an integral part of the learning activity.
- Social interaction with others is a part of personal and social construction and reconstruction of knowledge. (p. 50)

These perspectives identify the complex social dynamic of teaching and teacher education.

This is a qualitative study, which uses a constructionist paradigm. A paradigm represents a way of viewing the world and influences the research approach adopted (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The constructionist approach employed in this study is grounded theory which is used as a tool to help describe and interpret the social world of the teaching practicum.

Qualitative Research

Merriam (1998) identified the following characteristics of qualitative research that are consistent with the work of other qualitative researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Eisner, 1991; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

1. "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 6). In this study, the perceptions of each of the key participants of the triad: the student teacher, the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer describe the practicum from each of their perspectives.

2. "In qualitative research the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The researcher, as opposed to a data collection instrument, is responsive to the context; he or she can adapt techniques to the differing circumstances; the total context can be considered; what is known about the situation can be expanded through sensitivity to non-verbal aspects; the researcher can process data immediately, can clarify and summarise as the study as it evolves and can explore anomalous responses" (Merriam, 1998, p. 7). In this study, the researcher, who is the primary instrument of data collection, needs to have effective communication skills, empathy and sensitivity with the participants, and the ability to listen effectively.

3. "Qualitative research usually involves fieldwork. The researcher must physically go to the people, setting, site, institution (field) in order to observe the behaviour in the natural setting" (p. 7). In this study, the researcher visited each of the classrooms and schools in which the practicum took place, and interviewed the participants in an appropriate setting.

4. "Qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy. That is, this type of research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than testing existing theory" (p. 7). Within this study the perceptions of the participants grounded the research in the classrooms in which the practicum took place and shaped the development of themes and theory, which emerged from these perceptions.

5. "The product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive... [and] there are likely to be the researcher descriptions of the context, the players involved, and the activities of interest" (p. 8). In this study, the data were generated from interview transcripts of the participants and observations of the school contexts in which the practicum took place. In representing these perspectives, the voice of the researcher emerges as he or she filters and interprets the responses and is therefore present in the text (Eisner, 1991).

Many of the assumptions and characteristics in qualitative research are similar, but there are variations in the design depending on the purpose of the study (Merriam, 1998). This is a qualitative case study using grounded theory as its framework.

The Case Study

This is a case study of the third year primary pre-service teaching practicum. As Yin (1994) suggests, a case study may have smaller sub-cases embedded within the study. In this research, there are six such groupings, each within a different school setting and focused on three key participants: the student teacher, the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) suggest that the case study has the following characteristics:

- It is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case.
- It provides a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case.
- It blends a description of events with the analysis of them.
- It focuses on individual actors and seeks to understand their perceptions of events.
- It highlights specific events that are relevant to the case.
- The researcher is integrally involved in the case.
- An attempt is made to write up the richness of the case in writing up the report. (p.317)

Donmoyer (1990) has suggested that one of the advantages of a naturalistic case study is the perspective gained by seeing an event through the eyes of another observer. In this study, the practicum is viewed through the eyes of the student teacher, the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer. By examining the perceptions of each of the key participants, it provides three sources of information about the practicum.

Merriam (1998) identifies three characteristics of a qualitative case study. It is *particularistic* in that case studies focus on particular situations and describe the way particular groups deal with specific situations. In this study, each of the triads provides a particular focus on the practicum and therefore insights into how each of them attended to the challenges of the practicum. Secondly, a case study is *descriptive* and can provide a "rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 1998, p.29). Finally, it is *heuristic* which means a case study can provide "previously unknown relationships and variables...leading to re-thinking of the phenomenon being studied. Insights into how things get to be the way they are can be expected from case studies" (Stake, 1981, p. 47).

Grounded Theory

Using grounded theory, the collected data are analysed and sorted towards the identification of a meaningful conceptual framework. "Theory [is] derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process... Grounded

theories because they are drawn from the data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12).

For this study, the procedures advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) has been adopted. They advocate three key steps in developing grounded theory. The first step is to describe an event from the perspective of the participant. In the case of this study, the term "perceptions" has been used. In describing the events of the practicum, the participant has told a story, highlighting the aspects that he or she has seen as important or unimportant. The second step is to organise the data "according to their properties and dimensions and then using description to elucidate these categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 19). Strauss and Corbin (1998) see this as "conceptual ordering" and it is a necessary precursor to the final step, which is "theorizing". They define theory as:

> a set of well-developed categories (e.g., themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, nursing, or other phenomenon. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 22)

The process of analysis is described as coding the data. The purpose of coding is to make sense of the data by simplifying it and focusing on specific characteristics of the data (Morse and Richards, 2002). Three kinds of coding are possible. "Descriptive coding" stores information, particularly information that describes people, places, sites and characteristics. "Topic coding," gathers materials together that identify patterns in the responses of participants. In analysing these topics the researcher can often identify further sub-categories of this topic and because "data documents are multi-faceted... any passage will involve several, even many, topics, so topic coding is not merely sorting them into discrete heaps... you will need to copy a passage as many times as there are categories you wish to code at, and finding patterns in that

coding then becomes a challenge" (p.112, Morse & Richards, 2002). From these patterns, key abstractions or themes emerge as the research seeks to identify meaning from the data.

Methodological Congruence

As mentioned earlier, data analysis needs to rest on the assumptions of the research method selected, in this case, grounded-theory. Analysis of the data in this study was based upon grounded theory and it was coded using the QSR Qualitative Research N6 (non-numerical unstructured data indexing, searching and theorizing) software package to assist in data analysis (Qualitative Solutions and Research Ltd., 1997). Strauss and Corbin (1998) identify several key stages to coding and to ensure methodological congruence with the qualitative software, Morse and Richards (2002) recommend the following process.

1. The research asks a set of questions that will keep the focus on the purpose of the study such as: What category is this an example of? What are the dimensions of this category? Under what conditions and with what consequences will this occur?

2. The research examines and codes transcripts line by line, highlighting important passages and creating theoretical memos (for example, insights, comparisons, summaries and questions).

3. The researcher gathers passages or significant portions of the text in categories, bringing them into comparative view with similar text.

4. The researcher uses constant comparison in viewing each indicator or concept with another enabling the researcher to identify patterns and thus to label similar incidents as a category and therefore identify the properties of the category.

5. The researcher conducts theoretical coding based on the data seeking other instances and related instances to increase the degree of abstraction of the analysis.

6. Once the researcher has verified the initial data in other instances and has identified interchangeable examples, saturation is reached.

7. Finally, the researcher identifies the linkages between the various categories. Essentially the research is seeking to reach a point of "integration" or in-depth knowledge and synthesis of the data to describe a core category around which local theory can be built. (pp. 158-159)

Focus of the Research

This is a qualitative, evaluative study of Massey University's third year pre-service primary teaching practicum of the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) degree (see Table 1). It examines the perceptions of the student teacher, the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer regarding the adequacy of the practicum experience for the preparation of the first year primary school teacher. Each of these key players has a particular role to play in the practicum. The student teacher (ST) is required to complete a sustained period of teaching under the supervision of the associate teacher (AT) and the visiting lecturer (VL). The associate teacher is an experienced classroom teacher who monitors the teaching progress of the student teacher on a daily basis. The visiting lecturer is a university tutor or lecturer in the pre-service teacher education programme who has overall responsibility for the supervision of the student teacher on the practicum.

Table 1:
Overview of the Study

Object of research:	Perceptions of the primary teaching practicum.
Paradigm:	Social Constructionist
Research Design:	Grounded theory
Method:	Case study
Participants:	Six triads each consisting of a student teacher, an associate teacher and a visiting lecturer
Setting of study:	Schools at which each of the student teachers were on practicum.
Length of study:	Seven weeks over the third year primary teaching practicum

The perceptions of the student teacher, the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer were examined using an in-depth, recursive interviewing model. Documents and reports regarding the practicum provided further data for analysis. In addition, an interview with the Teaching Practicum Coordinator provided information regarding procedures and expectations.

As the practicum required that the student teacher, associate teacher and visiting lecturer work collaboratively to improve the teaching practice of the student teacher, the factors that contributed to or detracted from the triad's capacity to operate as a professional learning community during the final practicum were examined.

Ethical Considerations

At the outset of the study, consideration was given to the ethical issues raised by the study. These were issues of confidentiality, anonymity and the need to protect the

informants' perceptions and comments from formal performance assessment. According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), ethical considerations for school-based research require that all participants fully understand the aims, objectives and methods of the research involved.

> The researcher must allow subjects the right to refuse to take part in the research.
> The researcher must demonstrate how confidentiality is built into the research...
> The participants must be aware of the possible uses to which the research may be put. (p. 52)

As a safeguard to ensure these ethical considerations have been considered, approval was obtained from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1).

Informed Consent

Each of the members of the triad gave written consent for participation in the study, including consent to tape and transcribe the interviews for analysis and quotation in the research thesis. Participants also consented to the researcher's access to the final written reports of the student teachers (see Appendix 1).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was ensured for each of the participants and the classrooms and schools in which the practicum occurred by using pseudonyms for each of the participants. Further, the identity of the schools was kept confidential to the researcher (see Table Two, p.65).

The Interview

An in-depth, unstructured interview format was selected for this study. Schutz (1962) states that to understand the reason for people's behaviour, we need to know the way that they think. This is predicated on the belief that people act in the ways that they do because of the way in which they define the situation as they see it or believe it to be (Merriam, 1998). Minichiello (1997) and his colleagues' state:

> Tied to this idea is the belief that when we are engaged in in-depth interviewing, what we are actually interested in is people's experience of social reality through their routinely constructed interpretations of it. If the researcher develops theories that are not grounded in the informant's experience of social reality, then he or she runs the risk of constructing and imposing on that informant a fictional view of their reality. (p. 69)

To enhance understanding of this form of investigation, I reviewed guidelines by Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1997), Bogdan and Biklen (1998), and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) and also participated in an intensive two-day workshop on qualitative interviewing methodology. Following the workshop, two pilot interviews were conducted. My supervisor, experienced in qualitative research, critiqued the transcripts of these interviews. A further 'live' pilot interview with a volunteer, (not in the study), was conducted in the presence of my supervisor, who provided ongoing critique throughout the session to further refine my interviewing technique.

An in-depth, unstructured interview allows the researcher to adopt an informal, conversational style and is designed to solicit the interviewee's perspectives rather than biasing the interview (Minichello et al, 1997). Although unstructured, an interview schedule identified key areas of interest to the study that were probed generally for each participant.

Merriam (1998) identified three forms of question to avoid. Firstly, multiple questions should not be asked as one question but should be separated into separate

ones, for example, "How do you feel about the teachers and the classes?". Similarly, leading questions, for example, "What management problems have you had with the class?" and yes-or-no questions, such as "Do you like the class?" should also be avoided. In other words, the interviewer should carefully consider the questions to be asked prior to the interview, and the training and pilot interviews undertaken prior to beginning a study are critical. Of particular importance are the probes the interviewer uses to follow up the original questions (Merriam, 1998). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) point out "probes may take numerous forms; they range from silence, to sounds, to a single word, to complete sentences" (p. 85). For example, probes may be simply a nod of the head, or a prompt such as "Really?" or a question that delves deeper into the respondent's reply, such as: "Can you give me an example of this?"

By analysing the verbatim transcripts of interviews, it is possible to identify "places where you could have followed up but did not, and compare them with places where you got a lot of good data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 81).

Nature of the researcher-respondent relationship

It is critical that the researcher is aware of the dynamics of the interviewer-respondent relationship. Often there are issues of power, such as, who controls the interview, its direction and results. Merriam (1998) summarises this complex phenomenon:

> Both parties bring biases, predispositions, attitudes, and physical characteristics that color the interaction and the data elicited. A skilled interviewer accounts for these factors in order to evaluate the data being obtained. Taking a stance that is non-judgemental, sensitive, and respectful of the respondent is but a beginning point in the process. (p. 87)

The physical location and structure of the interview helps to neutralise some of these issues and create a relaxed environment in which to conduct the interview. According to Patton (1990) the interviewer is gathering data and not trying to change

participants. Therefore being sensitive to the respondents' viewpoints and seeking their explanation of the events with sensitivity and not as "a cold slab of granite – unresponsive to the human issues" is critical (Patton, 1990, p.354).

Summary

This chapter has explored the theoretical framework of the study and the ethical considerations that underpin qualitative research such as this. The following chapter outlines in detail the methods taken to gather and analyse the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: Methods

This chapter outlines the qualitative methods employed in this study. From the outset, consideration was given to the ethical issues raised by the study. These included issues of confidentiality, anonymity and the need to protect the informants' perceptions and comments from formal performance assessment. Approval was obtained from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1).

Having determined the focus of the research and the theoretical framework of the study, it was then necessary to consider the process to select the participants. The context of the study was critical in determining the sample for the research.

The Programme Context

The Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary has two main programme strands. The first strand, "Professional Practice and Education Studies", covers the foundational knowledge and understanding required for the effective practice of teaching. The core of this strand comprises a paper entitled "Professional Inquiry and Practice" (PIP) which aims to integrate theoretical knowledge within an applied professional practice. The key component of the PIP paper is the teaching practicum. The second strand, "Curriculum Knowledge and Practice", provides for study at a personal level of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of subjects related to the New Zealand Curriculum. Papers in this strand provide student teachers with the necessary background and appreciation to teach in an informed way the essential learning areas of the school curriculum.

The College of Education requires that student teachers enrolled in the three year Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary successfully complete a minimum of

20 weeks practicum in selected New Zealand primary schools. (Primary schools educate children in their first to eighth year of formal schooling.) There are two types of practicum: day placements and block postings. In each of their first and second year, student teachers have two block postings each of three weeks in the academic year. For four weeks in each semester, students spend one day per week in a selected school completing practicum tasks related to the curriculum and educational theory papers in which they are enrolled. These are called placement days. The block postings are sustained periods of teaching experience where student teachers are placed in a selected primary school for a period of at least three weeks. In their third year, the pre-service students are required to do a seven-week teaching block, which must include 10 sequential days of sole responsibility. This third year teaching practicum is divided into two distinct parts. The first three weeks are at the end of the first semester. The student teachers then have a two-week examination period, followed by a two-week mid-year school holiday break, before they return to their school posting for four weeks.

The Student Teacher

The student teachers in this study had successfully passed all components of the three-year Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary prior to the major seven-week teaching practicum in their third year. Thus, they were full-time internal students on the main university campus. The College of Education has several modes of teaching delivery. The full-time internal student is one who attends all his/her classes' on-site at the university. Typically, a single academic year constitutes a full-time study load of 100 points for a College of Education student.

The third year teaching practicum is assessed as part of a double semester paper called Professional Inquiry and Practice (PIP). The practicum provides the context through which the students meet particular learning outcomes including critical reflection on the teaching process. "Critical reflection, curriculum theory and research will be the basis for refining practices and principles of classroom organisation, planning, assessment, evaluation and management of learning and teaching." (*Block Posting Booklet*, 2000, p.5). The practicum component of the paper requires mastery of these and other learning outcomes reflecting the professional responsibilities required of a beginning teacher. One of the major assignments of the third year PIP paper was a reflective practice activity. Prior to the teaching practicum, the students identified an area of their current teaching practice that they wish to improve or refine. Once their PIP lecturer approved their proposal, the students completed the activity in the first three weeks of their practicum. The goal of this assignment is to encourage students to reflect critically on the teaching process and to make explicit the links between theory and practice.

The Visiting Lecturer

The visiting lecturer is the second member of this triad. The visiting lecturer is a College of Education tutor or lecturer in the pre-service programme, who monitors and assesses the progress of the student teacher in the classroom, visiting the student on-site during the practicum. Briefings are held by teaching practice coordinators to detail the role and expectations of the visiting lecturer, but there is no formal training required to prepare visiting lecturers. Visiting lecturers are typically successful classroom teachers, and in the course of their university employment, they maintain close links with teachers, pupils, schools and developments in the New Zealand

school curriculum. Because of the large number of student teachers that required supervision, the College also contracts additional staff to act as visiting lecturers. These are often ex-College lecturing staff (recently retired, who are considered professionally suited by the practicum paper coordinator). They may also be experienced classroom teachers with a record of being successful associate teachers.

The role of the visiting lecturer is to act as "coach and judge. In the early stages of this posting emphasise the coaching aspect while at the same time allowing the judge to emerge in an honest and tactfully frank way" (*Block Posting Booklet*, 2000, p.5). One of the other key roles is to forge a " strong professional relationship with both the student teachers and the associate teachers (and schools)" (ibid). The visiting lecturer is expected to visit at least three times during the posting. Each of these visits is to be approximately 90 minutes duration. The final visit should be in the period when the student teacher has sole responsibility for teaching the class.

Details of the responsibilities and requirements for this particular practicum are given to all visiting lecturers in the *Block Posting Booklet.* Visiting lecturers are expected to read this booklet to gain an understanding of the requirements of their role in the practicum, the responsibilities and requirements of the associate teacher and the learning outcomes and teaching tasks expected of the student teacher. Visiting lecturers are also supplied with report forms on which to record the progress and achievement of the student teacher. In the week prior to the start of the practicum, student teachers are encouraged to meet with the visiting lecturers assigned to them. This is not always possible as some staff had to be contracted from outside the College and may be difficult for student teachers to contact.

Besides the *Block Posting Booklet*, each visiting lecturer is given a practicum folder which contains report forms, the names of the student teachers and the schools

at which they are placed, including the names of the associate teachers and the class level of the placement.

The Associate Teacher

While on the major teaching practicum, the student teacher is placed in a selected primary school (year one to year eight of schooling) with an associate teacher. The associate teacher is an experienced classroom practitioner who has responsibility for the class in which the student teacher has been placed. The associate teacher is selected by the Principal of the school from a list of criteria recommended by the College of Education. These criteria are stated in the application form that prospective associate teachers are required to fill in at the beginning of the school year (see Appendix 2). Included in the application form are details of the associate teacher's teaching strengths, the length of time that he or she has been teaching, and the experience he or she has had as an associate teacher. An associate teacher needs to be:

> approachable and willing to accept student teachers into the class; be willing to progressively address student teacher needs through targeted advice and guidance; provide written feedback; regularly discuss professional expectations and progress with the student teacher; provide verbal and written assessment and evaluation that is:
> 1. HONEST
> 2. OBJECTIVE
> 3. CONSTRUCTIVE. (Teaching Practicum Coordinator Letter, 2000, p.2)

Details of the administrative responsibilities of the associate teachers are also sought because these tasks may restrict the time of the associate to work with the student teacher.

Although workshops have been conducted for associate teachers on occasion in previous years, there was no formal training for the associate teachers prior to this particular practicum. According to the Teaching Practicum Coordinator, few associate teachers responded positively to the proposal of a workshop. There were

two reasons given: "the associates were too busy to attend a workshop outside of school hours...[and] many of them had had third years [student teachers] before and they felt confident in the role..." (TE Administrator, lines 178-181).

They were offered training if they requested it. Details of the responsibilities and requirements for this particular practicum were sent to all associate teachers in the *Block Posting Booklet.* Associate teachers were expected to read this booklet to gain an understanding of the requirements of their role in the practicum, the responsibilities and requirements of the visiting lecturer and the learning outcomes and teaching tasks expected of the student teacher. Associate teachers were also supplied with summative report forms on which to detail the progress and achievement of the student teacher.

There are three aims in providing assessment to the student teacher cited in the *Block Posting Booklet:*

> The principal aim is to create quality feedback that will lead to speedy and positive development. A second aim is to determine the level of teaching ability of the ST. A third is to gather data on teaching performance to provide to prospective employers. To build the most complete picture possible, it is important that the ST, the AT(s) and the Visiting College/Evaluator (VCL/E) pool their information in as honest and open way as possible. (*Block Posting Booklet,* p.3, 2000)

Each associate teacher receives a small salary allowance for supervising a student teacher, at a rate set by the collective agreement between the Ministry of Education and the primary teachers' trade union (New Zealand Educational Institute).

The Schools

State schools in New Zealand are publicly funded and open to all New Zealand school children. Integrated schools are a second category of New Zealand school. They

retain a religious character but teach the New Zealand Curriculum and are monitored by the Education Review Office. Integrated schools also receive government funding.

The College of Education enrols a relatively large number of students who must be placed for teaching practice in a geographic catchment area with a relatively small population base. Two hundred and six student teachers required placements for their Third Year practicum within the city and the immediate surrounding district. Eighty-four per cent of the state primary schools in the city accepted third year student teachers in 2000. Of the schools that did not have third year student teachers, two schools were Maori language total immersion schools and required teachers with Te Reo qualifications. Two additional state schools did not wish to have third year student teachers on this practicum as they were already committed to providing teaching experience for students in the Graduate Diploma of Education (Primary), a one year teaching qualification for graduates which is also delivered by the College.

Fifty per cent of the state primary schools within a 30-kilometre radius of the College of Education accepted third year student teachers. The College also placed 21 per cent of the third year student teachers in schools outside of the city and surrounding district. For all placements, the associate teacher was assigned a student teacher that he or she had not previously supervised. Prior to this placement, each student teacher was required to have had a practicum in a range of schools, which included a small rural school and an inner city school. The student teacher was also required to have had a practicum in a class at junior level (years one to three of primary schooling), middle level (years four to six of primary schooling) and intermediate level (years seven to eight of primary schooling).

Therefore, in their third year, the student teachers were able to select the class level and the school district that they preferred. That is, they could select from either

a city school, a small town school or a rural school. The final placement of the student teachers depended on the analysis of the teaching placement administrator and the lecturer coordinating the practicum. After considering the school and the class level the student teacher had selected, other factors were considered. "It's really important that we don't make the level [class] too broad for a country school posting...So we wouldn't put them in a sole-charge school [one teacher primary school] for example" (TE Administrator, lines 15-18).

Because the College subsidises transport costs for students, it is a significant factor to consider.

> One of the major factors for this posting, because of its time in the winter, is to ensure that students aren't travelling too far because some are still on bikes...so we try to cluster them in town geographically, sensibly, because they're carrying a lot resources. (TE Administrator, lines 55-60)

There are a small number of male associate teachers and a small number of third year male student teachers. Therefore, the gender of the teacher is considered in matching the student teacher with the associate teacher.

> I think it's important for a male student to have a model that they can identify with from the maleness point of view. The model may not be something they want to take on board, but at least there are some factors of how men work with kids, which is quite useful for them to bounce off and help sort their own style. (TE Administrator, lines 47-52)

Another dimension that was considered was the relationship that the student teacher may have with her or his visiting lecturer. It was decided that:

> students would be visited where possible by people they knew, so that brought a whole new dimension to placing these students because it was tried to cluster students. Say a lecturer was visiting six people. They tried to cluster those students so the lecturer wasn't racing all over the country. Previously, what we would do is we'd say 'well, there's six people, visit them'. Whereas we now had to try and get those six people, or whatever number, reasonably close together with a lecturer they knew. (TE Administrator, lines 142-249)

In the final analysis, the choices of the type of school and the class age level that the student teacher had requested had been met on this teaching practicum. "They usually make three choices. Ninety per cent of students would get their first choice. Just works out that way that there are always plenty who want to go to juniors, plenty middle and plenty top." (TE Administrator, lines 92-95)

Procedures

Selection of a Sample

According to Merriam (1998), there are two basic types of sampling:

> Probability sampling (of which simple random sampling is the most familiar example) allows the investigator to generalise results of the study to the population from which it was drawn. Since generalization in a statistical sense is not a goal of qualitative research, probabilistic sampling is not necessary... Thus nonprobabilistic sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research. (p.61)

Nonprobalistic sampling can be 'purposive', however (Chein, 1981; Patton, 1990). Chein (1981) gives this analogy:

> The situation is analogous to one in which a number of expert consultants are called in on a difficult medical case. These consultants – also a purposive sample – are not called in to get an average opinion that would correspond to the average opinion of the medical profession. They are called in precisely because of their special experience and competence. (p. 440)

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) prefer to use 'criterion-based selection' to determine the sample. These criteria need to reflect the purpose of the study.

In this case, the focus of the study was the third-year primary teaching practicum of students. The sample included students who had maintained a successful academic record. This was defined as not having failed a paper or having repeated a teaching practice due to inadequate performance. The experiences of student teachers, who had failed aspects of their programme would constitute a completely different study.

In selecting a sample for case study research, there are two potential requirements (Merriam 1998). Firstly, the 'case' must be selected to study and then, at the second level, it must be determined whether " to interview, observe, or analyze *all* the people, activities, or documents within the case...[or whether] to do some sampling within the case" (Merriam, 1998, p. 65). In this study, the third-year primary teaching practicum is the case study, and within this case, six smaller studies are embedded.

To select the sample, the following steps were taken. Firstly, the student teacher information sheets (see Appendix 1) were distributed to each of the third year primary pre-service students during their Professional Inquiry and Practice class tutorials. I explained the purpose of the study separately to each group and the role that I would play as the researcher. Consent forms were available to any student who was interested. Any student who wished to participate in the study could either complete the consent form and return it via an internal mailbox or by contacting me personally at my campus office.

Twenty students signed the appropriate consent form. A check was made to determine whether each of these students was maintaining a successful academic record, which was defined as not having failed a paper or having repeated a teaching practice due to inadequate performance. Two of the 20 students were eliminated according to these criteria. A random sample of six was selected from the remaining 18 students using a random numbers table.

Prior to notifying these students that they had been selected, it was necessary to ensure a complete triad would be available for each. Thus, consent was needed from the remaining members of each triad, the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer. The teaching practicum administrator, who is responsible for collating and posting the

teaching placements, provided the names of the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer of each of the selected student teachers. The researcher contacted each of the visiting lecturers by sending him or her an information sheet describing the study (see Appendix 1). Two days later they were contacted again by telephone to check if each had received the information sheet and to clarify understanding of the project. A consent form was then distributed to each of the lecturers, who returned these to the researcher. One lecturer declined to participate. This necessitated a further random selection of a student from the original group of available student teachers. The same process, as described, was then followed to select the visiting lecturer, who did consent to be part of the study.

Having identified the student teachers and the visiting lecturers for the study, it was necessary to obtain consent from the associate teachers. Firstly, the schools were approached, and consent was sought from the principal of each school for the selected associate teachers to be contacted by the researcher. Once permission was granted, an information sheet (see Appendix 1) was left for the associate in an enclosed envelope. Again, after two days, the researcher rang each of the associates to clarify any issues and to request their consent to participate in the study. This was achieved and each associate teacher was given a consent form to complete prior to the first interview. Therefore, six triads consisting of a visiting lecturer, an associate teacher and a student teacher were selected for the study.

The Interview

An in-depth, unstructured interview format was selected for this study. Schutz (1962) states that to understand the reason for people's behaviour, we need to know the way that they think. To enhance understanding of this form of investigation, I reviewed guidelines by Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1997), Bogdan and

Biklen (1992), Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) and also participated in an intensive two-day workshop on qualitative interviewing methodology. Following the workshop, I conducted two pilot interviews. My supervisor, experienced in qualitative research, critiqued the transcripts of these interviews. A further 'live' pilot interview with a volunteer, (not in the study), was conducted in the presence of my supervisor, who provided ongoing critique throughout the session, to further refine my interviewing technique.

An in-depth, unstructured interview allows the researcher to adopt an informal, conversational style and is designed to solicit the interviewer's perspectives rather than biasing the interview. Although unstructured, an interview schedule identified key areas of interest to the study that were probed generally for each participant.

The following key areas were identified. Firstly, a general discussion of experiences of the teaching practicum was explored. Secondly, based on these experiences, beliefs about the role of the practicum in the preparation of pre-service student teachers were examined. Thirdly, based on experiences, the roles of each of the three key participants - the associate teacher, the visiting lecturer and the student teacher - were critically examined from the viewpoint of the informer. In the second round of interviews, these key areas would again be examined but would be focused on the third year teaching practicum that had just occurred.

Interviews were audio taped on a portable recorder that had the capacity to capture the conversation but not be overly intrusive on the informality the researcher sought to create. In conducting interviews, the researcher needs to ensure that the data are recorded accurately (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995).

All interviews with the visiting lecturers took place in my office. Easy chairs were provided, with the tape recorder placed on a small table between the informant

and the interviewer. I visited the schools to interview both the associate teachers and the student teachers during the first week of teaching practicum for each student teacher. In every case, a small withdrawal room was allocated to the researcher. This provided privacy, the needed quiet to tape the interview and a measure of comfort for the interview. Use of a withdrawal room was also the procedure usually adopted when a visiting lecturer interviewed student teachers on practicum. The interviews lasted on average 40 minutes.

Each of the participants was allocated an identification coding (see Table Two). This coding was confidential to the researcher. The first round of interviews was transcribed by the researcher handwriting the scripts. This ensured the accuracy of the transcriptions and also allowed the researcher to code any references to the informants or the schools.

Table 2:
Identification Coding of Participants

	Student Teacher	*Visiting Lecturer*	*Associate Teacher*
Triad One	Diane	Diane (VL)	Diane (AT)
Triad Two	Greg	Greg (VL)	Greg (AT)
Triad Three	Alan	Alan (VL)	Alan (AT)
Triad Four	Kate	Kate (VL)	Kate (AT)
Triad Five	Mary	Mary (VL)	Mary (AT)
Triad Six	Simon	Simon (VL)	Simon (AT)

The transcribed interviews were then typed by a qualified secretary who was experienced in transcribing, checked once more by the researcher and sent back to the informants for any additional comments or changes and corrections he or she wished

to make. All sound tracks of audiotapes, which had been transcribed, were then wiped clean.

The second round of interviews followed a similar pattern. The associate teachers were interviewed in the school setting in the final week of the teaching practicum. Once again these interviews took place in a small withdrawal room. The visiting lecturers and the student teachers were interviewed in my office in the first week after the teaching practicum. Easy chairs were supplied with a low table on which the portable tape recorder was placed. I endeavoured to ensure that the participants felt relaxed and clearly understood that the interview would not be used in any way to assess individual teaching or supervisory competence. I completed the handwritten transcriptions, once again ensuring that references to the informants and schools were coded. The transcripts were then typed and returned to the informants for comments and any changes or corrections. All sound tracks of audiotapes, which had been transcribed, were then wiped clean.

In the final analysis, the choices of the type of school and the class age level that the student teacher has requested have been met on this teaching practicum. "They usually make three choices. Ninety per cent of students would get their first choice. Just works out that way that there are always plenty who want to go to juniors, plenty middle and plenty top." (ibid)

Coding using the QSR Qualitative Software

Initially, I endeavoured to train myself to use the QSR software package using the N4 Mackintosh version. There were three tutorials supplied with the software package. Whilst this gave me an insight into the potential of the software, working alone meant that I was not able to utilise the full power of the system. In discussion with the

software consultants, it became apparent that I should change to the recently developed N6 system, which provided dimensions not available on the N4 system. In particular, there was a set of seventeen tools for automatically finding relationships between the coding of two or more nodes. Unfortunately the software programmers had determined not to develop a Mackintosh version. This required that I change to a PC platform. Initially, I worked alongside a visiting academic who had extensive experience using this software. I then travelled to Melbourne, Australia, to complete a weeklong training course with the developers of the QSR Qualitative N6 software package, Tom and Lyn Richards. Not only did this course enable me to utilise the software to its full potential, it gave me accreditation to train users of their programme.

Node Search

Nodes are the containers for ideas that represent categories for thinking whether they are concepts, topics, tentative interpretations or demographic information. Because qualitative research is not suited to rigid containers and definitions, nodes need to be flexible and change according to the development of understanding and ideas that emerge from the data. Within the QSR Qualitative Research N6 software, the 'Node Search' is a set of seventeen tools for automatically finding relationships between the coding of two or more nodes. It can be thought of in two ways: it is a way of answering questions about the coding, and it is a way of building new nodes out of old, with the coding in the new node (or output node) being derived from the coding in the old nodes (or input nodes).

> Node search, arguably, is what qualitative data analysis is all about. The exercise of coding has only minimal point if all you are going to do is to look at the text coded by some node or other. That's just retrieval of what you've done in coding...Analysis begins when you want to look at what the

> women have said about that topic, and if it is any different from what the men said; or what men with such-and-such political beliefs have to say on it; or how their attitudes on that topic relate to what they think should be done about it. To do such things, you are asking to compare coding, because all the aspects of these analytical questions – what the men said, who has these political views, the range of attitudes to the topic, and so on, are captured as coding at nodes. (QSR N6 Reference Manual, 2002, p.105)

In analysing the transcripts of the six case studies, the following steps were taken:

1. Descriptive Coding

Key demographics were recorded about the participants. Memos were attached to each of the interviews describing the location, time and context of the interview. These were imported into the N6 project for later analysis with the topics and themes that emerged.

2. Topic Coding

Initially the interviews were coded and an exhaustive range of topics emerged from the data. This process began from the outset of the thesis, as the interviews and field notes were transcribed. This was to ensure that the themes, which eventually emerged, were grounded in the data and that the labels for the codes were taken directly from the language used by the participants (Glaser, 1978).

3. Analytic Coding

Once the categories began to emerge, more analysis was required of the emerging 'topics'. This analysis allowed for new ideas to develop from the categories. This helps to develop further categories and themes. Having "opened" up the data and identifying concepts that seemed to fit the data, deeper analysis of the category was needed to develop potential themes.

4. Themes

A theme runs through the data and is not restricted to one segment or piece of data. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain, grounded theory emerges from this process.

> A set of well-developed categories (e.g., themes, concepts) that is systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, nursing, or other phenomenon. (p. 22)

These themes are abstractions from the original categories and need to be well supported by the data collected.

Summary

In this chapter, the procedures for conducting the research have been detailed. The process of selecting the sample and the decisions by which the final participants were identified has been outlined. The study involved six triads, each consisting of a student teacher, a visiting lecturer and an associate teacher. Each of these participants was interviewed at the beginning and finish of the practicum.

The process for conducting the interviews has been detailed and the reflexive nature of the process outlined. Each participant was given the opportunity to read the interview transcript and amend any part of it.

For this study, the procedures advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) have been adopted. They advocate three key steps in developing grounded theory. The first step is to describe an event from the perspective of the participant. In the case of this study, the term "perceptions" has been used. In describing the events of the practicum, the participant has told a story, highlighting the aspects that he or she has seen as important or unimportant. The second step is to organise the data "according to their properties and dimensions and then using description to elucidate these categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 19). Strauss and Corbin (1998) see this as "conceptual ordering" and it is a necessary precursor to the final step, which is "theorizing".

The process of analysis is described as coding the data. The purpose of coding is to make sense of the data by simplifying them and focusing on specific characteristics of the data (Morse and Richards, 2002). From these patterns, key abstractions or themes emerge as the research seeks to identify meaning from the data. These themes then provide the categories against which the practicum can be analysed as a social system to promote a professional learning community.

CHAPTER FIVE: Data Analysis

This chapter outlines the process adopted for data analysis. Initially the experiences and perceptions of the practicum of each of the triads are described. These perceptions are coded and topics identified from these data. From these topics, broad themes are finally identified.

Descriptive Coding

An in-depth, unstructured interview format was used to probe and identify the participants' perceptions of the practicum. The purpose of the first round of interviews was to explore the previous teaching practicum experiences of each of the participants and to identify the beliefs, attitudes and understandings that shaped their approach to this particular teaching experience. Each of the participants had a particular role to play on this practicum, and it was critical to examine their perceptions and understandings of this role. Exploring their previous experiences allowed the interviewer to adopt the role of the sympathetic listener, to get to know the participant and to establish empathy. The interviewer made notes about the interview to help capture the contextual factors of the discussion.

The Participants

Each triad will be described in turn. All names are pseudonyms and any identifying information about individuals or schools has been disguised to protect identities.

Triad One

The Student Teacher: Diane

Diane is a third year student teacher, who began training as an early childhood teacher. After the first semester of her course, she decided that early childhood was not what she wanted and chose to enter the pre-service primary teacher programme instead. An outgoing, enthusiastic student, Diane is motivated to become a successful primary school teacher. She has rated her teaching practicum highly. "I think that I have learnt more on TPs [teaching practicum] than I have sitting in a class listening to theories...I mean it's good to see things in practice, hands on experience" (Diane (1), lines 56-57).

Diane's placements have included a rural school, a city school and an integrated school. She has had experiences at all class levels from Junior (years one to three of schooling) to Intermediate (years seven to eight of schooling). On the teaching practicum, which is the context for this study, she is teaching in a small town, full-primary school (years one to eight of schooling) and has been placed in the Intermediate class (years seven to eight). Her curriculum strengths are English and music. Diane has identified improving her management strategies as a key goal of this practicum. She also has plans to do an action research project on reciprocal reading, focusing on improving her assessment practice and teaching across all the curriculum areas.

The Associate Teacher: Diane (AT)

Diane (AT) trained as a primary school teacher after working successfully for a telephone company where he achieved a supervisory role. Diane (AT) has strong opinions about his pre-service teacher education. "What I learned at Teachers Training College is a fraction of what I learned as a first year" (Diane (AT) 1, lines 288). He has been teaching for five years and has already won a position as Deputy

Principal of a five-teacher primary school. Diane (AT) is very confident of his own judgement and his success as a teacher.

> When I was at the "Kids for Kids" concert, one of the parents from our school said to the Principal "that guy's got a passion for teaching eh." (Diane (AT) 1, lines 203-204)

Diane (AT) describes himself as loud, very musical and very dramatic. Diane is his first third year student teacher. He expresses strong opinions of the role of the associate teacher.

> To be honest, my job is to cull out the people that I wouldn't have teaching my children. And if they've got potential, I do everything I can to develop them, but along the way if I think this person has not got it, I have no bones to fail somebody. (Diane (AT) 1, lines 13-17)

He believes that associate teachers should be more rigorously selected.

> And it should be more of a mana thing. That to be an associate teacher is a real joy ... it's selective ... when you put it on your CV that you've been an associate it should be 'Wow that person's a little bit better. they help teach teachers ... and teach children'. That's my philosophy. I want to be a teacher of teachers, and, that's what I think is not done at the moment. It's just find who can do it. (Diane (AT) 1, lines 77-83)

Visiting Lecturer: Diane (VL)

Diane (VL) has had considerable experience teaching at the primary school level. She has been a lecturer for six years. In this time she has assessed numerous student teachers and currently has five third-year student teachers to visit. Diane (VL) has a quiet confidence and values the role of visiting lecturer.

> I've really enjoyed doing it, partly because it gets me out of the College and into the classroom, which we're really on about, and it's nice to have one to one contact with the students and you don't get that in the College classroom. (Diane (VL) 1, lines 21-25)

Diane (VL) currently teaches in the educational studies stream of the Bachelor of Education (Teaching). Part of the challenge for her has been to make links between the study that students complete in her university classes and the experience they

have in schools. Diane (VL) believes that the visiting lecturer can provide a valuable fresh perspective to the teaching context, complimenting the role of the associate teacher.

> The student goes in and tries to pick up on what the AT is doing and model themselves along that line. Sometimes I say to students 'I see that you're trying to do what the associate is doing. Do you feel comfortable with that?'... Because it may be an associate who is very loud, confident and bold and the student is quiet and shy. I say, "Hey there're different ways of doing this." (Diane (VL) 1, lines 261-267)

To visit Diane (ST), she had to travel 30 minutes by car. But she enjoys the change of routine.

> I enjoyed my drive in the car the other day. It was the only fine day in the week, and I was off to visit a student and it was enjoyable not being stuck in my office. And I think too, it's good for students to be out of [the city]. Because the place gets so saturated with students really. And I watched one student and the kids said 'Are you going to teach us?' And I was watching for the response which was 'Oh cool! Neat wow!' And they sat up straight because it was a novel experience for them, which doesn't happen in [city] schools. (Diane (VL) 1, lines 369-377)

The School (Diane)

This school is set in a lower North Island small town. It is not the only primary school in the town and has a roll of 99 children. There are two distinct styles of school building. The staffroom, the school administration area and two classrooms are recent buildings compared to the school hall and the senior section of the school, which date back over 50 years. The school has a decile rating of three, which reflects the lower socio-economic status of the district. The classroom in which Diane is working is laid out so that the children can work independently at workstations and in small groups. Because it has an L-shape layout, the teacher cannot have an easy view of the entire class at any one time.

Triad Two

The Student Teacher: Greg

Greg is a mature third year student, who had owned his own farm prior to training as a primary school teacher. He has a strong commitment to becoming a teacher and has valued his time on teaching practicum. "TE (pause) I think it's probably the most valuable part of the whole teaching degree" (Greg 1, lines 34). He has had teaching practicum in both city and small country schools and taught from year one to year eight pupils. He has had positive experiences in all his practicum:

> I've only done three weeks with Forms One and Two and they were a good class, but with particularly trying boys. One used to come to school stoned, robberies, trouble with the Police. Cool kid but just a product of his upbringing. Last year when I went to do the five and six year olds I just did not want to do it. I walked into the classroom and after a day you know I could have carried on being a Junior Teacher all my life. They were wonderful. You had to worry about standing on them. But they were really neat. I mean you worked your butt off, you learned to never stand still, they were always tugging at your legs all day long and you had to have something to change on every 30 seconds because their attention span was so small, but I don't really care. All my sections I've just put on the thing – 'I don't care where I go, what I do.' (Greg 1, lines 13-29)

Greg has a particular interest in teaching mathematics. He has also been very interested in incorporating information technology within the classroom. Greg is an outgoing person who mixes easily with fellow staff, parents and students alike. Midway through the teaching practicum, Greg's first child was born. This resulted in one-week of paternity leave prior to coming back to complete his final three weeks of the practicum.

The Associate Teacher: Greg (AT)

Greg (AT) is a senior teacher who has had considerable experience working with student teachers, although Greg is only her second third-year student teacher from this

university. Having recently arrived at this school, Greg (AT) believes that the practicum is a key component of pre-service teacher education.

> I think these students need as much experience in a classroom as possible. I think the more they have the better they'll be...nothing beats in front of children experience whether it's one-offs, whether it's days, whether it's weeks. (Greg 1, lines 21-25)

She describes herself as "a control freak". Greg (AT) maintains detailed classroom planning and organisation, and she has high expectations of her teaching team.

Visiting Lecturer: Greg (VL)

Greg (VL) is a curriculum studies lecturer. She was a very experienced primary school teacher prior to becoming a College of Education lecturer ten years ago.

> I've been doing it for 10 years and as far as the experience goes I've had my share of students who have been absolutely brilliant and my share of those who've struggled. Maybe I've had over the years a number who've struggled. Yeah I've been put in as a support lecturer. I've worked across all year groups and I've worked with early childhood students and it's something I've loved doing. I've really enjoyed working with the students. I've loved getting into schools. (Greg (VL) 1, lines 5-11)

Greg (VL) sees strong links between her university programme and the experiences students have in schools.

> In fact when I'm teaching music, when I'm making a point about management or planning or..um.. assessment or skill development, I'll often find that I'll draw an analogy with broader areas in the school. That this isn't just the case in music you can apply this right across your school programme. (Greg (VL) 1, lines 30-34)

Greg (VL) has a warm personality and mixes easily with students and teachers. Her management philosophy demonstrates this.

> You know I'm very conscious that people have to be themselves in the classroom so I try and encourage students to find what is their own style...I talk about the primary management style that we were taught while we were at College. You know that you don't smile for the first six weeks, you know and you'd come down very heavily on the kids for a month or so and then you can pull back on that. And I make the point that for me it would be

> impossible not to smile for six weeks. I value children being comfortable in a class and I focus on a relationship model. (Greg (VL) 1, lines 63-72)

The School (Greg)

This is a 12 teacher, small town decile six school with 220 students, some kilometres from the university. The school was one of the original primary schools built in the town. It has large playing fields, a school hall, newly re-furbished office block and staffroom and spacious, brightly lit, tidy classrooms.

Greg has been placed in a year five and six class. The classroom itself is rectangularly shaped with desks in groups. There is a withdrawal area which has the class computer and at which children are often working independently. The children are from a range of lower-middle class backgrounds. As Greg (AT) is a senior teacher, there are a number of children with challenging learning and behavioural problems in the class.

Triad Three

The Student Teacher: Alan

Alan left school with an ambition to be a pilot. Unfortunately his eyesight was not good enough, and he was rejected. He decided to go to university for a year because he loved the sciences. To help pay his way through university, he began work at a supermarket where he was promoted to a manager's position. He was not totally satisfied with this career, and whilst on an Outward Bound course he resolved to try teaching.

> [on] the three days solo where you're left in the bush with a handful of nuts and raisins and an apple for three days ... I got to thinking "What do I like?" and I liked [scouts]. I was still going to [scouts] at the time and I was getting really involved with instruction and developing training programmes and all

> that sort of stuff ... and I thought, well even my Mum says I'm a pretty good teacher. Let's do it and ... yeah! (Alan 1, lines 71-77)

Since starting his pre-service teacher education, Alan has sought to have teaching practicum at as many different age levels as he could. These experiences have been important for different reasons.

> My very first posting shocked me. I got five year olds ... New Entrants. Most of them had just come into the school so we were learning together and I was terrified to step on them (laugh) And I did. I fell on one kid one day because he got behind me and I fell on him. The poor guy. He got squashed! But ... um ... I really grew to love that age group. They were really neat kids and they loved school that much, but they require a lot of attention and um and a lot of eyes in the back of your head, but they were just neat kids ... yeah! (Alan 1, lines 3-11)

Alan had an opportunity to work with an older age group in his second year.

> My first second year posting was at Intermediate and that was quite incredible. I enjoyed it a lot. I had the accelerate Form Two class ... bright kids. Most of them really got into their work and the others didn't require much prompting and I did some great work ... good learning ... did stuff they hadn't done before and just encouraging their independent work though I worked like a dog. There's a lot of planning required for that level and so it was hard work but very rewarding and I really enjoyed that. (Alan 1, lines 20-28)

Alan is pleased that he chose teaching as a career.

> There are days I go yes this is exactly what I want to do and there are other days I think: "What the hell are you doing here?" There's more where I'm happy than I'm not, and at Teachers College I've loved being at school again. I loved learning again and I've got hooked on science. (Alan 1, lines 78-81)

The Associate Teacher: Alan (AT)

Alan (AT) is an experienced classroom teacher who has had a number of student teachers over the last eight years, but Alan is her first third year student. She is currently completing further university study and has a clear idea of the demands on students such as Alan. She notes that the age of the student teachers is the only significant difference in these eight years:

> We've noticed that the last couple of years you've had more mature students who approach TE in a far more responsible and mature manner. The younger ones are still fairly young socially and do not really have the depth of knowledge of children, where as the more mature students certainly give it more ... ah ... knowledge and more understanding. For instance, the last two students I had, I had a young one and a more mature one who had been in the Army. Great fellow (laugh), and you could just see the difference. But of course you can't knock the young ones either. But the mature ones, they know exactly what they want to do and where they want to go. (Alan (AT) 1, 151-159)

Although this is a city school, Alan (AT) has taught in rural schools and with children at different school levels. She completed two workshops for associate teachers but this was eight years ago. Alan (AT) sees them as being important for those starting as associates, but she feels she has a sound understanding of the requirements. Alan (AT) rates the teaching practicum as important because the student teachers often have had limited contact with primary school children.

> Well I don't think that they can get any practical experience in College because they've got to actually work with young children and a lot of people at College haven't had a lot of experience with younger children or school age children. They may have had experience with younger brothers and sisters, but not perhaps at this age level and a lot of students come with just the experiences that they have had going through secondary school, which isn't near to the age level that we're teaching here ... and they come with a lot of vitality and enthusiasm which I think is very important ... it also means we can get a lot of young blood in our school with our children. (Alan (AT) 1, lines 18-26)

The Visiting Lecturer: Alan (VL)

Alan (VL) is a retired College of Education lecturer. He lectured educational studies for over 20 years prior to his retirement. His observations therefore cover a considerable period of time during which teacher education has gone through some major changes. He believes that one of the key values of the teaching practicum is that it confronts student teachers with a school culture that challenges their own value systems.

> Well one of the things that has always been quite obvious is that until recently most of the people that came here wanting to be teachers came from a middle-class background. They were children of professional or managerial people or mainly successful farmers who were people of status in their own district. They would come here ... salt-of-the-earth but with very middle-class values. And consequently a lot of them ... a lot of students found it very difficult to deal with situations where they were confronted with children from different cultural backgrounds ... particularly Maori children ... but increasingly children more of Pacific Islands descent ... um ... some schools of a working class district. Some children come to school with quite different expectations ... with quite different motivations ... and quite different ways of interacting ... quite different values and this is a real challenge to teachers who have to find first of all - and in their own minds - a way of just accepting this. Secondly a set of skills that might enable them to relate to these children ... and to help them learn. I see that as the kind of experience that people can talk about at college but can actually be only dealt with in schools. (Alan (VL) 1, 35-52)

The School (Alan)

This is a decile two, city school with a high proportion of Maori students. Most of the children come to school with significant learning needs. "Yes we're in a lower socio-economic area, so we have our own particular needs for our children ... but it is a very friendly and lively place ... so we have our own little culture here (laugh)" (Alan (AT), personal communication, 26 May, 2000). For Alan though, it was a considerable challenge.

> Everyone was saying, this is the toughest class, and the toughest school in the town, and if you survive you'll do okay, you'll be a good teacher. But, at the end of each day, I felt so dejected. You wondered if you ever wanted to teach again. (Alan 1, lines 20-23)

The class is a year five and six composite. There are 26 children. The school has six teachers currently, but it has, in the past, had considerably more children. Although the area is economically depressed, it is situated in a picturesque setting close to a river.

Triad Four

The Student Teacher: Kate

Kate came to university straight from secondary school. Physical education is her major curriculum study, but she is keen to develop her teaching knowledge and application in technology and Te Reo Maori on this practicum. Kate is a friendly, warm person who appears shy in new settings. But she is able to relate well with colleagues and has had successful practicum to date. Kate is concerned about her ability to control the class.

> My main goal is to have this class under control more ... work on my management strategies, reward system and getting the class running smoothly ... um ... You know basically, not to be such a wimp because usually I'm just too nice to kids and it doesn't work when I'm teaching them. (Kate 1, lines 12-16)

Kate is keen to be involved in the school sports programme, which happens every Friday afternoon in the school.

Although Kate saw the value of the teaching experience, she also viewed the university programme as being important in developing her knowledge and skills to be able to teach.

> The PIP days [one day placement practicums] I found really quite useful ... I know lots of people didn't like them but I found them really good, because you could concentrate on the curriculum and on the subject that you're teaching, rather than on the management issues. (Kate 1, lines 100-104)

Kate is hoping to travel when she graduates. She sees the practicum as a final major hurdle she has to overcome to becoming qualified, and does not plan to apply immediately for teaching jobs in New Zealand upon graduation.

The Associate Teacher: Kate (AT)

Kate (AT) is a senior teacher in the school. She has had extensive experience as an associate teacher. Kate (AT) has only recently moved to her new position of

responsibility, and Kate (ST) is the first third year student teacher that she has had at this school. However, Kate (AT) is confident in her ability to deal with student teachers. Although the *Block Posting Booklet* comes out before the student arrives, she said she briefly skims through it but relied on the student teacher to inform her of specific teaching tasks that are required.

> Having been an associate for over 10 years, I'm pretty confident of knowing what's required. There is a lot of guff in it (pause) and any rate the student has a pretty good idea of specific things. What you want to be able to do is support them through so they can be successful on their sole-charge and I've always worked pretty well with the visiting lecturer. (Kate (AT) 1, lines 19-24)

From Kate (AT)'s perception, the teaching practicum is critical in the education of a student teacher.

> To be honest, you can only do so much theory back at College. It's only when they get in front of a class that you can sort out whether a student is going to be successful on TE [teaching experience] and I'm not sure that they really get enough of it [teaching practicum]. (Kate (AT) 1, lines 35-39)

Kate (AT) has had considerable teaching experience and enjoys working with student teachers.

The Visiting Lecturer: Kate (VL)

Kate (VL) has been contracted as a senior tutor in educational studies for the past two years. Appraising student teachers on their practicum has been an important part of his role. Many of these have been students who had enrolled in the distance teacher education option, who did not attend internal classes at the College of Education but received their tuition via the Internet and written material.

Kate (VL) is an enthusiastic personality who loves visiting students on their practicum.

> I'm an enthusiast, so I enjoy it when I see the students who are enthusiastic, appear to like children and stuff like that. I've seen those sorts of lessons

> where they've thought about how they're going to get this thing across and they might be using models or stuff that they can hand round for the kids to look at and touch and use and those sorts of things. And then, on the flip side, you see things like a person sets up and uses the OHT and a third of the class can't see it or a really good example that I use with my students now is: I visited this class and it was a range of children from 5 year olds to 11 or something like that. And she said "Today we're going to have a person from the Fire Service coming in to talk to you. I want you to sit and listen quietly, and I want you to take notes so that you can ask them questions." And I thought 'Wow! There's something in the water here I'm dying to see these 5 year olds take notes." (Kate (VL) 1, lines 74-87)

He believes strongly that one of the key functions of a successful teacher is the ability of that person to establish positive relationships.

> I think that the relationships between the teacher and the children are far more important to me now than they were when I started... because I think if you can get, you can build a good relationship with a child, break down even some of the barriers that just exist, I think that you are more likely to be able to help that child learn and achieve the things you know, think that you ought to be doing. I think that if you distance yourself it's a very hard task and you run the risk of actually isolating a section of your class that you never reach. Once you work on relationships and work on ideas that you value, then I think if you can show them a little about yourself and how important you see it and how you get enjoyment from the same things. That 's what I mean by relationships. I think you have a very much easier job and the [problem of] classroom management, the behaviour management, it just disappears. (Kate (VL) 1, lines 201-219)

Kate (VL) began as a secondary school science specialist working in a year seven to year thirteen school. After period of time as a head of department, he became a university tutor in educational studies. He believes that this experience allows him to look at the teaching process through a different lens.

> I have the other perspectives so I'm quite happy looking at something in schools or classrooms from a Learning and Teaching perspective just as I am by looking at the interpretation of the class curriculum or how to teach Chemistry or Biology or whatever it is. And I think I personally benefit from having that educational side. (Kate (VL) 1, lines 231-235)

The School (Kate)

This is one of the original primary schools in this city. It serves one of the first state housing projects established in the city so many of the children are from lower-middle

socio-economic class. The school has a decile rating of three, has 150 children on the roll and employs seven teachers. It has had an extensive refurbishment and the children in this class are in a new open plan style building with a number of well-equipped withdrawal rooms. As is typical of the primary schools of this area, there is a large playing field area with an adventure playground.

Kate (ST) is placed in a composite year five and six class with 21 students. The associate teacher describes the class:

> I had the class from hell last year, and these ones are pussy cats by comparison, and there's only 21 of them. The difficult kids are the same sort of difficult kids that you find anywhere. Um ... two ADHD's [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder] out of the four, but they're pretty, pretty tiring really. But then I have been teaching awhile. (Kate (AT) 2, lines 33-38)

Triad Five

The Student Teacher: Mary

Mary is a mature student who had to be convinced that she would make a good teacher. She had left school to become a hairdresser as soon as she could and never believed that she had the academic ability to become a primary school teacher. But the kindergarten teacher, with whom she worked as a teacher aide, encouraged her and even gathered the enrolment forms for her. She said it took her three months before she had the courage to apply. Prior to enrolling she had been going to night school to improve her written English. Even when she had been accepted, she felt it took considerable courage on her part to attend university.

> It took me three attempts to get into College though. I mean like I went in my car. I stopped and I thought "I'm too scared." And I went back to my car. (laugh) I was so scared and I thought I don't know where to go and I don't know what to do ... and I bet they'll ask me to write things up on the board, and I won't be able to spell. Finally I thought they might be as scared as me and I followed whoever I thought might know where they were going ... and I got to class and I went to Te Reo Maori and I thought "I can't do that" and left the class crying, but I've got to third year. (Mary 1, lines 163-171)

Despite expressing her feeling of inadequacy, Mary has been very successful in her programme. She enjoys communicating with people and is not shy about engaging with the parents and teaching colleagues about the progress of her programme and the students that she is teaching. Nor is she reluctant to ask for help, and she actively seeks advice.

Mary has a particular passion for the arts and enjoys drama and dance. She ran a dance programme in the lunchtime for the children:

> I said, could we do it in the lunch break and ... I did it and I did it when I could, and a lot of the time I had to do it in the classroom and it wasn't good, because the desks were in there. They wouldn't give me the space to do it, but I wouldn't let that bother ... oh .. and they didn't have a stereo, and I brought my own stereo ... And what happened was the other children around the school did hear that I was doing dance and when I did it in the Hall, people ... the kids from um ... the J1 you know, very new entrants right through to the other end of the school would come and dance. (Mary 2, lines 428-440)

The Associate Teacher: Mary (AT)

Mary (AT) had considerable experience as an associate teacher. She has had third year students for the last 12 years of her primary school teaching. Mary (AT) believes that the teaching practicum is a critical component of the preparation of teachers. She sees her relationship with the student teacher as being a collegial one. Mary (AT) enjoys providing feedback throughout the day:

> I don't really like that system in the book where it says 'arrange for talking to your AT' ... We just talk all the time. Every lunch hour, every day after school. I like a co-operative approach so that it is on-going talking, on going planning every day and then feedback. I just like it to happen naturally. We sit together in my room. That's why I set it up like this (indicates 2 desks side by side). We work at lunchtimes together. We work after school together. (Mary (AT) 1, lines 52-59)

Mary (AT) is quietly spoken but has a warm personality, and this is reflected in the classroom environment that she sets. She notes the increasing demands of university courses intruding into the practicum.

> The other thing that worries me a bit about the third year posting is the assignment load that the students still have. They all do a really hard job in the classroom, but they're loaded with just so much out of classroom study, that I don't think it's fair. (Mary (AT) 1, lines 18-21)

The Visiting Lecturer: Mary (VL)

Prior to coming to take up a position in the College of Education, Mary (VL) was a successful primary school teacher for 20 years. She enjoys visiting student teachers and views the practicum as very valuable. However, she sees gaps in the preparation of the student teachers going out on teaching practicum.

> I think that they need more hands on things that they can use... more of the core curriculum things. Because some of them when they get there for example don't really know what they are doing. (Mary (VL) 1, lines 8-12)

Mary (VL) lectures in the curriculum studies component of the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary. She has particular interest in Maori students and provides support for the student teachers' Te Reo programmes in schools. Mary (VL) finds that often when Maori students go out on their practicum that:

> Once they get out into the schools the teachers in a way assume "oh they're doing Maori. I'll get into doing this big Maori unit" and then of course panic sets in because they are not quite ready for it (laugh). (Mary (VL) 1, lines 73-76)

Mary (VL) believes that the practicum in the third year is an important assessment time for student teachers, but she also sees herself as an important advocate for the student.

> Well, this is their final and really most important practice, the teaching experience, and I think to go in as a lecturer, I mean there are associates out there who would crucify some of our students and I think they need us there as lecturers to put their side. (Mary (VL) 2, lines 72-76)

Mary (VL) believes that her friendship with teaching colleagues has been important in helping her to maintain links with primary schools and to be aware of the impact of educational developments for classroom practitioners.

The School (Mary)

This is an integrated primary school. It is a decile ten school of 237 students situated in a middle-higher socio-economic area of the city. It has 10 teachers and, at the time of this practicum, was undergoing major re-furbishment of the office block and the junior school classrooms. In comparison to other schools in the city, the playing field area was smaller and there was no adventure playground.

The junior classrooms were open plan, and two teachers team-taught at the year one level. Mary had a class of 22 children. There were no significant behaviour problems in the class, and the children seemed keen to learn and to please the teacher.

Triad Six

The Student Teacher: Simon

Simon had spent two years at university before deciding to become a primary school teacher. He has majored in physical education and is a competent sportsman. Although Simon gives an air of being calm and controlled, he has found that juggling his university commitments, part-time work and sport demanding.

> Every night you're doing something when you're teaching. You've got planning all night and stuff like that. Where as when you're at College you've only got two or three classes a day or sometimes one you know and everything's done by four or fiveish. You know … I don't think the workload's that big at Teachers College if you actually pull your finger out you can get done easily. (Simon 1, lines 102-107)

Although Simon has enjoyed his teaching practicum, he looks forward to the end of it so that he can return to his peers and the university lifestyle.

The Associate Teacher: Simon (AT)

This is the first third year student teacher that Simon (AT) has had. She is only in her second year of teaching but is very committed to her chosen career and has recently begun post-graduate study. Simon (AT) is able to clearly articulate the characteristics of a successful student teacher.

> Be able to ask questions, reflect on what he does and look at ways to act on that reflection. Show initiative...have a broad range of strategies to cope with different styles of learning and different environments for teaching. Show an understanding of the planning, evaluation, assessment cycle...to show that you can assess where kids are at and know what to do about it. (Simon (AT) 1, lines 140-145)

Simon (AT) takes her responsibilities as an associate teacher seriously. She has read the *Block Posting Booklet* thoroughly. Simon (AT) feels she has the ability to relate well with the student teachers because she has recently graduated. She sees clear links between the university programme and the practicum.

> I'm a big believer in the theory. You need to have an understanding of the theory before you can understand the practical. And I think it [the practicum] is invaluable because it's the chance that you have in front of the kids to try things and see what works and what doesn't work. (Simon (AT) 1, lines 132-138)

The Visiting Lecturer: Simon (VL)

Simon (VL) is a curriculum studies lecturer but has strong links to the educational studies papers. She identifies connections between a conceptual understanding of learning and teaching theory and the practice of teaching. This is based not only on her research and study, but also her experience as a primary school teacher where she was herself an associate teacher.

> The other course that I teach is an Educational Psychology paper ...but I find that really useful from my link about "How to create effective learning" and when I talk to students...I find it a great strength to call on some of that literature that says "See how you had those kids focussed ... you know ...

> could you see what you were doing?" And I can bring in some of the theory and the link to their strategy and I find that really useful for me to know I can call on rather than just the curriculum studies body. (Simon (VL) 1, lines 63-70)

On occasions Simon (VL) has struggled with the role of the visiting lecturer.

> I must admit I do sometimes feel a bit of a fraud going in there. I sometimes think "Who are you to think (laugh) that you can help someone?" But then when I do see them "Oh yeah there are a few things I can tell you here." But that's probably just my personality ... I think, "Who are you to say these things?" Don't ever feel so arrogant that you know it all and because you're in a position where you're helping a student along that continuum I sometimes fear people saying "Who does she think she is?" And would I be able to cope if I went back into the classroom? (Simon (VL) 1, lines 63-70)

Despite these occasional concerns, Simon (VL) has worked with third year student teachers for a number of years and sees her role as a "coach and adviser to the student teacher rather than a judge." (Simon (VL) 1, lines 7-10)

The School (Simon)

This is a 30-teacher primary school with a roll of 514 students. It enjoys the status of a *normal* school. These were originally identified by the Ministry of Education as "model schools" and charged with the responsibility to work closely with the six original Colleges of Education as preferred sites for pre-service teacher education. Consequently the staff is automatically paid an additional salary increment for their role as associate teachers and the school recovers substantial additional funding as a *normal* school. Thus, a large number of third year student teachers are placed here on this practicum.

This is a small satellite class of 19 students but they are part of a syndicate of other year three and four classes. This means that on occasion, Simon may be teaching 38 students. This is a decile 10 school so the children come from a middle-upper socio-economic background. The school is very well resourced and equipped.

Topic Coding

Once the data from the first round of interviews had been collected, the transcript and notes were analysed. A number of categories emerged and have been described in the previous section. These were explored in terms of: the individual participant; his or her role in the triad as either a student teacher, a visiting lecturer or an associate teacher; and between members of each of the groups of six student teachers or visiting lecturers or associate teachers. The process for managing this analysis is termed "a node search" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p.232). As discussed previously, nodes are the containers for ideas that represent categories for thinking whether they are concepts, topics, tentative interpretations or demographic information.

Initial attempts were made to classify the data into units of meaning and to begin preliminary coding. Whilst coding these initial interviews, it was also important to maintain a sense of holism and to view the data as stories of each participant's journey towards this major teaching practicum.

The transcripts and preliminary descriptions of the coding were shared with the participants. They were invited to make amendments to any of their comments and perceptions. Most were surprised at the poor grammatical structures of their written transcripts. However, they were assured that oral interviews do not translate directly into well-structured prose. It was more important that their ideas and observations were recorded accurately, and that no single perception was either under-stated or over-emphasised. A number made minor editorial changes, but essentially the participants were satisfied that the written transcripts fairly represented their views.

The second round of interviews occurred two months later at the end of the practicum. The purpose of these interviews was to examine the participants' perceptions of their role and progress over the practicum. It was to capture, in their

words and from their perspective, their story of the third year teaching practicum. Prior to interviewing each participant, the interviewer read the summary sheet of the first interview. Summaries were made of each interview based on the transcripts and interview notes. A second coding pattern evolved from analysis of the first round and the second round of interviews. The written, formal reports of the visiting lecturers and associate teachers were gathered. These were analysed and coded. Because the reports followed a specific format, the initial coding categories matched this format. By using the computer software package QSR Qualitative Research N6, the two coding systems were blended. This allowed for regrouping and shaping data and, finally, collapsing and realigning data into the single coding system. The volume of interview and written report data was substantial and presented considerable challenges for interpretation and analysis.

The metaphor used by QSR Qualitative Research N6 is the symbol of a tree's branches or roots. "The root system becomes finer as it branches from the centre structures, with the accompanying analogy that the information becomes more specific, local and unique" (Taylor, p. 170, 1998). The data are stored from the original document or transcribed notes and interviews through a system of highlighting the information and attaching a code to it from either a pre-existing code scheme or through the creation of codes.

Topic coding gathers materials together that identify patterns in the responses of participants. In analysing these topics the researcher can often identify further sub-categories of this topic and because

> data documents are multi-faceted... any passage will involve several, even many, topics, so topic coding is not merely sorting them into discrete heaps... you will need to copy a passage as many times as there are categories you wish to code at, and finding patterns in that coding then becomes a challenge (p.112, Morse & Richards, 2002).

From these patterns, key abstractions or themes emerge as the research seeks to identify meaning from the data. As a result of analysis of the transcripts from the second round of interviews, the original nodes and emerging categories were further refined (see Table Three) using search tools. These categories were drawn from coding the transcripts into 91 free nodes. The categories at this stage were very raw and still needed considerable refinement.

However, key themes were beginning to be constructed. The primary learning outcome of the practicum was for the student teachers to demonstrate that they were able to assume the responsibilities and teaching tasks of a Year One primary school teacher. Therefore a fundamental question was: What did the student teacher learn from the practicum? Hence the theme: *The learning of the student teacher*. In examining this theme, further themes were identified. Firstly, it became very apparent that the practicum was not simply a technical, cognitive experience for the student teachers, but an emotional journey. Most of them identified it as a very stressful experience in which they had to demonstrate considerable amounts of resilience to survive the practicum. Secondly, all the participants saw the interface between the knowledge gained from the university programme and that gained in a classroom context as complex and problematic. Finally, the nature of the working relationships established between each member of the triad was a third theme.

One group of search tools is labelled "Boolean searches". The Boolean searches are similar to logic and Venn diagram mathematical processes. Some of these searches allow the researcher to identify text units that belong to combinations of nodes and in the process to make links between the categories identified by particular nodes.

Table 3
Initial Categories from the Transcripts

Categories	Definitions
Learning of ST	Growth & development in the teaching role
Survival	Management issues Stress associated with practicum Workload associated with practicum
Theory to practice	Bridging university programme & school Feedback from AT & VL to ST ST's knowledge of the curriculum/subject ST's pedagogical knowledge & practice ST's knowledge of the students, classroom & social context of the practicum
Year One teacher	ST's readiness to become a Year 1 teacher
- Resilience	ST's capacity to overcome challenges & ability to cope with practicum
- Passion	ST's commitment & belief in the teaching task
- Modelling	Learning from the teaching role models of ATs & other teachers
Relationships:	
- OTE	Interactions between staff of OTE & participants
- ST & other staff	Interactions between ST & other teachers
- Other STs	Interactions between ST & other STs
- Parents	Interactions between ST & parents
Practicum	Function of practicum in professional preparation of ST *Structure* Length & timing of TE5 *Placement* ST selection for a particular class *Selection* of AT & VL *Nature* Characteristics of class
Roles:	
- ST	Student teacher characteristics ST's perception of the role & development of ST ST's perception of the role & function of AT ST's perception of the role & function of VL
- VL	Visiting Lecturer's experience & characteristics VL's perception of the role & function of VL VL's perception of the development of ST VL's perception of the role & function of AT Professional development of the VL
- AT	Associate teacher's experience & characteristics AT's perception of the role & function of VL AT's perception of the development of ST AT's perception of the role & function of AT Professional development of the VL

One of the examples of a Boolean search enables the researcher to identify only the text that is coded at selected nodes. This is termed *an intersection search* and, for example, if the nodes "Student teacher learning" and "Planning" were selected then only the text units coded at these nodes would be identified.

As has been noted, a central question of the research was to identify what the student teacher learned on the practicum. In analysing this question it was important to examine perceptions gathered in a range of other nodes. An interesting picture began to emerge when the intersection of the node "Learning" [student teacher learning] was analysed with other nodes. A framework to examine these relationships was formulated. Three broad categories were identified:

1. the emotional nature of the teaching practicum;
2. the practicum as situated learning; and
3. the practicum as a professional learning community. (See Table 4)

The Emotional Nature of the Teaching Practicum

It became very obvious from the second round of interviews that the practicum was a strong emotional experience for all the participants, but in particular, the student teachers. By using the *intersection* search, it was possible to identify the relationships between the student teacher's learning and a number of emotional parameters.

Learning intersected with passion for teaching.

For a number of the visiting lecturers and associate teachers, a successful student teacher was one who had a 'passion' for teaching.

> I: What things do you look for in their teaching then?
> VL: Their attitude for a start. The focus is really clear. They know what they're there for and they love it you know. They know what they are doing. (Mary (VL) 2, lines 29-33)

Table 4
Themes

Themes	**Definitions**
1. The emotional nature of the practicum	*Teaching is an emotional practice*
- Resilience	ST's ability to persist & cope with challenges of teaching
- Survival	Stress associated with practicum
- Passion	ST's commitment & belief in the teaching task
2. Situated learning practice	*Applied learning in school context*
- Modelling	Learning from the At & other teachers
- Theory to practice	Bridging the university programme and the school
- Collaboration	Working relationships between AT, VL & ST
- The class	The characteristics & demographics of the pupils
- The school	The characteristics & demographics of the school
- The practicum	The structure, length & nature of the practicum
3. Professional learning community	*A community of professional practice*
Professional collaboration - ST with VL - ST with AT - AT with VL	Shared values and expectations of the practicum through professional conversations and de-privatising practice

This view was shared by Diane's associate who believed that the passion teachers have for their job is readily communicated to the children and parents.

> When I was at the "Kids for Kids" concert, one of the parents from our school said to the Principal "that guy's got a passion for teaching eh." And that's what I think your associate teachers need. (Diane (AT) 2, lines 201-204)

A number of the student teachers communicated a passion for teaching particular curriculum areas:

> Yeah ... I like to teach science if I can. I'll grab it with both hands ... I also think that it's given me a sort of scientific way of thinking ... and so ... it's made my approach to teaching very systematic ... especially things like maths and science... even reading. I teach it systematically and get them to try and learn the process and not just the knowledge, so that they can pick it up. It's above some kids and it's frustrating because I'm sitting there thinking 'It's so easy' ... (laugh). I can't explain it to you any other way ... and so it's a real mental gymnastics to think 'How are you thinking so I can try and explain it to you?' And, I've learned the value of prior assessment ... the sciences have got to be based on what the kids know already ... and I'm using that in other areas which is good. (Alan (1), lines 103-115)

Mary was passionate about dance and wanted to teach a unit to her class. The only opportunity to do this was in the lunch break. As a result of her work with the junior class, they performed for the rest of the school.

> Yeah ... they performed here, and they just clapped so loud. I said to them, you know, there are two things I want from you. I said to them, 'before you go on stage, one, I want you to really enjoy yourself and have lots and lots of fun okay? Yes ... okay, so go out there ... and if you do, they are going to clap their heads off.' 'Mrs M, they clapped their heads off' ... (laugh). (Mary 2, lines 455-460)

However, not all the student teachers shared the same passion to teach. Greg indicated his enjoyment of teaching as long as he did not have to continually face difficult classes.

> I went into teaching to teach kids, to help, to learn, to have fun, with them and for me, so I would enjoy it. I don't think I would enjoy coming to school year after year and having a difficult class. I would just say forget it. I mean, I'm quite happy with getting another job. My associate gets the tough class every year I mean, I'm enjoying these kids this time, but if I had tough kids all the time oh ... well I'd get another job. (Greg 2, lines 95-100)

Learning intersected with resilience for teaching

Another emotional state closely related to "passion" is the notion of "resilience". It is characterised by an ability to persevere in the difficult and challenging circumstances of classroom teaching. Diane commented on the demanding nature of the interactions in her classroom. She observed that by being able to persevere and remain resilient, she felt empowered to deal with any difficult class setting she may face in the future:

> For sure ... that is the reason why it rated so highly on the learning scale because I've seen the reality out there in our schools. It's not all rosy and you are not always going to get a class of lovely Juniors who think that you are just wonderful. That you are going to get children who are tough, who are rough, who are going to talk back to you, who are going to disrespect you, but it is just a way of life and we have to deal with it, and it has taught me you know, pretty much that, yeah, just wake up, it's not all rosy, but, you can deal with it. (Diane 2, lines 725-732)

Simon's visiting lecturer noted a significant growth in him, particularly as he realised that he was in control of the teaching situation.

> I did see huge progress in those goals, particularly confidence um ... at the end I remember saying to Simon I believed that he'd made progress and that responsibility again was being handed to him, he felt more in control, not only of his teaching, but of his professional development. (Simon (VL) 2, lines 46-52)

The practicum was very stressful for most of the student teachers. Both the associates and the visiting lecturers acknowledged this. Alan's associate made the observation:

> I: Do you think Alan was coping?
> AT: At times, at times he got quite down, but at times he was coping. He had good days, when things went really well, and I praised him up about those good days and said, well, what made that so good, what worked, and he could answer me okay ... but it wasn't necessarily put into practice the following day the same way or sometimes children come in and there'd been some argument or something's happened and it changes things. (Alan (AT) 2, lines 412-419)

The practicum was an emotional roller coaster, which was complicated by the experiences of the children in the class. As Alan's associate relates, if there had been

an argument or fight in the playground those emotional tensions would be brought into the classroom.

Learning intersected with survival

Most of the student teachers felt the pressure to succeed and they endured considerable anxiety over the period of the practicum. In fact, there was a sense of relief at surviving the practicum. Diane used the term survival to express her feelings:

> I would rate it, say a 10 on what I've learned that I can do and that I survived a big thing in my life, that I thought that I might not get. (Diane 2, lines 616-617)

And Kate related, "On the last day I was pretty relieved it was all over but I think I learnt an awful lot, you know." (Kate 2, lines 2-4). Clearly the practicum was a stressful time for Alan, and it focused primarily on behavioural management.

> It was really quite hard. In my second year, the most stressful stuff was getting the planning done, getting the assessment done, all the paper work. That was the hard bit. On this one the most stressful bit was keeping those tough kids learning. The other stuff came quite naturally, which was good. (Alan 2, lines 397-401)

In a similar way, Diane expressed the stress she felt and the hope she could simply survive the practicum.

> Very high stress levels, very high... I think it all depends on the class. I mean, I went home, I couldn't wait for three o'clock, and, each morning "Oooo, 3 o'clock can't come soon enough"... And it was a terrible way to be for 4 weeks. The first 3 weeks wasn't like that at all but, you know, the next 4 weeks it was kind of like, lets just get this stage over with, I'll go home. Yeah ... so it is very high stress levels. (Diane 2, lines 510-515)

Management and class control was a very dominant theme, which came through all of the interviews and was extensively commented on by all three triad groups. The issue of class control was a central concern.

> I think in terms of keeping control, which seems to be a major focus for third years. I think they're terrified that they'll lose control when they go out

> teaching. So they're very focussed on organisation strategies trying to keep the boat sailing in the right direction. (Diane (VL) 2, lines 179-182)

All of the members of the triad commented on the development of management skills and the growth in learning in this area by the student teachers.

> This class presented all sorts of new behavioural management problems, that I've never encountered before, and I spent so much time on behavioural management ... I sometimes really did feel that at the end of the day, that I hadn't done anything. I'd wonder, and I'd actually have to sit back and think, have I taught anything today, have they learnt anything today. And although they usually did it was really hard to figure out what it was. (Alan 2, lines 8-13)

What did the student teachers learn about behaviour management?

> Behavioural management is all about knowing what you'll accept ... the techniques or control vary for each person ... the most important part is what behaviour you'll accept ... and this is the bit I found hard, and making that expectation clear to the student so they know where their boundaries are, and that's the bit I struggled with. (Alan 2, lines 29- 34)

Situated Learning

The practicum was located in a school and classroom context, and so it became apparent that student teachers were keen to identify what would enable them to achieve success in the classroom. Each class was a unique community of practice that had evolved routines and ways of working that the student teachers had to adapt to. They did this by observing their associates and by interacting with the pupils and teachers over the period of the practicum.

Learning intersected with modelling of teaching.

From the outset of the practicum, the student teachers needed to identify the routines and practices of their associates. By modelling the teaching approach, the associate provided a blueprint for the student teacher to follow. By examining the intersection

of these two nodes, the impact of the modelling on the learning of the student teacher was identified. For example, Diane began by trying to adopt the teaching strategy of her associate.

> I will follow my own associate's strategy because I don't want to break the routine of the class. But ... if it's not working for me... I'd like to put in some of my own strategies. And I am quite flexible with behaviour management. (Diane 1, lines 204-207)

Towards the end of the practicum, the associate teacher's approach was clearly not working for her.

> I feel that I was trying too hard to stay within the limits of L.'s teaching, and to conform to his style, which really ruined me. (laugh) Because I, you know, I had to be my own person and the two of us are so different...it was very hard juggling both styles. (Diane 2, lines 87-91)

This was reflected by one of the visiting lecturers who observed:

> People have to be themselves in the classroom so I try and encourage students to find what is their own style ... what sits comfortably with who they are as a person and you know ... I talk about the primary management style that we were taught while we were at College ... you know that you don't smile for the first six weeks...and you'd come down very heavily on the kids for a month or so and then you can pull back on that. And I make the point that for me it would be impossible not to smile for six weeks and um ... things I value about children being comfortable in a class and trusting you have to show the teacher as a human being ... and I focus on a model which may not pull these kids immediately into line but because I have a relationship with them I find that they respond to that and they like to do what's going to work well in the classroom and maybe that's a management style ... that occurs over time in your own classroom rather than going in on the first day and laying down the law ... so I guess those sorts of things probably very much reflect the sorts of classrooms I had when I was teaching. (Greg (VL) 1, lines 64-80)

Similarly, one of the associate teachers noted that her student teacher probably under-estimated the groundwork that under-pinned the teaching approach of the associate.

> One of the mistakes that we made for this student the first time around, was that she saw the way I managed the class, and thought that I was really laid back and casual. She hadn't realised that there was already a lot of work that had gone in to get the class to the point that I could just be relaxed with them. And so, she came in was relaxed and casual, and of course they just about ate her alive. (Kate (AT) 2, lines 40-46)

The model associate teachers provided could not be mimicked by the student teacher, and the students often adapted and modified these teaching behaviours.

> ST: She used sarcasm a lot more than I do because she could pull it off because she knew them so well. But um ... yeah ...
> I: What do you mean by sarcasm?
> ST: Oh ... she's got sort of an um ... I don't know ... she's got quite a different sense of humour and the kids really respond to that. But I wasn't going to try and do that because ... it wasn't quite me...
> I: So what sorts of things did you do differently?
> ST: Hmmm ... I think I did sport a little bit differently to what she would have done. Bit more experimenting with and just modelling and getting them to copy it, a bit more of that sort of thing. (Kate 2, lines 58-68)

An element of frustration was noted amongst two of the student teachers. They were eager to assume full responsibility for the class, but they felt restricted by the directives of the associate teacher. This statement is evidence of that.

> It's also hard to show initiative and not be seen as too pushy. To be forward and asking to do things without being 'in their face', you know. It's really hard because you're stepping into their ways of doing things. If you're eager you don't want to be all the time "Why are you doing this? Et cetera". (Mary 1, lines 191-194)

However, the associate teacher often provided an expert model of a successful teaching approach that was not fully appreciated until the student teachers had been required to maintain a period of sustained sole responsibility for the class.

> Yeah ... and I think she had a tendency to be bit more ... maybe expect more from certain children. Now she had really higher expectations than my expectation... because if they can get away with it, they will and she didn't let any get away with it. She really made them um ... responsible for their own behaviour so they would have to explain exactly what they'd done wrong, how they could improve it. (Simon 2, lines 350-360)

Planning and the ability to organise lessons is important for the management of teaching and student teachers often follow the model and advice of their associate teachers. Diane had made the comment that this was an important goal for her and she saw it as a characteristic of a successful practicum. However, she identified flexibility as another key characteristic, particularly when the unpredictable occurred:

I: What do you think characterises a good TE?
ST: Planning! Are you planned? Are you prepared throughout the posting? Are you in control? Do you know what you're doing or do you come in there thinking "Oh wow ... today ... I think you know ... you need to be flexible on the TP. You can't go in there expecting to do one thing and that if it doesn't go your way you end up pulling your hair out. It doesn't work that way. Yesterday I had a police woman ... we're doing a Road Safety unit ... she was supposed to be coming in yesterday so I left the whole afternoon for her. She said "No I'm coming on Friday." Well that's fine. You do something else in that slot. (Diane 1, lines 174-188)

Kate's visiting lecturer identified that planning was an important achievement in her development as a teacher: "I saw um ... her ability to plan a unit and see it through and you know, her individual lessons and stuff" (Kate (VL) 2, lines 179-180). To successfully plan the student teacher needed to be aware of the needs of the learners and the contexts in which the learning would occur. Simon observed that his ability to organise and plan lessons had grown over the period of the practicum, although he remained concerned about his ability to assess pupil learning:

> Just getting my class up and running smoothly routines put in place and stuff like that, and also, the whole sort of planning, teaching, assessments ...quite a bit of help with that. The planning side and teaching side doesn't bother me, but the assessment's still a little bit of a worry. (Simon 2, lines 313-317)

Initially Greg's visiting lecturer was concerned at the depth of detail in his planning: "I was a little bit concerned about his planning, it was a bit sketchy and so ... I didn't get a sense of the focus of what he wanted to teach, how he was going to do it" (Greg (VL) 2, lines 24-26). She was keen that his planning made explicit his learning intentions for the lesson. Experienced teachers may not model the detailed planning expected of the student teachers:

AT: The way students plan is always an area of concern for me, because it's not practical.
I: So what do you mean by that?
AT: I guess it's the way they're taught to plan at Teacher's College, where they write down every single question ... You can't plan like that when you've got eleven curriculum areas to plan for and they don't seem to

> know how to scale the unit plan down into how you actually teach daily lessons, and you write that out in a diary ... and just being given a format that will do for all subject areas and things like that. It's something that they don't seem to be shown. But we've had a woman working here in the extension programme whose going to be doing some professional education aspects at College with the third year students and planning with them in a practical way is something she intends to focus on. (Kate (AT) 2, lines 121-139)

In contrast to this perspective, Diane's associate expected that she would plan fully, even though he may not model this.

> And then I just look at her planning and say that's not enough and she'll say it's virtually modelled on mine. And I'll say, "I've been teaching a lot longer than you, and I know what I'm doing at the introduction of the unit." I said "I've got my unit and basically what you need to do is your unit ... Some people know that, here's the objective here's the learning outcome, here's the activities, the activities in the daily planner. I've done all that now I'm going to instigate the assessment and evaluation. (Diane (AT) 2, lines 141-151)

Clearly, there is a major difference between the planning formats the associate teachers model and the planning expected of the student teachers. The student teachers are encouraged to articulate the processes by which they make decisions. This enables their practical knowledge to be examined and shared publicly.

Learning intersected with theory-into-practice

Many of the associates felt that one of the primary purposes of the university programme was to develop, not only the student teacher's knowledge of planning, but also the student's knowledge of subject content and, in particular, knowledge of the New Zealand Curriculum. Greg made the comment:

> One of the teachers is an expert [in mathematics], so luckily you get some support from her. Um ... I've done extension maths at College but a lot of the ideas are just my own ... the library is probably full of books but I (a) haven't got the time, I'm just trying to learn everything else, sometimes you feel like your heads just you know what, popping with new ideas. You haven't got time to go and read five maths books to help you. R [the AT] indicated that here's some good stuff but with the remedial kids I've just been doing my own ... my own thing. I mean, back to the thing ... my problem was ... like for next year I'm a bit worried that I won't know where

> all the good resources are if I'm not in a situation where there's good syndicate feeling. (Greg 2, lines 35-46).

In contrast to Greg's observation, however, his associate observed that he had a sound grasp of the curriculum:

> Of the curriculums that we focused on ... maths, social studies, English, just to name three, ah ... he knew what he was talking about. With our maths, he had a general idea of the, of the achievement objectives, and - we have a cyclic approach- and learning outcomes for each of the objectives, and he very quickly came to terms with those, and figured out what they were and steps that he could take to head towards them. Quite conversant with the English AOs [Achievement Objectives] and the same with Social Studies. (Greg (AT) 2, lines 91-98)

Although student teachers may complete extra study in key areas, as Greg did, nevertheless, they feel inadequately prepared in translating this theoretical knowledge into planning and resources for their teaching in the classroom.

Kate's associate teacher was impressed with the enthusiasm and fresh perspectives she brought to the classroom:

> Just a willingness to get in and give things a go. She's been exceptional with gymnastics which we've done, because that's a particular strength of hers and valuable. And she's just had, like a lot of young teachers coming through, she's just had some really new fresh ideas. (Kate (AT) 2, lines 101-104)

Student teachers noted that they knew more clearly what they needed from their university programme when they resumed their final semester after completing the practicum. Diane identified:

> Okay. I'm actually quite happy with my subjects for this semester, I'm doing a drama subject. I'm doing a Special Education Diverse Abilities paper. I really would like to learn a lot more about that. I feel that that paper is given to us too late, cause it's really practical. I had children with Special Needs in my class that I knew nothing about ... They should have been given to me in the second year or prior to posting ... I'd like to learn a bit more in my special area, music. I'd pretty much from now on be concentrating on completing my papers and absorbing as much as possible. (Diane 2, lines 660-670)

Alan noted that the follow-up support in the university programme was:

> Hugely critical really. That's the time to affirm all the good things that have gone on, and I think that's really valuable for a student to learn and hear. For me, if I was the student teacher to come, and you say hey, I've got some great reports from two people, your associate and your visiting lecturer, I think that would be really affirming of, for my continued belief in myself ... or if there are particular things I need to work on for you at that moment to say clearly, these are the issues you still need to work on, you've passed these learning outcomes but clearly these are your goals still to work ... yeah ... I think these are valuable. (Alan 2, lines 484-493)

However, Diane's visiting lecturer didn't share the perspectives of the students. Her perception was that final year student teachers were eager to get the opportunity to have their own classroom:

> And then I get third years in the second semester. They're tired they've been to their major teaching practice and all they want to do is to get through this last semester course and get out there and teach please. (Diane (VL) 2, lines 145-150).

Learning intersected with collaboration

As Mary observed, the relationship between the student teacher and the associate teacher can have a significant bearing on the success or otherwise of the practicum. The associates are working on a daily, intensive basis with the student teacher. As Alan observed:

> The visiting lecturer only sees a snapshot even if they visit a lot. So yesterday he caught me on a bad day ... and so although it was great feedback, he's not there every day and ... so things like [AT] she sees all the little things ... like I like the kids doing a lot of group work ... bounce ideas off each other ... but I've tried it and it's failed and [AT] has said "yes they're just not mature enough for it. Try it in little doses and build it up." So that's the sort of thing a visiting lecturer wouldn't see. They don't quite know the children. (Alan 2, lines 179-187)

Most of the student teachers received their feedback in informal conversations with their associates. Alan's example was typical.

> I: How did she provide feedback?
> ST: At the end of a lesson or at the end of the day she said, "how do you think that went?" And it just happened in normal conversation where you almost weren't aware that this was a feedback process. And it

> made it really relaxed and really comfortable. It made me feel comfortable that I could say: "that didn't go well, what do I do next time?" "I'm not enjoying this, this isn't good, what do I do to make it better?" And in some cases the feedback was super helpful and changes in the class were dramatic. (Alan 2, lines 170-181)

The feedback was characterised as conversational, low key and supportive. There was a desire to establish an honest, collegial atmosphere in which the student teachers received sound practical advice, particularly ideas that helped them to operate successfully in the classroom.

> Always before I've gone on section I've come in and visited my associate and made myself known. I come in and I say "I don't care if you tell me anything, please be honest. If I make a mistake tell me." ... I want them to tell me when I mess up, when I do things well, why, and in all these things you only find out by experience. I use my associate to pinch their ideas. To pinch their planning, they take some of mine um ... It's building up a collegial relationship. (Greg 2, lines 99-105)

This approach was favoured by most of the associate teachers. They liked to model teaching approaches that they used with their classes. They also preferred to provide oral feedback and talk through issues with their student teachers in informal settings.

> I think that it is very important to be a model. I enjoy in the first week or so modelling. I try and model all the different ways we do things ... like how we approach a story-writing session or how we organise our reading. All those sort of things before I expect the student teachers to start teaching themselves. And I don't expect them to do everything like I do but it gives them a guideline ... it gives them the routines and the methods of how we approach things and how we use things like the personal dictionaries ... I mean every school's different but it gives them the continuity for the children. The other thing is ... I don't really like that system in the book where it says "arrange for talking to your AT". We just talk all the time ... Every lunch hour, every day after school. I like a co-operative approach so that it is on-going talking, on-going planning every day and then feedback. I just like it to happen naturally. We sit together in my room. That's why I set it up like this [indicates two desks side by side] we work at lunchtimes together. We work after school together. (Mary (AT) 1, lines 42-59)

One of the associates had a very laissez-faire approach and left the student teacher essentially alone most of the day.

> She usually popped in every now and then, like sometimes in between transitions ... between reading and maths and stuff. Check how I'm going ...

> always sort of talk at um ... morning tea time and lunchtime as well. (Kate (2), lines 136-140)

Most of the student teachers were keen to have the space to try out teaching ideas on their own. Mary was desperate to do as much teaching as she could and she had ideas she wanted to try out. She struggled to establish a sound working relationship with her associate:

> Well she's very different from me. She is very, very quiet and very much, I would say, old school. She's got her views about things. Children shouldn't do this in sport, and they shouldn't ... um ... and she's got quite rigid views about English and things, and we'd see things quite differently. I tried my best to stay within how she'd done things, but it didn't work for me ... but tried to stay within what she did. (Mary (2), lines 272-277)

The associate had clear routines and teaching approaches that she wished Mary to adopt.

For one student teacher, her relationship with her associate began very well, but quickly deteriorated. She had initially begun the practicum with high expectations and confidence that she had the skills, knowledge and experience to be successful. Over the period of the practicum, this perception changed markedly. For her, the practicum became a trial of endurance and survival. The associate prided himself on being straightforward and blunt in his comments. Having come back on the practicum and found difficulty in working with the class, the associate felt that he should shock Diane into "reality".

> I said that if I had a problem I would have no bones about taking a class back. So I let her read that and then I said to her "Right, now I'm wanting to know if you want me to take my class back, if you should just ring the visiting lecturer and tell her not to come tomorrow," and she went into shock, started to cry. It doesn't worry me. I can't keep you going on like this. "You have to make a decision if you want to finish this or fail, or go somewhere else." (Diane (AT) 2, lines 301-315)

The result though was negative. Although Diane knew that she could contact the university and request withdrawal from this practicum and be placed in another class,

she was reluctant to do so. She didn't want to have to begin again. From that point, Diane decided:

> So yes, that brought a bit more tension into my life, and I thought well, heck, I really want to finish this practice with a pass, I don't want to do it again. Um ... And from that day on I think, I really did, you know, get my A into G and started concentrating on positives more, but, I just kind of gave up asking him for feedback, and I was just kind of hoping that what I'm doing is fine and hoping that he is going to pass me (Diane 2, lines 285-291)

It became apparent that teaching was now primarily a management issue for Diane when her visiting lecturer saw her teach in the last two weeks.

> So then I watched her teaching and she really is in a defensive mode at this point. She's doing a lot of watching the whole class for anything, anyone that moves, or blinks, or does anything out of turn, looks like they're going to cause a problem, she stops them very quickly. It was, I felt "Oh gosh, this is not the same student that I saw in the beginning of the section, oh, that's a bit sad." (Diane (VL) 2, lines 101-108)

What Diane needed was advice on teaching strategies and approaches to managing the learning of the class from her associate. The support she received from the visiting lecturer was the critical point between success and failure for her on this practicum.

> Really [VL] being there is the prime reason why I didn't walk away. Um ... because of her positiveness and I suppose because she knows, she's seen other student teachers. You know, I'm just talking about that support, that knowledge, that [AT] might have forgotten about how it feels to be in my shoes and with [VL], really knew, she was wonderful, really, really great. (Diane 2, lines 293-300)

There was a clear breakdown in the relationship between Diane and her associate. The associate's beliefs were strongly shaped by his own student teaching experience. He took complete control of the class on his six-week final practicum from the third day. "The third day I took full control right to the end of the six weeks. So I had five and a half weeks and I didn't see my associate ... she didn't come in at all" (Diane (AT) 2, lines 297-299). From his viewpoint, he obviously had a successful teaching practicum and this shaped his belief that student teachers learned best by being thrust into the role of the teacher, "thrown in at the deep end" if you like. Those that survived this

experience were likely to be successful teachers. He viewed the process of developing as a teacher as a personal journey and that teachers were isolated in their own classrooms. This is in stark contrast to the view that teaching is a collaborative process where teaching teams shared ideas and responsibilities for the learning of pupils.

> Cooperation and collaboration among teachers give teachers access to the new ideas, creative energy and moral support that help them to be more effective with their students. (Hargreaves, 2001, p.503)

In strong contrast to Diane's experience, Simon had an excellent working relationship with his associate teacher. Like Diane's associate, she was a recent graduate. However, as an associate at a normal school, she had more experience and collegial support from other teachers in working with student teachers. Simon found that she was:

> ST: Brilliant ... it was a really good experience and a wonderful associate ... she was really supportive and stuff. Lots of written feedback especially in that first three weeks. She wrote me a page every second day of refill ... mostly positive stuff, but a few things to work on and to fix up ...
> I: What sorts of things would she focus on?
> ST: Um ... giving instructions, how I could have made the lesson a bit more focused on the objectives and stuff, and behaviour management and stuff like that. She helped me a lot with assessment um ... yeah ... how I could assess children, the ways I could do it ... I've never had written feedback before. And ... it's really good to have that written feedback. Just to look back on as well... They tell you something in the first week and it's in one ear and out the other. (Simon 2, lines 45-61)

In contrast to the other associates, Simon's associate provided detailed written feedback daily, particularly in the first three weeks of the practicum. This feedback was focused on the goals of the practicum and in response to his teaching performance.

Learning intersected with the class

In this year, there were a large number of student teachers that needed to be placed on practicum. Therefore, student teachers were placed in a wide range of classrooms. In this study, the visiting lecturers of two cases felt that the management issues faced by the student teachers posed an unrealistic challenge.

> But I think the College is mindful of the fact that students have to move slowly but, there are still situations where I think students are being put in classes that are so difficult that there are too many things to deal with at once ... They've got to sequence the lesson, they've got to do all this, and they try and get from point A to point B. Now if you're going to be find obstacles at every point, then the nature of the challenge just becomes unreal, and I think that's what happened here. (Alan (VL) 2, lines 285-295)

This was backed up by the perceptions of these student teachers, who found the classes particularly challenging:

> I always had in the back of my mind: "How I'm going to do this, what am I going to do if so and so throws a fit, or what am I going to do if they are not listening and they start talking?" And, I believe that it was maybe because if it was a different class where I could have just ignored some of the problems for a little wee while and seen what happens, if I could have more experimentation maybe it would have gone differently. (Diane 2, lines 265-271)

In contrast, some of the associate teachers reinforced the need to work in schools that they felt better reflected the typical New Zealand primary school than the model *normal* school.

> She's got a limited base of knowledge in management skills, because she's had a limited base of children. Look, they're all the same type of goodie, goodie children, so when she gets into a normal bunch of kids, and these kids aren't naughty, they're normal. Now I've had naughty kids and these were naughty at the beginning of the year, they're not naughty now. When you get a normal bunch of kids, sometimes the nicely, nicely stuff doesn't work, and so you've got to do other things. ...so she's better off than somebody that has just dropped into good old decile 10, 20 kids in a class school. (Diane (AT) 2, lines 189-202)

The need for student teachers to develop management skills in authentic settings was reinforced continuously:

> Anyone with the right brain can read the curriculum documents after a year at Teacher's College, should be able to modify them into a unit plan and a lesson plan. Anybody, and she's got that ... It's just the hard core teaching management that you only get by either good advice or good practice and that's what you can't get in the lectures. (Diane (AT) 2, 159-164)

It would be reasonable to conclude that some student teachers faced more challenging classes than others. Mary who observed that she had been very nervous at the beginning of the posting confirmed this:

> I think that has a lot to do with several components. 1. What sort of school you're at, and what's your associate like. Are you getting on with your associate, because I tell you, if it would have been somebody else I may not have, you know, and you're so subservient to him, you know. (Mary 2, lines 246-251)

However Alan, who was one of the student teachers with a particularly challenging class, found that despite having a very supportive associate, the behavioural management skills demanded in teaching this class even challenged his associate, an experienced classroom teacher. Therefore, this class posed an unfair challenge for the novice student teacher, and is an issue that needs to be resolved before future student teachers are placed in similar circumstances.

Learning intersected with the school

There was a range of schools in this case study from large, inner-city primary schools to small provincial schools. Although they were state schools, two schools had distinctive characteristics. One was an *integrated* school, which means it has a Catholic religious affiliation, and the other was a *normal* school, traditionally staffed with teachers selected to provide professional development for student teachers of the university. As has already been noted, the large number of student teachers who needed to be placed on practicum meant that 82 percent of the primary schools in the city were used. This meant that schools that did not usually have third year student

teachers did so on this occasion. For this study, it meant that in two of the schools, there was only one third-year student teacher. These students missed the opportunity to collaborate with other student teachers. Alan viewed this collaboration positively.

> I: Did you find that um ... helpful having another student on Teaching Practice with you?
> ST: Yeah ... you can talk about things. Um ... and the end of a hard day, you can sit back and go, "it was a hooter", and she'd say, "yes it was", and you can celebrate the things that do well. "Oh, this went really well, you can give this a try and its really neat". (Alan 2, lines 260-268).

On the other hand, the *normal* school has a large number of student teachers. Therefore, the pupils did not necessarily treat them with the respect accorded their classroom teachers.

> ST: I heard some kids say, "Oh you're only a student teacher you can't tell me what to do".
> I: How do you cope with that?
> ST: I just told them, "Well while I'm here I am your teacher and you treat me like a teacher". (Simon 2, lines 230-234)

Similarly, two of the associate teachers did not have the support of colleagues with third-year student teachers on practicum at the same time. For these associates, they did not get the collegial support others got.

> I: And amongst the associates, did you discuss their progress?
> AT: Yes we talked about it. Um ... discussed the things that um ... the strengths um ... I would say Oh [ST] did this, and someone else would say so and so did that differently.
> I: Did that help actually being able to discuss with peers?
> AT: Yeah ... it did. Um ... we were all confident and that did make a difference I think. If one of us had been struggling or that the student had been struggling, I'm sure we would have helped where necessary. (Greg (AT) 2, lines 371-377)

Learning intersected with the practicum

The practicum was divided into two distinct parts straddling the first half and second half of the academic year. The first three weeks was separated from the second four

weeks by a significant break. This was to allow students to sit their first semester examinations and to have a two-week study break.

Opinions of the impact of this structure of the practicum was mixed. On the one hand, some expressed support for the structure.

> I like the idea of being there for three weeks and then a break and then the second session. I think it gives the student quite a positive feel for the class. I mean they know what they're coming to when they come back the second time, and that's when they need to get their heads down and work like a real teacher with their class ... when they have to do all those things that normally occur and it just gives them a whole lot of insight when they've had that first three weeks. (Greg (AT) 2, lines 12-21)

On the other hand, some of the associate teachers felt that this had a detrimental effect on the student teachers' teaching development.

> Basically the big gap in the middle is horrific. It was my student who just had the kids where she wanted them, and then she went away and when she's come back ... What she had to do was assert herself and then establish a programme and go away and come back and she had to re-assert herself and re-do her programme and everything been done again and it has lost its momentum. (Diane (AT) 2, lines 5-14)

The student teachers were supportive of elements of the structure. Alan observed: "I like the idea. I don't know whether I could be stuck in the school for seven weeks with these hard, hard kids" (Alan 2, lines 204-205). However, all three groups – student teachers, associate teachers and visiting lecturers – felt that the examination period was disruptive of the practicum and placed unnecessary pressure on the students.

> The down side of it is that it's really disruptive too. Because we're on the [university] programme we've got a week back or 4 days and then its exams and ... um ... after the holidays we've got a week at Teachers College again and back here for 4 weeks so ... it kind of disrupts the learning. (Alan 2, lines 219-223)

The difficulty of having to fit into the rest of the university programme was viewed negatively.

> We're very affected by the university model of semesters and breaks. The three weeks and then another four weeks I think is a very useful model. But the weeks they have in College are pretty hopeless in terms of you being able to use that time as really good learning time in terms of being able to re-focus them, particularly if they're struggling a bit. (Greg (VL) 2, lines 81-86)

Similarly, the associates would like the practicum to fit into the school year better than this practicum did:

> I definitely would go back to having eight straight weeks in the term and it would fit in perfectly with our four-term year. So they come in say the second week of a term and finish before the last week ... So that would be my ultimate one. (Mary (AT) 2, lines 95-100)

A Professional Learning Community

The practicum requires that the student teacher, associate teacher and the visiting lecturer work together to improve the teaching practice of the student teacher. To achieve this outcome it is necessary that they engage in in-depth professional conversations, share common values and expectations, de-privatise practice by team teaching and have a collective focus on student learning. Firstly they need to make explicit their beliefs about the role of the practicum in preparing a first year teacher. Secondly, they need to clearly identify their role and function within the practicum, and their understanding of the role and function played by the other members of the triad. Finally the factors that enhanced or detracted from each of the triad's capacity to operate as a professional learning community need to be identified.

Perceptions of the value and function of the practicum

All the members of the triad – student teachers, associate teachers and visiting lecturers – rated the practicum highly and saw it as the key ingredient for preparing primary school teachers.

Associate teachers

Associates were unanimous in their support of the practicum. Firstly they valued its practical application in an authentic learning environment. "Well I don't think that they can get any practical experience in College ... they really do need to have some practical experience" (Alan (AT) 2, lines 19-25). In fact, for the associates, it was not simply a critical component, but also a component that should be valued more highly and the amount of time on practicum be increased: "I think it's critical and I'm sad to see that it's cut down from what it was" (Mary (AT) 2, lines 17-18). They believed that eliminating some of the more theoretical university-based content would accommodate this extra practicum.

> I couldn't rate it too highly. ... I think the more they have the better they'll be. I think they need to get out into classrooms longer and more often ... I think nothing beats actual in front of children experience, whether it's one offs, whether it's days whether it's weeks. I mean all of those are relevant as their experience grows ... you can teach them for as long as you like in a lecture room or with videos, but actually being there in front of kids with kids doing all sorts of strange, weird and wonderful things, you can't get away from that. (Greg (AT) 1, lines 20-30)

They valued the practitioner knowledge learned in the classroom context more highly than knowledge learned in the university. This sentiment is echoed by the associate teacher who claimed "what I learned at Teachers Training College is a fraction of what I learned as a first year" (Diane (AT) 1, lines 288). But that did not mean that all of the associate teachers dismissed the university programme.

> I do believe that the programme now gives teachers a lot more depth [in] the curriculum, of how children learn. Well just because it's a degree course I think ... but I don't think you actually learn to be a teacher until you actually get in there. Have a go ... So that's why the third year posting is a really important one in that respect as well ... have a go ... make mistakes and try again and change things. (Mary (AT) 2, lines 110-115)

They also valued the ideas the student teachers brought to their classrooms, particularly their fresh perspectives.

> What I really like about it is the new ideas that the students come out with. This latest one that I had is a prime example ... um ... three or four ideas that he's put into practice that I will certainly keep going ... The other side of it is their enthusiasm ... when you get a little jaded as you do sometimes in this job because of the children or other pressures or whatever ... their enthusiasm helps ... a lot (laugh). (Greg (AT) 2, lines 11-18)

Alan's associate teacher believed that the university was providing focussed tasks that helped translate their theoretical understanding into a classroom context.

> They've really got to focus what they've learned at College into their practical experience ... I think that the Study Guides, the documents that are coming out of College really focus the students' attentions on what they should be looking at in schools. (Alan (AT) 2, lines 34-38)

Similarly, Simon's associate valued the importance of linking theoretical perspectives with the practice of teaching:

> Oh yeah...I'm a big believer in the theory. You need to have an understanding of the theory before you can understand the practical and I believe you need to know about scaffolding children...So from my experience, yes... I do see it. (Simon (AT) 2, lines 132-138)

However, as a new associate teacher she had not had the chance to discuss these views in an appropriate forum, as the university had not provided this opportunity in this year.

Student teachers

Students rated the practicum highly because they believed it prepared them best for their role as a first year teacher.

> It's essential. It is essential and I'm going to get a nice dose of schoolwork and how to deal with difficult children ... deal with violence and things like that. (Alan (1), lines 117-120)

Greg claimed, "it is probably the most valuable part of the whole teaching degree" (Greg (1), lines 34). He saw that it prepared the student for the rigours of the classroom whereas he struggled to see the relevance of a number of his assignments:

> This year we've got a research for change assignment ... an absolute flipping joke ... we end up writing the same thing that we've written for two years. I mean basically what they want to hear is "include all kids, don't hurt anyone's self-esteem", and I've written that assignment 20 times. (Greg 1, lines 61-66)

When Diane claims she has learned more on teaching practicum she does qualify this with the statement:

> When I say that I mean when it comes to teaching not when it comes to the theory ... I mean it's good to see things in practice, hands on experience. (Diane 1, lines 58-59)

At the back of their minds is the realisation that a year later they will potentially have their own class.

> It prepares you ... but I don't think we get enough of it. I guess the biggest worry is being able to sustain it day after day. How do you set up your class from Day One? (Greg 2, lines 169-171)

The view the student teachers have about the practicum is best summarised by Kate's comment:

> OK ... I think it's [TE] really good. It gives you more confidence and it gives you a feeling of what it's going to be like. I think the more time in the classroom the better. (Kate 2, lines 153-156)

The visiting lecturers

As with all the other members of the triads, the visiting lecturers rated the practicum highly in the preparation of first year teachers. There was a concern that after the practicum it was difficult to focus students on their final semester of study.

> It [the TE] is probably the most critical thing that they'll do in their third year. I find that when students come back from that posting they're very anti-college. They don't want to be in class and for many of them that's fair enough. They've realised that they've had full control for over two weeks and they've been successful and they've loved it and they want to carry on. So I see it as very, very valuable. (Simon (VL) 1, lines 309-314)

One of the key aspects of the practicum is the opportunity student teachers have to assume sole-charge. As this visiting lecturer notes, some associate teachers struggle to relinquish their classes to the responsibility of the student.

> I think the most important part of it is the sustained full control um ... which even then some teachers have trouble relinquishing for that period of time ... But just the sustained day-to-day teaching and obviously for those students who get in there and say I want to get stuck in pretty much from Day One. It's a wonderful opportunity to try things out, to build their confidence. (Greg (VL) 2, lines 109-116)

There was a concern that some students may be under-prepared and lack key curriculum knowledge.

> VL: Well ... on the whole it is very valuable. There are ... how shall I say? There are holes or things that they could be taught at College before they go out as teachers.
> I: What sort of things ?
> VL: I think that they need more hands on things that they can use.
> I: In what way?
> VL:: Oh ... more of the core curriculum things . Because some of them when they get there for example don't really know what they are doing. (Mary (VL) 1, lines 2-12)

Therefore, it is important that the student teachers had set clear goals for the practicum and reflected critically on their progress towards achieving these.

> So that was valuable and I think students who actually do that really focus on what works and don't walk away and shrug their shoulders and say, "Oh well that lessons gone... Now I'll try something different." You go away and hope that you'll adjust it in some way. (Diane (VL) 1, lines 312-315).

The practicum is set in an authentic context and provides opportunity for the student teacher to develop the practitioner knowledge necessary for a classroom teacher:

> I think the college does quite well in what it sets out to do ... that's really to provide background studies and put what's done in a school in some sort of theoretical framework. But there are a lot of things that have to be learned by a potential teacher. But they can't be learned just at college ... the student just has to experience [them] and this includes exposure to the whole climate of the school, the school culture. It includes developing social skills of the sort that are needed in schools ... and I'm talking about relationships with children and I'm talking about relationships with colleagues, senior teachers, school principals ... um ... It allows students to see at first hand the curriculum-in-action and last but not least ... um ... certainly not least, it

> enables students to learn the fundamentals of classroom management. (Alan (VL) 2, lines 20-32)

Perceptions of the role of the associate teacher

Each member of the triad had a particular role and function to perform. There were written guidelines provided to the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher describing this role and function from the perspective of the university. Although these guidelines provided a blueprint for each of these participants, it was important to identify how these roles played out in practice.

Associate teachers' perspective

Several of the associate teachers had attended professional development workshops conducted by the university that explained the purpose and focus of the practicum and the role of the associate teacher.

> AT: I have attended two courses. Not recently, but because I've done quite an amount of AT you get into the swing of it and get to know what the College is expecting. But early on when I did my first two lots of students I went to two courses ... that was about eight years ago ... and that was very informative.
> I: Would you want more?
> AT: I think for new associates it would be valuable. (Alan (AT) 1, lines 57-66)

These two experienced associate teachers felt that having attended two or three workshops, there was not much new information to help them in their role.

> But initially when we first became associates there was always sessions that we could go to at Teachers College as an introduction to the posting ... um ... I haven't done that for a while ... (laugh) I went to a few but they got to be the same. I don't blame them because they had to be ... because there are new teachers becoming associates all the time. (Mary (AT) 1, lines 144-149)

One associate teacher had experience in supervising student teachers on practicum in another part of the country with a different tertiary provider. She felt confident that

her previous experience provided a sound platform for her current role. Therefore, apart from one young associate teacher, each of them felt confident that they could satisfactorily fulfil their role. They did not feel the need for further professional development.

The inexperienced associate relied on the documentation that was sent out by the university.

> I had the booklet which explains what I'm expected to do, what [student teachers] are expected to do, what the visiting lecturer is expected to do. So I've gone through that and highlighted it in different colours for each of us. All our responsibilities...the student teachers come with more details as well. (Simon (AT) 1, lines 7-12)

This contrasted with the views of several of the experienced lecturers who relied on the student teacher to articulate their requirements: "To be honest, I don't have time to read the TE booklets in detail. Besides I've had so many third years before that I feel I know what I need to do." (Kate (AT) 1, lines 42-44)

The associates identified several strategies they adopt in working with student teachers. Firstly they see themselves as role models and introduce the students to the routines and teaching practices they have adopted with their classes. Mary's associate enjoys providing this for her student teacher.

> I think that it is very important to be a model. I enjoy in the first week or so modelling. I try and model all the different ways we do things ... like how we approach a story-writing session or how we organise our reading. All those sort of things before I expect the student teachers to start teaching themselves. And I don't expect them to do everything like I do but it gives them a guideline ... it gives them the routines and the methods of how we approach things. (Mary (AT) 1, lines 43-49)

This includes providing information about the class/school context in which they will be teaching:

> The school also gives them a booklet about the school and the culture of the school, our assertive discipline programme and things like that, so they're quite well informed. We also have everything set up for them in the

> staffroom, like the Charter and the policies and any other documentation that they need to have a look at. (Alan (AT) 1, lines 120-125)

The role model the associate provides is critical if the transition from the teaching of the associate to the student teacher does not detrimentally disrupt the learning of the class. One associate felt that the pupils were being adversely affected by the teaching style of the student teacher: "Yeah ... they need to be modelled because I took the class back and showed her, this is how you do it" (Diane (AT) 2, line 33).

Besides providing a role model, associates identify the feedback that they give the student teacher as critical. This takes a number of forms. Most of the associates gave written feedback. Simon's associate saw this role as a particularly important one and gave him daily written feedback. However, the majority of associates gave most of their feedback in oral form. This was often in an informal manner, in natural class breaks or "over a cup of coffee in the staffroom at morning interval" (Kate (AT) 2, line 54). It is best described as relaxed, natural and low-key. Each day usually followed a similar routine:

> We touch base with each other every morning. I check his planning, what he's got worked out for the day, make sure that those plans are up to date and on cue for the kids, where the kids are at ... um ... and I'll give him immediate feedback on that. I'll make sure that he's got his resources. I'll just say, are there any questions, check if he needs anything ... Then at lunchtime we've touched base again. Today we did duty together and talked about anything that happened in the morning, I said, "How's it gone this morning, how did you um ... fix that problem if there is a problem or how could you do it another way?" We'd talk through every day like that, and after school sometimes too, although mostly getting ready for the next day um ... and then in addition to that I've given him written feedback and we've had sessions where we've sat down and planned quite a few days in advance, you know, a week or so, gone and got the resources together or I've shown him where to get them or talked about it. (Simon (AT) 2, lines 9-21)

Monitoring the progress of the class is a third key role identified by the associates. They have a dual role: the class programme needs to continue with a minimal of disruption, yet provides teaching opportunities for the student teacher.

> I like to provide them with quite a good guide so they get my daily plan and outline and sort of the things I do weekly and a long term plan, so that they've got an idea of the things we are aiming for when they're here. And I would have expected them to have put some thought into what they're going to do when they're here, and that's not always possible because often they've come in the middle of a unit ... I would see my job now as being the guide. (Greg (AT) 1, lines 55-60)

This meant not only providing planning guidance, but also several associates felt that they needed to maintain a presence in the class because they saw the behaviour of several of the pupils as particularly challenging.

> I've been doing my study um ... and I've just sat in the room with my back to the class and the class has known that I'm doing my study, and I'm just not wanting to be interrupted by anybody. [Student teacher] will teach you. But I have intervened because I have got one or two very difficult ones in there. Those children have had the choice of either joining in and doing what they're meant to do or being removed, so I've just made sure I've stayed around. (Alan (AT) 2, lines 422-427)

The majority of associates saw their primary role as a supportive guide helping the student teacher develop into a Year One teacher. However, Diane's associate also saw his role as a gatekeeper to the profession: "To be honest, my job is to cull out the people that I wouldn't have teaching my children" (Diane (AT) 1, line 13). Although the other associates didn't express the appraisal of the student teacher as strongly as Diane's associate, nevertheless they were all certain that they would not allow a student teacher to take sole-charge of their class if they felt it would detrimentally affect the learning of their class:

> I have had experience like that before, and I just wasn't able to let them do their teaching. I said I am not prepared to give my children over to you. You know, badly prepared lessons. (Mary (AT) 2, lines 238-240)

Visiting lecturers' perspective

The visiting lecturers identified a wide variation in the roles associate teachers played. This ranged from those who were genuinely interested in the growth and welfare of

the student teachers to those who saw this as an opportunity to release them from the classroom in order to do other tasks.

> It varies, varies very greatly. There are some associates who have a clear, a very clear idea of what their role should be ... have sympathy, understanding and insight of the way forward for the student. There are others who I think see the student as some kind of a bonus, during the time that you're in the classroom and this is an opportunity for them to get some sort of work done ... There are some associates I've seen, who actually, see the young student as a rival for the affections of the children and are fearful of losing status in class, and kind of keep the student in the wings and don't like them getting too much centre stage. (Alan (VL) 1, lines 327-337)

All the visiting lecturers, however, saw the role of the associate as critical and felt that their professional development for this year was inadequate. Associates should have been provided with a workshop in which their role within the current practicum could be examined. It was not sufficient to simply provide written documentation:

> What is done now, is that, the role of the associate is written down for them in either the special booklet for associates or as part of the student's book, where the associates are asked to read and put into practice. My impression is that some associates don't even read those. Some read them and don't understand them, then there are those who read them, understand them, put them into practice and give their students a wonderful three or four weeks experience. (Alan (VL) 1, lines 348-354)

Visiting lecturers believed that the role model the associate provided was critical. However, as this lecturer identified:

> It's a bit of a double whammy. The student goes in and tries to pick up on what the associate is doing and model themselves along that line. Sometimes I say to students "Oh I see that you're trying to do what the associate is doing, do you feel comfortable with that?" Because it may be an associate who is very loud, confident and bold and the student is quiet and shy. I say "Oh hey there're different ways of doing this." Sometimes students reflect back that that's a conflict for them. Because working in the associate's classroom they feel that they have to do what the associate does and in the way that the associate does it. So they find it quite hard to put up their own style. I think it works well where an associate and student match in style. Everyone relaxes and feels comfortable. (Diane (VL) 1, lines 261-272)

This was the conflict that Diane faced and in the observation of her visiting lecturer was one of the key issues that needed to be resolved on the practicum:

> What happened, she was going so well and she's got a really good relationship with the associate. He's been supportive, but he's also very flamboyant, and, I think for a nice, quiet middle class girl, as Diane is, um ... a very flamboyant, very in control associate is very hard shoes to step into. It's a Form 1 and 2, ... lower decile school ... and um ... quite a few kids there, who if you look the other way or you didn't plan right down to the nth degree would really take advantage of any space you make for them. (Diane (VL) 2, lines 12-19)

Besides providing a role model, associates need to mentor the student teacher. In so doing, there is a delicate balance between providing the student teacher with the space to adopt the teaching role and feel that they are in sole-charge and, on the other hand, providing support in often challenging classes.

> Associates have actually aborted you know, control of the class so that the student can have total control. And I suspect that's not really the purpose of Teaching Practice, because, ... they are supposed to be mentored by an associate during that time and, ... I've seen a few instances like that where the associates have said "Oh but you know, it was all okay at the beginning, so now I've stepped back and left it to them" ... and I don't think students are ready for that. Surely this is their last opportunity to still get that input to make sure that it's all okay. (Diane (VL) 2, lines 214-222)

In Diane's case, the associate had a limited repertoire and was unable to help her find alternative teaching strategies other than to demonstrate his own teaching style:

> He kept saying to her ... you know ... kept telling her that she doesn't have to be me. But, you know, when she started to lose it, he didn't sit her down and give her some strategies to pull it round. He said, "Go back into observation mode. Watch what I do, but you don't have to be me". (Diane (VL) 2, lines 455-467)

In order for associates to be able to mentor student teachers effectively, they need to be well organised and have the ability to articulate the reasons for the professional judgements they make.

> Obviously if an associate knows what they're doing and why in the classroom and they're able to communicate that to the student ... and I think those sorts of associates perhaps are less defensive about things that go wrong ... um ... less defensive about their programme that they'll talk something through and the student might be questioning it and the associate might say "This is the way I've chosen to do it because it works for me but it's not necessarily the only way." So that whole quality of flexibility that there isn't just one way of doing it. I might have one way of doing it but I

> can acknowledge that it doesn't necessarily work for every group of kids or for every teacher. (Greg (VL) 1, lines 160-171)

In the process, they need to be prepared to give the opportunity for the student teacher to trial new approaches or methods:

> The associate whose got some ... um ... a bit of risk-taking, whose going to encourage the student to have a go and try something ... where they see that the student is determined to have a go, to let the student have a go ... and someone who has the graciousness to say "well I didn't think that was really going to work but I have to say you've proved me wrong." (Greg (VL) 1, lines 172-177)

There are personal attributes that the associate can bring to the practicum, such as:

> A sense of humour and someone who really does care what's happening with the kids and has a measure of sensitivity ... Somebody who works well with their other colleagues I think is very important for students because if you have an associate who's pretty isolated from other people in the school ... you know some pretty dysfunctional things happen in schools. (Greg (VL) 1, lines 179-188)

And in Greg's case, the lecturer believed that his associate provided excellent support:

> I understand that they spent a lot of time together after school. They obviously talked a lot about issues in teaching and that was one of the things he said when I commented on the lack of evaluation [of the student teacher], um ... written evaluation that I could see was that they went through everything with a fine toothcomb. He likes to talk and go through things and she was obviously very happy to give that sort of time. (Greg (VL) 1, lines 238-243)

In contrast, Mary's associate was more reserved and Mary "Didn't want to encroach into her space and which I think Mary was really frustrated about" (Mary (VL) 2, lines 46-47).

There was a perception that because the university needed to find so many practicum placements the scrutiny of associates was not as detailed, as it should be.

> Well they are a mixed bag and I think I know that they get a payment but again it relies on goodwill a lot and often you find out when you go into a school that it's been dropped on somebody. They didn't particularly like it. There is a whole lot going on and there is a bit of reluctance and then some of that reluctance you pick up with some of the associates. But then you find the people who are kindred spirits. Who like me, like to be involved in

> that part of the professional development and they are excellent. (Kate (VL), lines 284-291)

The qualities the lecturers perceived as important for an effective associate teacher are best summarised by this quote from Simon's visiting lecturer.

> I think someone whose prepared to give their class to the student to have a go ...but when I say that ...ah ...an associate whose astute enough to know when a student teacher is not ready to take my class ...and is confident enough to say "I'm not happy to leave this room. I'm not happy to have you have full control yet". So that's someone who is astute but is able to do it in a way that's not putting that student down ... An associate who gives up their time to talk after school, to talk through issues that may be worrying for the student ... can be honest about expectations in the classroom and gives good feedback ... written and oral ... someone who can identify key issues to work on and can provide strategies to work on, be it behaviour management and so on ... and someone with a sense of humour. (Simon (VL), lines 163-174)

Student teachers' perspective

Student teachers wanted an associate who had the time to spend to discuss their progress on the practicum and to provide feedback. Often the most experienced associates carried a broad range of administrative responsibilities that occupied a significant amount of their time.

> The associates who seem to have their fingers in a lot of pies ... they're in charge of a couple of Departments and they're doing all sorts of things around the school. They don't seem to have much time for the student ... um ... so it makes it really difficult to get any feedback. (Alan 1, lines 129-131)

The associate teacher was seen as the primary support and advisor by the student teachers. Their accessibility and willingness to provide advice and feedback is therefore critical.

> Well I see them as your support. They're going to be your main source of knowledge about the class ... about the children in the school. I see them as the person whose going to give you feedback and whose going to tell you "Yes you're doing fine", "No you're not doing fine. This is what you need to improve on". Um ... and I believe in talking to your AT if you have a problem, you know. They should be there for you. They should help you out. I see my associate as being the person that really is available to you. (Diane 1, lines 96-101)

The student teachers reported that the majority of feedback was given orally and usually informally, which was a low-key, relaxed approach.

> At the end of a lesson or at the end of the day she said, "How do you think that went?" And it just happened in normal conversation where you almost weren't aware that this was a feedback process and it made it really relaxed and really comfortable. It made me feel comfortable that I could say, "That didn't go well, what do I do next time? I'm not enjoying this. This isn't good, what do I do to make it better?" and in some cases the feedback was super helpful and changes in the class were dramatic. (Alan 2, lines 168-176)

For Alan, having the associate in the classroom was reassuring, mainly because of her low-key manner:

> ...because she was so low key, she was doing her own thing in the corner of the room, in a spot in the room I never went to, she was almost not noticed. And yeah, having her there was almost ... sort of having a lifebelt. Yeah ... having training wheels on the bike, they were raised off the ground, but if you really messed up they were there to catch you, but golly she didn't need to, which is good. (Alan 2, lines 221-227)

Although the student teachers enjoyed this informal manner of providing feedback, if something went wrong on the practicum, the lack of structure to the approach could escalate into a serious crisis. In Diane's case feedback had been unstructured and there was no formal time set aside to purposefully appraise her teaching progress.

> We didn't have time such as feedback time. I actually had to approach him and say "Can I talk to you about this?" And, for example, I'd say to him "How do you think my class went?"
> "Oh it was wonderful, it was great, it was good, just watch out for this, and this, and this boy or girl, make sure you change their cards, you know, he was playing around when you turned around"... I felt that maybe I'm doing really well but he's not saying anything really positive about it. He just says it goes well, and then, one day, I got the shock of my life when we actually went down to um ... the Bank to cash in some money for the school, and I said to him, (I think this was the second week of the second block and, it was a Thursday or I'm not too sure, I can't really remember anymore,) but I said to him "'Well, how do you think I'm going?"
> He said, "Well can I be honest with you?"
> And I said, "That's what I want to hear."
> And he said "You know, if I had to write a report on Monday, I would have failed you."
> And, I was really surprised; I thought well you know ... I'm not achieving great success in this class, but to fail me. I felt, I felt horrible, I felt really

> scared that he would have actually done that without telling me. (Diane 2, lines 371-392)

From this point, there was no effective dialogue between the associate and Diane and her primary source of support became the visiting lecturer.

On the other hand in Greg's case, he felt that the associate had a much better understanding of the class and the learning needs of the children. She also observed him over a sustained period of time and therefore was in a better position to critique his teaching then the visiting lecturer. So when he had a particularly critical appraisal from his visiting lecturer, it was Greg's associate who lifted his morale and provided strong support.

> Like I said I may have taken too much out of the critique ... [The associate] pulled me into her room and said, "Don't you dare go home and think you're bad at this job. She [the lecturer] hasn't said that." Um ... yeah that helped me. (Greg 2, lines 238-241)

The student teachers also valued the space that some associates provided for them to be able to try out thing on their own. "But then again I believe they should be able to back off from you and let you do your own thing and do your own teaching" (Diane 1, lines 104-106). Usually the associates monitored the class during breaks in the lessons.

> She usually popped in every now and then, like sometimes in between transitions ... between reading and maths and stuff. Check how I'm going or um ... always sort of talk at um ... morning teatime and lunchtime as well. (Kate 2, lines 137-140)

Mary had a very successful practicum, but she did not interact effectively with her associate. They were quite different personalities and had different views about teaching. She operated within the parameters set by her associate, but reluctantly.

> Well she, she's very different from me, she is very, very quiet and very much, I would say, old school, she's got her views about things. Children shouldn't do this in sport, ... and she's got quite rigid views about English and things. We'd see things quite differently. I tried my best to stay within how she'd done things, but it didn't work for me ... (Mary 2, lines 272-277)

From Simon's perspective, his associate contributed significantly to his success.

> Brilliant ... it was a really good experience and wonderful associate. She was really supportive ... really good school, the kids were brilliant and made it heaps easier ... Lots of written feedback ...Especially in that first three weeks. She wrote me a page every second day of refill yeah ... mostly positive stuff, but a few things to work on. (Simon 2, lines 3-37)

Perceptions of the role of the visiting lecturer

In a similar way to that of the associate teacher's role, aspects of the visiting lecturer's role was perceived differently by different members of the triad. Similarities were also identified.

Associate teachers' perspective

Visiting lecturers provide a different perspective on the practicum. Their professional judgement can affirm or provide new insights on the progress of the student teacher.

> As a sounding board for any problems that might have occurred or just to give some positive feedback to the students that they're going OK ... and as a person that they're familiar from College ... and they air their ideas ... if they've any difficulties and the student have also found out "Yes I'm on the right track and I am doing what I'm expected to do and things are going OK." (Alan (AT) 1, lines 68-80)

They can provide collegial support for the associate. As Alan's associate observed, "I was able to talk quite freely with him ... He was very honest, very positive with things that were going on..." (Alan (AT) 2, lines 139-143). Not all associates had as positive a view of lecturers. There was a perception that some had been too long out of the classroom. Diane's associate bluntly observed, "See half those lecturers haven't been in a school for years" (Diane (AT) 2, line 93). In fact his view was quite extreme.

> They're most pathetic people. They've not been in a classroom for years and they tell you what they did 10 years ago, and yet you know, they were out there before computers were born, some of them. (Diane (AT) 2, line 338-341)

In contrast, Greg's associate was surprised at the depth of knowledge the lecturer brought and the lesson analysis she could provide: "I was surprised at how well she knew the particular lesson that went drastically wrong ... Once I had listened to what she had to say, it all made perfect sense" (Greg (AT) 2, lines 203-204). What impressed the associate the most was the time and detail that went into the lecturer's de-brief with Greg.

> She wanted to talk with him further and it was nearly a whole lunchtime. So she didn't lay it on him and then rush off. It was you know, it was a proper discussion time. Um ... which I think he appreciated because if he had read what she had written, without discussing it with her, he would have been quite devastated. But as it was he saw where she was coming from, because they'd discussed it and talked about it quietly. (Greg (AT) 2, lines 219-223)

Kate's associate was concerned at her progress. She found her discussions with the visiting lecturer valuable, if only as a sounding board and an opportunity to air these concerns and possible solutions.

> The visiting lecturer was the one I actually spent the time with and um ... and I think that was where I went for my guidance because I don't ever remember having a student who was worrying me as much as what she was. So, I did spend a lot of time talking to him, and um ... and then, you know I sat down with Kate and said, "These are the areas you need to focus on" and listed three or four of them, and gave her some strategies to work on those things. (Kate (AT) 2, lines 246-251)

Associate teachers were very critical of visiting lecturers who did not spend sufficient time to appraise student teachers over a reasonable block of time.

> It's been really good ... [the VL] spent a good deal of time observing which was good... she spent a whole afternoon [the first occasion] and nearly a whole morning, the second time around, and I think that's fair. I think they need to spend it, to see the transitions between new work and the next. (Mary (AT) 2, lines 108-112)

There also needs to be sufficient time for the visiting lecturer to get a sense of the classroom dynamics in which the student teacher is working.

> Well I think initially that they need to get a feel of the classroom; how the classroom's run before they can look at the student within that environment.

> You've got to have an idea of what the dynamics of the classroom are first ... There's not a lot of time is there? (Simon (AT) 1, lines 94-97)

Student teachers' perspective

Student teachers see visiting lecturers quite differently from associate teachers. This is partially because visiting lecturers do not have the same level of contact with the student as the associate:

> Visiting lecturers only see a snapshot even if they visit a lot. So yesterday he caught me on a bad day ... and so although it was great feedback, he's not there every day and ... so things like [associate] she sees all the little things ... like I like the kids doing a lot of group work ... bounce ideas off each other ... but I've tried it and it's failed and [associate] has said "Yes they're just not mature enough for it. Try it in little doses and build it up." So that's the sort of thing [VLs] wouldn't see. They don't quite know the children. (Alan 1, lines 180-187)

Despite this view, Alan felt able to communicate effectively with his visiting lecturer because the lecturer believed he was able to offer credible advice.

> It was a plus that he was a good lecturer to visit and he knew what he was talking about, and he was brutally honest, he was really good. He had really good feedback and it was, even though it was honest, it was positive and you came away feeling, it was hard but I know where to go from now on. (Alan 2, lines 315-319)

At the outset of the practicum, Diane strongly believed that visiting lecturers were not in a position to fairly appraise the student teacher. Instead, more emphasis should be given to the associate teacher.

> They have to observe what you're doing. I do see them as giving constructive criticism as well as praise, but I don't think that it's fair the way it's done. I really don't. I mean I have never had ... all my reports have been satisfactory but I still don't believe that a visiting lecturer observing you for 45 minutes or even for half a morning can tell if you're making progress or you're not making progress. You can have an extremely hard class, you can be having a bad morning ... the children can be having a bad morning. That does not mean that you're a bad teacher. (Diane 1, lines 117-124)

However, as events unfolded over the practicum and her relationship with the associate teacher deteriorated, her perspective changed quite dramatically. "My

visiting lecturer actually was one factor that got me up and running again" (Diane 2, lines 61-62). Her visiting lecturer's experience and knowledge enabled her to support Diane when the associate's inexperience failed to provide that scaffolding.

> Really [the lecturer] being there is the prime reason why I didn't walk away. Um ...because her positiveness and I suppose because she knows, she's seen other student teachers. You know, I'm just talking about that support, that knowledge, that [associate] might have forgotten about. How it feels to be in my shoes and with [lecturer], really knew, she was wonderful, really, really great. (Diane 2, lines 649-654)

Of particular concern to the students was the length of time visiting lecturers spent observing them teach. Greg made the observation from his experience that:

> They walk in. Oh yeah ... he's competent. They walk out the door. They have a quick squiz over your planning booklet. I found that most lecturers don't want quality. They want quantity and I am no fool and I just put all this shit under the sun in the folder ... amongst it all was the quality ... but no one ever found it. But I always got excellent marks. (Greg 1, lines 123-128)

Although his view on the visiting lecturer changed, he was still not happy that her appraisal was critical of his performance. He had a strong positive view of his own teaching ability.

> Yeah ... she was good. She pointed out things I was doing wrong, she pointed out things I was doing right. She stayed a reasonable amount of time. She did a cross section of my teaching ability and made her judgements of them, which I appreciate. Um ... some of her judgements in my opinion weren't correct but, but what can she do. She can't be here for five days of the week. I thought ... she was probably the best visiting lecturer I ever had. (Gary 2, lines 109-115)

He was critical of the criteria by which visiting lecturers assessed student teachers. But he was more concerned that there was no moderation of the lecturers and he felt that some students would be appraised more stringently than others.

> I know there are other students at College, third years who are worse at this job than I am, and they will have visiting lecturers that aren't consistent in doing what they are supposed to do, so they will get away with it. I mean, I doubt very much whether my lecturer will give me a poor ... it's not a poor report, it's a blooming good report with a few things ... but a poorer teacher might get a better report and that you know, just doesn't seem equitable ... they should have criteria they are forced to stick to. (Greg 2, lines 109-115)

Mary shared Greg's concerns about the appraisal of student teachers by visiting lecturers. She noted that lecturers only get a snapshot and, even though things may have been going very well, nevertheless lessons that lecturers view may not have gone well for a variety of reasons.

> They obviously must know that we're very nervous and things do go wrong ... I think it's hard that if your lesson didn't go well ... you're failed on that. You might have done a blinding lesson the day before they come, you're nervous. You might have one kid that's playing up a bit more than usual, whatever. It's difficult ... but how do you change it? (Mary 1, lines 209-214)

Kate valued the feedback she received from her visiting lecturer, as he gave a perspective that the associate was not able to give her. Students seemed to have a thirst for information to help them improve their practice. They particularly valued practical ideas and tips.

> He came three ... yeah ... three times, and he was really helpful, giving me lots of ideas of ... okay ... "This wasn't quite so good so this is how I think you can improve it", instead of leaving it up to me to decide, "Well what am I going to do about this?" He gave me lots of practical ideas. (Kate 2, lines 286-290)

Kate added, "he gave me more specific things than my associate and sort of gave me a demonstration of how he would do it" (Kate 2, line 306).

Simon felt that his lecturer added very little value to his practicum. Although her visit early in the practicum confirmed that he was on target, even the visiting lecturer felt that she could not add anything to his progress over the second stage of the practicum.

> She gave me two or three things to focus on. Um ... I think that was her first visit. But after that they seemed sort of pointless. After her second one she even said to me, she'd had to come for a third, but didn't and she didn't really need to. (Simon 2, lines 112-115)

Visiting lecturers' perspective

All the visiting lecturers had been associate teachers prior to winning their lecturing positions at the university. As Alan's lecturer says:

> I would expect them to know what it's like to be a teacher. I would expect them to know what sorts of problems a teacher faces and that every day in the classroom is not a good day and that you might have 10 good days but you might have one day that's a disaster and that may not be anybody's fault. I want them to have had the experience of dealing with typical children themselves, uncooperative children ... I want them to have had that experience. In other words I want the people from College who go out to see students are people that are familiar at least to some extent with all the practical things about being a teacher and to have experienced the teacher role. Yeah I would like them to have experienced some of the frustrations of being in the classroom. (Alan (VL) 1, lines 340-351)

They value this experience and it strongly influences the way they approach their role as visiting lecturers. In particular they relate their personal experiences to those of the associates and the student teachers.

Each of the lecturers approached the practicum in a similar way. As Alan's visiting lecturer commented, it was critical that a lecturer establish a comfortable rapport with both the associate and the student teacher.

> I don't want to appear like an inspector type person, so where I can I visit the student first socially and then we can chat so we feel comfortable with each other... Oh I always like to explain to the student that I'm not there just to appraise them that any teacher has gaps to be learned and filled. I see the posting as an opportunity for me to help them fill these gaps ... the gaps do need to be filled. We talk about that and I say to them, one of my jobs is to write a report for you to the College, but I am also here to try and help you get a report that will mean that you can ultimately get a job. If I don't get an opportunity to do this before the first visit I always when I walk in the room, shake hands with the student and I smile and say we will talk later. I hope to convey a whole lot of things to the student by doing that and I think I do ... I see myself as available to help with problems ... along with the associate to be part of the building up. I also make a point of establishing a rapport with the associate. I always do that. Sometimes I go to school early in the morning, deliberately just to try and make that contact. In other words I want the associate to see me as a person, someone they can actually talk to as a person but to be honest with. A lot of associates are defensive of students, protect them and they protect them from this awful lecturer who's coming in (laugh). So I always make a point of, I wouldn't say cultivating an associate, but I do like to establish a good working relationship with the

> associate so the associate and I feel comfortable with each other. Because I think that helps in a number of ways. I feel that the associate and the student deal with me together like a triangle. (Alan (VL) 1, lines 117-143).

Visiting lecturers were seen to perform three key functions in relation to the practicum:

> Firstly, the TE is an opportunity to try things out. The second aspect is that there is an opportunity for people involved in teacher education to see what this person can do and to identify aspects that need to be identified if they're going to be able to succeed and do what they want to do. And therefore I see it as an advisory and helping role and things like that. You know "I saw this and I think I can offer some suggestions." Finally you really do have the judging role. You've got to make an assessment of their teaching. But hopefully you've provided them with the opportunity with sufficient feedback of what needs to be attended to and then you're looking to see if that's been taken on board and acted upon. (Kate (VL) 1, lines 12-22)

Simon's visiting lecturer prefers to use the term coach. She was reluctant to see herself as a final judge determining the failure or success of the student teacher. A number of lecturers struggle with this part of the role.

> I see my role as a coach I suppose. One thing I like to make clear to the students at the very outset is that I'm not here to be some judge looking on you. I try to make them feel comfortable and it's your role to tell me the sort of goals that you think you have and my role to try and identify some of those goals and then together to try and work out a way forward for you. And I try to say that teacher education is a continuum. It is trying to find out where you are and how we can help you make the next steps up...rather than for me to make judgements. By saying I'm here to pass or fail you, I think that sets up a performance anxiety thing in the students and I don't think they're going to be able to perform as well as they could for me to observe. (Simon (VL) 1, lines 7-17)

Visiting lecturers have a variety of approaches to their task. Diane's visiting lecturer had a very systematic way of observing the student teach. This included critical questions she was going to ask the student during the de-brief.

> While I'm observing I have a piece of paper and I jot down the stages that they go through and I try to engage my brain in the process. So I start analysing what I'm doing because I know I'm going to have to talk about it. So it makes you a lot more conscious of your process. I tend to put questions so at one point she'd stopped the kids a couple of times and they'd come back to the mat and they'd done a bit of teaching and they'd gone on to the next stage. You know and I had a question to ask about how was she

> going to give them some language. I was looking for that and the next session that they'd meet, I'd look at the transcript and I had some questions to focus on ... "It was good because I was able to see that you'd done that later on, and you came back and you didn't respond to what just happened, you came in with an expectation". (Diane (VL) 1, lines 114-129)

They acknowledged that they were only getting a snapshot of the practicum. Student teachers appreciate this and can demonstrate successful experiences.

> It's very easy to take a snapshot from different angles and, I try to make sure it's an angle that gives the student every chance to display what they can do. And, maybe that's, that's a huge pressure on students too if they feel that they are on display, that this person is only given a snapshot ... I could just try everything that I might have done well at some point in the last week or two, to let them see what I can do. And, I think that's what Diane was doing at the end. She was saying, here are the things that I did do really well, have a look at these please so that I think it is really always like this. (Diane (VL) 2, lines 368-376)

In working with student teachers, visiting lecturers are conscious of the experiences students may have had previously. In Greg's case, he had received outstanding reports on previous practicum. He assumed that this would be the case again in his third year.

> Yeah ... and possibly, you know, I would say if you saw him at the end of the second year ... he is so at home in the classroom, and so on to things. He has had wonderful reports all the way through, but it's some of that detail ... that might only occur in the third year ... But I think also this comparison, in knowing that there were other people who at various times hadn't been on to things, and it seemed like the visiting lecturers visit [on his previous practicum] was maybe just a ... going through the motions. And it made me think that he yeah, that he didn't have a great appreciation of what the visiting lecturer, what that relationship could mean. (Gary (VL) 2, lines 12-22)

Mary's visiting lecturer believed that she was able to support the student teachers better than the associate teachers; particularly as she clearly understood the background and experience they brought to the practicum.

> Well, this is their final and really most important practice, the teaching experience, and I think to go in as a lecturer, I mean there are associates out there who would crucify some of our students and I think they need us there as lecturers (Mary (VL) 2, lines 72-75)

Each of the visiting lecturers treasured their role and believed that they were privy to some very unique experiences. As Simon's visiting lecturer observed:

> I think the best ones in terms of experiences, are students who are teaching almost better than you think you can do it yourself...and you sit back and think...wow...you know...that's fantastic! ... These are third year students um...you've only had three years in a College of Education and look what you can do, and I've often said "I wish I had a video and you could see what I saw" and that's wonderful and that's happened a few times too. (Simon (VL) 1, lines 44-51)

Summary

It is apparent from the data that some of the triads exemplified critical aspects of a professional learning community. There were examples of in-depth professional conversations between student teachers and their associates and visiting lecturers. Alan's associate and visiting lecturer shared their views easily, partly because they knew each other well. In the most part, the relationship between the lecturer and the associate teacher was polite and respectful. However, there was little evidence that they shared views on the role of the practicum as a partnership and there was little congruence in the supervisory roles adopted by the associate teachers and the visiting lecturers.

The lack of congruence in supervision limited the potential development of the student teachers. Simon's visiting lecturer abdicated primary responsibility for formative assessment to the associate teacher because she did not feel confident to provide further professional feedback. In Diane's case, the visiting lecturer supported her through in-depth conversations in an attempt to provide feedback that was formative to enable Diane to succeed on the practicum. Diane's associate teacher had a limited view of his role and depended almost exclusively on his own personal experience as a student teacher.

Much of the feedback from both the associate teachers and the visiting lecturers focused on teaching techniques, as opposed to critical formative feedback. For example, feedback centred on management tips and strategies to specific problems the student teacher encountered, rather than deeper critically reflective questions that allowed the student teacher to exercise professional agency.

These case studies illustrate that the practicum is a complex socio-cultural environment in which intense professional relationships develop as a result of strong emotional responses to often challenging classroom scenarios. In this chapter, the characteristics of each of the settings have been described and the experience each of the members of the triad brought to the practicum. The perceptions each had to this teaching experience have been analysed. Three major themes have been identified: the emotional nature of the teaching practicum; the practicum as situated learning; and the practicum as a professional learning community.

CHAPTER SIX: Findings

In this chapter, the findings are presented for each of the three key themes: the practicum as an emotional practice, the practicum as situated learning practice and the practicum as a professional learning community. These themes were identified through the analysis of the perceptions that each member of the triad held of the impact of the final practicum in preparing the student teacher for his or her first year of teaching in a primary school.

The Practicum as an Emotional Practice

There is overwhelming evidence of the existence of strong emotions during the practicum. From the outset, all the participants – the visiting lecturers, the associate teachers and the student teachers – rated the final practicum as the most critical element in the preparation of the Year One teacher. The stakes were high and therefore the anxiety and anticipation levels of the student teachers were also high. In some cases, these emotions were successfully managed because of the actions of the associates and/or the visiting lecturers. In other cases, the emotional state of the student teachers was worsened by the interventions of the associate or the lecturer. The demand of managing the behaviour of a class of challenging students also proved stressful and was a concern expressed by all the participants.

Diane began the practicum believing that she was capable of being a successful teacher. Her previous practicum had been the highlight of her teacher education and the first two weeks of this placement confirmed her positive emotional state. Both her associate and her visiting lecturer were pleased with her progress. The problems arose when she began to take more control of the class. Subsequently, the actions of

her associate did not promote her teaching development but instead raised Diane's level of anxiety to the point that she felt she was fighting for survival. The fear of failure overwhelmed her and most of her actions became attempts to control and manage the behaviour of the class and she had little focus on the learning of the pupils. It would be reasonable to assume that her development as a teacher became fraught at this point.

> So then I watched her teaching and she really is in a defensive mode at this point. She's doing a lot of watching the whole class for anything, anyone that moves, or blinks, or does anything out of turn, looks like they're going to cause a problem, she stops them very quickly ... I felt "Oh gosh, this is not the same student that I saw in the beginning of the section, oh, that's ... that's a bit sad". (Diane (VL) 2, lines 24-30)

Diane's experience raises the importance of the selection of associate teachers. In this case, the associate saw himself as a gatekeeper and guardian of the profession. This belief meant he was ready to argue that a student should fail and be prevented from becoming a teacher.

> I said that if I had a problem I would have no bones about taking a class back. So I let her read that and then I said to her "Right, now I'm wanting to know if you want me to take my class back, if you should just ring the visiting lecturer and tell her not to come tomorrow," and she went into shock, started to cry. It doesn't worry me. I can't keep you going on like this ... You have to make a decision if you want to finish this or fail, or go somewhere else. (Diane (AT) 2, lines 82-87)

His blunt, unexpected assessment of the student teacher in the fifth week was a cruel blow to the morale of that student teacher. Clearly the beliefs of the associates about their role in the practicum need to be examined prior to their appointment, and there needs to be professional development for them to provide appropriate methods of feedback whereby concerns can be expressed to both the student teacher and the visiting lecturer in a manner that promotes development rather than overwhelming anxiety or fear of failure. In short, this feedback needs to provide a reasonable

measure of emotional safety for the student teacher. As Diane indicated, from the moment that the associate threatened to fail her, her stress levels rose alarmingly.

In contrast, Mary initially approached the practicum with considerable anxiety.

> I was really nervous. Before I went to Teaching Practice I actually seriously considered going off and telling them I didn't want to go, I was that nervous, because I didn't think I could do it. Um ... but it just went really well. (Mary 2, lines 15-18)

Her interactions with both her associate and her visiting lecturer calmed her fears. Her progress as a teacher grew remarkably to the point where she felt frustrated by the restraints she perceived her associate placed on her teaching freedom. Mary wanted to exercise the full autonomy of a Year One teacher whilst her associate's expectations and willingness to give her this autonomy were much more conservative. Despite this frustration, Mary was able to grow and by the end of the practicum felt strongly affirmed in her ability to become a Year One teacher, and the initial fears she had spoken of were allayed. Her visiting lecturer commented: "She's actually one of the best I've ever seen ... Preparation-wise, her manner with the children ... Just quite amazing." (Mary (VL) 2, lines 56-58) The confidence she gained over the practicum fuelled her eagerness to broaden her programme to include dance as an extra-curricular activity. Her associate was concerned that she didn't over-extend herself and suffer from burnout:

> My associate said, "You have to pace yourself." I said "Yeah ... well you know, they do gym and all the other things, anyway". To cut a long story short, I did it and I did it when I could, and a lot of the time I had to do it in the classroom and it wasn't good, because the desks were in there. They wouldn't give me the space to do it, but I wouldn't let that bother ... Oh and they didn't have a stereo, and I brought my own stereo ... And what happened was the other children around the school did hear that I was doing Dance and when I did it in the Hall, people ... the kids from um ... the J1 you know, very new entrants right through to the other end of the school would come and dance. (Mary 2, lines 430-440

Hargreaves (2000) argues, "As emotional practitioners, teachers can make classrooms exciting or dull" (p. 812). Mary had a passion for teaching dance and, despite the hurdles, persisted and provided a new, exciting dimension for the children.

Greg had a strong belief in his ability to teach. His previous practicum had been very successful and he had received very little critical comment prior to this practicum. Besides coping with the practicum, the birth of his first child occurred midway through the practicum, an event that had a strong emotional impact on him and meant that his home life had changed dramatically. Shortly after, his first critical appraisal from his visiting lecturer occurred. Emotionally he may have not been as capable of resolving this minor setback, as he normally would have been. It was only through the careful, detailed feedback from the lecturer that he was able to overcome this initial setback, and the strong emotional support he received from his associate provided him with additional strength. Greg demonstrated a strong emotional response to the lecturer's appraisal mainly because of his sense of fair play. He maintained that his primary concern was that other student teachers might not be subject to the same rigorous appraisal as he was and, consequently, he would be relatively disadvantaged in seeking a teaching position. His previous experiences with visiting lecturers had been very perfunctory and not as thorough as the assessment of the current visiting lecturer. His competitiveness and desire to be perceived as an outstanding student teacher meant he was concerned that other student teachers, whom he perceived as inferior, would receive more flattering appraisals. The competition for winning Year One teaching positions was intense and this emotional pressure was reflected in Greg's response.

> I know there are other students at College, third years who are worse at this job than I am, and they will have visiting lecturers that aren't consistent in doing what they are supposed to do, so they will get away with it. (Greg 2, lines 109-113)

Kate found the practicum challenging. She was anxious to succeed and therefore admitted to feeling pressure: "And on the last day I was pretty relieved it was all over, just to pass but um ... I think I learnt an awful lot..." (Kate 2, lines 3-4). However, she was open to advice and sought the practical guidance of her visiting lecturer in particular. As opposed to Greg, her ambition was to receive a "pass" grade and she was not seeking to prove herself an outstanding student teacher. Kate was not prepared to challenge the advice given by either her associate or her visiting lecturer, but was happy to comply particularly if it resulted in a successful grade. But Kate did bring a fresh perspective to the classroom. She had a passion for teaching gymnastics and dance. Unlike Mary, she felt she wouldn't be able to cope with the additional demand of lunch-time activity: "I was hoping to do like a Dance thing at lunchtime but um ... yeah ... I decided it would be too much pressure." (Kate 2, lines 278-279) However, from her associate's perspective, Kate's ability to teach gymnastics added a fresh vitality to her classroom programme: "She's been exceptional with gymnastics which we've done, because that's a particular strength of hers and valuable." (Kate (AT) 2, lines 101-103)

Simon's practicum was the least stressful. This was associated with the excellent professional relationships he had established with his associate. Very early in the practicum, his visiting lecturer determined that he was achieving success and adopted an almost laissez-faire approach to his supervision. Like Mary, the behaviour of his class was less challenging than that experienced by the other students, so that he was able to focus more easily on teaching as opposed to management. The combination of a receptive class of students and the strong support of an associate, who saw her role as supporting the student teacher to achieve success, provided Simon with an excellent practicum experience.

> Hey it just seemed you felt really welcome. They told us at the start and got us all together and said, their job was - and they knew the importance of their job - to help us to get through this and to have a good result. And also the children at the school were very well behaved. I mean behaviour problems were very limited. (Simon 2, lines 150-154)

Simon attributed most of his stress to managing a busy sporting schedule, and part-time employment whilst on practicum created most of his stress. He indicated that the practicum placed greater demands on him and he was looking forward to returning to the more relaxed life of university study after the practicum.

In sharp contrast, Alan's practicum was very stressful: the class he had was demanding even for a very experienced associate teacher. He rode an emotional roller coaster as he attempted to implement some innovative teaching ideas whilst trying to manage the behaviour of the class. He received constructive support from both his associate teacher and visiting lecturer. However, his failures left him dejected to the point that he wondered if it was all worthwhile. He reported that resilience and commitment to key beliefs about teaching gave him the strength to continue.

> My philosophy and my approach is still the same. I still really believe in giving a lot of power to the kids and letting them discover stuff, you know, make it look really child-centred. But at the same time, I had to adapt for these children's special needs. Um ... I had to have it slightly less child-centred and had it far more structured than before ... but it worked ... I became hard. I'm actually less tolerant of you know, the testing behaviours of youths and I think that will actually be good. (Alan 2, lines 36-44)

This passion for teaching never deserted him. He had a particular interest in the teaching of science and technology and was buoyed by the success that he had teaching one particular unit:

> ST: We did a great technology unit on packaging and advertising and it went right across all the curriculum areas and the kids made great products. They made plays and things with their language activities and each one brought out a product or gave me results through book work ... They all did learn something, but it was hard work getting there.
>
> I: Were they excited by the activities?

> ST: Yeah ... they were all interesting activities and, kids who missed out on them, didn't want to miss out, they wanted to catch up, to find out what they had missed and it was good to see. (Alan 2, lines 154-163)

He also felt that the opportunity to share with other student teachers, who were also at that same school and thus experiencing very similar challenges, provided an emotional release.

Summary

As Tickle (1991) noted from his examination of the experiences of five first year teachers: "Throughout these reflective explorations of academic and professional matters, the emotional explorations by the teachers were as prominent as the plethora of detail relating to 'technical' and 'clinical' competencies" (p. 319). The experiences of the student teachers in this case study can be summarised into broad categories of emotional practice.

Emotional arousal

Each of the student teachers commented at the level of anxiety each felt at the outset of the practicum. They knew the critical importance of the practicum for their future teaching careers. Although they were eager to take teaching responsibility of the class, behaviour management was their greatest concern. For those student teachers who had very challenging classes, classroom management dominated their experience of the practicum. For Diane and Alan, it was almost completely overwhelming. For these student teachers, the practicum did appear to be a matter of survival.

Innovativeness

A number of associates remarked on the vitality and expertise student teachers brought to their classrooms. As has been noted, this could be new curriculum

knowledge and teaching in areas that were not the strengths of the associate teachers. Associates also commented on the novelty of having fresh, eager teachers in their classrooms: "And she's just had, like a lot of young teachers coming through, she's just had some really new fresh ideas." (Kate (AT) 2, lines 101-104) Most of the student teachers were able to demonstrate aspects of innovation and creativity in their teaching. This included those who had challenging classes in which they struggled to manage behaviour. For example, Alan provided innovative science lessons for his class despite the risk of failure. He modified his approach but he did not succumb to a conservative, didactic approach.

Resilience

Resilience is the capacity to persist despite a potentially overwhelming challenge. It is important that students are adequately prepared and that their expectations are realistic. If they have the expectation that they will encounter significant challenges in the practicum, they are better inoculated against the difficulties they may encounter. As has been noted in Alan's experience, his resilience and passion for teaching and his belief in providing motivating lessons for his class never deserted him. This resilience was a characteristic of each of these student teachers. Without resilience and a strong commitment to succeed, the student teachers would not have been able to persist in some challenging circumstances, although several faced more difficult classes to teach than others.

The Practicum as Situated Learning Practice

The practicum was valued highly by these participants because it placed student teachers in authentic contexts. Practitioner knowledge was seen as different from the

knowledge gained at university. Alan highlighted the perceived gap between theory and practice in his response to one of my questions.

> I: Did you find your university course work helped you to deal with a difficult group of kids?
> ST: Almost completely irrelevant. Um ... they're good for classes that want to learn, but there were so many in this class who didn't want to be there and just wanted to disrupt. They'd be nasty little children. The management theory blew out the window when I saw these kids and no strategies for these sort of children, the kids who don't want to learn, who don't want to be there, the ones we've got here ... Theory at Teacher's College doesn't work. (Alan 2, lines 95-102)

This reflects Meijer's (1999) observation that the characteristics of teachers' practical knowledge "is personal, which means that each teacher's practical knowledge is to some extent unique; it is contextual, meaning that it is defined in, and adapted to, the classroom situation; and ... it develops through experiences in teaching." (p.19)

Contextual Variables

Two factors emerge strongly from these data. In the placement of student teachers, the most important variable may be a "difficulty factor" represented by the demands of managing the behaviour of the class. On the one hand, Diane's, Kate's and Alan's associates believed that challenges facing the student teachers in their classes were realistic, and that such challenges were the reality of most primary schools in which these student teachers would be seeking employment. In contrast, the visiting lecturers felt that the challenges were too demanding. The pupils in these classrooms were selected originally for experienced, senior teachers and, often, would pose significant demands on the expertise of these experienced associates. The second important variable related to judgements of the difficulty level of the placement is the socio-economic and cultural composition of the school. For Diane, Kate and Alan, their placement schools had a low decile rating as defined by their socio-economic status of the region surrounding the school. They also had a higher proportion of

Maori students. As Alan's visiting lecturer commented, most of the student teachers come from middle-class, New Zealand Pakeha[1] background and, therefore, may not be well-equipped without additional preparation to deal with the teaching demands required for a culturally and economically diverse classroom population. Several of the student teachers commented on the type of activities in which their class would be involved after school.

> Children who'd come to school with hickeys [love bites], who would go to parties, and bring alcohol in their pump bottles mixed with lemonade ... experiment with smoking and they have been exposed to the experiences that I wouldn't call positive in their childhood and, you know, once they enter the class those experiences are not forgotten. They are still there with them. You have to work with it. (Diane 2, lines 213-219)

This was a cultural shock for Diane and she was not alone in expressing this emotion. Interestingly the class level or age of the pupils was not an issue. This was probably because each of the student teachers was placed at the class level requested. Nor did any of the participants raise class size as an issue. Instead, the primary concern was with the significant behavioural management issues some children posed for a number of the student teachers.

Teacher as Model Variables

Associates and lecturers saw that one of the key functions of the practicum was the initiation of student teachers into the "world of teaching". For Lave and Wenger (1989), the practicum is a process of initiation to the profession that encompasses far more than simply the learning of techniques and skills, but also the socialisation into a community of practice.

> As an aspect of social practice, learning involves the whole person; it implies not only a relation to specific activities, but a relation to social communities – it implies becoming a full participant, a member, and a kind of person. In this view, learning only partly – and often incidentally – implies becoming

[1] *Pakeha* refers to white New Zealanders often of British or European heritage.

> able to be involved in new activities, to perform new tasks and functions, to master new understanding. (p. 53)

In particular, the associate teachers viewed themselves as models for the student teachers: "I think that it is very important to be a model and ... I enjoy in the first week or so modelling. I try and model all the different ways we do things (Mary (AT) 1, lines 42-44). They demonstrate and explain the class programme, provide insights into the decisions that they make, and introduce the student teachers to the class members and the wider school community.

> I've tended with a third year to sit back and say "This is where we're at" and I like to provide them with quite a good guide so they get my daily plan and outline and sort of the things I do weekly and a long term plan, so that they've got an idea of the things we are aiming for ... I would see my job as being the guide. These are the outlines that you're going to have to fit into. This is what it's going to be like for you next year. Hopefully you'll work as part of a team and you'll have collegial support, but you're really going to have to get around what you're going to do in a classroom following a plan, and I would expect them to get on with it um ... Each day I would hope for some sort of evaluation time. What did you do well? What worked poorly? What would you change? What are you going to do tomorrow? ... It's a guiding role more than anything else. I would make suggestions ... you know ... other ways of doing it. (Greg (AT) 1, lines53-69)

The student teachers endorsed the importance of the practicum as a way of getting to understand the role of the teacher: "I think it is probably the most valuable part of the whole teaching degree ... you know you're not really sure what it's like until you're in front of the class." (Greg 1, lines 34-36)

However, there were also limitations to this approach to teacher education. In Diane's case, when she faced particular difficulties in managing the class, the associate determined that he would put her back into an observation role so that she could learn from his teaching approach to the class. Ironically he commented that "Diane needs to be herself" (D (AT) 2, line 75), but his solution to her teaching difficulty was simply to observe him. As a result Diane made the observation that she was:

> trying too hard to stay within limits of [the associate's] teaching, and to conform to his style, which really ruined me. (laugh) Because I, you know, I had to be my own person and the two of us are so different, that it was very hard juggling both styles. (D (ST) 2, lines 88-91)

According to Greg's visiting lecturer, the dilemma of modelling teaching is to provide examples of effective teaching practice without expecting the student teacher to simply mimic this practice. "People have to be themselves in the classroom so I try and encourage students to find what is their own style ... what sits comfortably with who they are as a person." (Greg (VL) 1, lines 64-80)

In a similar vein, if the practice of the associate teacher is not critically analysed with the student teacher, the subtlety and nuances of the associate's behaviour may not be noted by the student teacher. Kate's associate commented that:

> She saw the way I managed the class, and thought that I was really laid back and casual. She hadn't realised that there was already a lot of work that had gone into to get the class to the point that I could just be relaxed with them. And so, she came in was relaxed and casual, and of course they just about ate her alive. K (AT) 2, lines 42-46

However, if the student teacher is provided with insight into the reasons for a particular teaching practice, the student can critically appraise his or her own teaching performance.

> Now she had really high expectations. My expectation what I expected from the children, because if they can get away with it they will and she didn't let any get away with it. She explained her management process and the reasons she had for them. S (ST) 2, lines 351-353

Summary

There was unanimous support from the participants of this study that the practicum was a critical component of the initial education of primary teachers. Success on this practicum reinforced beliefs that they were able to become effective first year teachers because they had successfully completed a major practicum in an authentic context. However, some of the student teachers faced far greater management challenges than

the others because of the "difficult" nature of their classes. In this case study, these were the classes in lower decile schools and reflected the need for student teachers to be adequately prepared to meet the diverse range of socio-cultural needs of New Zealand classrooms. Secondly, experienced associate teachers often have children with more challenging behaviours because they are better able to cope with these classes. Thus, placing a student teacher with an experienced associate teacher could also entail placement in a classroom with above-average challenges.

Finally, the practicum provided opportunities for the student teachers to observe experienced teachers model teaching practice. These experiences were most beneficial if the student teachers could critically reflect on their personal beliefs about competence and capability in similar situations. Difficulty ensued when the associate teacher was uncritically self-confident regarding his/her own abilities and did not reflect on how the student teacher might learn from rather than simply mimic these.

Professional Learning Community

In the view of the university, there are three key participants in the practicum: the student teacher, the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer. The associate and the lecturer are charged to work collaboratively to coach and finally to assess the progress of the student teacher on the placement. Lave and Wenger (1989) argue that situated learning implies that it is set in a community of practice.

> We have insisted that exposure to resources for learning is not construed as a purely interpersonal phenomenon; rather we have argued that learning must be understood with respect to practice as a whole, with its multiplicity of relations – both within the community and with the world at large. (p. 114)

A professional learning community extends this notion of a community of practice. It is characterised by shared values and expectations, in this case for the learning of the student teacher. To achieve this the members of the triad need to engage in in-depth

professional conversations about the objectives of the practicum and the progress the student teacher makes to achieve these goals. It requires that practice is de-privatised and that members of the triad are able to openly and honestly critique each other's role in the practicum. Whilst there were excellent examples of triads including aspects of the professional learning community in their practice, no triad functioned fully as a professional learning community. This section will highlight positive examples as well as areas that fell short.

Consistency and Clarity of Roles

Diane's associate failed to collaborate effectively with other members of the triad because he maintained strong, personal views about his role that were not shared by the other members. Nor did his views of the lecturer's role and the process of providing advice and support of the student teacher represent an acceptable model of professional development. As Diane said:

> But then I felt you know, well, I need more positive feedback and constructive criticism. I was always available for him to tell me, "Am I doing something wrong, how can I change it?" ... Maybe we should have set times. (Diane 2, lines 637-640)

This meant that the triad could not function in an open, professional manner to resolve easily these issues. The visiting lecturer worked closely with the student teacher in isolation from the associate because the student teacher felt unsafe in discussions with the associate.

> Really, [the visiting lecturer] being there is the prime reason why I didn't walk away. Um ... because her positiveness and I suppose because she knows, she's seen other student teachers. You know, I didn't feel I could confide in [the associate], that [he] might have forgotten about how it feels to be in my shoes. But [the visiting lecturer], really knew, she was wonderful, really, really great. (Diane 2, lines 649-654)

In contrast, Alan's triad worked more collaboratively as each member felt safe and confident in sharing his or her views of Alan's professional development. This may

have been facilitated by the fact that the lecturer and the associate knew each other prior to the practicum. Alan also knew the lecturer as he had been visited by him on his previous practicum and they had established an effective working rapport. Alan and the associate had been able to establish a warm, working relationship, which appeared to be related to the empathetic, gentle approach of the associate. However, the triad did not openly share perspectives. The lecturer's primary concern was the challenge for the student to manage the behaviour of this class.

> I watched him and I came to the conclusion again that the class was just too big a challenge for a third year student, and I know myself, that this class would have tested an experienced teacher, and this included his associate. (Alan (VL) 2, lines 101-104)

He felt that the associate struggled on occasions. However, he was reluctant to share this view with her, as he was sensitive to any suggestion that he was critical of her practice. Such sensitivities impeded open debate amongst most of the triads. "You have to realise that you're a guest in the school ... and that particular class" (Simon (VL) 1, lines 13-14). Each of the lecturers indicated a diplomatic way that they dealt with their interactions with the associate.

> I got the message that the associate, you know, was a bit short, a bit concerned and then I thought now "How will I handle this diplomatically?" And I thought well to handle it is to talk about the student's needs and how we might meet those in order for this person to achieve. Whatever, we all wanted them to achieve. (Kate (VL) 1, lines112-117)

Mary's triad operated largely as three independent members. Mary felt restricted by her associate and therefore confided in her visiting lecturer. The lecturer sought confirmation of Mary's progress from the associate and then confided this information to Mary.

> VL: She was very concerned because her associate was not telling her whether she was either doing a good job or not doing a good job and [Mary] being [Mary] she liked feedback whether it was bad or whether it was good. She really wanted feedback. I actually went and asked, but mind you that's something I do all the time. I always ask how the student is going. Right at the beginning her associate was very non-

committal - like trying to get water out of a stone at the beginning. Very nice person. But I think [Mary] impressed her so much in the end that she was very complimentary with me, like telling me that [Mary] had done such a wonderful job. But she wasn't saying this to [Mary].

I: She wasn't communicating that to the student?

VL: Not really, and that's exactly what worried [Mary] right from the start. Always worried in case she wasn't doing a good job. She was doing an excellent job. (Mary (VL) 2, lines 6-19)

Meanwhile, the associate was unaware of Mary's frustrations and believed that satisfactory progress was being achieved to the extent that she did spend less time in the classroom in the second part of the practicum. The lecturer provided assurances to Mary that she was achieving exceptionally well, but did not feel it was necessary to pass Mary's concerns onto the associate.

In contrast, Simon's associate provided very detailed feedback and support to him. Apart from some initial constructive feedback, his visiting lecturer was largely an interested bystander. She believed that Simon had received sound constructive feedback from his associate and she could add very little further feedback.

> I sometimes think we go into schools when we don't really need to. We need to trust what the associate teacher is saying, and when there is a problem we could go in. Perhaps we don't need to go in three times. Perhaps once at the beginning and once at the end, may have been better. I still think we have a role, but I think we need to trust a little bit more the really important day-to-day messages that the teachers are giving to students ... the feedback they would write down in their record book that comes back here. (Simon (VL) 2, lines 425-432)

In a sense, the associate and the student teacher were the team with the lecturer as an interested bystander. As the lecturer commented: "At the end I remember saying to him, 'Well [Simon], you tell me now, what are your needs now, because I see you as being quite okay to take your own class'" (Simon (VL) 2, lines 47-48).

Kate's associate had supervised a number of third year students. She relied on this previous experience and she admitted that she had not read the written documentation from the university. She had clear views about the purpose of the practicum, but these were not grounded by the expectations and requirements

specified in this year's course expectations. The visiting lecturer needed to share some of these perspectives with the associate and was frustrated by her lack of preparation. Therefore, there was no depth to the discussions between the associate and the visiting lecturer.

> One of the things that concerns me, and I think it's true in this case, is that, it's often dropped on people. And yeah, and that to me is a real concern. I know, that while you know, it's a job and someone's got to do it in a school, but the thing is, that sometimes you get the impression that you're not getting the best associates ... for all sorts of reasons and people have to sort of do this you know. And that's a shame, and I'm just wondering if um ... if the College could actually be involved more in terms of training people ... and perhaps working on the collaborative sort of nature of the task you know, between the visiting lecturer and the associate, in a more direct way. (Kate (VL) 2, lines 262-273

Greg's triad were the most collaborative team. The lecturer and the associate were mutually respectful and supported each other in making professional judgements about Greg's progress. The student felt best able to confide in the associate, but Greg was also a strong personality and was prepared to challenge the judgements of the lecturer. An added dimension operated in this triad. As there were several third year students on practicum at the school, the associates shared their supervision and progress of their respective students with each other.

> Yes we talked about it. Um ... discussed things ... I would say, "Oh Greg did this", and someone else would say "So and so did that differently" ... We were all confident and that did make a difference. I think if one of us had been struggling or that the student had been struggling, I'm sure we would have helped where necessary. It was a further dynamic, which operated. (Greg (VL) 2, lines 372-379)

This provided a valuable extension of Greg's support network. However, the university's perspective was absent in these particular discussions. Instead, these discussions rested on the initiative of the associate teachers, and it would have been valuable to engage in a professional dialogue that incorporated the purposes and roles of the third year practicum as perceived by the university.

From the point of view of the teaching practicum administrator, this raises a key failure of the organisation of the third year practicum. He observed that there had been no professional development workshop for associate teachers and visiting lecturers in a four-year period:

> I would say there has always been a range of associate teachers. But the range is widening. It's widening for two reasons in my view and at both ends of the spectrum. One is that we have to use virtually everybody because our numbers are so high, so while we're making selections within that pool to match people and levels, we may well be pushing the boundaries of using some people we might prefer not to use. In fact I'm sure we are doing that. The other reason that there's a greater range I think in associate teacher quality and, perhaps commitment to having students, is that we haven't had any professional development for associate teachers, or visiting lecturers for that matter, for the last four years. (TE Administrator, lines 172-181)

Roles had not been critically examined and each triad operated differently as each of the associates and lecturers adopted practices that had been either partly informed by the written documentation they had received or based on their previous experiences. This lack of consistency detracted from the triads being able to act as professional learning communities. Further there was little evidence that the triads engaged in professional conversations as a whole group. Instead, conversations occurred between members of the triad without the presence of one of the members. A key characteristic of a professional learning community is the de-privatisation of practice. This requires that members of the community operate in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

Furthermore, a lack of collaboration between all members detracted from the ability of the student teachers to exercise professional agency. Mary became frustrated by the control her associate exercised over classroom decisions. She felt her associate required that Mary should adopt her practices without question, although Mary conceded that her associate had considerable teaching experience.

> She has her idea on doing things, and like we all do I think, to a certain degree, we think what we do is the right way and she's been teaching for 20 years, she's tried every way, and that's the you know, that's the way she wants ... that may be old school you know. (Mary (ST) 2, lines 357-361)

In contrast, Greg felt that he was able to exercise personal judgement in the decisions that he made on the practicum. He felt confident in sifting through the feedback he received from his associate and his visiting lecturer prior to making a teaching decision.

> I think that you've got to take the information the visiting lecturer says, the information that the associate says and in a sense run them through - using a rural term - run them through a drafting race and take what's applicable to you for those kids. (Greg (ST) 2, lines 278-282)

Greg's rural analogy refers to the method farmers use to sort sheep into groups, for example, separating the lambs from the hoggets. However, a professional community requires that student teachers articulate and justify the reasons they decide on a particular course of action. Greg's analogy is not an image of collaboration, rather it thrusts the responsibility clearly on the "drafter" and not with the team.

Nature and Extent of Feedback and Moderation

A further measure of collaboration was provided by the final summations for the student teacher written by the associate and the visiting lecturer. Given the expectation that the associate and the visiting lecturer discuss their findings with each other, there was clear evidence that this collaboration occurred. For example, Alan's associate summarised her findings as:

> Alan has had some difficult children in this class, and has managed them more effectively with each week of his posting. He has increased tremendously in skills of classroom management. He still needs to develop further in scanning, eye contact and proximity with problem areas in the classroom. Experience will also show him when to end discussions. Alan has increased his own personal confidence and effectiveness, and is aware of areas that need more work. (Alan (ATFR), lines 101-107)

The lecturer summarised his report in a very similar vein, (although the associate had not seen the comment he made of her teaching).

> This class is a difficult one with a higher than usual number of difficult children and Alan experienced management difficulties on both my first and third visits. However the class is also a challenge to the associate teacher. I think Alan needs help to develop a more extensive and varied repertoire of behaviour management strategies for dealing with disruptive children. (Alan (VLFR), lines 24-30)

But not all the reports appear to accurately reflect the progress of the student teacher over the practicum. Diane had a particularly traumatic practicum. However, it would be difficult to find any evidence in the final practicum reports of the drama that had occurred. Considering that the associate had been at the point of recommending that she fail, his final summation is quite flattering.

> This was one particular area where you personally (evident from your evaluations and comments made orally) found it necessary to improve and develop. Initially the children responded immediately to you it wasn't until the second part of the posting that you were presented with most behaviour management challenges. You recognised your deficiencies and set about trying to rectify them. Using frequent voice control, eye contact, pausing, card system and constancy in expectations in the classroom, you gained respect of the children and set guidelines for the children to operate within. I am confident that you will be capable of developing these techniques to become even more effective in your own class. The children found your lessons interesting and challenging. I found them the same and at the same time being relevant to the curriculum needs of the children and kept the class as a whole on task. They particularly enjoyed the Maori and Science activities. You took into consideration the needs and abilities of the children and catered for these successfully. You remembered that an effective way of keeping children on task is to move about the class and involving yourself in their activities. This kept them on task and refocused them. Great skills. (Diane (ATFR), lines 133-151)

Greg's concern that there needed to be moderation in the practicum is probably well illustrated by the contrast with earlier views this report represents. Diane's visiting lecturer suggests some concerns with her management strategies, but the written summation still did not reflect the concerns she raised in the second interview:

> Diane is now effectively using low-key controls. Diane is working on focussing on positive models in the class. This has been a struggle at times, but she is making positive progress - due entirely to her own willingness to

> learn and develop new techniques. She has strong and positive control now operating in structured whole class situations although freer activities may need more detailed planning. Still, very positive developments seen. She uses timing and pace effectively. (Diane (VLFR), lines 34-41)

This report provides another illustration of the need for a wider debate amongst the lecturers and associates who supervise these student teachers to ensure that they are sharing common expectations of third year students and that a process of moderation occurs to support growth. Moreover for the practicum to function as a professional learning community, the associate teacher, visiting lecturer and the student teacher must engage in professional conversations as a team, focused on discussion of the progress of the student teacher towards meeting the learning outcomes of the practicum. These conversations would be characterised by specific feedback on strategies that would improve the student's teaching practice and the triad would take collective responsibility for making sure that the student was helped.

Summary

A professional learning community is characterised by shared values and expectations of teaching children and a shared understanding of the environment in which they are working. Such a community would have a collective focus on student learning and collaborate in the development of skills related to the implementation of professional practice. It would provide an environment of mutual support wherein the members of that community are able to trust one another. This requires that they engage in reflective dialogue via in-depth conversations about teaching and learning. Whilst there was evidence that aspects of a professional learning community operated amongst the triads, no single triad could be described as a true professional learning community as described in the literature.

There was a lack of consistency and clarity in the implementation of the roles members of the triad were to play on the practicum. None of the triads consistently engaged in collaborative practice in which all members of the triad participated in decision-making. Instead individual members of the triad collaborated as pairs usually in the absence of the third member. In most cases this involved the student teacher and the associate, although there were also clear examples of collaboration between the visiting lecturer and the student teacher. As there was little evidence that all three members of the triad engaged in in-depth professional conversations to determine the progress of the student teacher, there was not a shared understanding of the roles and function of the practicum. Thus some student teachers felt unable to exercise professional agency, and were instead reliant on the advice of either the associate teacher or the visiting lecturer to make decisions about classroom practice.

Conclusion

The practicum provided strong evidence that attention needs to be paid to the emotional dimensions of teaching. Emotional factors were of primary concern to the student teachers, and these were reflected in the comments of the associates and lecturers.

All the participants reinforced the importance of applying their learning in authentic contexts. Success on the final teaching practicum was a critical factor in a student's pre-service teacher education. Two key variables were identified to be considered when selecting placements representing a range of classroom and school characteristics: the "difficulty" factor required to manage the behaviour of a challenging class and the demands of teaching a culturally and socially diverse classroom population. These posed the greatest challenge for the student teachers. In addition, the experience levels of associate teachers often bore an inverse relationship

to challenges presented by those classrooms, thus confounding the decisions that must be made to ensure constructive learning experiences for student teachers.

Although there were excellent examples of components of a professional learning community, no single triad met all the characteristics of a fully functional professional learning community. The shared values and expectations of the associates and the lecturers were not apparent. This was probably because the opportunity to examine these aspects critically was not provided through professional development sponsored by the university. Nor was there evidence that members of the triads critically examined each other's roles before and during the course of the practicum. Finally, concerns were highlighted about the moderation of the final appraisal of the student teachers not only within the triad, but also between the triads. This was illustrated by the discrepancy between the perceptions shared during the interviews and the final reports of the lecturers and the associate teachers.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Discussion and Conclusions

Using a case-study approach, this study has examined the perceptions of the practicum of each of the key participants in the six selected triads. These narratives provide a rich source of information about the practicum and describe the process by which the student teachers acquired practitioner knowledge. This chapter now re-considers responses to the research questions. Findings will be critiqued within the context of the existing literature as well as with regard to issues raised that could be addressed through future research. Limitations will be discussed and recommendations made for consideration in the design of teaching practice that is supported by the findings of this study.

Response to research questions

Research question one: How does each member of the triad of the final teaching practicum perceive his/her role in preparing the student teachers for their first year of teaching?

This research found that student teachers, visiting lecturers and associate teachers were in agreement in viewing the practicum as critical in preparing beginning teachers. It was also evident that not all the associate teachers and visiting lecturers had a shared vision of the practicum. Although every participant saw it as invaluable preparation for beginning teachers, the associate teachers did not appear to appreciate fully that student teaching was part of the learning process. Instead they seemed to view the practicum as primarily a socialisation process by which student teachers were inducted into the teaching profession. Thus when Diane's associate teacher saw her experiencing difficulty, his response was to assess her as someone who should not

be allowed to enter the teaching profession; he saw his role as "gate-keeper" and not as mentor with shared responsibility to assist Diane in meeting the learning outcomes of the practicum.

Management issues dominated conversations between the associates and the student teachers. The associate teachers revealed strong expectations that their student teachers must demonstrate the management skills necessary to ensure that their pupils were able to be purposefully occupied and on-task over a period of sole-charge. This was evidenced by the nature of the feedback that was provided to the student teacher by the associate teacher, which was dominated by technical advice on the efficient performance of the task so that learners were perceived as busy, content and well behaved. Comments such as: "She is aware of the need to develop her 'scanning' and 'roving' techniques" (Kate ATFR, lines 65), dominated written and verbal feedback of associate teachers.

The visiting lecturers shared the view that the practicum was an important opportunity for student teachers to demonstrate their readiness to assume their role as beginning teachers. But, they also believed that the practicum provided an opportunity for collegial decision-making in which the associate and the student teacher may on occasion team-teach, particularly in helping to cope with challenging pupils. As Diane's visiting lecturer remarked: "It is an opportunity for the associate to work intensively with individuals and small groups ... I think it's sort of that nurturing, that standing alongside students and not just standing back" (Diane (VL) 2, lines 680-682). In adopting this role, the associates would better demonstrate collegial decision-making and provide insights into the reasons they made certain professional judgements. This required in-depth professional conversations between

the student teacher and the associate teacher. While there was evidence that this occurred in some of the triads, this was not a consistent finding across all the triads.

Student teachers also reported the importance of having positive working relationships with their associate teacher. This was because of the intensive period of time that was spent with the associates and the critical role the associate teachers could play in providing insights into the day-to-day workings of the class. As Diane observed, the student teachers needed more than simply modelling of classroom practice. Each of the student teachers wished to have feedback based on in-depth scrutiny of his or her practice. Where this positive rapport was not established between the student teacher and the associate teacher, the student teachers became increasingly dependent on the visiting lecturer for support. Indeed in Diane and Mary's cases, the visiting lecturer became their primary source of professional support. Yet, from the outset of the practicum, the student teachers reported the perception that their lecturers' input was of less value than input from the associates. Clearly relationship building and associated emotional factors had an impact on the student teachers' performance. The associate teachers and visiting lecturers who attended to these dimensions as much as they did to the skill-based and technical aspects of teaching were perceived by the student teachers as providing the richest source of support. This reflects the findings of Tickle (1991) who reported on the experience of first year teachers.

> The emotional explorations were directly related to the experience of being "halfway there" as learner teachers, and to "going through it" as they acquired what they saw as the necessary experience to emerge from novicehood ... that managing one's emotional self was an intrinsic part of managing the pupils' learning ... (p. 321)

Although most lecturers and associate teachers saw their role as complementary, not all student teachers saw this complementarity. Greg believed that the lecturer could

not assess his progress fairly and that his assessment should be based primarily on the advice of the associate teacher with whom he had established a close working relationship. Diane's associate clearly demonstrated a very limited understanding of the role of the visiting lecturer, and this prevented him establishing a productive working relationship with Diane's visiting lecturer. Similarly, Simon's visiting lecturer became increasingly passive and eventually ceased to have a significant role to play in his professional development. This visiting lecturer reported her impressions that there was little that she could contribute given her observations that Simon was doing well and the associate teacher was handling the feedback process. As Simon was in fact a student teacher with learning outcomes to master, someone who had not yet begun his teaching career, this abrogation of responsibility by the university lecturer would appear to be inappropriate.

The variable interpretation of roles occurred in the absence of any requirement for structured professional development for the visiting lecturers and associate teachers over the preceding four-year period. Perceptions of the role and the practices of both the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer were based on their individual experiences and interpretations. For two of the associate teachers, this was their first experience supervising third year student teachers, and they reported reliance upon memories of their own experience as student teachers on teaching practicum for guidance. As Diane's associate commented, "I've only been teaching for five years and I remember what it was like, the associates I liked" (Diane (AT) 1, lines 8-9). Simon's associate relied primarily on the written documentation from the university: "I had the booklet which explains what I'm expected to do, what they're [student teachers] expected to do, what the visiting lecturer is expected to do. So I've gone through that and highlighted it in different colours for each of us" (Simon (AT) 1,

lines 7-8). Greg's associate had been teaching in the South Island, and she noted that they had had regular meetings with staff from the college of education: "I wondered about that [practicum briefing meetings]. When I was down South, they did have associate meetings ... they had a regular, I don't know once a term, twice a term meetings for associates that you were expected to go to." (Greg (AT) 1, lines 132-134).

Perhaps then it was not surprising that there was little evidence of a shared understanding of the roles of the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher. The university had not provided a forum to brief associates and lecturers of their expectations for the practicum and their roles in supporting the professional development of the student teacher. Research findings on this issue may reveal more about a deficiency in the teacher education programme rather than problems with the triads functioning as professional learning communities. Had transparent expectations for roles been part of required staff development prior to placement, the results might have been different. However, it is also apparent that members of the triad – particularly associate teachers – brought strong personal beliefs and biases to their role shaped largely by previous experiences that were idiosyncratic. Given that there is considerable evidence that such impacts will have a significant impact on practice, professional development activities must acknowledge and mitigate any negative influences carefully (Tabachnik & Zeichner, 1984; Zeichner & Liston, 1991; Gore 2001). In sum, attention to shared professional development appears necessary but may not be sufficient unless it references the perspectives of participants as part of the educational process.

Research question two: What factors are seen as contributing to or detracting from the student teachers' capacity to operate as members of a professional learning community during their final practicum?

Study of these triads has highlighted a number of conditions that would seem essential to support the establishment of professional learning communities. Firstly, key participants must have a shared view of the value and role of the practicum as well as expectations for student performance on stated learning outcomes. This perspective of the practicum needs to be informed by the cultural and social context that shapes the classroom practice, as each classroom is a unique setting and context of learning. Shulman (1996) has argued that teaching should divide its work into case-like segments: "These cases then serve as the building blocks for professional reasoning, professional discourse, and professional memory" (p.464).

There were two views expressed by the associate teachers and the visiting lecturers. The associates valued the practicum primarily as an apprenticeship in which the practical knowledge and 'know-how' of the student teacher was demonstrated. In contrast, the visiting lecturers valued the practicum as an opportunity for the student teachers to not only develop practitioner knowledge but also to develop insights into the process by which the associate teachers made professional judgements through collegial action.

Secondly, the clarification of the purpose of the practicum was critical in defining the role each member of the triad was to play. There were clear examples of actions by either the associate teacher or the visiting lecturer that detracted from the capacity to operate as a member of a professional learning community. For example, the behaviour of Diane's associate had a detrimental effect on his professional relationship with her and, as a result, Diane relied primarily on the support of the

visiting lecturer. There was no evidence that any of the visiting lecturers or associate teachers critiqued each other's role in the triad. Each had a primary focus on the professional development of the student teacher and separately critiqued the student's teaching performance, particularly the management of the lesson. Perspectives on student performance were not consistently discussed across all members of the triad. Student progress would surely be enhanced by mutually critiquing the performance of the triad as well as that of the student teacher. Of course, participants emphasised often that pressures of time prevented them from having discussions they would like to have had.

On occasion, the student teachers expressed frustration in not being able to exercise professional agency. They wished to exercise a measure of autonomy in classroom decisions or at least to feel as though they were in a collaborative partnership. In Mary's case, she felt frustrated by the beliefs about teaching that her associate held.

> She's very different from me. She is very, very quiet and very much, I would say, "old school". She's got her views about things: children shouldn't do this in sport, and she's got quite rigid views about English and things, and we'd see things quite differently. I tried my best to stay within how she'd done things, but it didn't work for me. She didn't seem to listen. (Mary (ST) 2, lines 272-277)

This view was supported by Diane's experience. As she faced increasing management issues with the class, her associate sought to solve her problems by modelling the teaching behaviour he thought was appropriate, instead of sitting down and seeking Diane's perspective and potential solutions on the issues. This would have allowed her to act as a collaborative member of the teaching team and, indeed, may have enabled her to feel she had some measure of control of the situation. In contrast, Greg's associate allowed him considerable autonomy during his period of sole-charge. They planned collaboratively, and his ideas and suggested teaching

strategies were valued. He felt confident in his ability to promote an appropriate learning environment.

The need for collaboration by participants is strongly supported in the research literature, particularly if teacher education is to successfully bridge the theory-practice divide. Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler (2002) argue that to develop a rigorous body of practitioner knowledge, teachers must share ideas publicly so, firstly, they can be discussed, verified, refuted or modified by colleagues, and, secondly, that the process be accumulated and recorded as a public record. In my case studies there were few opportunities for the associate teachers and visiting lecturers to share their perspectives of the value and understanding of the role of the practicum in the development of the pre-service student teacher in a public forum. Nor was there opportunity to discuss current practice and open it to critical examination by peers. Instead, there was a reliance on the written documents and/or previous personal experiences for guidance.

The need for a large number of placements meant that the university was forced to use inexperienced associates and schools that had not had third year student teachers previously. To a large extent, the logistical demands of the practicum drove the selection of associates and visiting lecturers. This situation may make it all the more important that more attention be paid to preparing participants formally for their respective roles. Such preparation would not only provide novice associate teachers with needed guidance but would support the establishment of practicum experiences as a professional learning community in action. Even very experienced associate teachers could, without this common foundation, work against the purposes of the practicum experience. There were also few times when all the members of the triad met together to discuss the progress of the practicum. As a result, the student teacher

could not truly be viewed as a collaborative member of the teaching team or professional learning community. Instead, the student teacher's perspective was sought in isolation in discussions with either the associate teacher or the visiting lecturer separately.

Finally, a professional learning community needs to have an agreed process of assessment of student teachers. There were clearly stated learning outcomes for the practicum against which the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer assessed the progress of the student teacher. A formal process of preparation for visiting lecturers and associate teachers, based on explicit specification of procedures for providing feedback on the student teachers' professional development would require ongoing critical examination among the triad members. It would also better ensure interrater reliability, thus appeasing concerns such as Greg's perception that his appraisal from his visiting lecturer was more rigorous appraisal than that of his peers. A reporting framework focussed on evaluation of progress towards attainment of explicit learning outcomes agreed by the triad would also mitigate against personal beliefs and perspectives overshadowing empirical practices. Finally, this framework would provide the programme itself with summative information, across student teachers, of the extent to which students were meeting stated learning outcomes as they neared completion of teacher education requirements.

Research question three: Can a set of themes be identified that relate to a theoretical framework that explains the way each triad functioned and prepared the student teachers for their first year of teaching?

Three major themes were identified from this study. Firstly, it was readily apparent that the practicum was an emotional practice as the student teachers reported strong

emotional responses in their experience of the practicum. In this study, the challenge of the practicum threatened to overwhelm some of the student teachers and resulted in high stress levels and a feeling that they were simply in a survival mode. A strong tension was identified between the perceptions of the visiting lecturers and the associate teachers. On the one hand, the associates felt that their classes posed realistic challenges because they represented the normal range of pupil behaviour beginning teachers were likely to encounter. On the other hand, visiting lecturers noted that the children in these classes were selected for experienced classroom practitioners and were, therefore, not likely to be members of a beginning teacher's class. This was identified as "the difficulty factor".

Over the three-year qualification period, student teachers need a range of classroom placements to ensure that they receive a breadth of socio-cultural experiences. This includes experience in low decile New Zealand schools. However, such placements must be well managed if they are to be learning experiences rather than survival exercises focussed solely on behaviour management and suppressing emotions to the detriment of reflective teaching practice. Careful selection of appropriate associate teachers and visiting lecturers is also critical to ensure that students to receive appropriate professional support. As Gibbs (1995) notes: "A sink or swim approach in teaching practice at best is likely to cause for striving for survival, and at worst it places an emphasis on conservatism and a kind of controlling authoritarianism" (p. 17).

Resilience appeared to be a key factor in student teacher persistence despite some daunting challenges. As Gibbs (2000) has asserted, student teachers need to have the capacity to be resilient and persist, and "the capacity for innovativeness, and a preparedness to generate new solutions, take on new teaching approaches and be

willing to risk failure" (p.2). A strong, empirically based theoretical perspective was significant in supporting the student teacher to exhibit resilience, as in Alan's case. He demonstrated his commitment to child-centred learning. Although he tightened his management structures, he was still prepared to persist with this theoretical approach because he saw this as the most powerful way for primary school children to learn. Similarly, Diane persisted with a problem-solving strategy in teaching science despite group management difficulties because she believed it offered the strongest approach to teaching these concepts.

Research into the emotional practice of teaching identifies the importance of presenting learning experiences in creative, imaginative and often innovative ways. Woods and Jeffrey (1996) report that teachers can:

> Work affectively to be more effective in the learning situation. They generate relationships that feature excitement, interest, enthusiasm, inquiry ... discovery, risk-taking and fun ... The cognitive 'scaffolding' is held together with emotional bonds. (p. 71)

A passion for teaching and the desire to ignite and excite the pupils' interests in a topic was also evident. Mary's experience of teaching dance was successful not just because she enjoyed this creative outlet, but mainly because she was able to motivate children to dance. In a similar way, Kate's knowledge and experience of the teaching of gymnastics brought a fresh new perspective to her class, and she introduced a dimension that her associate was not able to give to the pupils.

Secondly, the practicum was valued highly because it placed student teachers in an authentic context. There was unanimity that the practicum allowed the student teacher to come to terms with the role of the teacher. Two key factors were identified as important in placing the student teacher on practicum. The "difficulty factor" has already been discussed. Secondly, the student teachers did struggle to cope with a culturally and socially diverse group of learners. This reinforces the need for student

teachers to be provided a range of culturally and economically diverse classroom experiences over the three-year period of their initial teacher education.

Finally, the practicum should be viewed as an opportunity to develop a professional learning community. Although there were some excellent examples of aspects of a professional community, none of the triads operated fully as a professional learning community. As noted earlier, specific times for reflection and discussion need to be set-aside for the student teacher, visiting lecturer and the associate to review their performance against set criteria. These professional conversations require that there is mutual trust and a clear focus to provide appropriate advice and guidance to the student teacher. They also must ensure that the voice of the student teacher is heard if the student is to be valued as a collaborative member of the teaching team. Lindgard and Mills (2002) summarise the practice of a professional learning community as:

> A teacher professional learning community emphasises reflective collaboration amongst teachers around their pedagogies, assessment and student learning outcome ... the de-privatisation of practice [is] another central aspect of a professional teacher learning community. Structured time is built in for such conversations. (p.78)

To help associate teachers and visiting lecturers to have a shared understanding of their roles, it is essential to provide appropriate professional development prior to the practicum experience. This study clearly provides evidence of the impact of the associate teacher on the professional development of the student teacher. For example, Simon's associate established a warm, supportive environment and, from the outset, provided detailed written feedback to him that allowed Simon insights into the professional judgements she was making. Ethell and McMeniman (2000) report the importance of associate teachers making explicit their decisions that allow the student teachers to better understand their actions and decisions.

Although there are very few New Zealand studies that have examined the role of the visiting lecturer, this study highlights the important role that the visiting lecturer can play on the teaching practicum. Haigh and Ward (2004) observed that a visiting lecturer not only has an assessment role but also has a supportive role in promoting a constructive learning experience for the student teacher. Apart from Simon's triad, the visiting lecturers provided critical insights and professional support to each of the student teachers. In fact, in Diane's case, the interventions of the visiting lecturer were critical to her final success. The visiting lecturer also provided insights into the university's perspective for the associate teacher. On occasions this role was diluted by the diplomacy the visiting lecturer felt obligated to adopt. The relationship between the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher clearly needs to be respectful. Clear and transparent strategies are needed to enable the visiting lecturer's role to encompass critiques of both the student teacher's performance while also qualifying that critique in context – there needs to be "safety' for the visiting lecturer to bring issues to the attention of the associate teacher for remediation without jeopardising the diplomatic balance between the university and the schools. The responsibility for passing or failing the student teacher on the final practicum lies with the university and the visiting lecturer ultimately advises the paper coordinator of the student's grade. Therefore, the visiting lecturer needs to clearly understand his or her role on the practicum and fully exercise this responsibility.

If the model of a professional learning community is to be realised, there needs to a strong commitment between the school and the university to foster such professional development. Korthagen (2002) argues that this partnership should be characterised by a commitment to the practicum and in-depth reflection on practice.

> On the one hand, these developments mirror a wish to ground teacher education more strongly within practical contexts, but on the other hand, the

> teacher education faculty involved try to avoid early socialisation to traditional educational patterns ... This means that teacher development is increasingly conceptualised as an ongoing process of experiencing practical teaching and other educational learning situations, reflecting on them under the guidance of a more experienced colleague and developing one's own insights into teaching through the interaction between personal reflection and theoretical notions brought in by teacher educators. (p.12)

Not only should the university promote strong professional links between the school and the university, but it should also ensure that the internal programme provides opportunities for discussion of the

> real problems encountered by student teachers during field experiences. The student teacher would then develop his or her own knowledge in a process of reflection on the practical situations in which a personal need for learning was created ... the emphasis shifts towards inquiry-oriented activities, interaction amongst learners, and the development of reflective skills. (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p.7).

Through this process, the practicum becomes better integrated into the university programme and promotes reflective practice in which the student teacher is encouraged to exercise professional agency in developing creative, authentic solutions to the complex demands of classroom teaching.

Finally, it is of interest that there was insufficient comment from participants – even in the one school with a relatively high Maori presence – regarding cultural issues to support any conclusions or recommendations. Clearly, this is an area that requires further investigation.

Conclusion

If the practicum is to be viewed as a professional learning community it needs to be characterised by shared values and expectations regarding learning outcomes expected to be achieved by the student teacher. Members of the triad need to engage in candid professional conversations about the objectives of the practicum and the progress the student teacher is making to achieve these goals. This requires that members of the

triad are able to openly and honestly critique each other's role in the practicum, and promoted through the practices of "team teaching, collaborative preparation, mentoring, multi-age teaching and conversations around student work to reflect upon pedagogies, in-built pedagogical communities and so on" (Lindgard & Mills, 2002, p.79). Student teachers need to be provided with field experiences in schools that promote professional learning communities if they are to be nurtured in an emotionally supportive environment that promotes powerful learning opportunities for them (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). This is in sharp contrast to the traditional model of the school in which classrooms operate as single-cell structures with little professional collaboration wherein teachers either "sink or swim" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Finally there needs to be a recognition that the teaching practicum is an emotional practice and that this dimension needs as much focus as the knowledge and skills that the student teacher brings to the practicum.

> Emotions are at the heart of teaching. Good teaching is charged with positive emotion ... Good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy. (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835)

As the experiences of the student teachers in this case study illustrate, their perceptions of the relationships they established and their emotional responses to the practicum played a significant role in determining their feeling of adequacy in becoming a first year teacher.

A clear guideline for practicum experiences emerging from this study is the importance of constructive professional dialogue among all members of the triad. Firstly, time needs to be set-aside for the triad to meet as a group in which the progress of the student teacher towards achieving the learning outcomes of the practicum is discussed. The student teacher must be encouraged to take responsibility

for his or her professional development under the guidance of the associate teacher and the visiting lecturer.

Secondly, the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher need to define their respective roles against a set of criteria that characterise their functions in a professional learning community. To achieve this, specific times for reflection and discussion need to be set-aside for them to review their performance against these criteria.

Finally, within the university programme, a model of reflective practice needs to be provided whereby student teachers are given the opportunity to discuss the problems and challenges they encounter on the practicum and the model of the professional learning community is examined in the light of their experiences on the practicum.

Recommendations

From this study a number of recommendations can be made if the practicum is to be viewed as a professional learning community.

1. *The teaching placement needs to take into account the level of challenge expected of the student teacher.*
2. *The disposition, beliefs and attitudes the student teacher brings to the practicum are as important for success as the knowledge and skill of the student teacher.*
3. *If a triad is to operate as a professional learning community, there needs to be a shared understanding of the purpose of the practicum in the preparation of the beginning teacher.*

4. *If a triad is to operate as a professional learning community, the student teacher needs to be placed within a supportive, collaborative triad in which the student teacher feels a valued member.*
5. *If a triad is to operate as a professional learning community, there needs to be a shared understanding of the role of the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher.*
6. *If a triad is to operate as a professional learning community, the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher need to be provided with professional development to fulfil their roles.*
7. *If a triad is to operate as a professional learning community, the practice of the visiting lecturer and the associate teacher need to be de-privatised and they need to engage in professional critique of each other's performance against clearly defined criteria.*
8. *The university programme needs to provide a framework for student teachers to de-brief and develop solutions to the challenges that they encounter on the practicum. This process should involve the examination of the emotional aspects as well as the technical and cognitive decision-making dimensions faced on the practicum.*
9. *Student teachers should be introduced to the concept of the professional learning community from the outset of their university programme and they need to engage in professional critique of their role in relation to well-defined criteria.*

Further Research

This study has highlighted the importance of the practicum in preparing student teachers for the classroom. Findings have been critically examined in relationship to variables described in the empirical literature, as the essential contextual conditions

required if the practicum is to operate as a professional learning community. The findings from this study cannot be generalised to other teacher education programmes or to teacher education generally as factors unique to this particular programme may account for these results. They do, however, suggest hypotheses regarding promising relationships between teacher education practices and student learning outcomes.

Each member of the triad viewed the final teaching practicum as critical to teacher preparation. Examining these perceptions has revealed patterns in the data consistent with existing research in this area, and this section will highlight key areas for future research on the student teaching experience that emerge from these data.

Firstly, further research needs to focus on the partnership models adopted between the school and the university in order to promote the practicum as a professional learning community. Current practice can too easily be shaped by historical precedence and the practicalities and logistics of placing a large number of student teachers over the course of the year. To a large extent understandings of the roles played by each member of the triad have been implicit rather than explicit. There has also been little evaluation of the effectiveness of the roles played by each member of the triad in promoting the development of a reflective, self-critical and creative first-year teacher. If student teaching is part of the student's set of overall learning experiences in teacher education – as opposed to a summative "test" of readiness – then there needs to be more attention given to the extent to which those in a mentoring and tutorial role perform that role as needed. This study has highlighted the importance and complementarities (not duplication or replication) of the roles the members of the triad play. Consequently, university and school personnel must collaborate effectively in order to promote student teacher professional development.

Secondly, research needs to focus on models to promote the student teacher's ability to exercise professional agency on the practicum. This study found that student teachers often rely on the solutions provided by the associate teacher and/or the visiting lecturer, and that they lack confidence in their own ability to solve challenging classroom problems. A professional learning community requires each member of the triad to collaborate actively as a member of the teaching team and collectively reach solutions posed in the teaching of the class.

Thirdly, research needs to focus on promoting the self-efficacy of the student teacher to act in different contexts, so that he/she can learn to adapt strategies to diverse classroom contexts. Student teachers experienced difficulty in meeting the challenges of student needs, particularly in low decile schools; for some the challenges were overwhelming. As many first year teachers win their first teaching positions in the lowest decile primary schools where staff turnover is highest, research to promote the success of inexperienced teachers to cope in these classroom contexts is critical. As many of these classrooms have a significant number of Maori and Polynesian students, the needs of working in a bi-cultural and multi-cultural classroom environment require that initial teacher education programmes adequately prepare student teachers to meet these challenges. The existing literature tells us that rote learning of scripted behaviour management strategies is unlikely to work in isolation (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). This study also provides evidence that an over generalised message to "just watch me" is unlikely to be helpful to a student teacher who has neither the experience nor credibility to model exactly what the classroom teacher does. Further, this kind of mentoring is also restrictive as it suggests non-reflective mimicking of practice, rather than critically

analysing effective approaches that fit for the individual student teacher's style and strengths.

The study has implications for other initial teacher education programmes regarding practices to meaningfully bridge the gap between the classroom context and the university programme. It provides insights into the requirements for the implementation of practicum that promote a professional learning community. It challenges the assumptions teacher education providers may have about the current models of teaching practicum in which it is perceived as a site where student teachers simply practise teaching and prove their readiness to assume the mantle of a first year teacher. It contributes to the debate of the role and function of the practicum in pre-service teacher education and the need for a deeper understanding and expectation in its implementation by the university and the school as key professional partners in this endeavour.

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Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Room 2.02, Main Building, Turitea
http://www.massey.ac.nzl-muhec

Telephone: 64 6 350 5249
Fax: 64 6 350 5622
Email: S.V.Rumball@massey.ac.nz

Massey University

Private Bag 11 222.
Palmerston North.
New Zealand
Telephone: 64 6 3569099

9 June 2000

Mr Peter R Lind
Human & Health Development
HOKOWHITU

Dear Peter

Re: Human Ethics PN Protocol - 00/53
The perceptions of teacher education in relation to the teaching practicuum

Thank you for your amended protocol.

The amendments you have made and explanations you have given now meet the requirements of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee and the ethics of your protocol are approved.

Any departure from the approved protocol will require the researcher to return this project to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee for further consideration and approval.

Yours sincerely

Sylvia Rumball

Professor Sylvia V Rumball, Chair
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Palmerston North

cc Professor Luanna Meyer
College of Education
HOKOWHITU

Professor Richard Harker
Professional Development & Educational Research
HOKOWHITU

The Perceptions of Teacher Education in Relation to the Teaching Practicuum

STUDENT TEACHER CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my identity will remain confidential.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio-taped.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio-tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I consent/do not consent to have my final Associate Teacher and Visiting Lecturer Reports used in the study.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Perceptions of Teacher Education in Relation to the Teaching Practicum

INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENT TEACHERS

Peter Lind, Senior Lecturer, Dept Health & Human Development, Office: N 3, Gymnasium, Hokowhitu, Centennial Drive, Palmerston North.
06 357 9104 Exn 8737, e-mail *p.r.lind@massey.ac.nz*

This research is part of my doctoral thesis. As a lecturer at the College of Education, I have been intensively involved working with students, teachers, schools and College lecturers on teaching practicum. The teaching practicum is a major component of our current College of Education programme. For that reason, I am investigating the perceptions of student teachers, associate teachers and visiting lecturers of the major third year Primary School Teaching Practicum.

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide details about this study. Students who have maintained a sound academic programme and not failed a Teaching Experience to this point are invited to participate. From the group of students who volunteer to participate in the study, six students will be randomly selected.

The research will follow a case study approach. The interview will focus on the experiences, perceptions and values each of the three key players have of the teaching practicum. Each of these insights will have equal significance in the description of the role and value of the teaching placement in pre-service teacher education.
For the research, each of the three players – the student teacher, visiting lecturer and the associate teacher – would be interviewed separately prior and following the third year Primary School Teaching Practicum. The interview will follow the pattern of a normal everyday conversation. The interviews would be audio-taped and then transcripts made.

Each of the three participants – the student teacher, visiting lecturer and the associate teacher – will form a triad. Permission to participate in the research will be sought from each member of that triad separately. If for any reason one of the participants was unable or did not wish to participate in the research, then that triad will not be used in the research.

Therefore, the process for selection will follow a set procedure.
After a random sample of six student teachers has been made, then the schools and associate teachers will be invited to participate. Once their permission has been obtained, the six visiting lecturers will be invited to participate.

Participants can be assured that:

- as far as reasonably possible confidentiality will be maintained for the participants;
- anonymity will be preserved for the participants and schools in all publications of the research;
- participants can refuse to answer any particular questions;

- each participant would have access to his/her transcripts and field notes in order to correct any inaccuracies or alter comments if necessary; and
- the intent of the study is not to be used in any way to assess their teaching or supervisory performance but rather to provide insight into the perceptions the participant has of the teaching experience.

Interviews will be conducted at times that suit the needs of the participants. During the interview, field notes will be made by the researcher. The purpose of these notes will be to describe the location, for example an office, the time of day and other relevant descriptive detail. These field notes will be available with the transcripts for the participant to read.

In addition to the interviews, final written teaching reports of the associate teachers and the visiting lecturers will be obtained. These reports will be collected from the College of Education Teaching Practice Office only if the participants have given written consent. Once again, the confidentiality of these reports is assured by coding the documents. No names of the participants or the schools in which they work will be disclosed.

All audio-tapes, written reports and transcripts will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Participants can volunteer by contacting Peter Lind at the above address.
This study has been approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

Supervisors of the study are:
Professor Meyer, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Education, extn 8938.
Professor Harker, Director Professional Develop. & Educational Research, College of Education, extn 8969.

Thank you.

The Perceptions of Teacher Education in Relation to the Teaching Practicuum

ASSOCIATE TEACHER
CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my identity will remain confidential.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio-taped.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio-tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I consent/do not consent to have my final Associate Teacher Report used in the study.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Perceptions of Teacher Education in Relation to the Teaching Practicum

INFORMATION SHEET FOR ASSOCIATE TEACHERS

Peter Lind, Senior Lecturer, Dept Health & Human Development, Office: N 3, Gymnasium, Hokowhitu, Centennial Drive, Palmerston North.
06 357 9104 Exn 8737, e-mail *p.r.lind@massey.ac.nz*

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The purpose of this information sheet is to provide details about this study.
Students who have maintained a sound academic programme and not failed a Teaching Experience to this point have been invited to participate. From the group of students who volunteer to participate in the study, six students have been randomly selected. The second stage of the recruitment of participants is to invite the associate teachers of the selected student teachers to participate in the study. It is important to state that the student teachers have not been informed of their random selection. This is to ensure that the associate teachers do not feel obliged to participate against their wishes.

The research will follow a case study approach. The interview will focus on the experiences, perceptions and values each of the three key players have of the teaching practicum. Each of these insights will have equal significance in the description of the role and value of the teaching placement in pre-service teacher education.
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Thank you.

The Perceptions of Teacher Education in Relation to the Teaching Practicuum

VISITING LECTURER
CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my identity will remain confidential.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio-taped.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio-tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I consent/do not consent to have my final Visiting Lecturer Report used in the study.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Perceptions of Teacher Education in Relation to the Teaching Practicum

INFORMATION SHEET FOR VISITING LECTURERS

Peter Lind, Senior Lecturer, Dept Health & Human Development, Office: N 3, Gymnasium, Hokowhitu, Centennial Drive, Palmerston North.
06 357 9104 Exn 8737, e-mail *p.r.lind@massey.ac.nz*

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Thank you.

Associate Teacher Booklet (ATFR)

Kate

Indicator One
There will be lessons and units of work taught across the curriculum, preferably, on occasion at least, in an integrated way.
Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
Kate is developing her planning skills across the curriculum. Like most students she needs to develop a more compact system of planning for classroom application.

Indicator Two
Children will have made satisfactory progress, achieving clearly stated learning outcomes.
Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
Kate has made excellent progress in developing these areas. She needs now to consolidate her methods into consistent application especially in the area of "expectations".

Indicator Three
The student collaborates well with the Associate Teacher.
Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
Kate has willingly participated in school activities in her own time and initiated out of school planning sessions etc in the holidays and weekends.

Indicator Four
Develops positive and effective relationships with children, other teaching staff, parents, and, wherever possible, others in the community.
Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
No concerns in this area at all.

Indicator Five
Displays initiative and enthusiasm.
Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
Kate has put a lot of extra hours outside class time in preparation. She has willingly accepted the role of the teacher.

Indicator Six
Displays appropriate professional and ethical concern in work and relationships.

Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
Nil

Indicator Seven
Effectively uses physical, human, and organisational and administrative resources available within and without the school.
Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
Nil

Indicator Eight
Takes full responsibility to enthuse and teach a class or a group of learners over a sustained period of time using a variety of teaching skills and strategies.
Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
We have had the DARE programme in the afternoons so Kate has been responsible for planning and teaching each morning session and only one or two afternoons each week.

Indicator Nine
Where appropriate, will simultaneously and successfully engage children in multi-group activity.
Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
Kate has made huge progress in the management of groups and the change from activity to activity. She is aware of the need to develop her "scanning" and 'roving' techniques. Kate has been aware of the need to develop multi-group management and has successfully done this in Maths and Reading.

Indicator Ten
Have the children successfully engage in learning collaboratively.
Rating: 3

Qualifying Comments
Demonstrates a reasonable understanding which she will develop further in her own class.

Visiting Lecturer Final Report

Kate

Personal Qualities
Kate is friendly and sincere. She is both conscientious and reliable. Kate is open and honest in her approach to others and shows an ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Professional Qualities
Kate is committed to teaching and willingly accepts advice on how she might improve her performance. She is able to establish appropriate and professional relationships with both children and teaching staff.

Interpersonal Qualities
Kate shows respect for children. She is polite, patient and concerned to establish good relationships with children and staff.

Planning, Preparation and Evaluation
Kate is able to plan a coherent programme that addresses group, class and individual demands. Her awareness of the curriculum documents is evidence in her planning. Unit plans show creativity and thoroughness. Kate incorporates assessment into her planning and is developing her evaluation skills.

Curriculum
Kate is able to teach effectively across the curriculum. She has shown an ability in linking areas effectively – language/art.

Class Management
Kate has gained in confidence and is now beginning to assert herself. She is prepared to employ a variety of strategies to get attention and to maintain control within the classroom. Kimberly now uses eye contact, proximity and voice much more effectively. This is an area where she will continue to improve with support and encouragement.

Teaching Strategies
Kate is able to motivate and enthuse children through the selection of topics and activities that will interest them. She uses children's own work as models to emulate. Kate encourages children to contribute their thoughts and ideas and shows that she values their contribution.

Example of Interview

QSR N6 Full version, revision 6.0.

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: D(AT)2
+++ Document Description:
*Diane's Associate Teacher's second interview at end of TE5.

+++ Retrieval for this document: 553 units out of 553, = 100%
++ Text units 1-553:

1

Interviewer: Tell us your perspective of the TE? 2

AT: Yes it has been a lot of fun. 3

Interviewer: Has it. What's been the challenges with the TE? 4

AT: Basically the big gap in the middle is horrific. It was my student 5
who just had the kids where she wanted them, and then she went away and 6
when she's come back it was like.. the kids missed me while she was in 7
there and when I came back now they're coming up to me everyday and 8
saying to me "What's going to happen?" And there is nothing wrong with 9
the student just, they just want to have their teacher back, and I think 10
they should have a good one. Because what she had to do was assert 11
herself and then establish a programme and go away and come back and she 12
had to re-assert herself and re-do her programme and everything been done 13
again and it has lost its momentum. 14

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah ... because it was going pretty well in the first 3
weeks? 15

AT: It was. It was, it was really good. And I think that she has had a 16
knock to her confidence with people starting to jib her. 17

Interviewer: Could you put your finger on any particular things that she does
now which has made it difficult? 18

AT: No ... they respond to a lot of genuine positives rather than ... 19
there is a lot of put downs and when I do put downs the kids know that 20
because I just say "that it's not good enough" or "who do you think you 21
are?" You know, it's ... she was saying thinks like, "now it's lunchtime, 22
get out," and last week even I go (grimace) ..... and um ... I know that 23
they just responded to that. I think she's gone down that track because 24
what she did, she used everything she had to establish a good programme 25
and a good rapport and it was good, and when she came back she ... 26
they'd seen everything she could do and she couldn't use it again and 27
they just needed something extra, and because she's a new teacher she 28
hasn't got the extra skills, so I've had to be teaching it. So I suppose 29
its quite good but I ... I see it as a combination of a bit of her and a 30

bit of the teaching practice being split.

Interviewer: Do you think those sorts of things you are identifying can be learned by the student?

AT: Yeah ... Yeah ... they need to be modelled because I took the class back and showed her, this is how you do it.

Interviewer: Can you give us a couple of those examples?

AT: Well by ... like, I ask questions. I very rarely tell the children anything, or, if I do there is a question at the end Like I'll say "Do you know what this is, it's a video camera?" And, "What does a video camera do? I caught you on tape." Because I taped a few of her lessons and I said, they say "well that doesn't worry me," because they give me lip too, and I'll say "do you really think that that attitude is going to be good when you are an adult," rather than go "as an adult you're going to suck when you get" ... I start all my stuff with questions .... You know, schools for life, it this going to be good for your life. Look I have statements using the following set of questions so that they have to ask themselves and um .... Those skills are actually starting to be picked up on ... so I've remodelled to her and she's good about them. I've said things to her like..you know I was a bit disappointed with her negativity
... And I said "Be positive, in spite of them" and I think it's because I love kids. No I hate kids but I love kids learning, and yet I don't like kids when they are naughty and horrible, and I think that she's got that passion in herself. I think that she has found that her passion would be for younger children. So these children are annoying her.

Interviewer: Do you think um ... it's because of the teaching strategies that she has currently, that would accommodate better to a junior class area than what she has currently been doing in a senior class?

AT: No, no I don't. I think it's because the Colleges set people up for failure.

Interviewer: Tell me more about that.

AT: Because they only send people to Normal Schools and good schools, and the children are all used to it. So she comes to a school where this is full of a bunch of normal children that you've really got to work to be a teacher, and they go "Oh my God! What's happening?" You know usually I just have to put up my hand and everybody just sits on the mat and sits quietly. Well that's not a real class. Well not of Form 1 and Form 2's. I mean, and most Year 5 and 6's are going to give them a bit of jib. The other experienced teachers do it...have it...
and this is a real school, and she's going to go out and apply for a school like this, because a Normal School will never take a beginning teacher. Come on ... so the Colleges ... it's just not real.

Interviewer: How do you work through that? 70

AT: Well I think schools that are based with behaviour problems like this, 71
is not .. Hey ... this school used to be the worst school in the town and now 72
we're the best behaviour wise. There's people being expelled left, right 73
and centre around the place, and we're getting them ... or they actually 74
aren't coping and I'm thinking this is where people need to come. They 75
need to come to a real life situation. Go out on your day-to-day to the 76
Normal Schools, but don't do a posting in a Normal School. It's just not 77
real, because what say these people get to a job and they have a class 78
like this, they're just going to crack and they do, and I think it has to 79
come back to the Colleges and the lecturers, all telling them 'nicey , 80
nicey' stuff, so straight up, if you remember back to that transcript of 81
mine. I said that if I had a problem I would have no bones about taking a 82
class back. So I let her read that and then I said to her "right, now 83
I'm wanting to know if you want me to take my class back, if you should 84
just ring the Visiting Lecturer and tell her not to come tomorrow," and 85
she went into shock, started to cry. It doesn't worry me. I can't keep 86
you going on like this...you have to make a decision if you want to 87
finish this or fail, or go somewhere else. And she was very teachable, 88
she wants to learn. 89

Interviewer: So how do you do that? 90

AT: Well, she's got the right attitude, she wants to be a teacher, so she 91
didn't sit in a lecture and have someone telling her saying to her na na 92
na na na... see half those lecturers haven't been in a school for years. 93
She has actually gone into the grassroots and she did what I said in the 94
last few weeks. It's a credit to her. I don't mind writing her a good 95
report, because she has 96
improved so much and I've even put it in her report because I've done a 97
draft copy that she is a teachable person. 98

Interviewer: How do you provide feedback to her? 99

AT: Oh ... very straight mate. She sits at my desk and I was in there 100
today and I opened my desk to use a pen and I'm a tidy freak and I'm ... 101
it was messy, so when she walked in I said "Hey ... if you are to use 102
anything of mine this drawer stays tidy otherwise use your own," and she 103
goes "oh, oh, yes sorry, I didn't know" .... Okay. Well when I walked in 104
it was all tidy it's good I mean, I am just very honest and that's why, 105
look I'm sorry ... I don't respect a lot of people in our teaching 106
profession. 107

Interviewer: So how do you ... tell me a typical day then with her? 108

AT: I have not left that classroom for a whole day or for more than an 109
hour. I've had to stay in there, and I've been making resources for her 110
and I, and I would start with conversation in the morning and ask her 111

what she was going to do and ... like I've had to bounce her, like she's come up to me and I've said to her straight, "you shouldn't be even talking to me, your focus should be on the children', and she goes oh, yes ..... and she might come back a bit later with the planning in the middle of Maths, and I say "I don't want to look at English during Maths time." She said, "well I've asked everybody and they say there's no questions. Well get in there and ask the kids what are they doing. Half of them are saying, yes they've got no questions but as soon as you walk away they talk." She'll go "oh okay" and I have been very straight because if she crumbled ... I'd say.. what there's about 1200 kids she'd have in her life in a class, so if she crumbles now I'll have saved a 1000 kids ...

Interviewer: So how do you give your feedback through the day?

AT: Pardon ...

Interviewer: How do you give Diane feedback?

AT: Yes I've done some written reports, but written reports to me mean nothing, because, let's be honest, what is she going to do. Is she going to show them to anybody? But, if I was telling her things and she wasn't changing or even applying then I would put it in writing. You've got to give people a chance, and all the time I've said to her "I'm going to get up there and show you what to do and what I want you to do is take from that what you can use, don't mimic me, don't be a clone. Stand up and be whoever, and be yourself, if you want to break into a song in the middle of your lesson, do it, go for it, be you. The kids will love that ... but don't be me, the kids will see through it, they will see that you're a surrogate stepfather."

Interviewer: What's her response to your feedback?

AT: Well ... like she would say things like "oh I didn't do any planning over the weekend" and I'd say "well I didn't want to hear that, no, you didn't say that to me though." And then I just look at her planning and just say that's not enough and she'll say it's virtually modelled on mine and I'll say "I've been teaching a lot longer than you, and I know what I'm doing at the introduction of the unit." I said "I've got my unit and basically what you need to do is your unit. When you write a bit of the unit into the daily planner it should be highlighted, and at the end of the unit that whole unit, should all be highlighted, so you actually put it into your day planner." Some people know that, here's the objective here's the learning outcome, here's the activities, the activities in the daily planner. I've done all that now I'm going to instigate the assessment and evaluation.

Interviewer: How would you rate her mastery of the teaching process at this stage?

AT: I'd say that she's going to be in shock for the first term of her career and then she'll be sussed. Because somebody, or, her Tutor Teacher will say no do di-di-di-da and she'll probably go, or try something on her own. I think she'll be good. She's a success, but if it was anybody else that wasn't as teachable, I would have been looking at failing them.

Interviewer: What do you think are the issues?

AT: Well, anyone with the right brain can read the curriculum documents, after a year at Teacher's College, should be able to modify them into a unit plan and a lesson plan, anybody, and she's got that. She's got skills, she's a very talented person, so it's not that. It's just the hard core teaching management that you only get by either good advice or good practice and that's what you can't get in the lectures.

Interviewer: Are you confident that she would be able to step into Year 1 teaching?

AT: 80%. I have had students that would be 95%. I don't think they'd be 100% but, I think she needs to go and watch Anne of Green Gables, and a couple of those movies that have people with passion in them.

Interviewer: You don't think she's got passion?

AT: Yes, but sometimes, you have to look at other people who have passion and go ... I feel like that, and think I'm going to draw on that passion, rather than draw on experience. You know I can walk into anywhere and just .... There's something about when you've got it. I was looking after the kids concert and people were telling the Principal, that he's got passion for kids that guy. There's something about it ... and most people have got it that are in teaching, somewhere. Not most. Some people have got it and what you need to show people or perhaps you can see that when I walk into a room and go ... suddenly they all go ... They want to please you because you're like that ... your kids want to do things that are right.

Interviewer: How do you get that?

AT: How do you get that to her? Or how do you relate to the students?

Interviewer: If you are an Associate how would you get that? How would you get someone like your current student to display passion?

AT: The easiest form of any communication is the oral, so you've got to talk it and show it. I mean, I'm not even sitting there and they have a couple of weeks of observing you, and they see what they're doing. They come with a little bit of experience and you try. She gets up there, tries something, falls flat, and then she should not just keep doing that same thing, but some of them have been ... What I am trying to say is she's got a limited base of knowledge

in management skills, because she's had a limited base of children. Look, they're all the same type of goodie, goodie children, so when she gets into a normal bunch of kids, and these kids aren't naughty, they're normal. Now I've had naughty kids and these were naughty at the beginning of the year, they're not naughty now. When you get a normal bunch of kids, sometimes the nicely, nicely stuff doesn't work, and so you've got to do other things. So now when she's in another class she'll go and .... She'll go, "Excuse me, do you think you're doing your personal best? I expect it of you." Those sort of things, challenges children into their character which she wasn't doing at the start, so she's the better off student than somebody that has just dropped into good old ... decile ten/20 kids in a class school.

Interviewer: So her management strategies are developing?

AT: Oh, definitely, and in all honesty, she needs a couple more weeks, but I can't say that to her and I wouldn't do that to the kids, and I wouldn't do it to me, because I'm dying to get back in there. I am, every day I go "Ohh in 2 more days I'm going to do that programme."

Interviewer: Do you think your kids have suffered from having a student teacher?

AT: I don't know that suffered is the word...they've been enriched by the experience.

Interviewer: They've been enriched?

AT: Sometimes it's just enriched, because they appreciated their own teacher. Like I mean, she's had them for 3 weeks of control. I believe that for the rest of the year those children are going to do twice as much work for me, than what they did before.

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

AT: They are all dying for me to come back. My style is different.

Interviewer: Do you think you've got a style though that creates a 'teacher Culture' for your kids?

AT: No, because most of these kids are righteous children, they want to do what's right, they ... Look, kids work to a family, if you've got really good kids and you take over someone else's house and they're used to saying "Can we have an ice cream please?" And they say "How dare you ask for an ice cream, not until you've got that"... Are you telling me that those kids are going to wake up and say cool, I like this place and that's what its like. Like when they come up to me and go "Can I go to the toilet?", and I reply "Right quickly, go to the first cubicle", they scoot off and giggle and laugh about it because they like it. But another teacher might go "Ohoo...come with me." But, I make them feel

special and she is starting to do that. 229

Interviewer: hmmmmhmm 230

AT: But what it is, is she ... they know what it is to be liked by a 231
teacher, they know what it is like to like the teacher, and what I think 232
what that does is that she needs to be exposed to other skills to get the 233
children where she wants them. And she is actually starting now to work 234
these children and each bunch of children need to be worked differently. 235
When I go in there I work differently to Diane... 236
there's no way she can get the same amount of work 237
output or the same amount of respect out of them but it is how she does 238
it, and she has grown tremendously in this section, and I think it's 239
because they are not goody goods. And she's saying to me "I really 240
believe that whatever class I get next year I'm going to be able to do 241
wonderful things." Because nobody is going to be as bad as this, because 242
she thinks this is the worst class and let's be honest when she does her 243
next year's teaching she won't get a class like that. So from 244
then she's going to build a bit more and grow out and great. But there is 245
not enough grass roots. How many people do you know at the end of the 1st 246
year say "God I learnt hardly anything at Teachers Training College", and 247
it's because they didn't learn true management skills. They didn't learn 248
how to work children. I am teaching my children how to work. "No I'm not 249
putting up with that sort of stuff. You know if you don't want to play 250
with me, fine go away then". That sort of stuff, you know real life 251
skills. If you went into my class and said "School is what". They would 252
say "For life". Because what they are doing now...how do I say it, I've 253
got some great little sayings, but I say to kids "Start exercising now 254
for the adult you want to be". Like when they don't do their homework and 255
they give you lip I just say 'look into your future. What sort of person 256
who doesn't do their homework now and answers the teacher back, what sort 257
of employee do you think that will make, and recognise that's what you 258
want to do." 259

Interviewer: Does that have an effect on the kids? 260

AT: Definitely. But it's the whole philosophy of look, what we are doing 261
now is to set you up for the next stage. The next stage is another step 262
then you get to be an adult. I talk a lot about life. You know we'll 263
take a 5 year old . How does a 5 year old tell his 'not so good' friends 264
that he wants his ball back ... what does a 7 year old do, what does a 10 265
year old do, what does a 12 year old do, you know. Right. What do you 266
think an adult will do? Look at that process. What do you think an adult 267
will do? That somebody told him that he's going to get something back 268
that he didn't want or. The kids have the answer. Is that the type of 269
adult we want to be? Okay this is the time to stop that action now. 270

Interviewer: Right, so your focus on a lot of the programme would be around life skills? 271

AT: Yes. Well otherwise what are you here for? Why would you do reading and blends of letters at junior school? You use them when you get to senior school so you can read better so you can go into College better so you go into life. School is for life mate and all my kids know it.

Interviewer: Do you think Diane has been able to focus on that as well as pick the other issues?

AT: Ask that question again?

Interviewer: The process of learning and what kids are learning, do you think Diane knows to focus on that as well as other things?

AT: Developing the management is from the start of the class till the end. That's just happening naturally because every time she comes up to something, and she does this and they won't, she's got to go into her manner or use her eyes or voice, that's what practice is all about so you don't even need to talk about that. But the understanding of the learning is there, she has ... She is now understanding what you say to children. She's understanding that some children you can just say 'sit down' and some children you don't do that. Some children you've got to say 'why aren't you doing your work?' and some children you need to say "change your card" [Class disciplinary procedure] Other children you will go, "I think I will have to change your card, what do you think?" "Why aren't you doing this? You think you don't have to do this bit?". All this sort of learning stuff is cheap learning and I'm telling her, but the management stuff is intrinsic of what she's here for.

Interviewer: I was meaning more um ... whether she was identifying kids' learning in the curriculum area that they may be working on at that time.

AT: Oh ... well that's...Well, see my kids are totally familiar with the curriculum documents ... they read them. I show them them, then they start their units. They have the page number and the level and the objective, so they know it ... and Diane to her credit has used the curriculum documents when she's introduced a unit and shown them why they are learning this and where it is, so that's reflected on what we are doing.

Interviewer: Do they understand that though?

AT: Yes they do. Because I'll read to them, "who does this?" and they all put up their hands. "So that's good, it's Level 1. Who does this? Well that's good, it's Level 2." Then we start to fall off at Level 3, until .... Now the kids ... and I've explained the curriculum document. They even wrote their own unit. I told you. So they wrote their own unit on letter-boxes, that's where they go into.

Interviewer: So that's ... and that becomes an investigation for them?

AT: Yes

Interviewer: And they go on through that process?

AT: Yes. And they know why they are doing that and do they reach this level because that's Level 4 and Level 4 is where I'm meant to be at, and everybody appreciates where they are. But the learning of how they learn I think Diane learning that herself and she's learning how to bring children learning.

Interviewer: Is that part of your feedback process with her? Do you talk about that?

AT: We talk about nearly everything. I think I'm so straight with her because I am a straight person that if I see something like you know this drawer is not clean and she was offended, I wouldn't do it. She's basically I think..she knew she was at crisis point and so she's gone for everything to be the best ever, and she has. I tell you, she's blooming, moved heaps.

Interviewer: The crisis point, that was the stage where you said, shall I take my class back?

AT: Yes. Basically it was 'look hey mate, I'm not comfortable with you taking my class..what happened is she got really negative to them ..as soon as one person talked she would fly at them and make like "I want to be perfect" but you can't do that. She's a good teacher even if the class are climbing out the windows. You know ... so that's where she was.

Interviewer: How does it work with the Visiting Lecturer?

AT: Oh good.

Interviewer: How do you interact with them, how do you work through it?

AT: Well she comes and visits and then she comes and has a talk with me and asks what I think. I don't tell her everything. I tell Diane everything but ... just tell her what she wants to know and listen to her rabbit on and ...

Interviewer: It's an interesting process.

AT: They're most pathetic people. They've not been in a classroom for years and they tell you what they did 10 years ago, and yet ... you know, they're were out there before computers were born, some of them, you know, yet they yeah, yeah, yeah .. I thought wonderful but ...

Interviewer: So basically they don't make any difference?

AT: To me? No. I think they're there, they make a difference when I'm going to boot them out, and as far as I'm concerned that's where Diane could have gone to them the Visiting Lecturer and said "look he's being really tough on me da-da-da and I'd like it to end"...and I would say "OK I'll pull my head in or get her out of here", but..I don't see that they are an important person. I see they are important for the student, I do. They get all excited , all nervous and have everything done for them so they are important for them. They're not important for me. I mean that they could come as often as they like.. it doesn't worry me. But the University. I see that Diane, and thinking back on my past experiences, even when I was becoming a teacher, the Visiting Lecturer was a big thing.

Interviewer: Do you think it's because of the appraisal point?

AT: No, I think it's something that you feel the same whether you're a 1st or a 2nd year and at that stage you don't really know about a final report for your job.

Interviewer: So why do you think the Visiting Lecturer has such an impact on the students?

AT: Well you will have to ask the students that.

Interviewer: In terms of ... the relationship with the Visiting Lecturer is there a way that you think would work better?

AT: I don't know, I've moved a little bit from what I used to be because say in this section I could have needed to call the lecturer in. aah.... I think that the bottom line comes down to the teacher . Yeah ... I would have liked to have thought that I could call in someone and say look I'm really having problems, I think it would be best if Diane does her section somewhere else, because it isn't working here. That's what I would say, I wouldn't say "She's bloody useless." She wasn't. She's just yeah ... I wouldn't like to feel like I was patronised or any of that, but if the school was going to be hurt in some way because I've made that decision.

Interviewer: Well what about if the Visiting Lecturer comes in and what they are saying is quite different from what you're...

AT: I told you that last time that I'd seen that happen. And it seems to me that the Visiting Lecturer has the power. Like I had a bad student, somebody else had a good student but the Visiting Lecturer saw the opposite. And as a school we were all in shock, because somebody came trumps on the day, and somebody panicked Diane.

Interviewer: Would you have seen the comments, the notes that the Visiting Lecturer would be making about the student?

AT: I see them afterwards.

Interviewer: Yeah ... and do you feel at that stage you could make a comment to the Visiting Lecturer? 378

AT: Hmmm .... This is getting a bit tricky. It's not tricky in the fact 379
that I'm just trying to work it through the process that we've had, could 380
you repeat the question so that I live the experience again? 381

Interviewer: So if the Visiting Lecturer has written a report and the comments that are coming through you don't think are accurate? 382

AT: You mean that the Visiting Lecturer has seen positive or both ... 383

Interviewer: It's just say the Visiting Lecturer had seen things differently from you.. 384

AT: I'd tell her straight that I disagreed with her. It would have to be 385
pretty serious. But what I'd also say well that's very good why don't we 386
either video her or him...or could you come back for another lesson and 387
or what I could say is could I have another look at the principle goal 388
and sit at the back of the class and pretend to do a running record or 389
something during a lesson and listen. I can get a second opinion. 390

Interviewer: Yeah ... in terms of the way it developed over this teaching experience did you feel that your Visiting Lecturer was listening to you? 391

AT: Yes. No I think the Visiting Lecturer and I were on exactly on the 392
same plane when it came to the grass roots. It was all very nicely, 393
nicely and I said "well look this is the deal" and then she came right 394
and said "yes, well I noticed that" ... Oh well, cool, and I told her 395
the honest truth that I was going to take the class back, and I said but 396
no she has decided to hang in and um ... this is what she is doing and I 397
respect her for it. Because I don't ever go in get these students to 398
fail them. I get them to make them good educational practitioners. I had 399
some terrible associates and I had a brilliant one, and I want to be the 400
brilliant one, and as far as I'm concerned I just want to make Diane a 401
better teacher when she goes out. But if that lecturer had said "no, no I 402
disagree with you di-di-di"...I would say "okay" , and if I said "what I ... 403
lets have a second opinion", she said "no, no, no she's doing fine." I 404
would have said "well I think we need to discuss this, either you could 405
get your superior and we will go to the Principal." And with my Principal 406
and her boss could decide what they want to do. But, as far as I'm 407
concerned , the Visiting Lecturer has to take my word because I've been 408
here before, you know, for 7 weeks with the girl. She's been for two 409
visits. But no, the Visiting Lecturer knew exactly what I was saying. 410

Interviewer: So it did work? 411

AT: Yes it did, yeah ... 412

Interviewer: And so the Visiting Lecturer doesn't have any impact in terms of

the way you perceive the teaching experience? Is that what you are saying? 413

AT: Yeah ... 414

Interviewer: If I came in and I said "well this is what I saw about the teaching process, what do you think?"... would that have any impact? 415

AT: Well I'd like to think that there must be something wrong with the 416
Visiting Lecturer and the Associate if they are seeing different things. 417
That must be a rare thing, surely. If you're both here for the learning 418
of the child, we all know what management skills are, they're either 419
using them or not, we all know delivery, you know, quality delivery , you 420
can see it or you cannot. And if somebody would say "oh no, they're 421
useless." I'd say, "no, no, no, they're not". 422

Interviewer: Yeah ... well you gave an example of the school where the Visiting Lecturer came in and saw a student, two student teachers and he said that one was better and then the school was in shock. So, that happens. 423

AT: Yeah ... that Visiting Lecturer was an old man, non-fit. He was very 424
old man and he was, I think he was put off, put out, by our reaction to 425
him, that "no, no, you've got it all wrong mate," and the Associate 426
talked to him. Because I was the one with the guy he said was great. And 427
I was going ... this guy doesn't even know what a daily planner is, you 428
know, they were 2nd years but ... 429

Interviewer: Sometimes, it does happen? 430

AT: Yes, it does, and I think that he listened to the associate and the 431
principal at the time. 432

Interviewer: So basically what would happen is you'd need a second opinion or you'd need further visits? 433

AT: Yes. 434

Interviewer: You know, to make sure they'd seen everything that you thought was important? 435

AT: Yes, and what happened is um ... he didn't like what she'd done. He 436
didn't like her management style, but, the teacher said "well that's 437
actually mine." He didn't like that she put that little person that was 438
making a noise into a hoop, but that was B's style, that's what she does. 439
So this ... the student teacher actually used the same thing, and the 440
Visiting Lecturer didn't like it. 441

Interviewer: Right. So ... 442

AT: You know, she had to take that on, and there was a little bit of um 443
.... Yes ... but she did panic at this stage, she did panic and she was 444

nervous and I think, crikey, we all could recognise that. The other person was so laid back he was nearly asleep, and he thought it was great.

Interviewer: In terms of um ... the teaching practice in the sense of culture, being able to get involved in the total school ..has Diane been effective

AT: Oh yes, she's been brilliant . You know, we've had some after school excursions for Rugby and she's willingly offered her car and things like that. Like we are going to see *Joseph and His Technicolour Dreamcoat* tonight and she's coming and ... I think that aspect has been good.

Interviewer: And the staffroom ...

AT: Oh, no she's good. Yeah ... she hasn't been that eager to stay. I don't think she has ever stayed for a staff meeting. Always ready to go home, but she's been ill and I'd much rather her plan a good lesson the next day than sit with a boring staff member. I must say I've given her that license to go, because I sat through many staff meetings when I was on section and thought "what the hells going on" and just sat there. So as I say, I'd rather her go home and do what she has got to do and come back better the next day.

Interviewer: Do you think you were able to talk effectively?

AT: Yes we do, and that's quality time, and she is good and she's eager and yes she's ... as ... I think she's been set up for a failing in this school and, this school is not unusual. She's been sent to a whole lot of goody, goody-shoes schools, and she's come here and she didn't want to give up, she wanted to ... you know, she did challenge herself - do I really want to be a teacher - that's what she said to me, and I was going "Of course you do, come on" and...and then she's worked her little tail off and she has worked mate. In the last 2 weeks every minute that she's been in front of that class she's been on her toes, and now she knows she's got confidence to go out and apply for anything and I'm pleased. I think that she's had a good section. Develop...you know, she's gone from basically a good Year 1 student to now, quite an able Year 3. I think when she came here she was, well I would have classed that somebody in this school was a Year 1. She's gone, learnt and applied herself and thought what do I do now and eager and I'm really quite impressed.

Interviewer: You mean a Year 1 Teacher or a Year 1 Student?

AT: A Year 1 Student yeah ....

Interviewer: Yeah ... is that right?

AT: Yeah ...

Interviewer: So ...

AT: What I'm saying is that there's ... as a Year 1, if she came to this school a Year 1, she would and then .... how can I say it ... if she went to school in [the city] all the goody, goody schools all the Normal Schools that's what I am saying, at the end of the 3rd year you'd be okay, you know, but you are not set up for the real world, you're a bit like in a glasshouse, put the flower outside and its going to die. Well she was a bit like that she was a glasshouse person and now she's got stuck into the work and instead of just plodding along she has worked her tail off, and to her credit. And I haven't been easy on her, like, rather like, I learn how much I could say to her and I said it to her and consequently she is really, really done well.

Interviewer: So how do you ... I'll ask the students this too, but, from your perception how stressful do you think it is?

AT: I think it is absolutely criminal that the College give them anything to do while they are here. This is their career on the line. They should not have to think of one thing apart from this Section, I even said that to Diane I said "Are you working this weekend?", she went yeah. I said "Hey this is your career you are talking about, you need to do your P.E. you need to have your resources sussed, you need everything straight so that at the start of the lesson you don't have to think .... This is your career, remember that", and I think, that if the College don't then they are setting up them up for failure. I just think that the work demand is, it goes on, like they do a Section and in the middle of the Section they've got units and assessments and assignments to do, that is cruel. Well first of all it's not good for my kids, to know that she's doing assignments and getting stuffed, she needs to be totally focused on what she is doing, and, that's, that's something that happens when you are a 1st Year , that's what you do. Suddenly you don't go out at night, and suddenly oh no I can't go to the pictures tonight, I've got da-da-da to do, and that's what happens and its not till you are in the 2nd Year and 3rd and 4th Year that you start to realise that you can have a life. Or you get to school at 7.00am and you work your tail to 4.30pm and then don't do anything at night. I mean, so I don't think it's fair that the University had anything on them.

Interviewer: That's fine ...

AT: Absolutely. And another thing, I've said it all before they need to keep, I think the schools or the Government should give them some allowance when they are on Section. I mean Diane's buying things left, right and centre, well, what other, look, how many times does the Vet have to go out and buy its own sheep to practice on.

Interviewer: Yeah .. . you see it is an issue?

AT: We need a decent Minister of Education .

Interviewer: So in the 3rd year teaching experience, all other contracts need to stop over that period of time? 523

AT: Yes, I agree with you. 524

Interviewer: That would be something anyway. 525

AT: Yeah. But um ..... yes. I would like to think that I have helped her 526
and now that I've seen the development I know I have. 527

Interviewer: Yeah ... so for you as an Associate it's pretty much everyday... every lesson that you get to be involved with in someway with what's going on? 528

AT: Yeah ... when I was in the 3rd Year Section, I took full control of 529
the first afternoon I was there and the third day I took full control 530
right to the end of the 6 weeks. So I had five and a 1/2 weeks and I 531
didn't see my [AT] didn't come in at all. But I've been in and out 532
ofthere every day, and if you look at the resources that I've made, I've 533
made 40 sheets, spelling sheets and a whole lot of, you know, they are 534
all A4, laminated and they are a whole year's supply so she's going to go 535
away rich in resources as well, and, not only that, I think it is a 536
constant thing. It's been a class that you have to, but it's been a 537
student I've had to as well. 538

Interviewer: If you, if you were confident the student was handling the class would you be in as often? 539

AT: No. I have to go back in there. For about 3 days I did nothing I came 540
and stayed in here so I cleaned out a resource room, you know, so I could 541
be on tap. But I had to go back in..and that has only happened with the 542
second part. You need one thing.. you need to go and tell University that 543
the 3rd Years need a consistent thing.. and the 3rd years need to get 544
into normal schools, you know. Diane has benefited immensely by coming here. 545

Interviewer: Great. 546