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**Investigating Perceptions of the Role of Cooperating Teachers and their
Needs in the Practicum in Primary Schools in Tobago.**

By:

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Abstract

This qualitative case study was designed to investigate how the roles of cooperating teachers who participate in the practicum programme of the Centre for Education Programmes University of Trinidad and Tobago (CEPUTT) are perceived by those involved. Semi-structured interviews were carried out and data collected from three sets of significant stakeholders regarding the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher. The participants included six cooperating teachers (classroom teachers who accommodate student teachers during practicum) from primary schools in Tobago, six student teachers (prospective teachers currently enrolled at the CEPUTT pursuing a Bachelor of Education to become qualified teachers), and three university supervisors or practicum advisors (instructors who teach content courses at the CEPUTT and are charged with the responsibility of supporting and assessing student teachers during practicum).

The results of the data analysis and the emergent themes indicated that the cooperating teachers perceived their roles in relationship to the student teachers as: willing to accept student teachers, establishing good relationships, mentoring and modelling for student teachers, observing and evaluating and socializing student teachers into classroom practice. Cooperating teachers reported that they lacked training for these roles and relied on their own teaching experiences in dealing with student teachers. They identified training as a need. Cooperating teachers suggested better collaboration with practicum advisors and that they be provided with guidelines and expectations of what they are required to do to fulfill their roles as cooperating teachers. Student teachers perceived the roles of the cooperating teachers to be: keeping up current educational practices, establishing collegial relationships with the student teachers, giving student teachers feedback, and contributing a grade to the student teachers' assessment. The practicum advisors suggested that the role of the cooperating teachers should be: to build student teacher confidence, socialize student

teachers into school and classroom context, mentor student teachers and contribute to student teachers' assessment grades.

Results from the interviews suggest the need to include cooperating teachers in the practicum triad and recommendations included proper selection and training for them particularly in developing mentoring skills and assessment procedures to help in better preparation of student teachers entering the teaching profession.

Signature Page

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List of Abbreviations

AILSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
B. Ed	Bachelor of Education
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEPUTT	Centre for Education Programmes, University of Trinidad and Tobago
COPET	Cooperating Physical Education Programme
EBITT	Employment-Based Initiative Teacher Training
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GORTT	Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MIC	Metal Industries Company
MTC	Mausica Teachers' College
MUSTER	Multi-Site Teacher Education Research
NCATE	National Council for Teacher Education
NCQT	National Council for Teacher Quality
NIE	National Institute of Education
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OJT	On-the-job training
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PRAC	Practicum

ROYTEC	Trading name for School of Business and Applied Studies in collaboration with Royal Bank Ltd.
SLCUTT	School for Learning and Cognition, University of Trinidad and Tobago
TITT	Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USC	University of the Southern Caribbean
UTT	University of Trinidad and Tobago
UWI	University of the West Indies

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Figure 1: Diagram showing the overlapping themes of the Perceptions of the Cooperating Teachers, Student Teachers and Practicum Advisors.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Context of the Study

The Centre for Education Programmes University of Trinidad and Tobago (CEPUTT) offers a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree programme, certifying prospective teachers to become qualified teachers. Prospective student teachers are required to complete 48 courses which include foundation courses in education, core content subjects and pedagogical courses which accrue to a total of 142 credits necessary for attaining the Bachelor of Education degree. Also included in those 48 courses, are eight practicum courses spread over the four years of the B.Ed. programme (21 credits).

Teacher training in Trinidad and Tobago has a long history of sending student teachers to do their practice in cooperating schools. This traditional model of “*college-recommending teacher education*” (Zeichner, Katherina and Kate, 2014, p. 123), which is still used at the CEPUTT, emphasizes the translation of academic knowledge into practice which Clandinin (1995) refers to as putting the “*sacred theory into practice*” (p. 46). Korthagen and Kessels (1999) and Thomas (1997) also describe the historically dominant application of theory model as one where prospective teachers are supposed to learn theories at the university and then go to schools to practice or apply what they learned on campus working with an experienced teacher. It should be noted however that many countries including the UK and the US have shifted the locus of teacher training from the traditional college or university lecture room to the real world of the school and classroom with the focus on helping student teachers acquire the ability to enact specific teaching practices that are relevant to student learning (Grossmam, 2011; Zeichner & Bier, 2013). Therefore,

this school-based method instruction represents another space for exchange of university and school-based expertise. (Jeffrey & Polleck, 2013; Klien, Taylor, Onore, Strom and Abrams, 2013; Zeichner and McDonald, 2011; Morgan-Flemming, Simpson, Curtis and Hull, 2010; Shirley, MacDonald, Sanchez, Scandone, Skidmore and Tutwiler, 2006).

Attempts at teacher education reform in Trinidad and Tobago have been made but according to the Ministry of Education's Draft Policy Framework for Transforming and Restructuring Teacher Education and Development in Trinidad and Tobago (2005), Trinidad and Tobago "*has not been successful at implementing the recommendations for teacher education which have emanated both from official and unofficial sources in the past*" (p.15). The Draft Policy Framework for Transforming and Restructuring Teacher Education and Development in Trinidad and Tobago (2005) also stated that:

While North America and the UK have implemented continuous reforms in teacher education in the last three decades we have continued with the same arrangements over the last three decades (p.15).

In 2002, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) began the planning process to achieve "Vision 2020" with the appointment of a committee tasked with spearheading the preparation of a National Strategic Plan; its agenda to transform Trinidad and Tobago into having developed nation status by 2020. In dealing with education, this plan proposed the need for the re-engineering and restructuring, transforming and upgrading of the teacher education sector (Vision 2020 Statement). One positive outcome has been the establishment of the University of Trinidad and Tobago's Centres for Education Programmes. Other objectives are still being incrementally achieved.

As part of the CEPUTT's practicum programme, a Practicum Handbook (2014) exists as a guide for student teachers. It outlines some expectations for cooperating teachers. The document

suggests that cooperating teachers should be qualified competent and experienced practitioners who will provide mentorship and guidance to prospective teachers based on real-life classroom situations. Cooperating teachers are also expected to accept student teachers into their classrooms. They should recognize that these prospective teachers are not experts at teaching, but rather they have only just begun their professional journey and require assistance and feedback. Cooperating teachers should be present in the classroom during the delivery of lessons by student teachers and provide them with sound professional advice and feedback. By doing this, they will help prospective teachers to develop their expertise and creativity as teachers.

The handbook also states that it is important that student teachers create a cordial, professional working relationship with their cooperating teachers and practicum advisors. It is also important that student teachers consult with cooperating teachers on a regular basis in all areas of the management of their tasks as beginning teachers. Practicum advisors are expected make contact with principals and cooperating teachers before the actual teaching in the field begins, to clarify roles and responsibilities of principals and cooperating teachers in the practicum process. They should strive to maintain a professional relationship with cooperating teachers of the schools in which the student teachers are placed. Practicum advisors are also expected to give support to cooperating teachers and plan and provide professional development sessions for them if required.

I have over 45 years of experience as a teacher educator, with 31 of those years spent specifically with student teacher preparation. During that time, I have observed variations in the support and guidance offered by cooperating teachers pointing to a lack of consensus on their role. The student teachers, cooperating teachers and practicum advisors appear not to work as a team regarding student teachers' supervision. Student teachers are sent to cooperating teachers who are expected to assist and guide them without adequate preparation. The practicum advisor and student

teacher appear to have a closer networking regarding what is expected during the practicum because of their interaction at the university campus. Unfortunately, the cooperating teachers' role has become so 'taken for granted' that the Practicum Committee at the CEPUTT (those responsible for designing and managing proper implementation of the practicum programme), including the practicum advisors, do not seem to view this as a problem. I say this because since the inception of the CEPUTT's practicum programme, no real efforts were made by the Practicum Committee to either have meaningful discussions with cooperating teachers regarding their roles, and very few serious and open discussions have been systematically engaged in to formalize and regularize the expectations of the cooperating teachers and to present them with such a document. Research done by Thomas and Ramsook (2017) with graduates from the Bachelor of Education degree from the UTT regarding their levels of preparedness for the real classroom suggest the need for the practicum to be revised with regard to the role of the cooperating teacher although they are seen as supporter and advisor.

Two practicum courses are offered to each student year body; year 1 (PRAC 1001&1002); year 2 (PRAC 2001 & 2002); year 3 (PRAC 3001 & 3002); and year 4 (PRAC 4001 & 4002) with each pair of courses led by different pairs of practicum committee members. This makes it almost impossible for a coherent structure of the practicum programme to exist as it poses a challenge with meeting as a whole unit to discuss practicum matters. As such, the organization of the practicum is one that is compartmentalized, each set of committee members meeting to construct or deconstruct practicum matters. There are no plenary sessions with the student teachers after their field practice to provide some sort of evaluation of the practice or discuss problems they may have encountered during their practice to suggest ways of moving forward.

Over the past five years since becoming practicum coordinator at the CEPUTT in Tobago, I have received an increasing number of complaints from cooperating teachers concerning their contribution to the professional development of student teachers. As coordinator for the practicum in Tobago, one may think that I should have made some interventions with the cooperating teachers there but because of the hierarchical structure of the organization of the practicum, I cannot make decisions for Tobago. Decisions are made by committee members, which are then handed down to the practicum advisors. My role as practicum coordinator in Tobago is to simply oversee the implementation of the practicum programme, organize schools where student teachers do their practice and attend to any problems that may arise during the practicum. I do not serve officially as any practicum leader or practicum committee member.

Cooperating teachers have also indicated to me that they accept student teachers because they feel indebted to do so since they were once student teachers themselves. They have also grumbled about feeling left out of the practicum process and that they need to be included more significantly in the practicum. Many student teachers have indicated that they could have done better if they had more support from their cooperating teacher and received better supervision. Some said that they experienced cooperating teachers who go all out to assist them, while others have been absent from the classroom. Student teachers also expressed the desire to have better relationships with cooperating teachers, lamenting some of the bad experiences they encountered. Moreover, practicum advisors indicated that they have very little communication with cooperating teachers. They do not have the time to meet and collaborate with cooperating teachers because of the large number of student teachers they have to attend to. It is my view that there is a need to go much beyond such anecdotal evidence regarding the cooperating teachers' role and try to find out how student teachers, practicum advisors and cooperating teachers themselves, view the role of

the cooperating teacher in the practicum and to use this information to better enable cooperating teachers to become more significant stakeholders in the practicum. As Clarke (2001) and Kasperbauer and Roberts (2007) agree, cooperating teachers are often the most influential factor in the development of novice teachers, as they have the most contact and communication. Therefore, it is important to develop a better understanding of cooperating teachers' involvement in teacher education. Pertaining to the student teacher, Gregory (2008) says:

People [student teachers] who enjoy their work and find their workplace pleasant, non-threatening, yet challenging usually feel more confident than those who don't. They are able to take the risks involved in order to learn and develop new skills and strategies (p.5).

The issue with cooperating teachers is just one of the disquiets regarding the organization of the practicum at the CEPUTT. There are many other concerns, one of which is the practicum advisors' ability to supervise and assess student teachers' performance on teaching practice. This is particularly worrying since there are university instructors at the institution who have no experience in primary or secondary school teaching. There are issues regarding the preparation of student teachers for practice and the congruency between what is taught and what is assessed. It is not always the case that the instructors who deliver the practicum course to a group of student teachers are the ones to assess that same group of students. Although the practicum curriculum is standardized, each instructor may have different interpretations of what should be taught and how it should be taught, because there have been no real attempts at coming to some consensus on the matter. This being so, student teachers may be caught in the middle of this conflict of what is expected when one instructor says one thing and the other says another. This also causes agitation among student teachers regarding the wide variations of grades they receive from the practicum advisors. For example there are records of an entire class of student teachers receiving grade A's in their practice. Though this is not impossible it is a very unlikely outcome.

My research project is small and has many constraints, time being a major factor. I have therefore delimited this study to focus on the supervisory role of the cooperating teacher which has been an area of interest to me from the beginning of my teaching career, being a student teacher practicing in a cooperating teacher's classroom, acting as a cooperating teacher for many student teachers and now as coordinator for the practicum programme and having an awareness of some of the problems involving cooperating teachers.

1.2. The Supervision Context

Generally, supervision during practicum is believed to be a key factor influencing the development of a new teacher (Muongmee, 2014). Under the traditional model of the field practice, student teachers are supported by purposeful coaching from a cooperating teacher who offers modelling, co-planning, feedback, more opportunities for practice and reflection upon practice while the student teacher assumes more responsibility for the classroom (Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman and Stevens, 2009). However, I am not certain that cooperating teachers in Tobago are aware that they can offer these types of support to student teachers in their classrooms. Therefore, finding out about the perceived roles of these cooperating teachers is central to this study.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The practicum is an integral part of the B.Ed. programme at the CEPUTT. It involves a series of supervised professional experiences for student teachers who go into the field to apply, refine and reconstruct their theoretical learning. Central to the practicum is an interactive process of supervision involving the practicum advisor from UTT and the cooperating teacher, who are also expected to supervise the student teacher in the school context. The problem is that cooperating

teachers are not familiar with the practicum course outlines used at the CEPUTT as it has never been extended to them without any justified reason. There is no specific document prepared for them regarding their roles and functions in supervising student teachers. This disconnect between the expectations of the UTT and the cooperating teachers creates a major gap along the practicum continuum.

Cooperating teachers have not been adequately included in the student teaching triad. They have never been formally consulted on what roles they believe they can play in supervising student teachers. They accommodate student teachers without any clear direction as to how they can contribute to the development of student teaching. The focus of this research is to determine the perceived roles of the cooperating teachers with the intention of developing some policy document which would guide them in supervising student teachers. If cooperating teachers are not aware of the contributions they can make towards teacher education and teacher development, then issues of conflicting roles in student supervision could arise. According to Handcock (2013), cooperating teachers should receive adequate instruction and development regarding their roles as they guide student teachers to become effective teachers to enter the field of education as professionals.

1.4. Rationale of the Study

This is an interpretative qualitative study set in my workplace – CEPUTT in Tobago. It addresses the perceived role of cooperating teachers who accept all student teachers from their first year to their final year at the CEPUTT. The study arises from the need to investigate the lack of certainty of the role of the cooperating teacher, which may have been responsible for some bad experiences met by student teachers as reported. The study aims at investigating the role of the cooperating teacher in the practicum and whether this role can be improved. The investigation will collect data systematically by means of engaging the different parties involved in the practicum,

student teachers, as well as practicum advisors and cooperating teachers themselves, using semi-structured interviews to obtain a rounded view on the issue. The data will be analyzed using an interpretative approach to consider what roles the cooperating teachers currently provide at this time and what needs they have as to improving their roles as cooperating teachers. If the findings suggest a need for developing some sort of training of the cooperating teachers regarding their roles, my plan is to recruit volunteer cooperating teachers to undergo that training with the hope of improving the supervisory role of the cooperating teacher in subsequent teaching practices.

As researcher and practicum coordinator at the CEPUTT in Tobago, I am also a participant in the situation I am researching, in other words, an 'insider'. As an insider, I have had:

Prior attachment to and involvement with, the institutions or social groups in, or on, which [my] investigations are based (Sikes and Potts, 2008, p.2).

That perspective, I believe, gives me an advantage in that I am familiar with the nature of cooperating teachers' supervision, but it also poses several challenges. First, I hold the strong view the cooperating teachers' supervision needs to be improved but I must set this aside and look objectively at the data from my interviewees to see if it supports or refutes these views. Secondly, the cooperating teachers, many of whom I have taught, may consider that I am out to criticize them and am trying to impose my views on what their role should be. Third, my practicum advisor colleagues may be suspicious of my motive as a researcher and resist cooperating with me if they consider that their shortcomings will be revealed.

In conducting my interviews, I recognized the importance of ensuring confidentiality at all stages, so that participants in all three groups may share opinions without fear of identification. With regard to the current practices of the cooperating teachers, it occurs to me that one obvious lack is that their roles are not specifically defined, documented and circulated to them. Another

shortcoming is the provision of time for practicum advisors to discuss the roles of the cooperating teachers with the cooperating teachers and the student teachers, before, during or subsequent to teaching practice. It is in these areas that development work may be required.

1.5. Aim / Objectives of the Research

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of the cooperating teacher in the practicum and whether this role can be improved. There are five objectives to achieve this aim. They are to:

1. Examine the cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles.
2. Assess student teachers' perceptions of the roles of the cooperating teachers.
3. Identify practicum advisors' views of the roles of the cooperating teachers.
4. Identify needs that cooperating teachers may have regarding their roles in the practicum.
5. Identify the how the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teachers and their needs can influence the effectiveness of the practicum.

These objectives give direction to the following research questions.

1.6. Research Questions

1. What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles?
2. What are student teachers' perceptions of the roles of the cooperating teacher?
3. What are practicum advisors' views of the roles the cooperating teacher can play in the practicum?
4. What needs do cooperating teachers have regarding their roles?
5. How can the perceptions of the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors about the role of the cooperating teacher and their needs influence the improvement of the effectiveness of the practicum?

1.7. Significance of the Study

This research gives a voice to the student teachers, cooperating teachers and the practicum advisors in the realm of educational research. The cooperating teachers are the ones who know the culture of their schools and who have the experience of working with children in their school context. Examining how the roles of the cooperating teachers are perceived by cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors as well as identifying the needs of the cooperating teachers can better equip them to be more confident and competent in assisting student teachers. This may also translate into better collaboration between UTT and the cooperating teachers in schools in Tobago.

Without an understanding of the ways in which cooperating teachers participate or are expected to participate in teacher education, it is difficult to know how best to support or facilitate their work. It is therefore crucial that researchers and practitioners alike move beyond simplistic understanding of the role of the cooperating teachers to more detailed, nuanced perceptions that could provoke and advance how their work is conceived and enacted. Otherwise, teacher educators are limited in the ways in which they can support cooperating teachers in their role and vice-versa. This would mean that cooperating teachers would be left to rely on their own intuitive sense of what it means to guide or mentor student teachers, often drawing on their own practicum experiences when they were student teachers (Knowles and Cole, 1996). Knowledge of the perceived roles of the cooperating teacher can be used to create a cooperating teacher professional development programmes designed to enhance mentoring skills of those teachers who already serve as cooperating teachers and prepare new ones for their role. This study will make a significant contribution to the field of teacher education by providing a foundation for continuing research on the role of the cooperating teachers. It will also make a significant contribution to the

Department of Education in Tobago and by extension the Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago by providing them with findings which may be used to improve the role of the cooperating teacher in the practicum. The study will place Tobago in a leading position in transforming the practicum programme at the CEPUTT to significantly include the cooperating teacher in the practicum triad since no study of this nature was ever conducted in Tobago. In sum, insights gleaned from this study can directly influence policy, practice, and future research.

1.8. Theoretical Framework.

This study is informed by many approaches and conceptions about what the role of a cooperating teacher should entail which are discussed in much detail in the literature on teacher education (Belton, Woods, Dunning and Megan, 2010; Megan, Dunning, Belton and Woods 2013; Clarke, Triggs and Nielsen, 2014; Garies and Grant, 2014; Hamilton, 2010; Rajuan, Beijjaard and Verloop, 2007). Educational leaders concur that interactions between cooperating teachers and student teachers are critical in predicting the evolution of the student teacher into one who is highly qualified (Hamman, Fives, & Olivarez, 2007). Literature on the role of the cooperating teacher repeatedly refers to the cooperating teacher as “model” (Grossman & Mc Donald, 2008; Sanders, Dowson, & Sinclair, 2005). I have also framed this study by drawing upon empirical work situated within the literature on mentoring (Ambrosetti & Derrekers, 2010; Bird, 2012; Bullough, 2005; Clarke, Triggs & Nielsen, 2014; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Lindgren, 2005; Marble & Raimondi, 2007), in which the cooperating teachers are referred to as mentor teachers. According to Butler and Cuenca (2012), framing a perspective on student teaching mentoring is the belief that mentoring is fundamentally a socially constructed practice.

In addition to the literature located on the role of the cooperating teacher, Bandura’s social cognitive learning theory was explored to examine the role of the cooperating teacher (model) and

the student teacher (observer). Social Learning Theory posits that people learn from one another by observing, imitating and modelling. According to Bandura (1977) “... *most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling, from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action*” (p. 22). Social learning theorists hypothesized that skills and knowledge of a society are transferred through a process of socialization (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1996).

Theories related to student learning are also relevant to understanding how student teachers learn. For example, Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of intellectual development combines many aspects of modelling which illustrates the importance of observation in the learning process. Vygotsky suggests that real-life models, such as cooperating teachers, are essential in the internalization and integration of skills and knowledge that are first perceived by observation. The sociocultural theory by Vygotsky (1978) posits that learners solve problems through communication and working with more experienced members in a learning community. He also stated that social interactions allow people to advance their thoughts through conversations with more experienced practitioners.

This study also draws on research done by Butler and Cuenca (2012). They outlined three major conceptions of the cooperating teacher as mentor. They include instructional coach, emotional support system and socializing agent. They contend that mentoring relationships are conceptualized by a series of social, cultural and individual factors.

Mentors who view themselves as instructional coaches are primarily concerned with assisting pre-service teachers in developing the repertoire of skills needed to teach (Butler and Cuenca, 2012). These instructional coaches spend much of their time providing pedagogical, technical and organizational advice. Mentors as instructional teachers observe and evaluate

instructional practice and provide constructive feedback aimed at improving teaching strategies and techniques of pre-service teachers (Butler and Cuenca, 2012).

Another view is that mentors as individuals serve as an emotional support for student teachers who are unsure of their abilities. According to Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, and O'Brien (1995), supportive mentors see themselves as helpful rather than being evaluative and as being there for the student teacher who might have difficulty adjusting to their new role of becoming a teacher. Stanilus and Russell (2000) acknowledge the importance of providing a caring work environment where student teachers can learn how to teach. Within this approach, there exists a focus on the development of trust, collaboration and consistent communication (Butler & Cuenca, 2012).

Due to the largely conceptual nature of university-based education, student teachers enter the field of teaching with a lack of the practical knowledge about the daily routines of teaching (Head, Reiman, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1992; Huberman, 1993). These routines include aspects of socializing student teachers into the school and classroom context. For example, taking assemblies, meeting with parents, staff relationships, how to take attendance, along with other involvements that classroom teachers experience during the school year. Through non-instructional and repetitive responsibilities of teaching, student teachers are implicitly socialized into the school and classroom context (Butler & Cuenca, 2012). The three conceptions which I have described as outlined by Butler and Cuenca played an important role in the theoretical analysis of the data revealing some of the emergent themes associated with the perceptions of the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher. For example, establishing relationships, mentoring and modelling, observing and evaluating, giving feedback, socializing student teachers into school and classroom context and building student

teacher confidence. These perceived roles of mentors (cooperating teachers) in this study will answer calls to provide a common language between the university and field-based teacher education (Grossman and Mc Donald, 2008; Zeichner, 2010).

1.9. Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for meaningful and consistent understanding of them in relation to the research questions and data collected from this study. These definitions apply throughout this study.

Primary school principal: The person who conducts the administrative duties in a school, referred to as the principal.

Student teacher: A person who is currently enrolled in a preparation programme at a university to become a qualified teacher. The student teacher is also referred to as a prospective teacher, teacher candidate, novice teacher, beginning teacher, teacher trainee or mentee.

Assistant teacher: An untrained teacher in a primary school.

On-the-job training (OJT): This is an opportunity for young prospective teachers to be attached to a school to observe school and classroom climate as on-the-job trainees. These persons are attached to an experienced teacher where they help the classroom teachers with day to day activities but should not engage in lesson delivery. They receive a stipend from the Education Department, Tobago.

Cooperating teachers: These are teachers who accommodate and mentor prospective teachers in their classrooms. (Practicum Handbook, 2014). They are also referred to as the classroom teacher.

Field-placement: This refers to the time prospective teachers spend in real-life schools and classrooms (Practicum Handbook, 2014).

Field orientation visit: This is the initial visit(s) to a cooperating teacher to gather information for field teaching.

University instructors: Instructors at the university who teach content courses as well as supervise and advise student teachers on teaching practice.

Practicum: The period that a student teacher spends in a primary school to acquire experience teaching pupils. This is also referred to as teaching practice.

Practicum Advisors: These are university instructors charged with the responsibility of supporting a specific group of student teachers on teaching practice. They are also referred to as university supervisors or lecturers.

Practicum Coordinator: The leading person who oversees all practicum procedures.

2.0. Organization of Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter gives an introduction to the study. This is followed by the context of the study and a rationale for doing this project. The aims of the study are presented followed by the research questions. The significance of the study and definition of terms are stated and the chapter concludes with the organization of chapters for the study and a summary.

Chapter 2: Background and Setting of the Study

This chapter focuses on the background and setting of this thesis beginning with phases in the development of primary education in Trinidad and Tobago, followed by an account of the

evolution of the UTT and the origin of the CEPUTT. A brief history of the beginning of the CEPUTT Tobago ensues, highlighting background information about the university instructors. A summary of the restructured practicum programme used at the CEPUTT will be presented, followed by a discussion on the practicum in context and a brief history of Tobago and the primary schools follow. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter 3: Literature Review.

This chapter provides an overview of the literature that informs my research. First, it discusses teacher education from an international perspective. It then examines many issues relating to the practicum and the student teacher, the cooperating teacher and mentoring. It also reviews the literature on the perceived role of the cooperating teacher by cooperating teachers, student teachers and university supervisors. The chapter will be presented in three sections outlined below:

1. Section 1: Teacher Training Systems: International Perspectives
2. Section 2: The Importance of Practicum in Teacher Education
3. Section 3: The Dimensions of a Cooperating Teacher.

This section will focus generally on the characteristics of an effective cooperating teacher, the selection and preparation of cooperating teachers, cooperating teachers and student development, cooperating teachers and student teacher relationship, the role of the cooperating teachers in teacher education, the need for preparation of cooperating teachers for their roles, the state of cooperating teacher training, cooperating teachers as mentors and cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles, student teachers' perceptions of the cooperating teachers' role and the university supervisors' perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods.

This chapter will discuss my ontological and epistemological assumptions and the influence on the choice of methodology for this research. I justify the use of a case study and discuss my data collection method. A rationale for using semi-structured interviews and the profile of the participants will be presented. A discussion on conducting the interview, data analysis and explaining my role as reflective practitioner will follow. Ethical considerations and procedures, a discussion on crystallization of data and limitations of the study will be presented and a conclusion will bring closure to the chapter.

Chapter 5: Findings.

This chapter will discuss the finding from the research questions.

Chapter 6: Summary of Findings and Discussions.

Chapter 7: Summary of Study, Recommendations and Conclusion.

Conclusion

Chapter 1 gave an introduction to the study on the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher in the practicum at the CEPUTT in Tobago. There was discussion on the attempts made at teacher education reform in Trinidad and Tobago within the past three decades as well as proposed plans for further transforming and upgrading the teacher education sector. However, not much has been implemented at this time. This study is centred around the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors regarding the role of the cooperating teacher, so I proceeded to give an outline of what the CEPUTT's expectations are for those three stakeholders. I went on to explain that although there is a practicum handbook with written expectations of the cooperating teachers this was never made available to them. I shared some of the idiosyncratic practices I have

encountered during my years as a teacher educator, major ones being the manner in which the field placement is done and the selection of cooperating teachers. I went on to define the statement of the problem for the research and presented the rationale for the study which focused on investigating the supervisory role of the cooperating teacher. As an inside researcher I had to make the claim that I am familiar with the process of cooperating teachers' supervision and so had to set this aside and look objectively at the data I collected from the participants. The aim of the research was to investigate the role of the cooperating teacher in the practicum and whether this role can be improved and this gave rise to my research questions. I also discussed the contribution that the findings of this research can make to the CEPUTT, as well as to the education systems nationally and internationally. Finally, I presented the theoretical framework which guided the analysis of the data collected. The next chapter will address the background to the study which would provide for a better understanding of the research context.

Chapter 2

Background and Setting of the Study

Introduction

Chapter 1 gave an introduction to this study. It presented the context of the study, statement of the problem and sought to offer a rationale for the research study. The purpose and significance of the study were given followed by the research questions. This chapter offers insight into the historical background to the study. It will begin with an overview of the phases in the development of primary teacher training education in Trinidad and Tobago from 1823 to 2006. This will be followed by an account of the evolution of the UTT in Trinidad in 2006 and Tobago in 2011. A brief look at information regarding the Tobago instructors will be given. The restructured practicum programme now used at the CEPUTT and a discussion on the practicum in context will constitute the other sections. Finally, a brief history of Tobago, its primary schools and primary teacher status will be conducted, concluding the chapter with a summary.

2.1 Phases in the Development of Teacher Training in Trinidad and Tobago

First Efforts at Teacher Training

The development of teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago is closely linked to the development of the education system and more specifically, to the development of primary education. In January 1823, just prior to Emancipation, the first efforts at teacher training took place. Seven young men were selected for training to staff the first National School established by the Cabildo (a Spanish colonial and early postcolonial administrative council that governed a municipality) in Port of Spain. However, it was after the abolition of slavery that the first sustained efforts at teacher education took place (Quamima-Aiyejina, Mohammed, Rampaul, George,

Kallon, Keller, Lochan, 2001). The British Government helped to fund the Mico Charity training school in Trinidad between 1835 and 1845 (Campbell, 1992). They mandated that compulsory Christian Education be given to the children of ex-slaves under a scheme called the Negro Education Grant, which was financed by £25,000 from the British treasury. Trinidad was apportioned £800 and with additional funding from the Mico Charity Fund (a non-denominational education trust to promote education among emancipated Negroes), schools were established in Trinidad and other Caribbean territories, whose function was to train local teachers (Quamina-Aiyejina et al., 2001). These were the first teacher training institutions in the region and were almost unique in the world. Unfortunately, the Mico School in Trinidad was closed in 1841 when the British government discontinued the Negro Education Grant (Quamina-Aiyejina et al., 2001).

In 1851, systematic consideration of education began in Trinidad when Lord Harris, then Governor of Trinidad, saw the need for a system of primary education. This system included plans for a training school for teachers, intended to give secular instruction without direct religious or doctrinal teaching and a model school similar to the Training College to provide necessary teaching practice for student teachers (Quamina-Aiyejina et al. 2001). The Government Normal School was established in 1852, primarily for the education of teachers for the ward schools (schools in different divisions of the country where no religious instruction was to be imparted). The Lord Harris system, with its underlying principle of secularism, was met with opposition from most of the religious denominations (Quamina-Aiyejina et al. 2001). In 1869, Patrick J. Keenan, an Inspector of Schools in Ireland was appointed by the Secretary of State for the colonies and was tasked to conduct a full inquiry into the state of education in Trinidad as well as to make recommendations (Campbell, 1992). Keenan severely criticized the existing system because of irregularities discovered in many of the schools, including school organization and teacher

irresponsibility. Keenan made numerous recommendations, many of which were diametrically opposed to the system developed from Lord Harris' proposals. Among Keenan's recommendations were that the Government Training College be abolished and that a system of monitors be instituted for providing highly qualified teachers (Quamina-Aiyejina et al., 2001).

The Monitorial or Pupil Teacher System

As a result of Keenan's recommendations, the monitorial or pupil teacher system was introduced in Trinidad in 1870 (Baldeo, 2010). Under this system, pupils attending the school who were interested in being recruited as teachers were selected with reference to their intellectual acquirements and general conduct (Keenan Report, 1869). These "monitors" as they were called was a senior pupil served as apprentices working with the most qualified teachers in schools, assisting in teaching small groups of pupils and studying after school hours to improve their teaching knowledge (Campbell, 1992). After one year, they wrote an examination and once successful, became "pupil teachers". They continued to write additional examinations in subjects normally taught in the primary school, but at a more advanced level. This was combined with learning about various educational theories. At the end of approximately five years, they were deemed qualified to enter a Teachers' Training College (Baldeo, 2010).

In 1918, the Code of Elementary Education provided opportunities for the employment and education of pupil teachers. This code attempted to provide some sort of external secondary education for the untrained teacher, conducted by head teachers and inspected by government. However, instruction time was only about five hours a week for approximately five years (Quamina-Aiyejina et al., 2001). This pattern of training was a significant shortcoming of the code. From 1931 to 1932, the Mayhew-Marriott Commission found serious weaknesses in the pupil teacher system. It was found that the student teachers were working with master teachers of

questionable proficiency, therefore they were receiving very little guidance in the art of teaching (Quamina-Aiyejina et al., 2001). Although the various commissions examining the quality of education in the British West Indies identified many weaknesses associated with the pupil teacher system, little or nothing was done to strengthen it. As a result, no further appointments of pupil teachers were made after 1959 (Baldeo, 2010).

The Teachers' Training Colleges

Despite all its efforts at teacher training, Trinidad appeared incapable at providing adequate facilities for the training of all its teachers. The government amended the Code of Regulations governing teachers, offering a full Teachers' Certificate to untrained teachers following success in a practical test. However, in 1961 there were about 3,221 untrained teachers in active teaching waiting to be trained (Quamina-Aiyejina et al., 2001).

The Maurice Report of 1959 expressed concern about the large number of untrained teachers in the schools, and deemed this a real danger to education, so that teacher training became a most urgent need. There were three Training Colleges for teachers at that time; (1) The Catholic Women's Training College (2) the Naparima Training College (Presbyterian) and (3) the Government Training College, catering for those outside of the Catholic and Presbyterian faiths. The three colleges with a total enrolment of 250 teachers in training conducted a two- year course. The annual output of trained teachers was approximately 125, subject to failures. The Maurice Report sought to correct this insufficiency of trained teachers and recommended an Emergency Training Course.

The Government immediately accepted the committee's recommendations and a one- year Emergency Training Course was inaugurated as a temporary measure to ease the backlog of

untrained teachers. In the early 1960s, another government-funded training college, the Mautica Teachers' College (MTC) was opened, offering a two-year programme in pre-service training. The purpose of MTC was to offer pre-service training to secondary school graduates who had no teaching experience and who became trained teachers after graduation (Campbell, 1992). Persons between the ages of 18 to 25 years old were eligible if they possessed five subjects at the General Certificate of Examination (GCE) Ordinary passes level or their equivalent. Upon acceptance, these persons were required to sit an entrance examination and only those attaining a score of 66% or more went on to a rigorous interview by a panel before being accepted to the MTC (Brereton, 1996). It must be noted that this period was post-independence where educational reform demanded the rejection of the external frames of reference which shaped our educational practices (Bristol, 2008). George and Quamina-Aiyejina (2003) argued that some segments of the education system were still characterized by aspects of British colonialism and the system of primary teacher education was one such. In many respects, this holds true today.

Between 1956 and 1981, the elimination of the backlog of untrained teachers in the primary school system was considered one of the most significant developments in teacher training (Baldeo, 2010). Another important development was the raising of the academic standards for entry into the Teachers' Training Colleges. Instead of the minimum entry requirements of a Teachers' Provisional Certificate, mainly acquired by way of the pupil teachers' examinations, all the pre-service candidates had to attain five GCE Ordinary level passes, including English, before being admitted for training (Quamina-Aiyejina et al., 2001). In addition to the higher entry qualifications, there was a change from the dominant pre-1962 pattern of in-service training to a new model of predominantly pre-service training, plus some in-service training (1963-1975). However, during the period 1975-1981, teacher education fully returned to in-service training

(Quamina-Aiyejina et al., 1999). In 2004, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago saw the need for the creation of a new student centered institution, with a mandate of providing students with a higher quality learning environment, effective teaching and research programmes and qualifications that will be recognized by employers, other higher learning education institutions, professional bodies and the general public. This innovative thinking facilitated the evolution of the UTT.

2.2. The Evolution of the University of Trinidad and Tobago

In 2004, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) established a national university, the UTT to keep pace with the rapidly changing and growing needs of industry. The UTT was also created to ensure that quality higher learning was within reach of the widest possible constituency (Self-Study Report, 2017). It was believed that the integration of several existing institutions of higher learning into one entity would be the most effective approach to bring about this change. In September 2004, the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology (TTIT) in Point Lisas, established in 2001, was the first to be subsumed under the banner of the UTT. The genesis of this Point Lisas Campus arose from a strategic decision by the GORTT to create a direct link between education and training to meet the needs of the industrial sector and national development priorities (Self-Study Report, 2017)

This original mandate, which focused on science and technology, gradually expanded and has grown into a multi-campus institution of higher learning, offering a range of programmes in diverse disciplines. When UTT was established, there were 1,656 enrolled students (full-time and part-time), the majority of whom were at the diploma level. By 2009, enrolment had grown to 7,346 and the number of programmes had increased to include 27 undergraduate degree programmes and 38 postgraduate programmes, 12 of which were at the doctoral level. In 2006,

two other institutions, the Valsayn Teachers' College and the Corinth Teachers' College became part of the UTT, now called the Centre for Education Programmes (Self- Study Report, 2017).

2.3. The Centre for Education Programmes University of Trinidad and Tobago

The UTT was given the mandate for Teacher Education by the GORTT through Cabinet Minute 3159 of December 9, 2005. Having accepted the recommendation of the Draft Interim Report of the Working Committee on Teacher Education issued in July 2004, headed by Dr. Lynette Simmons, of which I was a committee member, it was agreed that Teacher Training Colleges at Valsayn and Corinth be transferred to the School for Learning and Cognition University of Trinidad and Tobago (SLCUTT). The purpose of this entity was to train teachers for all levels of the school system to fill vacancies and replace teachers leaving through retirement, migration and resignation. Under this new arrangement, teachers at all levels of the educational system, early childhood, primary and secondary have the opportunity to pursue a four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree in a number of specializations. This programme consisted of general core courses, disciplinary content areas, pedagogy and practical field experience. It was initiated in Trinidad in 2006 with 742 full-time and 175 part-time students. In 2011, SLCUTT was renamed the Centre for Education Programmes University of Trinidad and Tobago (CEPUTT). CEPUTT was given the responsibility for teacher preparation (UTT Validation Document, 2007).

Being a staff member at the UTT from its inception, I was able to be an observer in the transition for teachers' college to university as well as an active participant in some of the decision making processes. I can say that the programme represents a radical shift from the previous model of teacher education whereby persons desirous of teaching at primary level were accepted into the teaching service as assistant teachers, taught in schools for approximately five years before completing a two-year teacher preparation course at the teachers' training college and were

awarded the Teachers' Diploma. One of the disadvantages of this model was that many untrained teachers were placed in classrooms without pedagogical knowledge and skills. Recognizing this, the Ministry of Education took the decision to require pre-service training for all new teachers at both primary and secondary level. In addition to recognizing the importance of the primary level as part of the foundation on which all other levels of education are built, the Ministry also took the decision to increase the qualifications for primary teachers from a two year Diploma to a four year degree. The two centers for education were already in existence in Trinidad but it was not until five years later that the CEPUTT was established in Tobago when I became a part-time instructor there.

2.4. The Beginning of the CEPUTT Tobago Campus

The Bachelors in Education programme began in Tobago in October 2011 with an intake of 48 part-time students all of whom I instructed. For the very first time in the history of teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago, the student teachers from Tobago were able to stay on their island to pursue their teacher preparation programme at the UTT. The UTT initially shared space in the Metal Industries Company (MIC) building in the Canaan Bon Accord district for one year. After this, it was officially launched at the education campus in Scarborough on 18th January 2013. The Trinidad campuses offer both full-time and part-time B.Ed. programmes, with staff to facilitate both. There are also specialized programmes geared towards preparing students for secondary school teaching. In Tobago, however, there is only a part-time B.Ed. programme, for primary school teachers. The majority of students at the Tobago Campus are pre-service who are at their workplaces during the day and then attend classes on evenings between the hours of 5.00 – 8.00 pm. This is a similar practice for the Tobago instructors responsible for the delivery of content courses.

2.5. Instructors at the Tobago Campus

When the Tobago Campus started in 2011, there was a need for instructors to facilitate the teaching of courses offered during the first term. These personnel were sourced from Tobago, along with a Programme Coordinator, Dr. Verleen Lewis Bobb, who was responsible for the general administration of the campus. By the second term, there was further need for instructors to teach other courses. Given the difficulty of finding additional instructors from Tobago at that time, some had to be sourced from Trinidad. I took up the challenge as an instructor for Tobago being asked to do so by the then coordinator. As the programme grew, term after term and year after year, more instructors came from Trinidad to Tobago to deliver courses to the Tobago students. Presently, I am the only full-time person along with eleven part-time instructors. There is still a dire need for Trinidad instructors in Tobago and, on an average four or five instructors visit Tobago every week to engage in content course delivery, some of whom assist in practicum supervision.

The radical shift from the model of teacher education alluded to earlier, brought with it major changes to the teacher preparation programme. With the evolution of the CEPUTT, there was a complete switch in the courses offered, particularly the teaching practice programme of which I was familiar with for the past years at the training college. In fact, the teaching practice programme used at the teachers' college was referred to as 'the old dispensation' and this was quickly replaced with the term 'new dispensation' for the practicum. I refer to this new dispensation as the restructuring of the practicum. After the transition to the UTT in 2006, the teachers' college teaching practice programme continued to be used for a short period before a new practicum committee was appointed to reconstruct that practicum programme. Two main general objectives guided this process; (1) to critically examine practical experiences and learning

of student teachers and (2) to develop and deepen practical knowledge of teaching (UTT Validation Document, 2007, p.10). This led to a newly restructured practicum programme.

2.6. Restructured Practicum Programme

The practicum course was designed to help prospective teachers build a bridge between the practical experiences and their theoretical understandings. This bridging developed during the Foundations, Practicum and Pedagogy courses in the B.Ed. programme. This course was also designed to engage prospective teachers in planning, decision making, teaching and evaluating the quality of their instruction to pupils in real-life classrooms (Practicum Course Outline, 2014). The learning outcomes for the programme state that prospective teachers will develop critical understandings related to unit planning and lesson planning, devise appropriate strategies and materials to implement effective teaching in classrooms and make linkages between theory and practice of teaching and learning in authentic classroom environments. Other significant learning outcomes include application of the knowledge of pedagogical skills of assessment; classroom management and student-centered pedagogy to design appropriate plans for instruction; developing their own communication and interpersonal skills; engaging in relevant educational research; and building communities of learners who engage in critical self-reflection to improve their professional practice. These objectives are to be achieved through “*incremental professional development*” of prospective teachers. (Practicum Handbook, 2014, p.5).

In September 2008, an eight-course practicum programme was implemented. It was designed to provide the prospective teacher with practical experiences of teaching to help them develop and deepen their practical knowledge and “*wisdom of practice*” (Schulman, 1987; Flores and Day, 2006). In the first year, students reflect on reasons for becoming teachers and they explore their past experiences of teaching (in-service teachers) and learning. This course is titled PRAC

1001. In a subsequent course, (PRAC1002) their perception of the various roles and responsibilities of teachers are examined. There are also field observations for two days where prospective teachers make sense of the organization of schools and explore the roles of principals, cooperating teachers and parents. In the second year, another course (PRAC 2001) focuses is on in-house planning and teaching. Prospective teachers plan, execute and evaluate lessons for diverse classrooms with peers and practicum advisors and develop their own communication and interpersonal skills. They also engage in relevant educational research, with practicum instructors guiding the sessions. There are also field-teaching visits (PRAC 2002) where students discuss classroom strategies, plan and deliver lessons (in pairs or trios) in real-life classrooms in various schools and reflect upon cooperating teachers' behaviours and interactions in their respective classes. This is done on three consecutive Mondays in semester two of their second year.

During the third year (PRAC 3001), prospective teachers engage in field teaching for five consecutive days, planning lessons and teaching in pairs. They also prepare for individual teaching in the following semester for a two week block period (PRAC 3002), where they explore a range of innovative teaching strategies and make links between their teaching and the understanding of students. The final year involves individual teaching for a three-week block period (PRAC 4001) where student teachers deepen their field experience in preparation for the final practice. The final practice (PRAC 4002) involves individuals in actual classrooms over a five week block period. Student teachers plan lessons using a variety of instructional strategies, methods and assessment strategies in their classes. For each of the practicum courses where prospective teachers go into the field on field placements (PRAC 1002, PRAC 2002, PRAC 3001, PRAC 3002, PRAC 4001 and PRAC 4002), they are attached to a school with a cooperating teacher who is asked to accommodate a student teacher. In doing so, cooperating teachers are expected to perform the role

of mentor, guiding and advising these student teachers in their classes. From the very first field placement (PRAC 1002), student teachers are required to meet with and observe cooperating teachers in action and reflect upon their behaviours and interactions in their respective classes, clearly recognizing the importance of the “*cooperating teacher as model educator*” (Glenn, 2006, p. 86).

Practicum in Context

The overall aims of the practicum programme are to provide student teachers with practical experiences of teaching so that they can develop and deepen their understanding of the practical circumstances in which teachers work (personal practical knowledge), their knowledge gained from classroom situations and the tasks of teaching (classroom knowledge), their knowledge of how to teach specific matter (pedagogical content knowledge) and to provide opportunities to link their theoretical understandings of teaching with their practical experiences of teaching and learning in an authentic environment (Practicum Handbook, p. 4-5). According to Darling-Hammond (2009, p.40):

Often, the clinical side of teacher education has been fairly haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements with little guidance about what happens in them and little connection to university work.

This statement summarizes some of the challenges that are experienced in the authentic environments (cooperating teachers’ classrooms) in which student teachers do their practicum.

The Selection of Cooperating Teachers in Tobago

The placement of student teachers in schools in Tobago is one of my responsibilities in the practicum. Due to the severe constraints of work overload experienced, contacting schools for practice is done via telephone. On many occasions, an administrative assistant assists in this

process. Once the school accepts student teachers, the prevailing practice is that the principals are solely responsible for selecting cooperating teachers to accommodate the student teachers. On few occasions, however, student teachers collaborate with principals on their field orientation visit in deciding which class they prefer. This preference is not always met. As a result of this method of accessing schools for practicum and the inability of the university supervisors to meet directly with school principals regarding the use of their schools and selection of cooperating teachers for practicum, schools are selected mainly because of availability or geographical location. Student teachers are sometimes *blindly* sent to cooperating teachers with little teaching experience.

The Dichotomy in Pedagogical Practices

The UTT provides student teachers with the theoretical aspects of the practicum course after which student teachers enter classrooms to practice. Many of the cooperating teachers have been trained for some time either at the teachers' college or at a university. UTT's Validation Document (2007) states that student teachers are required to critically explore contemporary, student-centered pedagogical theories and methodologies in the classroom environment. Whether cooperating teachers are up to date with these practices and exemplify the theories taught at the university is questionable. Added to that, classroom teachers may be too busy completing the primary school syllabus and maintain the traditional teacher-centered methods. On the other hand, the student teacher is prepared by the university to promote student-centered learning techniques. The contradiction between what is required by UTT and what the school is offering is cause for conflict with the student teacher.

Social Development

Practicum is not only limited to the preparation and execution of lessons. Field experiences are important occasions for student learning rather than merely times for teacher candidates to demonstrate or apply things (Zeichner, 1996). The Practicum Handbook (2014) states that it is the aim of the UTT to produce effective teachers who are responsive to issues of diversity, special needs, democracy, equity and social justice. While it is the responsibility of UTT to prepare the student teachers for effective teaching, it is only in an authentic setting where this could be accomplished and where democracy and equity and social justice can be demonstrated. The question is whether the cooperating teachers are prepared to do more than just allow the student teacher to teach lessons.

These are only some of the concerns with the practicum. The cooperating teacher is at the centre of these matters regarding the practicum context. They are not obligated to engage in any sort of student accommodation or supervision, they do so on their own volition. These challenges with the practicum could impact on prospective teachers' learning. Numerous studies have demonstrated obstacles to student teacher learning that are associated with the traditional loosely planned and monitored model of field experiences (Fieman-Nemser and Buchmann, 1985; Griffin, 1983; Stones and Morris, 1977; Zeichner, 1996). When the practicum is carefully coordinated, that is, student teachers carefully mentored, their workload well measured and pedagogical orientations in selected schools and teacher education institutions are well aligned, trainee teachers are better able to accomplish their goals through their teacher training (Zeichner and Conklin, 2005). A well designed practicum is needed to ensure that teacher training institutions produce high quality teachers (Zeichner, 2010; Sabar, 2004).

2.7. Brief History of Tobago and the Primary Schools

Tobago is situated off the north-east coast of Trinidad, with a distance of 45 kilometers separating the two islands. Tobago is about 300 square kilometres in area and has a population of approximately 62,000 persons. Possession of Tobago has been fought over by numerous countries since 1498 and the island changed hands 31 times before it was finally ceded to the British in 1814. This contributes to Tobago having its own identity and dialect that are quite different from Trinidad. There are 36 public primary schools in Tobago (see appendix 1) consisting of 12 Government Primary, 11 Anglican Primary, 4 Seventh Day Adventist Primary, 6 Methodist Primary, 2 Roman Catholic Primary and 1 Pentecostal Primary. These are the placement schools where student teachers to do their field teaching practice. There are roughly 870 primary school teachers, with 85% of them holding Bachelor of Education degrees. The teachers in Tobago have recently begun to adopt the role of cooperating teachers for the UTT's practicum. Before 2011, student teachers would have done their practicum with cooperating teachers in schools in Trinidad. I believe that these cooperating teachers in Tobago, can play a significant role in student teacher development, given the fact that student teachers universally regard the practicum as the most important component of their degree programme and the cooperating teacher as critical to their success in that degree (Weis and Weis, 2001; Kirk, Macdonald and O'Sullivan, 2006). Therefore, cooperating teachers' participation in teacher education is of great importance (Keogh, Dole and Hudson, 2006).

The research literature has a vast amount of evidence regarding the roles of the cooperating teacher and how they are perceived by the student teachers and the cooperating teachers themselves. Research pertaining specifically to the role of the cooperating teachers as perceived by practicum advisors is not as extensive. In the next chapter, I will attempt to explore a review

of the literature pertaining to the role of the cooperating teacher and the perceptions of these roles by those directly involved in the practicum.

Conclusion

This chapter provided the context and background of the study. It traced the history of teacher education from 1823 to present. It discussed the support given to teacher training and the challenges experienced in the process. Many of the attempts at teacher training were short-lived because of dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the programme by directors like Lord Harris, Patrick Keenan and Marriott-Mayhew. The establishment of three training colleges aimed at reducing the vast number of untrained teachers was reviewed. The evolution and main focus of the UTT were discussed leading to the establishment of the CEPUTT both in Trinidad and in Tobago. Staffing at the Tobago campus was briefly discussed explaining the need for instructors to still shuttle between Trinidad and Tobago. An outline of the restructured practicum programme was presented along with some of the concerns regarding the selection of cooperating teachers and the dichotomy in pedagogical practices in the practicum context. A brief history of Tobago was given along with information about their primary schools. The next chapter will explore a review of the literature relating to this research.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Introduction

This study has three main purposes. The first is to examine perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher by the triad members, which are the cooperating teacher, the student teacher and the university's practicum advisor. The second is to determine their needs in guiding student teachers and thirdly to consider how the perceptions of the triad members can influence the effectiveness of the practicum programme. Although the primary focus of this study is on the cooperating teacher, the literature review will also include research on the practicum in the student teacher learning process. There is a considerable collection of literature on current trends in teacher training in various countries worldwide. In Trinidad and Tobago, our system of teacher training remains very traditional. The intention in this section is not only to discuss the reformed systems of student teacher training in effect elsewhere but to review the range of past practices regarding the cooperating teachers as it relates to Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore experiences such as selection of schools and cooperating teachers, student teacher placement, the role of the cooperating teacher and the like will be discussed. The reviewed literature is directly related to many of the idiosyncrasies experienced by the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors and informs the study.

This chapter begins with a discussion on teacher training systems in Trinidad and Tobago and some leading countries of the world. It then examines the literature that informs my research. The chapter will be presented as follows:

Section 3.1. This section briefly discusses teacher training systems internationally

Section 3.2. Practicum

This section begins with a discussion on the importance of practicum and student teachers' learning during the practicum.

Section 3.3. The Dimensions of a Cooperating Teacher

This section will discuss characteristics of an effective cooperating teacher, the selection and preparation of cooperating teachers, cooperating teacher and student teacher development, the role of the cooperating teacher in teacher education and the state of cooperating teacher training.

Section 3.4. Perceptions of the Role of the Cooperating Teacher

This section addresses cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles, student teachers' perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher and practicum advisors' perceptions of the role of the cooperating. The chapter concludes with a summary.

3.1. Teacher Training Systems: International Perspectives

As discussed in chapter 2, the road to teacher education and teacher training in Trinidad and Tobago has been long and challenging. Prior to UTT, teacher training was done mainly in the two Teachers' colleges, the Valsayn Teachers' College and Corinth Teachers' College. Both provided a two-year programme of teacher education for primary school teachers. A range of institutions currently offer teacher education programmes to primary school teachers. The Centre for Education University of Trinidad and Tobago is the main institution offering professional preparation for primary school teachers. Others include the University of the West Indies (UWI), The UWI School of Business and Applied Studies collaborating with the University of New Brunswick and Royal Bank of Canada (UWI ROYTEC) and the University of Southern Caribbean

(USC), which offer both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Primary Education for teachers. These institutions all engage in providing theoretical courses for prospective student teachers and incorporate field experiences through school teaching practice with a cooperating teacher aimed at bridging theory with practice. This practice period lasts for no more than 12 weeks, broken into variable time periods, lasting from a few days in the first practice to five weeks in the final. The teaching practice is the core of the preparation programme, which the student teacher must pass in order to be accredited by the Ministry of Education as a bona fide teacher.

Across the English speaking Caribbean (Caribbean Community or CARICOM), programmes of initial professional education for teachers have been in transformation in accordance with the Hemispheric Project (2005). In a recent draft report on The Eastern Caribbean Countries, Mark and Murphy (2016) report that teacher training has been transferred to the Community College. In these countries professional training was not required for recruitment, so that most students in those programmes are already in service, requiring them to now seek to reduce the backlog of untrained teachers. The UWI Associate Degree in Education is now the entry level qualification for teaching.

With regard to the practicum, Mark and Murphy (2016) report that new recruits into teaching have a mandatory induction programme in their first year, beginning with a workshop in the week before they take up their duties. During the first year of teaching they are mentored in-house and supervised by Education Officers of the Ministry of Education.

Many leading nations engaging in initial teacher training education have become convinced that effective teaching is one of the most important school-related factors in student achievement (OECD, 2011). Thus, teacher preparation and development are key building blocks in developing effective teachers (Darling- Hammond, 2017). Although reports and analyses of teacher training

programmes have been critical of teachers in the United States (Chaltain, 2012 and Samsa, 2013), and a “*war on teachers*” has been declared in England (MacBeath, 2012), nations like England, Finland and Singapore who have strong beliefs about teaching as a profession continue to treat teachers as professionals who must acquire the knowledge to increase student learning opportunities (Darling- Hammond, 2017).

In England, there are a number of routes into teaching and the proportion of newly qualified teachers delivered via each route also varies (Gorard, 2017). Previously, one of the most utilized routes to achieving qualified teacher status was obtaining qualification first, and subsequently entering the profession, where they were mentored to become professional teachers. These were typically the undergraduate programmes in Education and the post graduate PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) courses (Gorard et al., 2006). According to Gorard (2017) this route has been reversed to some extent as employment in schools is sought first and qualifications are acquired later, such as the Teach First and the Employment-Based Initial Teacher Training (EBITTs). However, it must be noted that although the Teach First may be seen as a way forward to teacher preparation and development in England, this programme was already existing in Trinidad and Tobago prior to 1962, and came to an end soon after the establishment of the UTT in 2006.

Darling-Hammond (2017) finds that Finland’s approach to a high quality education system has relied on forming a cutting-edge profession of teaching where it is mandatory for teachers to hold a Master’s degree. This qualification contains a heavy emphasis on strong subject matter, pedagogical preparation and integrates research and practice. This system has placed Finland as a twenty-first- century leader with a current literacy rate of 96%. Likewise, Singapore has shifted from “*just getting teachers to providing teachers of quality*” (Darling-Hammond, 2017, p.292).

This change has fuelled changes in recruitment, preparation and status of professional development of teachers. As in Finland, admission requirements into teacher preparation include strong academic ability. Teacher preparation occurs primarily at the graduate level and preparation is well designed and offered only by the National Institute of Education. This training is followed by strong induction and professional development. Singapore selects its best teachers to become cooperating teachers and mentors in teacher preparation and the induction process. Thus, the process of connecting theory and practice is strengthened. All these countries engage in a highly defined system of mentoring where candidates spend considerable time with mentors who are highly qualified and trained.

3.2. Practicum

The Importance of Practicum in Teacher Education

There is agreement in the research literature that the practicum is considered as one of the most critical components of teacher preparation with the greatest impact on teacher quality (Graham, 2006; Zeichner, 2010). Graham (2006) describes it as an important rite of passage in a teacher's career while Tillema (2007) calls it the core of teacher education programmes. Teaching practicum is integral to trainee teachers' professional development, and shapes belief and thinking about teaching (Mtika, 2011). Questions have been raised however, regarding the value of developing professional thinking from practicum (Mtika and Gates, 2010; Zeichner, 2010). For example, there is need to focus attention on the predicament that trainee teachers are faced with as a result of the nature of the practicum arrangements and the placement in schools (Du Plessis, Marais, van Schalkwyk and Weeks, 2010). The system of placement tends to be ad hoc and not tailored to the requirements of the student teacher.

During pre-service teacher education, student teachers learn practices that will enable them to construct practical knowledge and learning (Meijer, de Graaf and Meirnk, 2011). With the knowledge of teaching emerging from field practice, student teaching provides prospective teachers with the opportunity to construct their own understanding based on the practical dilemmas they encounter (Cuenca, 2010). Knowledge of teaching is different from knowledge about teaching. Whereas it might be possible to learn about teaching in theoretical courses, the professional content knowledge of teaching can only be acquired by active engagement in teaching (Shulman, 1987).

The practicum does not only serve as a bridge between theory and practice in learning to teach but it is the context in which student teachers develop a personal teaching competence. There are multiple terms that refer to practicum. For example teaching practice in Trinidad and Tobago is referred to as field experience (Practicum Handbook, 2014), induction (Collinson, Kozina, Lin, Ling, Matheson, Newcornbe and Zogla, 2009), internship (Darling- Hammond (2005). Although there is some variation internationally, the practicum is generally regarded as one where a pre-service teacher works with a more experienced mentor (Giannakaki, Hobson & Malderez, 2011; Le Cornu, 2012; Mutlu, 2014). Whatever the terminology used, practicum plays an important role in the professional development of the student teacher for several reasons. The most critical among these is that it “*shapes teacher candidates’ understanding of themselves as professionals*” (Peralta and Burns, 2012, p.133), provides student teachers the “*opportunity to explore their developing teacher identities*” (Roth-Sitko, Everett, Marnella and D’Angelo, 2015, p. 579) and provides the opportunity for pre-service teachers to make links between theory and practice (Turner, 2011; Zeichner, 2012). However, conflicting views about the purpose of the practicum and about

learning how to teach are underlying issues that impact on student teachers causing stress and compromising their learning (Trevethan (2017).

Student Teacher Learning During Practicum

There are several studies (Borko, 2004; Endedijk, Vermunt, Brekelmans and Verloop, 2008; Korthagen, 2010; Vermunt and Endedijk, 2011) that focus on the analysis of student teacher learning during teacher education. According to Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, (2005) and Grossman (2007), previous studies have not focused adequately on student teachers' learning patterns. Nevertheless, there are some studies that have shown that regardless of the amount of preparation that is done at the university, student teachers still face huge challenges during the practicum. For example, Caires and Almeida (2007) in Portugal and Liston, Whitcomb and Borko (2006) in North America recounted that one of the major trials that student teachers reported was the need to perform according to what was learnt at the university, which distracted them from reasoning about teaching based on their own experiences. Another study by McCormack and West (2006) in Australia reported challenges posed by weak relationships between the coursework done at the university and the practicum. This included adjusting into the school culture and developing their own effective approaches to teaching and supervision.

Learning to teach through practicum experiences is regarded as a highly complex process in which multiple influences, dilemmas and tensions emerge (Gan, 2013). This field experience is key to professional learning because student teachers are given the opportunity to experience authentic classroom situations where they learn various teaching strategies and techniques (Chien, 2014). This practicum experience is highly valued by student teachers (Pekkanli, 2011) because they get the opportunity to learn about teaching. Dellicarpini (2009) found that they learnt the skill of planning and the ability to make instructional decisions. Even though practicing teachers deem

field experiences as the most “*highly valued component of their preparation*” these clinical practices have also been characterized as the most “*ad hoc part of teacher education*” (NCATE, 2010, p. 4).

Another issue that has been explored regarding student teacher learning in practicum is the contribution of cooperating teachers to their learning. Some studies (Atay, 2007; Hsu, 2005) have reported that cooperating teachers effectively facilitate student teachers learning. Darling-Hammond (2006a) found that teacher education programmes which focused on well-structured collaboration between student teachers and cooperating teachers had a powerful impact on student teacher development. On the other hand, where collaboration is not well structured and cooperating teachers were not prepared for their roles, there is the possibility of non-productive student teacher learning, resulting in a negative practicum experience (Farrell, 2008; Rajuaan, Beijaard and Verloop, 2008).

There is also some evidence that student teachers benefit from the kinds of pedagogical knowledge that promotes active learning and provides constructive feedback and emotional support (Soini, Pietarinen, Toom and Pyhalto, 2014). Butler and Cuenca (2012) explain that a key component for pre-service teacher learning during the teaching experience is the guidance and cooperation received from mentor teachers. These mentors and supervisors who generally give student teachers guidance include the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. The three individuals constitute what is referred to as the teaching triad members (Lu, 2008). Effective communication and collaboration between the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor can significantly impact on the student teacher’s learning experience (Nolan and Hoover, 2008). Nolan and Hoover also believe that rapport among those in the triad can influence student teachers attitudes and self-direction.

3.3 The Dimensions of the Cooperating Teacher

Characteristics of an Effective Cooperating Teacher

According to Melder (2014):

Literature defining the qualities of a good cooperating teacher is derived primarily from qualitative studies of student teachers' satisfaction with their experience, not from studies of cooperating teachers' effectiveness as instructors (p.31).

Amrano and Campbell (2016) identified notions on the qualities of cooperating teachers. Among them they propose that effective cooperating teachers possess knowledge of educational theory and practice, understand the importance of context in education and be able to critically reflect on teaching practice. Hoff (2010) in her study done in California involving cooperating teacher selection criteria, found that with respect to the cooperating teachers' dispositions they should be good managers, have positive attitudes and whose teaching strategies reflect curricular activities and aligned with a technical view of teaching.

In a study done in Illinois by Killan and Wilkins (2009), one of the most noted characteristics of highly effective cooperating teachers was supervisory effectiveness. The participants thought that the most powerful association for effectiveness was a graduate level of preparation in supervision, holding a degree in teacher leadership, skills on systematic observation and feedback and conferencing skills. The study also highlighted three attributes for the cooperating teacher to be effective; more than five years of experience, past and multiple experiences in supervising student teachers and close collaboration with university supervisors. A model of cooperating teacher effectiveness presented by Robert (2006) was summed up into four major categories; teaching/instruction, professionalism, relationship and personal characteristics.

Based on Robert's model, Epps (2010) explored perceptions of cooperating teachers and student teachers on the characteristics of an effective cooperating teacher. The study showed a lack of alignment in their perceptions. Student teachers thought that the construct of teaching/ instruction was the most important quality of an effective cooperating teacher. Relationship with the cooperating teacher was not an important characteristic for them. In contrast, the cooperating teachers did not perceive the construct of teaching/instruction to be important. Rather, importance was placed on factors supported by personal characteristics. They believed that characteristics of an effective cooperating teacher were dependability, reliability, respect and cooperation. Epps (2010) and Johnston (2010) remind us that major differences in perceptions of the student teacher and the cooperating teacher can lead to frustration during the student teacher experience.

The Selection and Preparation of Cooperating Teachers

Student teachers receive benefits from cooperating teachers who provide both instructional guidance and opportunities to engage in independent teaching (Hamman, Fives and Olivarez, 2006; Woullard and Coats, 2004). Johnston (2010) also documents the consequences of a poor match between a student teacher and cooperating teacher. In his study done at a Scottish University on problematic relations with host teachers on school placement, findings suggest that the kind of relations that student teachers are able to forge in placement with professional colleagues significantly affects their capacity for professional growth. The participants experienced relationship difficulties such as vulnerability, conflicting teaching philosophies negotiating control and negative feedback.

Another major concern regarding the selection of cooperating teachers is the disregard for selecting those who are trained to sanction and legitimize student teachers' work (Darling-Hammond and Hammerness, 2002; Laboskey and Richert, 2002; NCTQ, 2011). The ability of the

classroom teacher to function in the role of mentor or cooperating teacher is inherent to the success of field experiences (Bullough, 2005; Korth and Baum, 2011; Korthagen, 2010; Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith and Erickson, 2005; Zeichner, 2010). Generally, teacher experience and teacher education levels are seen as important criteria in selecting cooperating teachers (Melder, 2014). Requirements for selection of cooperating teachers often lacked specificity in defining or articulating set criteria and institutions may only comply with some requirements that are easily measured, such as teaching experience and teacher education (NCTQ, 2011).

While many institutions set criteria for the selection of cooperating teachers, it can be argued that they lack clear, rigorous criteria either on paper or in practice (NCTQ, 2011). Pavlini (2014) in her study of the effectiveness of the selection of cooperating teachers revealed several important traits. Among them are commitment to professional development and continuous learning, enthusiasm for teaching and several years of experience. Hamilton (2010) revealed that there is a lack of standardization in selection criteria for cooperating teachers. There is a need for development of criteria based on training, content and pedagogical knowledge, mentoring skills and exemplary teaching skills. Hoff (2010) also looked at ideal criteria for selecting cooperating teachers. He found that university personnel showed preference to those whose beliefs about teaching and learning were aligned with the philosophies of the teacher education faculty and the programme. Effective classroom teachers do not automatically become effective cooperating teachers or mentors. Experts (Korthagen, Loughran and Lunenberg, 2005; Shagrir, 2010) have warned that demonstrating good classroom teaching practices does not necessarily mean that a classroom teacher has skills and knowledge to mentor a student teacher. Zeichner (2010) notes that people who engage in the supervision of candidates are not necessarily aware of how to *“support teacher learning and its transfer to the early years of teaching in the context of a*

university-based teacher education program” (p. 90). To prepare teachers for the 21st century, teacher education must develop programmes that are fully grounded in clinical practice, interwoven with academic content and professional courses (NCATE, 2010).

For cooperating teachers to become highly qualified, they must develop specialized mentoring skills (Wang and Odell, 2002; Zeichner, 2010) along with the foundational abilities of building trust, establishing rapport, effectively communicating, and providing critical feedback to student teachers (Korth & Baum, 2011; NCATE, 2010). There is evidence that illustrates limitations at the university level in providing the professional development for cooperating teachers with respect to the implementation of a more active conception of mentoring (Carroll, 2007; Margolis, 2007). Research on the preparation of cooperating teachers in professional development revealed that only 55% of the participants had some type of professional development training (Hall, Draper, Smith and Bullough, 2008). In their study, Clarke, Triggs and Nielsen (2014) found that “*cooperating teachers lack specific training to enable high quality engagement and developmentally progressive support for student teachers*” (p. 49).

According to Spencer (2007) and Zimpher and Sherril (1996), professional development provided for teachers prior to assuming the role of a cooperating teacher is usually restricted. It boils down to the provision of a cooperating teachers’ handbook and the offer to attend an orientation meeting, which focuses mainly on expectations of the student teacher as well as their management of administrative tasks. Valencia, Martin, Place and Grossman (2009) showed that inadequate professional preparation for the role of cooperating teachers and lack of training affects supervisory skills when working with student teachers. Melder (2014) also indicated the need for improved preparation of cooperating teachers in regard to modelling the use of theory and research during student teaching practicum. She contends that cooperating teachers need to be trained to

move beyond the day-to-day supervision of teaching to a deeper analysis of links between pedagogy and theory, which could improve student teachers' understanding and application of theory in their teaching. Furthermore, a study done in Auburn by Russell and Russell (2011) participants recommend that cooperating teachers receive mandatory training in preparation for their duties.

Handcock (2013, p. 215) states that *“an abundance of research exists to address the needs of student teachers, but research has not always addressed the needs of cooperating teachers”*. In her study done in San Francisco on the perceptions of support needed by cooperating teachers to mentor student teachers, it was revealed that there should be improved timing, giving cooperating teachers ample time to prepare for placements of student teachers. Participants also thought that there should be improved communication with university supervisors. Although Handcock's study was related to secondary cooperating teachers these findings will be applicable to the primary sector. Hamilton (2010), in investigating cooperating teachers' needs and training as mentors and supervisors in Texas, concluded that university classes needed to bring cooperating teachers and their student teachers together to assist in the ease of role execution. The participants also suggested training and support for them if they are to have a positive impact on student teachers. Hamilton's study involving ten cooperating teachers found five of them suggesting the need for professional development to improve their qualities as mentors. The participants believed that responsibilities of the cooperating teacher were to reflect encourage and support, give feedback, model practice and procedures and observe and evaluate student teachers. Regarding the needs of the cooperating teachers some suggestions were, more university engagement to improve relationships between the university and cooperating teacher and pre-screening and selection of cooperating teacher and student teacher partners. They also believed that the university should

provide additional information to prepare them for their role in mentoring student teacher candidates. It should be noted that although research has established the need for professional development for cooperating teachers, studies do not provide adequate information about which specific areas of professional development would provide the most benefit (Hamilton, 2010).

The Role of the Cooperating Teacher in Student Teacher Development

The cooperating teachers, as indicated by researchers such as Grimmer and Ratzlaff (1987) and Hamman et al. (2006), are expected to help the student teachers adjust to the host school, allow them to access all teaching resource materials as well as discuss planning and evaluating various learning experiences. They are also called upon to engage them in conferencing regarding their teaching performance and evaluate their progress and development by giving regular feedback, going well beyond just classroom pedagogical practices. Belton, Woods, Dunning and Meegan (2010) in their study in Ireland regarding the cooperating teachers' role found that they were to boost the moral and confidence of the student teacher, provide constructive feedback, allow student teachers to observe them then take classes on their own and guide the student teacher rather than tell them what to do. Clarke et al. (2014) drawing on the notion of categories of participation by Brodie, Cowling and Nissen (2009) developed eleven different ways that cooperating teachers participate in teacher education. I will use five of them to guide this literature review. These are Advocates of the Practical, Modellers of Practice, Conveners of Relation, Agents of Socialization and Providers of Feedback.

Advocates of the Practical

As supporters of the practicum, cooperating teachers excel at providing first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day workings of the classroom, a dimension which is important to successful classroom practice (Clarke et al., 2014). The person who provides that first-hand knowledge to the student teacher is actually engaging in mentoring. Mentoring is a very practical undertaking by the cooperating teacher (Seperson and Joyce, 1973) where they carefully guide student teachers in practicalities of the classroom (Beck and Kosnik, 2000; Rajuan, Beijaard & Verloop, 2007). Practicalities are not confined to just the lesson delivery but everything that occurs in the classroom. Edwards and Protheroe (2004) examined the self-reported contributions of mentors to student teacher development. The cooperating teachers described hands-on experiences of daily practice as one of their main contributions. According to McDonald, Kazemi, & Kavanagh (2013), the cooperating teacher is an experienced practitioner who provides student teachers with the opportunity to work with “real students in real classrooms” (p.397). Therefore, they can be seen as advocates of the practical who engage in mentoring.

There is no consensus on the definition of mentoring in teacher education because it includes a variety of contexts including, pre-service teacher education, in-service teacher education and distance teacher education (Lai, 2010). Mentors in this study refer to those cooperating teachers who oversee pre-service teachers who spend short periods of time [two days to five weeks] in their classroom as mentioned in Chapter 2. There is also school-based pre-service teacher education where mentoring refers to supervision of student teachers by an experienced teacher for longer teaching blocks of practice in a public school (Hamel and Jaasko-Fisher, 2011). Burg (2010) suggests that context shapes mentoring roles and that the aim of mentoring changes with each mentoring context based on the needs of the mentor and the protégé.

Most definitions describe mentoring as a hierarchical relationship in which the mentor is more experienced than the mentee, or that the mentor has or can provide knowledge and skills satisfying the wants and needs of the mentee (Aladejana & Ehindero, 2006; Fowler & O' Gorman, 2005, Mc Cormack & West, 2006). Bird (2012) simply describes mentoring as a method to assist student teachers as they are introduced to the realities of the classroom. On the other hand, there are some robust definitions of mentoring that captures the roles of mentors. For example, Smith (2007) defines mentoring as “*a particular mode of learning wherein the mentor not only supports the mentee, but also challenges them productively so that progress is made*” (p.277). Fairbanks, Freedman and Kahn (2000, p. 103) define mentoring in teacher education as “*complex social interactions that mentor teachers and student teachers construct and negotiate for a variety of professional purposes and in response to the contextual factors they encounter*” (p.103). All reviewed definitions strongly allude to some type of relationship and engagement but are rarely defined in detail (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010). Kwan & Lopez (2005) view mentoring as “*both a relationship and a process*” (p.276). The literature suggests that although mentoring is complex, it is mutually beneficial to both mentors and mentees (Hall et al., 2008; Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh and Wilss, 2008), and their roles are often described in non-specific terms. For example, terms like guide, advisor, counsellor, instructor, sharer, supporter and encourager are all commonly used to describe the mentor's role (Bray & Nettleton, 2006; Sundli. 2007; Hall, et al., 2008). One of the most featured benefits of mentoring which feature in research findings (Bullough, 2005; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Lindgren, 2005; Marable & Raimondi, 2007) relate to the provision of emotional and psychological support, which boosts the confidence of beginner teachers. As a result, they are able to put difficult experiences into perspective, increasing their morale and job satisfaction.

I concur that it is difficult to agree on any one definition for mentoring because mentoring takes place in different contexts and has varied purposes which will determine the type of mentoring programme needed. As Stanulis and Ames (2009) maintain “*preparing mentors can differ based on the induction purposes and the context in which the mentors develop their practice*” (p.1). Having been a cooperating teacher on numerous occasions during my years of teaching, I played the role of parent, advisor, counsellor, supporter, listener, empathiser, resource person and patient friend. Engaging in mentoring and supervision of my student teachers was all in an effort for the student teacher to acquire “*an explicit view of good teaching*” to have “*an understanding of teacher learning*” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 18) and for them to become professionally developed teachers. At the CEPUTT there is a tendency for practicum advisors and student teachers to use the word mentoring and supervision interchangeably. However, there are subtle differences between them as I go on to discuss.

Mentoring and Supervision

The roles of supervisor and mentor frequently overlap within organizations and this can result in uncertainty in roles when responsibilities are not well articulated. Many supervisors consider themselves to be mentors (Hicks, Buckingham and Law, 2010). Nevertheless, because of the possibilities of mixed messages, it is essential for those in a supervisor-mentor relationships to understand clearly the difference between the two concepts and which role is to be enacted at any given time. The differences between mentoring and supervision are discussed by Bray & Nettleton (2006). They argue that supervising involves “*the roles of teacher, boss, assessor, counsellor and expert*”, whereas mentoring involves “*assisting, befriending, guiding, advising and counselling*” (p.849). Hudson and Millwater (2006) refer to supervision as having the main purpose of assessment performance, whereas mentoring is about building trust within a relationship.

He (2010), says that the student teacher needs significant guidance in both pedagogical and content knowledge throughout the mentoring process. The mentoring experience is one of the primary factors that determine the success of the first-year or beginning teacher's experience. Mentors engage in a process of reflecting on the evidence of their teaching leading to positive effects on the student teachers' practice and self-confidence (Darling-Hammond, 2006a). Mentors nurture the development of the mentee through rapport building (Hudson and Millwater, 2008). Zellers, Howard and Barcic (2008) suggested key characteristics of successful mentoring. The best mentors they studied served as sponsors or coaches to guide, protect, teach, challenge, open doors, and provide feedback. They also became role models who demonstrated appropriate behaviours, attitudes, and values, as well as counselors who provided support and advice. *"Despite the highlighted differences between mentoring and supervision, mentors in pre-service teacher education engage in both mentoring and supervisory roles"* (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010, p.44).

Mentor Characteristics

Almost all definitions of mentoring include characteristics like supporter, guide and one who has a good relationship with the student teacher. According to Varney (2009):

Though mentoring definitions vary in the literature, they show a progression over time similar to the evolution of component teaching and include four main components: roles, categories, kinds and behaviours (p. 128).

He continues to say that mentoring has been defined as academic and career support and professional advice and encouragement. Varney (2009) further states that this definition lacks stronger connection to the mentee as a person: a growing, striving, and sometimes struggling human being. *"The 'mentee as a person' is a strong component of Humanistic Mentoring, which recognizes motivational benefits of cultivating personal as well as professional relationships"*

(Varney 2009, p.128). This Humanistic Mentoring is anchored in humanistic psychology, arising out of the work of Maslow (1954), Rogers (1961) and Noddings (1992). This concept of mentoring provides a commitment to a mentee's professional and personal growth, incorporating an understanding and appreciation of the mentee's life, culture and aspirations both inside and outside the classroom. *"Mentoring that impacts educational achievement and technical teaching is necessary, but not sufficient"* for the holistic development of the student teacher (Varney, 2009, p.129). The role of the fellow teacher implementing Humanistic Mentoring is best described by an attitude of genuine caring for the trainee within the developing professional sphere. *"The overarching goal of Humanistic Mentoring is to empower the mentee's present and future educational and professional development through a trusting, caring, relationship"* (Varney, 2009 p.129).

Evans-Andris, Kyle and Carini (2006) also caution against mentoring programmes that focus solely on the emotional and technical concerns of the new teacher. According to Bird, (2012)

If teachers are going to achieve high levels of student performance in their classrooms, they must be sustained with the type of psychological support, instructional assistance, and understanding of educational politics that impacts them in the setting in which they work on a daily basis (p.15).

It is therefore essential that mentors should volunteer for this assignment, rather than being delegated to perform those duties. Bird (2012) also states those who are delegated to mentor a student teacher, especially if they do not commit time to the mentoring relationship are less apt to support the student teacher and less likely to develop professionally as mentors. According to Zachary (2000), motivation drives participation in mentoring relationships and directly affects its quality. Those who hold a deep understanding of why they are doing something are more committed to it. By answering questions like 'Is mentoring for me?' the mentor decides if he is

willing to accept the role as not all persons are capable of or willing to take on this role. If required to do so and are not willing, they would be inadequate or “*incomplete mentors*” (Galbraith and Maslin-Ostrowski, 2000, p. 147)

Cooperating Teachers as Mentors

Although the terms cooperating teachers and mentors are sometimes used interchangeably at the CEPUTT and they share many of the same attributes, there is some distinction between them. Mentoring is the central component of serving as a cooperating teacher (Garies & Grant, 2014). In teacher preparation programmes, a cooperating teacher:

Serves as mentor to a teacher candidate, which requires a foundation of craft-skill and experience in such areas as human growth and development, pedagogical content knowledge and assessment for learning (Garies & Grant, 2014, p.78).

Additionally, they continue to say that a classroom teacher serving as a cooperating should possess knowledge and skills related to the characteristics of the learner [student teacher] stages of teacher development, professional standards of teacher competency and classroom observation techniques. Experience as a classroom teacher is not likely to be adequate to effectively serve as a mentor (Sinclair, Dowson, & Thistleton-Martin 2006; Sykes, Bird & Kennedy, 2011).

Powell (2016, p. 6) states that “*the most effective cooperating teachers understand that they are taking on the significant responsibility of mentoring a new student*”. Moreover, Hobson, Ashby, Maderez and Tomlinson (2009), as well as Wang, Odell and Shwille (2008), find that the placement in the classrooms and in particular the contribution of mentor teachers are crucial for student teachers. Very often, mentor teachers are not trained to help student teachers learn to teach (Hobson et. al., 2009) and are not aware of what is expected from them (Grimmet and Ratzlaff, 1986). They are often provided with little guidance by the teaching institutions in supporting the

development of student teachers and are instead left to “*sink or swim*” with minimal support (Valencia et al., 2009).

Some teacher education institutions provide specific training for cooperating teachers and mentors, which suggests that both roles call for knowledge and skills that classroom teachers may not acquire from work experience only (Ganser, 2002). According to him, “*many teachers serving as mentors today never participated in a formal, organized mentoring program*” (p.380). It is important that cooperating teachers who serve as mentors support student teachers in practising and acquiring knowledge, skills and beliefs that will assist them to teach in ways that are fundamentally different from how they were taught (Borko and Mayfield, 1995; Hammerness, Darling-Hammon, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith and Mc-Donald, 2005). Performing both mentor role and classroom teacher role might be very challenging as noted by Jaspers, Meijer and Wubbles (2014).

Cooperating teachers as mentors are responsible for the development of the well-being of their own pupils and the two responsibilities may very well diverge. It may turn out that the cooperating teacher as mentor may focus on their pupils’ wellbeing rather than the development of student teachers’ learning (Edwards, 1998). Jaspers and his colleagues are doubtful as to how cooperating teachers as mentors perceive these roles. Knowledge about cooperating teachers’ perceptions and experiences of their roles may increase the effectiveness of the mentor cooperating teacher as well as increase their effectiveness in guiding student teachers. In a case study conducted in the Netherlands, Jaspers et al., (2014) explored challenges that mentor teachers perceive when they combine both roles of classroom teacher and mentor in the same classroom. These were: to transfer (or not) responsibility for the class and pupils to the student teacher and to intervene (or not) in classroom procedure (p.106). The mentor teachers felt that being the classroom teacher of

pupils was their primary task, and being a mentor of the student teacher was an aside and additional task.

Koc (2012, p. 821) in his study in Turkey aimed at defining the roles of the cooperating teachers as mentors in a teacher training programme. The findings of the study revealed that cooperating teachers identified the following as their mentoring responsibilities; providing facilitative information to enhance classroom performance, giving constructive feedback on teaching performance, helping student teachers form a professional identity and become aware of their professional development, providing moral support and facilitating socialization of the student teacher. It is evident that cooperating teachers as mentors lend formal support to student teachers. However, a report by Laker, Laker and Lea (2008) on the changing sources of support structures utilized by pre-service teachers in their practicum revealed two main sources; formal and informal mentoring support.

Formal and Informal Mentoring Support

Formal mentoring has been the focus of a substantial amount of research. Some of these case studies and correlational research have identified key features of mentoring believed to improve teacher confidence, knowledge, and instruction, raise student achievement, and increase retention (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kapadia & Coca, 2007; Stanulis & Floden, 2009; Stanulis, Little, & Wibbens, 2012; Villar & Strong, 2007). However, Desimone, Hochberg, Porter, Polikoff, Schwartz & Johnson (2013) argue that a missing perspective in many of these studies is an explicit consideration that novice teachers obtain mentoring from others besides those formally assigned to them. These informal mentors they describe as those persons whom novice teachers choose for themselves to go for help. According to Coburn (2001), *“informal networks among teachers are largely unacknowledged by the policy world. Yet they*

have enormous potential to play an influential role in teacher sense making” (p.163). Desimone and his counterparts also contend that informal mentors likely play a substantial role in student teacher learning, although little is known about them in relation to formal mentors. One of the findings coming out of this research is that student teachers interacted more with informal mentors than with their formal mentors.

Bird (2012) describes two types of mentoring programmes; the informal buddy system in which mentors receive no compensation, training or release time. The other is the comprehensive programmes that include highly prepared mentors who are carefully selected, compensated for their work and given time to engage with their new teacher peers. With the buddy system, support for new teachers comes from assigned fellow teachers who may or may not have any inclination as to the intended purpose of their role. Bird (2012) purports that the buddy systems are mainly for the purpose of providing social support by offering answers to questions that these new teachers may have. Student teachers generally engage in utilizing both types of support. The formal support system includes the cooperating teachers’ ability to model classroom teaching practices for their student teachers.

Mentoring Programmes

Formalized mentoring programmes initially involve the identification of mentors who have the role to assist student teachers through their first year(s) of teaching. It is hoped that they will be exposed to a systematic and well planned mentoring programme (Long, 2009). In many cases, such as Tobago, the primary school principal calls on volunteers among staff to take on the role of cooperating teacher or mentor. But Hobson et al. (2009) found that on many occasions, few resources accompany this role, such as mentor training, release from other duties or even acknowledgement of the importance of the mentoring role which benefits and maintains the

profession. Many experienced classroom teachers also do not volunteer to act as mentor or may even reject the offer because they perceive that this is time consuming, takes away from their primary job of teaching and offers few benefits or incentives to participate (Long, 2009). Hale (2000) said that among those who volunteer, some may be unsuitable for the role of mentor for a variety of professional or personal reasons. Some volunteers may be too authoritarian and prescriptive rather than being empowering and developmentally focused (Ellinger, Hamlin and Beatie, 2008). Selecting competent and willing mentors is the start of the development of an effective mentoring programme. What is also significantly important is the process of developing a successful mentoring programme to include principles and components needed for the overall professional development of the student teacher.

Kajs (2002) states that the literature is filled with benefits of mentoring for student teachers but there is a paucity of information that exists in designing a mentoring programme for novice teachers that addresses an organization's specific situational needs and resources. This suggests that programmes should be designed in partnership with the teacher training institutions, the student teachers and the cooperating teachers selected as mentors. However, Heikkinen, Wilkinson, Aspfors and Bristol (2018) point out that:

The activities and actions, concepts, meanings and concomitant social relations associated with mentoring also vary between national contexts so that what is described as mentoring practices in one setting may look quite different from another setting (p.1).

Freking (2006) however, believes that although training in the mentoring process is lacking among veteran teachers, student teachers continually state they value the support and guidance they receive while learning to teach.

Modellers of Practice

There is a strongly held expectation that the practicum provides the opportunity for modelling (Clarke et al., 2014). Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) suggest that new teachers develop their own teaching skills by observing mentors who model good practice. Darling-Hammond (2010b) states that *“it is impossible to teach people how to teach powerfully by asking them to imagine what they have never seen or to suggest they do ‘the opposite’ of what they have observed”* (p.216). Student teachers should not be placed with over worked cooperating teachers hoping that they will provide much needed classroom support (Beebe and Margerison, 1995). Although cooperating teachers may feel nervous, insecure or inadequate with regards to being observed (Bullough, 2005), they must overcome these feelings because modelling supports the development of the less experienced student teacher (Borden, 2014). Unfortunately, not all cooperating teachers possess the skills necessary to model to student teachers (Gardner, 2005; Levine, 2006). As Darling-Hammond (2010b) puts it *“no amount of coursework can, by itself, counteract the powerful experiential lessons that shape what teachers actually do”* (p.216). Therefore, student teachers who observe poor models are more likely to continue to display ineffective habits (Cochran-Smith, 1991).

Cooperating teachers as models must be able to explain to the student teacher the rationale behind their actions, behaviours or instruction (Hobson et al., 2009). This helps the prospective teachers to think like a teacher (Borden, 2014). This is similar to Cuenca’s (2011) notion of *“legitimacy”* in student teaching by making them *“feel”* like a teacher (p.117). Salisu and Ransom (2014) see modelling as an instructional approach where the teacher demonstrates and learning occurs through observation. Danielson (2007) states that watching what teachers do is not sufficient for learning why they do it. Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005), He & Levin (2008)

and Henry & Weber (2010) pointed out that ideal placement of student teachers is one in which the cooperating teacher models, co-plans, provides opportunities for practice and reflection, and provides feedback while the student teacher gains increasing responsibility. One concern with this modelling is that cooperating teachers should have an inordinate amount of influence on the student teacher and should demonstrate good classroom practices which can be modelled. In a study done by Anderson (2007) and Caires & Almeida (2007), it was highlighted that student teachers commented that they patterned their behaviour after the model provided by their cooperating teacher. Because the cooperating teacher spends more time with the student teacher than the university supervisor, they should be persons who provide “*leadership by guiding*” the student teacher experience (Rudney & Guillaume, 2003, p.1.).

Student teachers do expect their host teachers to model best practice (Haig and Ward 2004). Trevethan (2017) in her study in New Zealand revealed that cooperating teachers believed that being a professional role model was part of their role and that modelling meant showing student teachers how to do things as they did them. Seperson and Joyce (1973) confirmed that teacher candidates mimic the attitudes and behaviours of their cooperating teachers. Through modelling, experienced teachers are expected to provide authentic, experiential learning opportunities for student teachers (Saffold, 2005). According to Anderson (2007), student teachers often pattern their behaviours after their cooperating teachers simply because those were the only mental maps they had experienced. In contrast to Anderson, I argue that student teachers also draw on their own experiences they had from their classroom teachers, encountered as pupils, In fact, during my years as a student, I adopted teaching styles of those who taught me and still use these in my delivery of courses.

Conveyor of Relations

The cooperating teacher/ student teacher relationship can be described as a relationship between an experienced person and someone who is not as experienced (Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). The relationship between mentor teachers and student teachers is a very crucial aspect of the practicum experience (Aspfors and Fransson, 2015; Delaney, 2012; Fletcher and Mullen, 2012; Hobson et al., 2009; Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors and Edwards-Groves, 2014; Myers and Anderson, 2012 ;). For instance, Hobson et al., (2009) contested practices on mentoring newly qualified teachers and suggested three views of mentoring; mentoring as supervision, mentoring as support and mentoring as collaborative self-development. Aspfors and Fransson (2015) focused on mentoring newly qualified teachers in which themes emerged around reflection and critical thinking relationships, emphasizing good relationships as a necessity for student development. Glenn (2006) found that the focus on relationships is one of the five characteristics of exemplary cooperating teachers, suggesting they should be “*collaborative rather than dictate, relinquish an appropriate level of control, allow for personal relationships, share constructive feedback, and accept differences*” (p.88). Clarke (2006) in his study on cooperating teachers felt that establishing a personal connection with a student teacher was a precursor to being an effective advisor. The work of Bullough and Draper (2004) at Brigham Young University highlights the cooperating teacher’s role as convener of relation:

The proper mentor is an expert teacher and skilled coach, a sometimes mother figure who defends her “children”, is open and responsive to whatever needs a neophyte presents, has a flexible but heuristically useful concept of how beginning teachers develop, is able to maintain an optimal distance and involvement in the neophyte’s classroom and protects the neophyte not only from threatening parents and potentially meddling administrators but from knowing too much about the mentor, what the mentor actually thinks about the neophyte as a person and as a teacher, and about the range of responsibilities the mentor has embraced on the neophyte’s behalf (p.285).

Although there may be a power differential between student teachers and cooperating teachers, an important aspect of the cooperating teachers' role is the nature of the relationship that he or she is able to develop with the student teacher. Latour (2005) agrees in saying that it is important for cooperating teachers to encourage relationships between the student teacher and other actors within the practice context.

I have not encountered any research that focuses specifically on the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher in Trinidad and Tobago. However, some aspects of this type of relationship surfaced during the interviews conducted in the Muster Report (2003). Trainees reported levels of interaction that ranged from having no help at all to the display of genuine interest in the trainee's work. One trainee who was grateful for the help given by her cooperating teacher described the relationship as follows:

I teach by myself. At the end she might say, You should have done this. This would have been more appropriate, but the lesson was quite a good lesson. You need to polish up on this. But she is very helpful. Even before, she would ask me what I was going to teach today. She would ask me how I was going to teach it. Depending on how much time she has. She would ask me and I would explain to her and she would say, "Okay" (p.85).

Cooperating teachers and student teachers spend more time together than any other persons while in the field. Baker and Milner (2006) point out the kind of powerful influence the mentor teacher can have on the student teacher. According to Koerner, Rust and Baumgartner (2002), student teachers consider the personal characteristics of the cooperating teacher to be six times more important than other supervisors.

The work of Haig, Pinder and Mc Donald (2006) at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, with cooperating teachers revealed a strong relationship with the student teacher as a key factor in enabling student teacher learning on practicum. Draves (2008) found that without a trusting and respectful relationship, student teacher learning was curtailed. Further to this, Awaya,

McEwan, Heyler, Linsky, Lum and Wakukawa (2003) contend that a positive mentoring relationship extends beyond information sharing to relational responsibility, suggesting a deeper more meaningful connection between the student teacher and the practicum setting. This finding is consistent with Clarke and Jarvis- Selinger's (2005) work conducted at the University of British Columbia, produced evidence of a strong leaning towards nurturing in the teaching perspectives of elementary school levels. This focus went beyond the typical student teacher and cooperating teacher dynamics to support the broader relational context that constitutes the practicum, which includes others in the wider school community.

Caires and Almeida (2007) using an inventory instrument on experiences and perceptions of teaching practice found student teachers who gave positive comments about their cooperating teachers and used terms such as thoughtful, supportive, trustworthy, and open. The most valued features of the cooperating teachers were their interactions with their student teachers, respect and support. The extent to which student teachers interact with tutors and cooperating teachers varies depending on the existence of supportive structures such as school, school-based mentors and regular visits to schools by supervising tutors from teacher education institutions (Sivan and Chan, 2009). It has also been argued that visits from supervisors from teacher training institutions tend to be infrequent and as a result have minimum impact on student teachers (Ssentamu-Namubiru, 2010). Prospective teachers who receive appropriate support from mentors or cooperating teachers during teaching practicum tend to develop a stronger commitment to teaching (Guarino, Santibanez and Daley, 2006). Mtika (2011) contends that *"there is usually discrepancy between what trainees learn in pedagogy classes in their teacher education and the practices adopted by their mentors in the school"* (p. 553). Sadler's (2006) research done with student teachers from a large Midwestern public university, found that some students described their relationship with the

cooperating teacher as a safety net. Phelps and Benson (2012) and Sayeski and Paulsen (2012) agree that cooperating teachers act as a safety net for teacher candidates during the field teaching experience.

Nevertheless, many students reported a divide between the teaching strategies taught at the university and those modelled by the cooperating teacher (Smith, 2007). Although learner-centred pedagogy dominates the official curriculum reform attempts and the rhetoric of teacher education centres including the UTT, placement schools have yet to fully master and adopt this (Mtika and Gates, 2010). Bates (2008) states that this presents a source of struggle for student teachers on practice when they are visited by supervisors from their training institutions for assessment of their developing pedagogical practices and professionalism. According to Sinclair, Munns and Woodward (2005), many cooperating teachers encourage their student teachers to ignore what they were taught during the teacher education courses since “*real learning*” takes place during the practicum (p. 210).

In order to build sound relationships between cooperating teachers and student teachers, it is necessary to reach agreement on expectations of both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. One way to reach agreement on expectations is for the university supervisor to act as a liaison between the university and the cooperating teacher, providing much needed preparation (Paulson, 2014). This was supported by Gardiner (2009) who suggests that cooperating teachers are often not prepared to mentor teacher candidates. Du Plessis et al., (2010) also noted that although schools express willingness to take trainee teachers, they lack mentorship structures for trainees due to factors such as staff shortage and workloads of their staff. Sabar (2004) suggested that student teachers evoke an image of “*marginal*” people at an interpersonal level while on practicum placement and as “*marginal*” people they are vulnerable to stress due to difficulties in

coping with perceivable unfamiliar situations (p. 148). He further explained that the student teachers are marginal because they lack confidence in their behaviour and in their social status and are therefore dependent on the goodwill of others of the group to which they wish to belong. Cooperating teachers, therefore, need to be aware of the roles they can play in student teacher education if they are to have a positive impact on student teacher learning.

Agents of Socialization

The student teacher practicum provides a setting where cooperating teachers and student teachers work together to plan, design and implement educational programmes for young learners. During teaching practice sessions, student teachers are exposed to the authentic context of the teaching profession whereby student teachers become socialized to the profession (Marais & Meier, 2004). There are assumptions that give rise to the claim that the process of socialization and mentoring benefits teachers, schools, and students and improves the quality of teacher education (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Socialization of the student teacher is a role learning process that results in the situational adjustment of the individual to the culture of the teaching profession (Kocoglu, 2008). A framework has to be provided for student teachers to hang their professional expertise on, suggesting that mentoring is a form of socialization. The socialization of student teachers is appraised to be a unique academic mentoring process (Vumilia & Semali, 2016). Hobson et al., (2009) also suggest that by helping student teachers adapt to the norms of teaching, mentors socialize them into the professional standards to be maintained in the teaching profession. The mentor as a social supporter prepares the student teacher to be a member of the society of teaching, who adapts to the norms associated with the profession. This mentor partnership consists of dynamic social interactions that encourage learning by way of modelling of skills (Hamilton, 2010).

According to Lukanga (2011), the overall intent of teaching practice is to enlighten student teachers to classroom teaching and learning environments in order to challenge the development of teaching skills through a framework of socialization into the profession. Anderson (2007) suggests that cooperating teachers are not always cognizant of the full nature or scope of their influence on student teachers and in fact underestimate their influence on student teachers.

Cooperating teachers can be powerful agents of socialization and it is essential that they are aware of the message they communicate to the student teacher, both implicitly and explicitly, and how these messages impact on student teacher learning (Clarke et al., 2014). Roberts, Benedict and Thomas (2013) purport that cooperating teachers can use practicum as an opportunity to help pre-service student teachers develop coping skills to deal with stress and to help them feel like teachers by engaging in affective coaching which includes *“collegiality, respect, and emotional support”* (O’Brian, Stoner, Appel and House, 2007, p.271). The practicum is really the heartbeat of any teacher preparation programme and can be a challenging experience for student teachers, even with the help from the teaching institution and mentors as their knowledge of practice (Busher, Gunduz, Cakmak and Lawson, 2015). Cooperating teachers have as one of their most important roles the introduction of student teachers to the classroom context introducing them to the real teaching as well as the hidden dimensions of teaching. According to Clarke et al. (2014) *“of the many roles that cooperating teachers play, one of the most important is purveyor of context for student teachers”* (p. 26). Crasborn, Hennisson, Brouwer, Korthagen and Bergen (2011) recommended that cooperating teachers be conscious of the cultural and political contexts that they invoke, especially those pertaining to the discourses of the school itself where the classroom is only one of a series of interrelated systems that student teachers encounter while on practicum.

Wang's (2001) exploration of the relationship between the instructional contexts of the cooperating teachers illustrates that *"different instructional contexts can open different opportunities in shaping the nature of ideas and practices that mentors develop"* (p.70) with their student teachers. Clarke et al. (2014) succinctly stated that:

Context is a powerful contributor to the overall practicum experience and the cooperating teachers are best placed to ensure that this element of the practicum is fully engaged and utilized as part of the student teachers' experience in the school setting (p.28).

On the other hand, Wilson, Floden and Ferrini-Munday (2002) warns that many student teachers find themselves in situations where they are supported by mentor cooperating teachers who *"interpret [their] job as socializing student teachers into the status quo of schools or into the mentor teachers' own practices"* (p.196). Placing a student teacher with a mentor cooperating teacher who is unaware of the ideals of the teacher education programme can create a divisive environment where disagreement may arise between university supervisor and cooperating teacher based on conflicting beliefs on how student teachers should be socialized (Bullough & Draper, 2004). It is important, therefore that during practicum, student teachers are exposed to authentic contexts of the teaching profession in order to become adequately socialized (Marais & Meier, 2004). Research done in Tanzania by Vumilia and Semali (2016) revealed that the mentoring and professional socialization activities they engaged in at the teachers' college or university had a trickle-down effect on the quality of teacher education. The trainee teachers reported feelings of satisfaction with the teaching practice.

Providers of Feedback

While different models have been intended for the supervision of teacher education student teachers, providing feedback remains an important part of the supervisor's role (Ackan and Tatar,

2010). Feedback plays a critical role in learning and serves as an invaluable means for improving practice (Ferguson, 2013; Schartel, 2012; Thurlings, Vermeulen, Bastiaens, & Stijnen, 2013). Hattie and Timperley (2007) agree that feedback is conceptualized as someone providing information regarding one's performance or understanding. Obviously, there must be some sort of observation before any feedback is given.

Richards & Farrell (2011, p. 90) states that "*observation plays a crucial role in practice teaching, both observation of your teaching by your cooperating teacher and supervisor*". Nonetheless, there are some limitations that must be considered. Teaching is a complex activity and many things happen simultaneously during a lesson so it is not possible to observe each one. The presence of an observer in the classroom may influence the nature of the lesson causing the student teacher to deviate from his or her usual teaching style and this is one of the experiences that may be more stressful. Richard and Farrell (2011) propose that observations by cooperating teachers have several purposes. These include collecting information about the lesson that would be difficult for the student teacher to observe, noting how student teachers are implementing new strategies, identifying those aspects of the lesson that could be improved and to identify techniques and practices that cooperating teachers themselves can use in their own teaching. Whatever the purpose of the observation, "*providing feedback remains an essential part of a supervisor's role*" (Ellis & Loughland, 2017).

Few studies have focused on what constitutes effective feedback (Thurling et al., 2013). In any case, cooperating teachers are expected to be providers of feedback to student teachers (Broad & Tessaro, 2010; Clarke, 2006; Grimmer & Ratzlaff, 1986; Killian & Mc Intyre, 1985). Feedback is central to the practicum experience (Wright, 2010), especially if it is constructive, focusing on changing teaching behaviours as well as promoting positive reinforcement and encouragement.

The cooperating teacher's feedback is the most important factor related to student teachers' success (Powell, 2016). It is considered the "*most useful component*" of professional experience (Copland, 2010, p.466). Although feedback can be a powerful tool in learning it can be seen as either positive or negative (Ferguson, 2013). This depends on the nature of the feedback and the context in which it is given (Nitko and Brookhart, 2009, p.1) Effective feedback should be "*goal-or task-directed, specific and neutral*" (Thurling et al., 2013, p. 10).

Although most of the research on supervision suggests that the nature of the conversation between supervisor and student teacher in post-observation conferences is dictated by the supervisor, the student teacher can take more initiative by sharing their reactions to the class, surprises they encountered, what they would have done differently, what they have learned and what they think the pupils have learned (Richards & Farrell, 2011). What I have observed over the years as practicum advisor is that most of the feedback given by cooperating teachers tend to be technical, emphasizing what should have been done rather than justifying why it was done. Chalias, Bertone, Trohel and Durand (2004) noted that this technical form of feedback between cooperating teachers and student teachers commonly validated prior knowledge but was rarely a source of new knowledge construction. Kahan, Sinclair, Saucier & Caiozzi (2003) in their research in the US on cooperating teacher feedback also reported that even as student teachers' knowledge and expertise develops over the practicum, cooperating teachers feedback remains largely fixed on the technical aspects of teaching.

In contrast to the above findings, Kwan and Lopez-Real (2005) saw providing feedback not as imposing a particular form of practice but rather "*in terms of helping student teachers develop their own strengths and improving their weaknesses according to their own personality, character and ability*" (p.285). This suggests that a highly dynamic relationship between the

cooperating teacher and student teacher might play an important part in the provision of rich feedback. Pekkanli (2011) emphasises the important role that feedback plays in shaping the professional identity of teacher candidates. Hattie and Timperley (2007) view feedback as existing along a continuum, ranging from formal written statements to a passing comment (Ferguson, 2013). Research done in Turkey by Akcan and Tatar (2010) found that the feedback cooperating teachers gave to student teachers followed a one-way flow of direct suggestions about classroom practice rather than trying to establish dialogue between student teachers and themselves. Bloxham and Campbell (2010) believe that dialogue is important if the student is to engage in the feedback process.

Cooperating teachers provide both formative and summative assessment of student teachers' work. Summative assessment can play a significant role if it contributes to the entry of student teachers to the profession. Many of the challenges discussed in the previous section apply to summative assessment (Crookes, 2003; Nolan & Hoover, 2008), as well as formative assessment. While cooperating teachers are expected to give some form of assessment of the student teachers, there is some contention about the quality of their report. For example, Boatright, Phelps, Schmitz (1986) suggested that cooperating teachers are unable to discriminate sufficiently when evaluating student teachers' final grade which is sometimes reduced to general impressions of the teachers rather than reporting individual differences. Clarke et al. (2014) highlights three questions that emerge from their review of the literature on cooperating teachers; Are cooperating teachers knowledgeable enough for summative evaluations? Are the tools that are available sufficient for summative evaluation? Are cooperating teachers' summative evaluations discriminating enough to ensure that standards of performance are not only recognized but accurately reported? Their review found that these questions have yet to be definitively addressed.

I argue that the suggestion made by Clarke et al., (2014) regarding the unfulfilled skill in genuine assessment of student teachers by cooperating teachers cannot be generalized as I have encountered many cooperating teachers in the field in Trinidad and Tobago who demonstrate effective assessment skills regarding the performance of student teachers on practice. However, there is still the need to prepare cooperating teachers in developing skills in assessment procedures including both formative and summative as well as qualitative and quantitative assessments. Quantitative assessment requires giving student teachers a numerical representation of their performance. This exercise is complicated. I speak here from my own experience as a teacher and as the coordinator for the Classroom Based Assessment Course offered at the UTT and as the holder of a Master of Education in Measurement and Evaluation. No matter how much assessors try to maintain scorer validity and reliability there will always be the issue of subjectivity in scoring a performance. At the CEPUTT there has never been the practice to include cooperating teachers in grading student teachers. However, I have seen research done by Younus and Akbar (2017) in Pakistan involving the evaluation methods of teacher education institutions. The majority of prospective teachers of the formal universities suggested that the practicum supervisor involve cooperating teachers in their evaluation.

Ellis and Loughland (2017) conducted a case study in South Wales, where they examined the feedback received by teacher education students from supervising teachers. The study revealed that supervising teachers suggested that they could do with more training in using the graduate standards as assessment criteria. Although these findings cannot be generalized it supports the notion of setting standards for assessment between university supervisors and cooperating teachers. Loughland and Ellis (2016) and Ure (2009) have already argued in previous studies for the inclusion of supervising teachers in use of standards as assessment criteria. In Australia for

example, it is required that all teacher education students undertaking professional experience are formally assessed against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the Graduate level (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2015). Providing feedback is clearly one of the most significant elements of cooperating teachers' work with student teachers and this provision is not just expected from the cooperating teachers but largely defines their role.

Challenges in Training Cooperating Teachers

Despite research evidence suggesting that training cooperating teachers, results in more effective mentoring behaviours and that the absence of training is associated with ineffective mentoring, cooperating teachers do not typically receive training for their role (Gareis & Grant, 2014). The illogic of this phenomenon was alluded to by Levine (2002), who stated that clinical experiences are central to teacher preparation yet are perhaps the least intentional aspect of the training process. Clarke et al.,(2012) provided more evidence on the state of cooperating teacher training stating that the body of literature “*reveals a strong sense that cooperating teachers lack specific training to enable high quality engagement and developmentally progressive support for student teachers*” (p.49). Mitchell, Clarke and Nuttall (2007) conducted a comparative study of cooperating teachers in Australia and Canada, which revealed a paucity of studies on the preparation of cooperating teachers for their role.

Gareis and Grant (2014) claim that there are many reasons why training of cooperating teachers is not a norm in teacher education programmes. Typically, research on training of cooperating teachers focuses almost entirely on the outcomes associated with the cooperating teachers themselves, such as interactions with student teachers, the use of observation techniques and the accuracy of summative evaluation. While these are important aspects, the long-term and more intended outcomes of cooperating teachers' training is to facilitate greater proficiency of the

student teacher performance. There is little, if any evidence that such training improves student teachers' performance (Gareis & Grant, 2014).

Another suggested reason given by Gareis and Grant (2014) as to why cooperating teacher training was not prevalent is that this training has not yet been adequately investigated and understood in a manner that is readily applicable. Darling- Hammond (2012) seemed to be in agreement with this when she wrote: *"The central issue I believe teacher education must confront is how to foster learning about and from practice in practice"* (p.42). In other words, there is no real debate about the importance of clinical practice, but employing clinical experiences to the fullest extent is still a challenge. A similar observation was made by Giebelhaus and Bowman (2002) when they posited *"little attention has been given in the literature to effective mentoring models for pre- service teacher education programs"* (p.256).

Gareis and Grant (2014) in their research done in the US on outcomes of clinical faculty training programmes designed to prepare cooperating teachers for supervising pre-service teachers found that training resulted in a greater sense of efficacy for aspects of their role which led to more effective evaluation practices and stronger performances by student teachers. Other research in this area drew similar conclusions (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2008; Clarke et al., 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002; Sykes et al., 2011; Zeichner, 2010).

3.4. Perceptions of the Role of the Cooperating Teacher

Cooperating Teachers' Perceptions of their Roles

Koeppen and Davison-Jenkins (2007) and Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2010) point out that teacher education programmes rely heavily on cooperating teachers in preparing future

generations of teachers, but there is a significant gap in the literature concerning the views of cooperating teachers. This may be so in Trinidad and Tobago as little research has been done on cooperating teachers. However, George et al. (2001, p.35) interviewed 19 cooperating teachers on what they saw their roles to be. All 19 said that they saw it as a nurturing one. They also emphasized that they tried to make the trainee teachers comfortable; ensured that they had the materials needed; maintained discipline in class and helped with correction of work assigned by the trainees. Some reported that they often worked with student teachers in the lesson preparation stage. They also found that what cooperating teachers said they felt and what they actually did feel may not have been the same thing, since some cooperating teachers who said they felt comfortable having trainees in their classes and wanted to help them, were reported by the trainees to be openly hostile and indifferent. The study also found that the cooperating teachers were not happy with their roles. Two reported they had no indication of what their role was. Two other cooperating teachers expressed reluctance to continue to serve in that capacity because of problems of unpunctuality and absenteeism on the part of the student teacher. One cooperating teacher stated when the supervisor was not there to see a lesson *“the children at risk. Teaching will be done, but not to the best”* (George et al., 2001, p. 35). Another cooperating teacher said, *“Whatever happened with my trainee, my job is to teach my class”* (p.35). Cooperating teachers made comments like *“I don’t know alyuh [you all] new things. I don’t know alyuh [you all] new methods. I don’t know what alyuh [you all] doing”* (p.35). These comments could have come about because it was observed that cooperating teachers who were assigned to trainees were themselves untrained.

George and Quamina- Aiyejina (2003) in the Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project (MUSTER Report) in Trinidad and Tobago interviewed cooperating teachers on how they defined their roles. Some saw their roles as facilitators simply making it possible for trainees

(student teachers) to deliver lessons as they had planned them. *“Others saw themselves as guides and assistants smoothing over rough spots”* (p.84). One cooperating teacher saw the cooperating teachers’ role as assisting the trainee by telling them the level of the pupils, their standards, assisting in any problem dealing with children, just being there if help is needed. Another defined her role in this way, *“all I tell them is that we have certain topics that we have covered. I expect my work to be done. I am not going to come out and tell you that it should be done this way”* (p. 84). Many, however, indicated that they remembered their own experience as trainee teachers and tried to deliver their criticisms in ways that would not make the student teachers feel bad. In only one case did a cooperating teacher define the role as being partly collaborator, both in planning lessons, and managing the whole teaching practice exercise with the student teacher.

Moving away from research in Trinidad and Tobago, a qualitative study done by Russell and Russell (2011) on cooperating teachers’ perceptions about mentoring student interns revealed that the major components of mentoring in the field of education are role modelling, nurturing, support, sponsoring, and teaching. These were findings consistent with those of Weasmer and Woods (2003) and Anderson and Shannon (1988). In Russell and Russell’s study, a participant who viewed herself as a guide said:

I provide a stable, secure environment and allow my interns to begin to explore gradually first on an activity, then a class period, then more prolonged experience. I encourage interns to watch their teachers, too (p.10).

Another participant described how she could best facilitate the internship experience, *“I will certainly do whatever I am told to do, as well as be a support system for the intern, and I will be cooperative and sensitive to his/her needs”* (p.10). Participants also expressed their motivation for mentoring, saying that they wanted to share their knowledge, gain knowledge on new trends in teaching, encourage new teachers, and collaborate with beginning teachers. They also stated that

mentoring workshops should be provided for cooperating teachers to better prepare them for the mentoring of their students, and recommended that workshops on effective mentoring be a part of ongoing of professional development for cooperating mentor teachers who plan to host student interns.

Paulson's (2014) study done in central Illinois on perceptions of cooperating teachers concerning the student teacher field experience revealed that of the 153 participants who engaged in a survey, only 10 respondents (6.5%) had participated in a university course that prepared them for working with student teachers, while another 110 (71.9%) had received a handbook to use when working with student teachers. Regarding the assistance that cooperating teachers valued most from interactions or support from the university supervisor, they indicated that frequent university supervisor visits were extremely important (41.7%). Pertaining to the value they placed on receiving information about the student teacher prior to accommodating them in their classrooms, more than half of the cooperating teachers (55.6%) felt this was extremely important. Concerning how much cooperating teachers valued detailed guidelines about the university expectations of the student teacher, 76% indicated that this was extremely valuable. A little over 30% of the cooperating teacher said receiving feedback about their work with student teachers was somewhat valuable. Finally, 52.7% of the cooperating teachers found it was extremely valuable to be asked for input on the student teaching programme. In addition, cooperating teachers were asked to identify challenges they may have faced before or during the student field teaching experience. Their responses were:

Lack of pre-semester meeting with student teacher, lack of planning time, giving up control, poor quality of student dispositions, lack of preparedness for teaching, issues with the university supervisor, and lack of training for cooperating teachers (p.41).

The previous section looked at the cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles. The following section gives a review of the student teachers' perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher.

Student Teachers' Perceptions of the Cooperating Teachers' Role

Melder (2014) in her study done in Ohio on cooperating teachers found that literature on student teachers' perceptions of the cooperating teacher's role was minimal. However, findings from her study were consistent with one by Hamman and Romano (2009) done in Texas on the examination of characteristics that pre-service teachers desired from their future cooperating teachers and the manner in which they anticipated interacting with them in learning how to teach. Hamman and Romano (2009) found that elementary teacher candidates wanted more opportunities to imitate their cooperating teacher, to be guided by them and to engage in more collaborative and scaffolding interactions. The results of this study also suggested that elementary teacher candidates are more likely to view their cooperating teachers as models of best practice and expect high levels of interaction and supervision during the student teaching. Holbert (2011) also examined student teachers' perceptions of their cooperating teacher in Ohio and found that the highest positive perceptions were related to cooperating teachers' modelling of classroom pedagogies. Similarly, Epps's (2010) study in Ohio also found that student teachers strongly agreed that their cooperating teacher modelled understanding of how students learn, how to help students grasp and understand concepts using examples and how to make subject-specific content make sense to students. These findings were consistent with research by Rajuan et al. (2007) in Israel showing how cooperating teachers perceived their role as guiding practical experiences in the classroom and providing experiences that bridge pedagogy to practice (Hamilton, 2010).

In another qualitative study done in the US on roles and role perceptions of cooperating teachers, university supervisors and student teachers, Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) found that

different perceptions of roles were attributed to unclear role definitions and a lack of communication. In 1999, the National Institute of Education (NIE) at the Nanyang Technological University, a teacher education institution in Singapore used the 'integrative' model in its relation with the schools as partners in teacher education. With the implementation of this partnership model, the schools were encouraged to accept a greater responsibility for teacher preparation. Appointed cooperating teachers carried out most of the supervision and mentoring of student teachers during the practicum. The roles of the cooperating teacher considered important by more than 80% of student teachers related to evaluation feedback on their teaching, teaching subject content effectively and classroom management.

These included:

Suggest ways to improve teaching skills based on my performance in class (88.8%), providing constructive criticism and fair evaluation (87.9%), provide guidance as to how I can effectively teach the content of the subject (85.0%), teach techniques to handle difficult students in the class (84.9%), provide opportunity to observe experienced teachers teaching (82.2%), show effective ways of managing different types of classrooms (82.2%), share teaching materials/resources that are related to the teaching of the subjects (80.4%) and provide a profile of the classes I am going to teach (80.4%) (Atputhasamy, 2005, p.7).

In George and Quamina-Aiyejina's (2003) MUSTER Report, trainees had varying views about the role played by their cooperating teacher. They reported levels of interaction that ranged from no help at all to the display of genuine interest in their work and giving quality feedback and advice. Other trainees were not so fortunate and were unhappy about the lack of support from the cooperating teacher. A particular trainee who depended on the cooperating teacher for assistance was quite disappointed that little help was received. This trainee stated:

When she is not there, I have some trouble controlling some [pupils], not all. Even when most of the class would be engaged in what might be for most an interesting task, one or two would give trouble. . . she should be there. Before the lesson, we should discuss it and

after the lesson. . . she should give me feedback. Most of the time I don't get any and I think she should tell me whether it was good and where I needed help and stuff like that (p. 86).

Cooperating teachers fulfil an important role in the education and preparation of student teachers who view them as the primary supervisors who are directly in touch with their concerns, needs and professional growth throughout the student teaching practice (Hall et al., 2008; Hamilton, 2010). The role of the cooperating teacher must be handled with care. Technically the cooperating teacher holds the power over the student teacher to allow them to enter the teaching profession. The relationship between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher influences the success of the student teacher and this relationship should not be taken lightly. Rudney and Guillaume (2003) suggest that accepting a student teacher *“is like accepting a spouse; it is continuous work to ensure that each person's needs are being expressed, valued and met”* (p. 33). However, like some marriages, the role of the cooperating teacher is mostly *“one-sided and will eventually come to an end”* (Rudney and Guillaume, 2003, p. 33).

It is essential that a sound both-sided relationships exist between the student teacher and cooperating teacher. Literature revealed two important aspects which stand out regarding the cooperating teacher's role: the process and content of feedback provided to the student teachers by the cooperating teachers as mentors and the behaviours exhibited or modelled by the cooperating teacher (Melder, 2014).

Practicum Advisors' Perceptions of the Cooperating Teachers' Role

Although many studies have highlighted cooperating teachers' and the student teachers' perceived role of the cooperating teacher, I have not found any studies referring specifically to the perceptions of the practicum advisor or university supervisor regarding the cooperating teachers'

role. However, Meegan, Dunning, Belton and Woods (2013) carried out a study in the Republic of Ireland on university supervisors' experiences and perceptions of a Cooperating Physical Education Teacher Education Programme (COPET). The results showed that future directions for the programme revolve around the need for universities to consider ways of encouraging supervisors to work collaboratively with student teachers, cooperating teachers and other university supervisors to improve the teaching practice process. One of the university supervisors suggested that in the future, cooperating teachers involved in the programme should also take on the role of assessor;

I think that by giving the cooperating teacher a bit more responsibility, and this is going to be a controversial point, we could then move to them being the number-one assessor. Now there are many issues with it as well, but they wouldn't necessarily be the only assessor but they would have to be involved in the moderation process to come up with the mark at the end (Meegan et al., 2013 p. 211)

Another study was done in the United States by Thomas, Applegate and Ellison (1986) pertaining to the expectations and problems of university supervisors of early field experiences. In this research, supervisors had a rather clear sense of the cooperating teachers' behaviours to be evidenced during field experiences. These were subsumed under three categories; professional expectations, instructional expectations and service and responsibility expectations. The supervisors believed that the cooperating teacher should structure meaningful field involvement that could reinforce or build on concepts presented as part of the teacher education programme. As suggested by Thomas et al. (1986):

Supervisors expect cooperating teachers to guide field experience students through the varied activities outlined by the teacher education program and to evaluate student performance relative to established field experience objectives (p. 135).

Traister (2005) in her thesis on perceptions of student teachers, cooperating teachers and university supervisors explored in the US regarding assessment of student teacher performance revealed that one role in assessment that is required of the cooperating teacher is the completion of a competency form. Other roles of the cooperating teacher included conferencing with student teachers, providing feedback to the university supervisor and providing input into the final grade for the student teacher. One supervisor noted that the cooperating teacher should be a mentor and by the end of the practice be a colleague to that student and a resource person. Another supervisor remarked that the cooperating teacher has the responsibility to the children in the classroom, acting as gatekeeper gently encouraging student teachers to do more as well as telling the student teacher to step back when things are not working. That supervisor summed up the cooperating teachers role as *“they are mentors. They make or break a student teacher. Their job in assessment is mentoring to guide, to direct, to encourage, to model so that the student teacher gains confidence”* (p.168).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the literature regarding practicum, particularly what the research says about the involvement of the cooperating teacher in the teaching practice. Instead of presenting a summary at the end of every section in the literature review, I have decided to present a final summary at the end of the chapter to avoid fragmentation of thoughts thereby affording a more connected and coherent understanding of what was discussed in the chapter. I began with a discussion on teacher training systems in Trinidad and Tobago and our neighbouring Caribbean countries, as well as leading countries like England, Finland and Singapore. It was discovered that the system of seeking employment in schools first then acquiring qualifications after, one which

began in Trinidad and Tobago prior to 1962 and subsequently abandoned in 2006, was now one of the routes taken in England.

The importance of the practicum in teacher education followed indicating the importance of the practicum in providing student teachers with the opportunity to put theory into practice, to facilitate professional development of trainee teachers and help in the shaping of student teachers' identities. Many of the benefits of the field practice were discussed. Although there was some uncertainty about what and how student teachers learn during practicum, there was evidence that some learning occurs.

This study focused on the cooperating teacher, so that many dimensions of the cooperating teacher were presented in this chapter. The characteristics of an effective teacher, selection and preparation of cooperating teachers and the challenges involved as well as research on the role of the cooperating teacher were some of the major issues discussed.

The review continued examining the different ways that cooperating teachers participate in teacher education drawing on five categories outlined by Brodie et al., (2009). These included Advocates of the practical which included discussions on differentiating between mentoring and supervision and the role of the cooperating teacher as mentor. Other categories presented concentrated on the role of the cooperating teacher as Conveyor of relations, Agents of socialization and Providers of feedback.

This study focusses primarily on the role of the cooperating teacher, so that research done on the perceptions of cooperating teachers about their roles, student teachers' perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher and practicum advisors' perceptions of the role of the

cooperating teacher were included. The following chapter will go on to describe the methodology used in conducting this research.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this case study is to investigate how the roles of cooperating teachers who participate in the practicum programme of the CEPUTT were perceived by cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors. It also examines the needs of the cooperating teacher regarding their role. I focused on six pre-service student teachers who had completed all eight practicum courses, six cooperating teachers who had experienced at least five student teachers on practicum and three practicum advisors who supervise and assess student teachers on practice. In this regard the study was designed to answer the following key research questions:

1. What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles?
2. What are student teachers' perceptions of the roles of the cooperating teacher?
3. What are practicum advisors' views of the roles the cooperating teacher can play in the practicum?
4. What needs do cooperating teachers have regarding their roles?
5. How can the perceptions of the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors about the role of the cooperating teacher and their needs influence the improvement of the effectiveness of the practicum?

The first two sections of this chapter address the methodology and methods used in my study. Under methodology, my ontological and epistemological assumptions that led me to adopt an interpretative paradigm are discussed. Wellington (2000) describes methodology as "*the*

activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use” (p.22). However, methods refer to the *“range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction”* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 44). Next, I justify the case, discuss my data collection method, explain my rationale for using semi structured interviews and present the profile of the participants. This will be followed by the procedure in conducting the interviews, the approach to data analysis by discussing my role as a reflective practitioner. Ethical procedures and considerations used in conducting this research are provided and a discussion on the crystallization of the data is given. Finally, limitations of the study are presented, ending the chapter with a conclusion.

4.1 Methodology

When researchers are deciding on which methods to use, they are usually influenced by their underlying ontological and epistemological positions (Wellington, 2000). I acknowledge that my ontological assumptions influenced my approach to collecting and interpreting the information I obtained from the participants in my study. My assumption is that cooperating teachers can play an important role in the professional development of the student teachers of the Tobago Campus. Being involved in teacher training for more than 30 years strengthened my belief that I could gain insight into the individual perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher by obtaining views of participants involved in the practicum through the use of semi-structured interviews.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) suggested that *“ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions: these in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection”* (p.21). There are different paradigms existing within educational research the traditional being the positivist and the interpretative (Wellington, 2000), with critical realism

emerging post 1970-1980 as a response to post-positivist crises in natural and social sciences (Archer, Decoteau, Gorski, Little, Porpora, Rutzou, Smith, Steinmetz and Vandenberghe, 2016). Social reality is perceived as external, independent and ultimately observable from the positivist perspective, the emphasis being on obtaining statistical and numerical evidence in order to make generalizations about the findings. The interpretative approach argues that *“human behavior can only be explained by referring to the subjective states of the people acting on it”* (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007, p.220). The interpretative paradigm suggests that a value-neutral approach to research is not possible in the social sciences where people are the focus of the research process. It also argues that social research can never be an objective activity carried out by detached scientists. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that *“all research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied”* (p.22).

4.2 Justification for the Case Study

This research employs a case study strategy. The case is the practicum which is a critical component of the B.Ed. Programme at the CEPUTT. It is a single case excluding other programmes at other institutions. It specifically involves the perceptions of the supervisory roles of the cooperating teachers and their needs.

Creswell’s definition of case study frames the research. He stated that:

A case study is an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. This bounded system is bounded by time and place, and it is the case being studied- a programme, an event, an activity, or individuals (Creswell, 1998, p.61).

In 2011, while working at the Corinth UTT Campus in Trinidad, I was selected to deliver part-time practicum courses for students in Tobago. This travelling to and fro was very challenging

so I moved with my family to Tobago. There I continued to deliver theoretical practicum courses as well as other content courses and supervising student teachers in the field. I was appointed programme leader responsible for general administration at the campus and given the responsibility as practicum coordinator in 2013. I am still serving in this position. Conducting this research was very opportune for me, because I live in Tobago, work at the university, and the topic for this study has not been examined in this context.

The Practicum Programme at the CEPUTT has many organizational components. They include the preparation of student teachers at the CEPUTT which is guided by specific course outlines; selection and placement of student teachers in real classrooms to put theory into practice; the actual practicum experience going out to the selected schools; supervision of student teachers in the field by cooperating teachers; and evaluation of student teachers by the practicum advisors.

This study focuses on the supervisory roles of the cooperating teachers, and the improvement of their roles and functions in the practicum is the ultimate hoped for outcome of this research report. The case study seems the best research design to achieve this. Merriam (1998) advocates this believing that when research is done in a real life situation a case study is the preferred research strategy. It is the best methodology for gaining an understanding of a problem which in this instance can lead to improvement of the roles and needs of the cooperating teacher. This case study practice of the practicum is the main foundation from which the theoretical knowledge will assist in the development of a procedural framework for improving the cooperating teachers' role and contribution to the practicum ultimately aimed at enhancing the practicum programme at the CEPUTT in Tobago.

This case study offered an opportunity for participants to voice their perspectives, concerns and their views for the way forward regarding their practicum experiences. Baxter and Jack (2008)

explain that the issue in the case is not to explore data through one lens, but a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. Through the use of semi-structured interviews cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors all provided empirical data in context regarding their practicum experiences.

In Trinidad and Tobago it is important as a post-colonial and developing country to ensure that we continue to produce high quality teachers through well designed teaching practicum (Zeichner, 2010; Sabar, 2004), to have a deep understanding of the contextual issues regarding the practicum with the aim of unravelling the practicum to determine the way forward in transforming the existing practice into what is required for preparing teachers for teaching in the 21st century. Darling-Hammond (2017) stated that partner schools are increasingly being developed as sites for clinical practice and opportunities for student teacher development in schools through a “school attachment” agreement are also growing (p.300). Because the context in which this study is situated is Tobago, all contextual issues and complexities regarding the practicum and the role of the cooperating teacher need to be brought to light because these have never been investigated. Van Manen (1990) suggests collecting “*data*” of other people’s lived experiences allow us to become more experienced ourselves (p.62). In exploring particular experiences of people it also allows one to become “*in-formed*” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 62).

As an insider researcher, in this case, having responsibility for organizing placement and supervision for student teachers, I am a learner, acquiring practical insights to profile the future. Participants provided contextual knowledge as I learned through their perceptions, explanations, and concerns. I acknowledge limitations regarding the use of a case study, some of which Yin (1994) summarizes as a lack of systematic handling of data, systematic reporting of all evidence, no basis for scientific generalizations and that it may take too long to conduct because of excessive

unreadable documents. One of the major challenges I experienced in this study was the reporting of all evidence. Regardless of the limitations, I see case studies as valuable research designs for conducting research, but as with all research, interpreting case study reports requires care and understanding.

Bassey (1999) explained that an educational case study is an empirical enquiry which is conducted within a localized boundary of space and time and explores interesting aspects of an educational activity, programme, institution, or system. In this case study, the geographical boundary is Tobago while the contextual boundary is the practicum component of the B.Ed. programme. The period under research 2013 – 2017 was chosen for inquiry as during that time I fulfilled the role of practicum coordinator and academic administrator for the UTT campus in Tobago. The cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors were selected as participants because they were engaged in the practicum during that same period. The practicum programme outlined in chapter 2 was the one which guided the practicum for the four year period. All the data collected in this study were also lived experiences given by the participants within the bounded time. The next section continues to describe the data collection methods used in this research.

4.3 Data Collection Method

Methods are the techniques or strategies used to collect data. I decided to use a qualitative interview as the data collection method in this research. Cooper and Schindler (2008) suggest when an exploratory study is undertaken, it is likely that non-standardized (qualitative) research interviews will be included in the research design. When people are telling stories, every word uttered is a microcosm of their consciousness (Vygotsky, 1987). Interviewing requires *“a respect for and curiosity about what people say, and a systematic effort to really hear and understand*

what people tell you” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 17). Spradley (1979) contends that the purpose of interviewing is to provide data from which to make cultural inferences, thick descriptions of a given social world analyzed for cultural patterns and themes. I used the interview method which allowed deep exploration into the participants’ responses by constantly probing to gain a better understanding of their experiences in the practicum pertaining to the cooperating teachers’ roles. I also recognized that other peoples’ stories are important. In the following section, I go on to explain the rationale for the use of semi-structured interviews in this study.

4.4 Rationale for using semi structured interviews

Interviews of this nature are likened to a casual conversation with an explicit agenda (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). According to Qu and Dumay (2011):

The semi-structured interview enjoys its popularity because it is flexible, accessible and intelligible and more important, capable of disclosing important and often hidden facets of human and organizational behavior (p. 246).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) say that semi-structured interview is often the most effective and convenient means of gathering information. The decision to use semi-structured interviews was informed by Wellington (2000, p.71), who reported that an interview allows the interviewer to “*probe into the interviewee’s thoughts, values, prejudices, views, feelings and perspectives*”. Qu and Dumay (2011) also influenced my decision to use semi-structured interviews with their explanation that:

The semi-structured interview involves prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses (p.246).

This assisted me in designing an interview guide, which incorporated a set of broad questions to direct the conversation towards the perceived role of the cooperating teacher suggested in my

conceptual framework. The purpose of the guide was to ensure that a similar approach was applied during the interviews (See Appendix 2).

According to Seidman (1998), if the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experiences, then interviewing provides a necessary and sufficient method of inquiry. Tuckman (1972) argued that when the researchers are developing interview questions, they need to consider whether the questions would influence the participants to show up themselves in good light or whether the question influences the respondent's answers. I argue that no matter how you try to couch a question to try to eliminate those influences one cannot be certain about the impression the responder wants to give. I made every effort to establish good rapport with my participants. Essentially, rapport includes trust and respect for the interview process and the information shared, (DiCicco and Crabtree, 2006). I established an environment where the interviewee felt safe to share their personal experiences hoping to build comfort and trust. My intentions for the interview were made very clear in order to eliminate any apprehensions about the interview process where both interviewer and interviewee were not afraid of offending each another and thereby facilitate open and candid discussions (Spradley, 1979; Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

4.5 Profile of Participants

The participants of this study were six cooperating teachers, six student teachers and three practicum advisors.

The Cooperating Teachers

The cooperating teachers who participated in this study supervise and support student teachers who are enrolled at the CEPUTT in Tobago. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000)

outlined four factors to decide the best approach when dealing with sample issues; the size of the sample, the representativeness and parameters of the sample, access to the sample and the sampling strategy to be used. These cooperating teachers were purposefully selected because they were all trained (with a B.Ed. degree) and have worked with at least five student teachers on practice. Wellington (2000) described purposive sampling as sampling done with deliberate aims as opposed to a random sample or one chosen purely for its “*convenience and accessibility*” (p.199). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have also found that this method of purposive sampling “*increases the scope and range of data exposed as well as the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered*” (p.40). These cooperating teachers were employed at both urban and rural schools where the school enrollment sizes ranged from 50 to 240 pupils. Based on the records of practicum placement from UTT, I was able to identify potential participants with the years of trained teaching experience as well as qualification. I met with each cooperating teacher personally informing them of my intention and presented them with a package containing a letter outlining the aims and objectives of the study, participant’s information sheet and a participation consent form. The first six cooperating teachers who returned the forms indicating their willingness to participate in the study were selected.

The Student Teachers

Purposive sampling was also adopted to select the six student teachers who were interviewed. These student teachers have completed the eight practicum courses outlined in Chapter 2. This prospective graduating class of 2017 consisted of about 22 student teachers both pre-service and in-service. I purposefully selected six student teachers who were pre-service as they would have had cooperating teachers to supervise them. The in-service teachers are already in their own classrooms and do not have a cooperating teacher. Most of the time they teach on

their own unless the principal of the school designates a teacher from another class to oversee them or the principal makes the effort to do some spot checks.

The Practicum Advisors

As mentioned in Chapter 2, practicum advisors came from Trinidad to Tobago to assist with the supervising of student teachers during practicum. This occurred since the CEPUTT in Tobago only offers a part-time B.Ed. programme during the hours of 5.00 to 8.00 p.m. The part-time instructors in Tobago are at their substantive workplace during the day and are unable to visit student teachers on practicum. For this reason, the three practicum advisors who came from Trinidad to assist with student teachers supervision in Tobago were selected as participants for this research. I also believed that these practicum advisors could contribute rich data to this research, since their conversations would be influenced by their own supervision experiences in Trinidad.

4.6 Conducting the Interview: Venue, Timing and Challenges

This interpretative approach sought to “*explore perspectives and shared meanings and to develop insights into situations*” (Wellington, 2000, p. 16). I employed the use of semi-structured interviews from three main sets of stakeholders in the practicum aspect of teacher training; the cooperating teacher, the student teacher and the practicum advisor. These interviews were conducted with each participant at a scheduled time before school, after school or any other time which was suitable for the participant. Most of the interviews were conducted after school. The cooperating teachers requested having the interviews at their own schools since they said they all felt comfortable and secure in their own setting. The student teachers opted to be interviewed at the UTT campus. Although, I suggested a more neutral setting for the interviews, they thought that the student lounge was an appropriate and convenient environment for them. For the practicum

advisors, I arranged to meet them at their campus on two specific days when they were not conducting classes. Through mutual arrangements, I travelled to Trinidad to conduct those interviews. Each interview was carded to last between 45 minutes to one hour. Robson (2002) warned that interviews can be very time consuming, and that anything under 30 minutes is unlikely to yield any valuable information. Conversely, an interview that is more than one hour may reduce the number of individuals' willingness to participate. In this instance, interviewees were willing to go beyond an hour. During the interviews, many of the participants did not realize it lasted for more than an hour. Nonetheless, they were willing to continue.

In this study, I recorded each interview using a digital recorder to *"improve accuracy and quality of data evidence"* (Wellington, 2000, p. 128). This recorded data was transferred to my laptop and labelled by three headings; Cooperating Teacher (CT), Student Teacher (ST) and Practicum Advisor (PA). Pseudonyms were given to each recorded interview to ensure anonymity of the interviewees. Research can be *"messy, frustrating and unpredictable"* (Wellington, 2000 p. 3). Some significant challenges were faced during the interview phase. The timing for the interviews was arguably the biggest challenge; when I thought I would be working comfortably within the deadline date for submission, delays in this area resulted in a setback of at least three months. The majority of the participants suggested that the last week of November 2016 would be a good time to be interviewed as there were no formal classes at that time.

However, it turned out that during that period, all participants indicated that they were too busy with their own work. From my experience, I should have expected this because this was time for cooperating teachers to mark their pupils' test scripts, for student teachers to begin revision for examinations and the practicum advisors to mark course work scripts for their students. This caused postponements of the interviews which were rescheduled for the next term. The interviews

with cooperating teachers and practicum advisors were conducted during the period January 30th to March 10th 2017, the period for the final teaching practicum. Nevertheless, this period turned out to be most appropriate since the student teachers in their 4th year of the programme were on teaching practice. Cooperating teachers had student teachers in their classes, practicum advisors were in the field and student teachers were in classrooms for their practice, a time when their experiences would actually be lived (Van Manen, 1990). The student teachers were interviewed after they completed their practicum from March 25th to March 30th, 2017. The other challenges, like the recorder malfunctioning and difficulty in transferring the recorded interviews to my laptop, were easily rectified.

4.7 Data Analysis

After conducting each interview, I transcribed the data within 48 hours. This was a long and painful exercise. Some interviews lasted more than an hour and in instances like those transcribing took up to nine hours. In one instance, a transcription took 16 hours to complete. This prompted me to seek the assistance of a professional transcriber from Trinidad as frustration was stepping in. Although I was reassured of confidentiality by the institution, this did not work. The transcriber could not even complete one of the recorded interviews because of the challenge in understanding the Tobago dialect. I had to complete all the transcripts listening to recordings over and over before transcribing what the participants were saying. However, this allowed me to become exceedingly familiar with the contents of the recorded data to ensure a more accurate transcription.

After transcribing all the data, three manila folders were compiled for each category of transcripts with headings, “Cooperating Teachers Transcripts”, “Student Teachers Transcripts” and “Practicum Advisors Transcripts”. The key research question for each set of participants was

written on the cover of the folder. I began by analyzing the data from the cooperating teachers since they were the main focus of this research. Each transcript was read two to three times, which allowed me to get very close to the data and offered an opportunity to reflect on its overall meanings. Each time the transcript was read I pondered deeply on what the participant said. Clarke (2005) recommends a period of “*digesting and reflecting*” on the data before beginning initial coding ventures (p.84). As this was my first attempt at a fully qualitative study analyzing data from interviews, I acted on the advice of Saldana (2009) who suggests that initial coding is particularly appropriate for inexperienced qualitative researchers learning how to code data, including interview transcripts. During this initial coding words and phrases which indicated any inkling of the role of the cooperating teacher were underlined. For example words like ‘model’, ‘assist’ and phrases like ‘observe the student teacher’, ‘make student teachers comfortable’, and the like. This initial coding gave me the opportunity to reflect deeply on the contents and nuances of the data. Brief notes were made in the margins of the transcripts about my general thoughts on the data. I continued the process of initial coding, breaking down qualitative data into discrete parts, closely examining them, and comparing them for similarities and differences (Strauss and Corbin, 1988). Chunks of data were categorized and words inserted to represent initial possible groupings (Rossman and Rallis, 2012). Charmaz (2006) explains that the goal of initial coding is “*to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your reading of the data*” (p. 46).

After the first cycle of coding, I progressed to the second cycle of analyzing the data which Saldana (2009, p. 155), referred to as “*Focused Coding*” searching for the most frequent or significant codes to develop categories or themes. For each of the transcripts, I created three headings; Responses, Codes and Themes. This helped me to get a clearer understanding of my

analysis of the data, to see the coding of the data, if the data supporting each code and the categories that emerged from these codes, were consistent with the qualitative, interpretative methodology framework I adopted in this study (see Appendix 6). The more the data was read the more in-depth findings were revealed thereby engaging in the process of crystallizing the data. Sentences and phrases in the dialogue that conveyed similar meanings and thoughts were put together. I used my own tacit and intuitive senses to determine what data “look like” and “feel like” when grouping them together (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 347), and making references to the theoretical framework used in this study, themes were decided upon (See Appendix 7).

In an effort to improve the trustworthiness of the research, which are the steps taken to ensure the quality of the research or the extent to which the data and the analysis are believable, two strategies were used, peer debriefing and member checking. Lincoln & Guba (1985) defined peer debriefing as:

A process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind (p.308).

The peer debriefer for my study was a PhD candidate who graduated from the University of Sheffield and is now a consultant in teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago.

I also made every effort to have all 15 interview participants proof read all the drafts to make sure that their voices were the ones coming through their experiences. I provided each of them with a hard copy of the interview transcript for review, clarification and to make adjustments to any part of the transcripts they felt needed to be changed. All data were verified through this process and only two practicum advisors made some changes to what was transcribed. I was aware

that things could change in different situations and that the same issue could be interpreted differently by researchers. According to Sikes & Goodson (2003):

... as people, as social beings, located in space, time, cultural milieu, researchers have been influenced by the particular understandings about, and interpretations of the world to which they have been exposed (p. 34).

A researcher cannot possibly be isolated from the research process. This meant that I engaged in reflexivity acknowledging that *“we are part of the social world we are studying and that the researchers’ own interpretations processes and authorial position need to be taken account of”* (Golbart & Hustler, 2005, p. 17). This led me to become a reflective researcher.

4.8 Being a Reflexive Researcher

The process of reflexivity from a socio- cultural perspective is an acknowledgement by the researcher that *“all findings are constructions, personal views of reality, open to change and reconstruction”* (Tindall, 1994, p.151). For example, this research would certainly provide for different interpretations if it involved different researchers and participants and was carried out in another place or at a different time. McNay (2000) understands reflexivity as *“the critical awareness that arises from a self- conscious relation with the other”* (p.5), while Skeggs (2004) suggests that an ability to stand outside oneself is one of the key dimensions of the reflexive self. McCormick and James (1988) suggested that reflexivity requires researchers to monitor closely and continually their own interactions with participants, their own reaction, roles, biases, and other matters that might influence the research.

In Chapter 1, I briefly spoke about my positionality, which exposed some of the biases brought to this research. I acknowledged my subjectivity and affirmed my purpose to contribute to improvement of the role of the cooperating teacher in the practicum at the CEPUTT, Tobago. Being the Programme Coordinator in Administration for the Tobago Campus, which involves

coordinating the Practicum Programme in Tobago, and having been involved in teacher training for more than three decades have coloured my perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher. I have also approached this research with the belief that there is no single “*truth*” to be discovered but rather there are many truths, multiple realities and multiple interpretations of the same events (Cohen et al., 2000 p. 21-22; Pring, 2000, p.253). I have always had a special interest in cooperating teachers regarding the invaluable contributions they can make in the practicum and to enhancing the concept of education. The location of the study at the CEPUTT, Tobago and the participants I interviewed were all influenced by my reflective practice to the point that during the interviews I allowed participants to tell their story, although it meant deviating from my interview schedule which provided me with much more valuable information. I have described my efforts to engage in reflexivity as a researcher. I will continue in the next section to discuss my approach to maintain ethical procedures and ethical considerations in this study.

4.9. Ethical Considerations and Procedures

Ethical concerns emerge from the planning of your research to the reporting of your data. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) define ethics as “*the appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work, or are affected by it*” (p.183-184). The ethical procedures outlined by the University of Sheffield, School of Education were followed. Clearance was obtained to carry out my research from the Research Ethics Committee. A copy of this is attached. (See Appendix 3). In addition, each cooperating teacher, student teacher and practicum advisor received a package containing a copy of the “Participant Information Sheet” (See Appendix 4) which includes the objectives for the research, and a “Participant Consent Form” (See Appendix 5).

All efforts were made to maintain confidentiality for the participants. For example pseudonyms were utilized in all identifying instances. During interviews I tried to ensure that no information concerning other participants was revealed to other participants both in the interviews and the references to them in the findings chapter and throughout the text. I enquired about participants' willingness to participate before the process began. We discussed the contents of the information sheet and told each of them that they were free to withdraw from the research anytime they wished. I assured all interviewees that their statements would be confidential, their identities anonymized in the text by the use of pseudonyms. All audio recordings were kept in my personal vault and were password protected. It must be pointed out that "*It is evident that whatever precautions are taken to protect those involved in a field study, nothing is fool proof*" (Burgess, 1984, p, 206). Because of my small number of participants, particularly the practicum advisors, there is the possibility that participants may be able to identify each other in the final research publication. Work done by Crossley (2010) addressed some of the implications regarding conducting research in small states. He defines small states as those countries having a population of less than 1.5 million and Tobago falls in that category because its population is just above 60,000. Crossley and Holmes (2001) warns that local researchers have to be especially sensitive to the potential repercussions from research reports, "*...since anonymity is difficult to achieve in a small state*" (p.403). There could be the possibility of being unable to guarantee anonymity in my research because of the closely related families and communities in Tobago. I also considered information I received from the participants during the interviews and was very cautious as to what should be reported and what should be omitted. For example, while interviewing student teachers regarding the role of the cooperating teacher there were a few instances where cooperating teachers' names were called in relation to their performances. Names of schools where student

teachers had bad experiences were also disclosed. I therefore followed advice from Tolich (2004). He explained that as researchers we must take time to “*learn from insiders what information is potentially damaging if read by another insider, and which information is innocuous*” (p.105). I therefore guaranteed all participants that any damaging information revealed would not be published.

4.10 Crystallization of Data

Richardson (1994) proposes that the central image for validity for postmodern contexts is not to triangulate findings but rather crystallize it to provide a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic being researched. I used crystallization as a form of establishing credibility for my study because I focused on offering deep, thickly described, complex interpretations of meanings about the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teachers in the practicum in schools in Tobago. Through crystallization my aim was to produce knowledge about that particular phenomenon through gathering a deepened, complex interpretation (Richardson, 2000b). Rather than using multiple sources of data to corroborate my research findings (triangulation), I focused on an in-depth examination of the data to richly describe my findings, using different sources for data collection to refract on the same phenomenon of the role of cooperating teachers in the practicum.

4. 11 Limitations

This case of cooperating teachers’, student teachers’ and practicum advisors’ (triad members) perceptions of the role of the cooperating teachers in the practicum in Tobago had some limitations. The study focused on cooperating teachers solely from Tobago. Therefore, conclusions drawn from this study cannot be generalized across countries. They are indicative of the perceptions of only six cooperating teachers, six student teachers and three practicum advisors.

This study takes into consideration only one university, UTT, as it is the university which partners with the schools to offer field experiences to their students who are enrolled in the teacher preparation programme. The conclusions drawn from this study cannot be generalized to reflect teacher preparation programmes of other universities.

This qualitative study only represents those student teachers, cooperating teachers and practicum advisors who participated in the research. This sample is a small representation of student teachers, cooperating teachers and practicum advisors in Tobago as well as those other cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors who have partnered with the university in the practicum. The study took the perceptions of the 15 participants into consideration and probed their thoughts regarding experiences within the last four years. While this gives a specific time period on which to focus, participants' memories may hinder them from specific detail that may be more easily recalled had I focused on a current semester or a specific time. Although this study is only a starting point to add to the already existing body of knowledge regarding perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher, it can provide additional information to help fill a gap in research. However, greater exploration of this area of the practicum could provide significant recommendations for improving the experience of all involved, student teachers, cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and most certainly the entire education system.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology used in conducting this research. I began with a discussion on how my ontological and epistemological assumptions influenced the choice of methodology for this research. One of my main assumptions was that cooperating teachers can

play an important role in the professional development of student teachers. There was some discussion on the interpretative paradigm chosen for the study. I justified the use of a case study pointing out clearly that the entire research context was very unique. The data collection was then put forward rationalizing the use of semi- structured interviews, which was the only source of data collection. The profile of the participants were presented justifying why there was some purposeful selection for both cooperating teachers and student teachers. I proceeded to describe the data analysis technique used explaining in detail the entire process. I continued to explain my role as reflective practitioner and admitted that the research could be influenced by my subjectivity, being an inside researcher and also involved in the practicum for so many years. All ethical considerations and procedures were outlined and discussions on crystallization of data and limitations of the study and a conclusion ended the chapter. This chapter sets the stage for presenting the findings about the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher in the practicum.

Chapter 5

Findings of the Study

Introduction

In the previous chapter I outlined the research methodology used in this study to find out about (a) the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher from those directly involved in the practicum; the cooperating teacher, the student teacher and the practicum advisor, and (b) gather from cooperating teachers their perceived needs regarding their role as cooperating teachers. I explained that my analysis of these perceptions and needs of the cooperating teacher was based on the responses I collected from conducting semi structured interviews with each of the participants. I also outlined my approach to interpreting the narrations of the interviewed participants. This chapter presents the findings from the in-depth interviews that I conducted to answer the following key research questions:

- 1) What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles?
- 2) What are student teachers' perceptions of the roles of the cooperating teacher?
- 3) What are practicum advisors' views of the roles the cooperating teacher can play in the practicum?
- 4) What needs do cooperating teachers have regarding their roles?
- 5) How can the perceptions of the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors about the role of the cooperating teacher and their needs influence the improvement of the effectiveness of the practicum?

The findings include information from the semi-structured interviews, peer debriefing and member checks, all of which were completed to gain an understanding of the perceived role of the cooperating teacher in the practicum as well as their perceived needs.

This chapter includes answers to interview questions, summaries of responses, direct quotes provided by all the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors during the interviews. Since the study focused on garnering perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher from various stakeholders specific attention to their detailed responses will require a significant amount of their direct dialogue to be used in describing the findings. The names used in these dialogues are all pseudonyms.

5.1 Research Question 1: What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles?

After a detailed analysis of the data regarding this research question, five major themes emerged from the data collected. Research findings are presented as they relate to the emergent themes which I identified regarding this question. The five main themes identified from the analysis of the data were:

1. Willing to accept student teachers
2. Establishing good relationships
3. Mentoring and modelling
4. Observing and evaluating
5. Socializing student teachers

Willingness to Accept Student Teachers

Interviewees used phrases like “no problem”, “willing to accept”, “willing to help” and “willing to pass on knowledge”. Five of the cooperating teachers saw willingness as the most

essential role of the cooperating teachers and they indicated that they were willing and still willing to accept student teachers. Roxanne strongly stated *“I don’t want another student teacher”*. Up to the end of the interview, she still insisted on being unwilling to be a cooperating teacher if training of cooperating teachers is not fixed. They also indicated that there must be willingness to learn on the part of the student teachers. Roxanne stated *“I will support you; I will help you when I can. I will give you advice whether they take it or not. I will give you advice”*.

She continued by expanding on what Roxanne said by explaining:

The cooperating teachers should be the ones who are willing and wanting to have you there and bring you up to standard, hold your hands and take you through, they are your mentors. If I am not willing then I can’t be your mentor.

Roxanne expressed her unwillingness to accept any more student teachers in the future because of their unpreparedness and attitudes. She explained that even though she is willing to accommodate student teacher, they are always unprepared. She painfully said *“and that’s wasting my time, it’s wasting my children’s time. Realizing that I have a student teacher in my class wasting my time is why I said no when asked to take other student teachers”*.

Another cooperating teacher Joanne stated quite categorically that cooperating teachers must be willing to accept student teachers and as such should be carefully selected. She believed that:

Yes cooperating teachers should be carefully selected because we all know, not everyone is willing to have a student teacher in their classroom. Therefore they may not want to assist, they may not facilitate that person [ST] so the principal should have a good idea who they should select to be a cooperating teacher.

When probed into how she knew that cooperating teachers were not willing to accept student teachers, this is what she had to say when she recalled her own teaching practice:

I would have experienced that myself and many other teachers would have talked about it, who I graduated with. They had bad experiences with cooperating teachers who just didn't want anybody in their class. But the principal sent us so we had to go. Once the principal sends that student teacher they have to accept them but if they don't want them they don't treat you, you know they don't help you or respect you or anything like that.

Joanne concluded by saying “so it comes as though the student teacher is just left there alone”.

Roxanne was not happy with the manner in which student teachers were sent to cooperating teachers. She said:

Student teachers are just sent and we have to take them even if we are forced to. What can we do? Nothing! Just let them go through to teach their two lessons and then we teach our class.

The six cooperating teachers in this study indicated that they were all selected by their principals.

They also believed that the principal is the best person to make the selection because they know their teachers. As Joanne summarized:

So again, not anybody should be chosen to be a cooperating teacher and again the principal should know his or her teachers. So they know who better to be that cooperating teacher.

Establishing Good Relationships

The cooperating teachers described an ideal relationship with the student teacher as being based on components such as open communication, feeling comfortable, trust and respect. Their actual relationship, however, was described as including both personal and professional dimensions. From a personal perspective, all of the cooperating teachers described “friendships” with the student teacher. One cooperating teacher shared an experience where she observed a colleague in the adjacent classroom treating the student teacher like a “servant”. “That cooperating teacher”, she explained “used the student teacher to do things like distribute books, record pupils’ attendance on the register, distribute lunches and so on”. She also described a

professional relationship as one in which the cooperating teacher, provides support, gives advice related to teaching and learning and even learning from each other.

Joanne described her relationship with the student teacher “*what I tell them is anything you have concerns about or you are not sure about you call me. So they have my phone number, they call me. I give them my email address*”. Roxanne extended the same offer as Joanne. She told the student teacher “*you will get my number so you can call me anytime*”. Joanne spoke about “*building as getting along with you. You must have a good rapport. After they have left my classroom they call me and ask me if I can give some ideas*”. She viewed student teachers as professional equals, as part of the teaching team and friends in training, “*I learn from you and you learn from me. I don’t mind exchanging ideas*”. Joanne described some cooperating teachers as “*the sage on the stage*” where they control what happens in their classroom hardly allowing for student teacher input. She went on to say “*this should not be so; it should be a back and forth sharing*”. Stacey stated “*it’s not about me winning. It’s about both of us winning. You gain from me, I am gaining from you*”.

Making student teachers feel comfortable surfaced as an important aspect of good relationships. The very first cooperating teacher interviewed was very adamant that the first thing a cooperating teacher should do is to make the student teacher comfortable. She says:

Oh yes it [good relationship] is very important because the student must be comfortable in order to learn. They [ST’s] can’t have conflict between student teacher and cooperating teacher and expect them to learn. So when they [ST’s] see we are working together in unity and love it helps them to come up to standard. So when both of them hold the same head, it’s always a benefit to the students.

Stacey mentioned that she knew she had to be understanding and be willing to work with them:

You must have a cordial relationship. Because if you don’t get that good relationship you would not be able to reach very far in terms of that teaching practice, because you will not

feel confident. You will not feel comfortable being around that person. So you must have a cordial relationship going.

Roxanne believes that she is a very good cooperating teacher. She mentioned that she will be willing to make the student teacher feel as comfortable as possible. She believed that:

Once you have a good relationship with your student teacher, it will be easy sailing. A good relationship is very, very important because you function better when you are in a comfortable area. If you feel wanted, you feel safe, you feel at ease and you perform better. But if you are stressed you know you are not wanted. You would not want to try anything new. You wouldn't want to come out of your zone.

Drew described making her students comfortable and summed it up as “*I took them around, through the whole school, went to each class and introduced them*”. Roxanne also showed how far she went in building a good relationship with the student teacher:

If you have a good relationship with the student teacher and you feel comfortable, you give the student teacher her own table, her own area and everything in the classroom. I try to make them comfortable. I know that I was in that same position.

The cooperating teachers associated trust and respect with establishing a good relationship. For example, Mike explained: “*I see the cooperating teacher in terms of it is I give you a lesson. I am trusting you [to] do a good lesson so that I won't have to teach it over*”. Joanne also believed that:

If you encounter a problem as a student teacher who are you going to? You must be able to trust the cooperating teacher. There must be trust to help them to get over that situation, over that hurdle.

Roxanne shared her feelings on having a respectful relationship. She said “[*I*] *don't know if they have respect for the cooperating teacher. They not listening to us. What can we do? Nothing*”. She continued:

Like they know we just there. And when they begin to teach you itching to get up and say, hey stop! This happens many times wanting to stop the lesson. We don't know how much authority, well not authority but what we can do and cannot do. So we have to let them go.

Mike also talked about intervening during the lesson delivery but thought that it may not be the best approach. He explained:

I don't want when you go up there you are off track and then it is you now have to stop them in the middle of the lesson [that] is something that I would not want to do because I know that could be a kind of embarrassing.

Joanne also had her own views on this topic. She said:

I don't try to re-teach a lesson they would have done because I have seen that happen where the cooperating teacher hastily re-teaches a lesson. The cooperating teacher would have done that. That does not go down good at all, especially if you re-teach just as the student teacher finishes teaching. That is not good.

None of the cooperating teachers saw drastic intervention during the teaching sessions by the student teacher as one of their roles. The cooperating teachers all expressed the value of establishing a good relationship with the student teacher. They saw their role as encouraging open communication, making student teachers feel comfortable, developing a good relationship with trust and respect.

Mentoring and Modelling

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, Butler and Cuenca (2012) posited that mentoring is a socially constructed practice and the instructional coach (cooperating teacher) is a mentor who primarily assists pre-service teachers in developing the repertoire of skills needed to teach. Bandura (1977) also believe that human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling.

The cooperating teachers interviewed in this study used the words mentoring and modelling interchangeably. This was gathered from some of the expressions they made like “*a mentor is a model*” and on another occasion “*modelling good teaching is like being a good mentor*” and “*to be a good mentor you must be a good model*”. They saw mentoring as modelling and as an essential role in student teacher development. Stacey stated:

Mentoring is associated with a role model because a person will have to be looking up to you to follow, to emulate what you are doing. You must be a role model. A mentor would actually show you.

Joanne recalled her experience as being a mentor and what she does because she completed a mentoring course as part of her Masters of Education programme. She stated:

I did a course in mentoring. Whereas mentoring is about giving guidelines, you are to guide them. Mentoring is associated with modelling, scaffolding, because you have to give them [ST's] something to support them.

Roxanne also recalled her experience as a student teacher

On my practice I sat down and watched the class teacher teach. Then she would allow me to teach. That is mentoring or modelling. You teach in front of your mentor. The mentor has to demonstrate or model to the student teacher. Sitting in a class in the university they would not get that. When they are in the classroom with you they learn how to keep the class, how to manage the class. They see the strategies you use in building a lesson.

Stacey supported this with “*seeing it [a lesson] on paper is one thing, but actually seeing how it is played out in the classroom is a different thing*”. All cooperating teachers acknowledged mentoring as essential to their role. Stacey explained:

Mentoring to me is having a better relationship with the person so you will be discussing one on one, critique, appraising, also demonstrating, and showing what is expected of them. So mentoring is more in-depth or of a closer relationship than a supervisor.

Roxanne gave her own explanation of what she believed the role of the mentor should be. She stated:

Mentoring is associated with a guide, demonstrator, one giving constructive criticisms, counsellor, mother figure, my cooperating teacher was a mother figure. Always organized. You have to be a very kind and compassionate person, very understanding. You have to be patient because the student teacher is learning from you.

Drew stated “mentoring should entail guidance, assistance, showing examples of what a teacher should be”. Implicitly coming out of the conversations with the cooperating teachers was the difference between mentoring and supervision. According to Roxanne “supervising is that you are coming just to see. Let me see. Just coming to see mistakes”.

Joanne also spoke about what she believed supervision entails and described what happens when university supervisors visit schools. She had this to say:

Supervise is just overseeing what the person is doing. You don't have much of an input into what they [ST's] are doing. Supervising is overseeing the entire process, not necessarily interacting. Sometimes I feel that the university supervisors [PA's] supervise. I think they are so rushed that they just give a 'slam bam' kind of visit to the student. I don't feel that they have a feel for the students, for what is going on, on the ground.

Stacey gave her own view on the advantage of supervision from the cooperating teacher. She asserted this saying:

Remember the supervisor [PA] is just talking but the cooperating teacher could actually show, demonstrate what is expected of them [ST's] and in terms of discipline and class control, the supervisor is not really there to show how to control your class.

Mike summarized the conversation about the subtle difference between supervising and mentoring when he stated:

Obviously while mentoring I am supervising. A mentor can be a supervisor but a supervisor might not be a mentor. In terms of the mentor, it might be a passionate person who has more of a passion and should model and give you genuine critique.

Generally, there was consensus that mentoring and modelling should be essential roles of cooperating teachers.

Observing and Evaluating

The theme observing and evaluating included reflection and feedback since the cooperating teachers in this study thought reflection and feedback were subsumed in evaluating. Butler and Cuenca (2012) see mentors as instructional coaches who observe and evaluate instructional practice. The student teachers did not see reflection and feedback as a separate entity from evaluating. All six cooperating teachers noted that observations were an important part of their roles. Observations were not exclusive to only when the student teachers were actually teaching but included observing the student teachers' lesson plans before they were taught. Stacey recounted:

Before they teach I guide them. I would give them, give them advice. They go home and they go according to what I say. They put in what they know too. They come back with it [lesson plan]. I go through it, they teach then I critique.

Roxanne also shared her strategy in observing lesson plans:

I would tell her how to teach a particular lesson or topic. She will come with the lesson or topic. We talk about it. When I give her advice, she would take a note and go and change up and bring back before teaching. You must give constructive feedback before the lesson is done.

Joanne specified *"I like to see it [the lesson] before-hand so I can break it down and give feedback. Then let them sit and discuss with you [CT] what you [ST] did"*. She even went further than observing the lesson plan, *"look at the teaching practice folder [compilation of all units, objectives, lessons, resources]. Let them talk about their philosophy of education and their own personal philosophy"*. Joanne emphasized *"I say when you do your lessons send them so we can*

check it before you submit to the lecturer [PA] for approval. If I see anything that needs improvement, I make it”.

Mike suggested that even during the lesson, student teachers can get feedback. He gave a strategy that he uses. He was steadfast in saying:

I told her during the lesson try to watch me from time to time, so I can subtly cue you in as to where you are going wrong. After the lesson you come to me and I give honest critique, pointing out, okay here is where you were going wrong, here is where you can improve on this and that. I give them something positive, then negative and then we end up with something positive.

Drew shared her experience in evaluating. She explained:

No way you can have a teacher [ST] and you don't give an evaluation of the teacher at the end of the day. A lesson is done, you reflect on it, you say what was good, what wasn't good, what could be better, what went wrong, how the lesson can be improved and this can assist both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher.

Joanne also gave an insight into how she goes about evaluating student teachers:

Before the lesson I talk, they take notes. After the lesson I sit with them. While they were teaching I made little notes, what I liked, what they could improve on, what they could have added, what could have been left out. Then I would say this is how you did.

All the cooperating teachers were involved in student teacher observations and evaluations. They gave input to the student teachers about their competence and performance. They saw observing and evaluating as an important role for the cooperating teacher.

Socializing Student Teachers

The theme of socialization, referred to by Bandura (1977) and Vygotsky (1978) as social interactions emerged from cooperating teachers, suggesting that their role is not only the technical aspects like observing lessons and giving feedback but more hidden aspects of the teaching profession. For example, Joanne stated:

So the cooperating teacher has a lot to do other than just about lessons. You have to change their attitudes. Some of them... it's an important role actually grooming them with a professional attitude.

Drew said emphatically *"I am there to look at their work and their mannerisms. Their whole deportment, even dress and everything"*. Joanne was concerned about the pre-service student teacher who needs more guidance in the professional aspects of becoming a teacher since they have never taught before. She said *"they don't have a clue because they had no practice. They are not in the teaching service. Those are the one who really need guidance"*. Drew stressed that:

It is not just about the lesson. It goes further than that. You have to change attitudes. I remember telling one [student teacher] that you may have to go home and change because of the low cleavage and the slit in the skirt. Ensure that you dress appropriately, aware of how you present yourself as a teacher. Every aspect of your school life makes an impact on the pupils. That's the hidden curriculum.

Mike also expressed concern about the student teachers who are not in the teaching service:

Certain things like how you approach assemblies and so forth. Your first impression counts. The way you speak, especially if you are not a teacher [pre-service] and you are going to the classroom for the first time. So advice on how they present themselves as a professional.

Joanne reiterated *"the way they present themselves is important, because there are student teachers when you see them in other classes, I say to myself 'uh huh', they are not for the profession"*. Although Stacey did not explicitly use the word socialize, she continuously emphasized that the cooperating teacher should be exemplary in her behaviour and introduce the student teachers into the teaching world. Generally, the cooperating teachers saw their roles as grooming the student teachers with a professional attitude, what Drew described as the *"social part of teaching"* preparing the student teachers for more than just teaching lessons. She continued:

The cooperating teacher is the one to let the students [ST's] into what is happening in the schools, what real school life is all about. These pre-service teachers never taught before. When they come [to our school] we have to let them into the school culture, the school context. They must have an idea of the operation of the school. It's true they are here to practice in the classrooms but that's just one part.

However, one cooperating teacher openly said:

No, I never really focus on other things than the lesson. I have never really gone beyond the classroom because they [ST's] are not really here long enough to focus on other things. There is not enough time.

In general, most cooperating teachers agreed that developing classroom teaching skills was a major duty. Introducing the student teacher into real school life was equally important.

5.2 Research Question 2: What are student teachers' perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher?

This research question was concerned with how student teachers view the role of the cooperating teacher. Analysis of the data collected from the student teachers revealed that they believe that the cooperating teachers' roles were:

1. Keeping up to date with current practices
2. Establishing collegial relationships
3. Giving feedback
4. Contributing to student teachers' assessment

Keeping up with Current Practices

Keeping up with current educational practice was the first theme that appeared during the interviews. At the UTT, student teachers are introduced to some of the most up to date techniques and strategies regarding classroom teaching skills. However, when they presented their units of

work and their lesson plans, they were criticized by the cooperating teachers about their structure. The cooperating teachers believed that the plans were insufficient and not detailed enough. The student teachers also experienced instances where they were told to restructure their lessons to suit the cooperating teacher. One student teacher, Kerry admitted to this:

Some of the cooperating teachers were not familiar with the resources that I used with them [pupils]. For example, the geo-board. I wanted to use the geo-board so I went to the cooperating teacher and said miss I am going to use this resource to do my Mathematics lesson on shapes. She [CT] said how can you use that square shape to teach other shapes? Then she asked me, what is that? So when the cooperating teachers don't know about resources and how to use them then we are not allowed to.

Kerry expressed her views on the idea of resources. She asserted saying:

There needs to be some programme showing [CT's] new strategies used at the UTT, how to assess lessons and they will learn about the multiple ways of teaching. How to use them [resources] the correct way.

Kim also shared her experience regarding the issue about the cooperating teacher using teaching strategies that are different from those taught at the university. She explained:

The cooperating teacher has to be knowledgeable, because the student teacher is coming with certain knowledge about what is expected from lecturers from the strategies she would have been taught. And the cooperating teacher does not know. It make life difficult for the student teacher, it can frustrate the student teacher because you are trying to use strategies and implement the things that you were taught, and the cooperating teacher, who does not know, it can be difficult because she is now seeing things she never used. It can cause her to look at you in a very [questioning] way, you trying to show her up.

Mindy believed that cooperating teachers need to be in the know. She stated that:

You as a student teacher going into the class for the first time teaching a lesson and sometimes you don't know everything and you may need help with something and sometimes you may go to the cooperating teacher and they themselves don't know. I think they should be trained in some way with the new strategies.

Sandy made this point:

Teachers [CT's] have to change their attitudes. You have some who are there for so long and they also think that they know everything. So you may say something you may try to give an input, based on the new knowledge you are getting [at the university]. But then the training they [CT] would have gotten, twenty or fifteen years ago is different to what we are getting based on what the educational system [university] see as necessary to give to these new teachers coming into the system. We now going into schools to implement this new knowledge. They can't. They not given the opportunity because the cooperating teachers 'eh' [don't] know. The training that you get, the student teachers would shift from trying to practice what they learnt at UTT and they just go with the flow.

Another student teacher, Lisa spoke about an experience with one particular cooperating teacher.

She told me:

You go into the classroom and you sit down to just observe the cooperating teacher. Although she never asked me to sit in I sat and observe. That lesson was a drag, no fun, no different things you see just talk and chalk. How can you learn from that cooperating teacher? There are manipulatives in the school and the teachers [CT's] don't know how to use. So there must be some update. I think that's one of the biggest problems we are learning one set of things at the university and you go to a school the cooperating teacher looking at you like what you doing.

The student teachers saw keeping update with new classroom teaching skills as an essential role for the cooperating teacher. They were very passionate about the UTT bringing these cooperating teachers on par with what is happening at the university. As Candy explained:

Just as education is evolving so too educators have to evolve to suit the time. So we need to do things differently and these teachers [CT's] who would have learnt things when 'king chisel was a hatchet but they need to realize well hey king hatchet is now a chisel'. They need to realize that learning styles have changed therefore the teaching strategies have to change to accommodate the learning.

Kim made reference in the interview to the 'master teacher' and explained:

A teacher who can be a good example can be a master teacher. One who keeps refreshing and reading on new strategies and techniques. I think all teachers need refresher courses, especially cooperating teachers because they must know what is going on at the university. Some still use methods they learnt in training college years ago.

All the student teachers strongly recommended some formal training for cooperating teachers as Sandy summarized and made a vital suggestion for training of cooperating teachers. She concluded:

I strongly recommend and suggest some formal training programme, a formal forum for this [training] to take place. I think that the training of cooperating teachers should be mandatory because training of teachers is ongoing. They need to be trained because they are partly responsible for the teachers that are put in the system.

Establishing Collegial Relationships

This theme highlights the student teachers' desire for support and good relationships between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher during the practicum. Social learning theorists like Bandura (1997) believe that knowledge is transferred through a process of socialization. Sometimes, a smile or a nod of agreement assists both cooperating teacher and student teacher to sense whether things are going well or not. Having a friendly or caring person in the classroom could be reassuring and empowering. Student teachers found value in having collegial relationships with cooperating teachers during their practice and subsequently emphasized the careful selection of cooperating teachers. Three of the six student teachers experienced good relationships, which motivated them on practice. The other three described negative experiences. However, they all agreed that a collegial relation is an essential factor regarding the cooperating teacher. Lisa shared her experience with a cooperating teacher. She explained:

He took time with me. He told me don't be afraid to call on him for advice on what I need to find out. It was a genuine caring, gentle person who knew how to speak to someone. He was not 'hoggish' like some [CT's] I had. That was the greatest cooperating teacher I had because of the good relationship we had. He never played me down, we were on the same level.

Kim shared her experience with her cooperating teacher:

My relationships with my cooperating teachers were all good. I had no bad experiences. All eight were good. They were really caring, if I needed anything. Good relationships make your practice successful. A good relationship can help because it can make you feel comfortable and safe.

Mindy continued “*for me I would say the relationship was very good, I had no problems at all working alongside the cooperating teacher. Once you have a good relationship you will have a good session [practicum]*”.

The three other student teachers also shared mixed experiences of the kind of relationships they shared with their cooperating teachers. They concluded that the relationship one has with the cooperating teacher can either make you or break you in the practicum. For example, Kerry explained:

On one occasion she gave me time to adjust my lesson. She went through the lesson and I went off to do over the lesson [plan] and she did it so nicely in a nice tone of voice not pressuring you to feel you made a mess. No, real cool and nice way in telling me about our mistakes. That is what I liked. I thought that was fantastic. That gentle kind of relationship.

She also described another situation:

She [CT] was one of them who basically was on vacation so sometimes she would show up for class sometimes she would not show up. She did not even inform me that she would be absent and this would have been nice so that I would know in advance how to organize for the day. But no communication. I was not comfortable with her professional side. And that's one of the things a cooperating teacher has to make you feel comfortable, a comfortable kind of relationship in her class. Remember this is a new situation you are in.

Candy spoke about an experience she had with a cooperating teacher:

She made me cry. When I came with my lessons planned for the three weeks, the children were not at the level the cooperating teacher was supposed to bring them to. So I had to go and write over all my lessons. Then all my criticisms were negative. I got no help or suggestions or no ideas given to me from the cooperating teacher. In the middle of my lesson she used to interrupt. She used to say no don't do that. She just tried to belittle me.

Candy was in tears as she continued with the interview “*A lot of times, student teachers get turned off from their cooperating teachers because you go in their class and they try to make your life a living hell*”. Sandy believed that the cooperating teacher should have a friendly relationship with the student teacher, a relationship where cooperating teacher and student teacher can learn from each other. She said:

These cooperating teachers treat you like, where you come from? We want to be treated like we are learning, we know some stuff but be patient with us. Sometimes you could feel that they [CT's] don't want you there. You feel like you are invading their space and they make you feel that way. But they are not telling you that. They just tolerating you. It is painful when you just not feeling welcomed. But you have to do what you have to do to get through. So you know you would tolerate being there, you tolerate their attitude, you tolerate their bad ways, you tolerate, you tolerate you just tolerate. I don't think they [CT's] know. They don't understand their roles.

When I asked Sandy what she thinks the role of the cooperating teacher is, she summarized:

The cooperating teacher has to be present. You have to be committed. Come to school on time, have good personality, caring, supportive, give feedback, must be interested in what the student teacher is doing. Be like a mother to a child, a mentor and they must give genuine and honest, unbiased feedback. There must be a sound relationship between cooperating teacher and student teacher. There can't be friction. They must not be at loggerheads. The cooperating teacher must be someone I can come to easily, one I can even share personal situations with so that they can give support.

Carefully selecting cooperating teachers adds value to the relationship between cooperating teacher and student teacher. The student teachers described the role model characteristics of the cooperating teacher to be caring, helpful, compassionate, empathetic, prepared, advising, giving tips, one with experience, open-minded, honest, guiding, good leadership qualities, and passionate. All of these attest to good mentoring and establishing strong relationships.

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback emerged as a theme for the perceived roles of the cooperating teachers by the student teachers in keeping with the role of the mentor as instructional coach (Butler and Cuenca, 2012). The feedback sessions were mainly conducted by the practicum advisor and the student teacher while the cooperating teacher only attended if he or she was available. The quality of feedback came into question as student teachers felt that cooperating teachers saying that the lesson went well or it was good was helpful but inadequate because it did not give in-depth feedback. Mindy saw the need for cooperating teachers to give feedback, she said:

Not just only positive feedback but negative feedback that would help you move forward and let you know what went well. Also not just what you could have done differently but what you could do in the future. When they [CT's] just tell you it was good or could have been better that doesn't help much. The feedback that they would give should encourage you to grow.

Kim also shared her experience during her practicum. She explained:

All my cooperating teachers were able to offer advice [feedback] on how the lessons went. Advice on strategies used, advice on management, advice on time. Even when the supervisor [PA] comes and leaves they [CT's] would say your weaknesses and your strengths and sometimes give more detailed feedback than the supervisor. You should know, you are a supervisor. You always have to touch and go to another school. No real time to give detailed feedback. So the cooperating teacher has to [give feedback].

Lisa shared her views on how she benefitted from the feedback:

Learning how to control the class was an example of the kind of feedback given to me by the cooperating teacher. She told me that my voice is soft and I needed to project [voice] because when you project the children would hear. Then she said they will take a little time to analyze what you are saying. So give them time. When you are doing demonstrations they must see. I pick up a little. The type of feedback is useful.

Lisa also talked about another cooperating teacher at a school where she did her first practicum:

The experience with her wasn't bad but that one I got less feedback and it is the feedback that is so helpful for me. What happened is that the only time she would sit and look at me is when my practicum advisor was there and that's the only time she would tell me how to improve that particular lesson. She had a good relationship with me but the feedback wasn't there. Feedback is so important to us as student teachers. I need to know well how to improve, how to be a better teacher. I have never taught before and I don't want to mislead the children.

Lisa shared the same thoughts like Kim regarding supervisors. She said:

The feedback from the practicum advisor and the cooperating teacher is there, I learnt from both of them but I benefited more from my cooperating teacher because Mr. X [practicum advisor] would pop in and pop out. He would come and spend a little time with you 35 minutes, and he gone. He would give some advice like you have to manage your class better, your lesson was too short or too long and he gone. But the cooperating teacher was always there. The cooperating teacher's role is much more important where advice or feedback is given on actual teaching. Sometimes the lecturer even leaves before the lesson is done because he has to go to other schools. Leaving me here in Scarborough to go to Charlotteville, so he can't really spend time with me.

Candy gave her experience on the type of feedback she received on practice. She stated:

For most [of the time] I had cooperating teachers who showed me, gave feedback, supported me, cared, who were helpful, who actually held my hand and took me through the process. But I also had those who just glanced at my work and wasn't too concerned with what went on.

Sandy stated that giving feedback was an important role of the cooperating teacher. She started off

by saying:

In my case, the cooperating teachers would have been trained for some time but their attitude is not right. They make you feel you are doing fine and so on and actually giving you positive feedback when the truth is that they found something wrong but they did not genuinely tell you. The cooperating teacher must give feedback. Be genuine about your comments, genuine about your feedback. We need to have cooperating teachers giving genuine and deep feedback.

Kerry believed that the role of the cooperating teacher should be to give feedback:

The role of the cooperating teacher should be to give some sort of feedback after each lesson whether positive or negative or both. You want help for you to practice your skills, help from the cooperating teacher where you expect to get feedback. But when you have cooperating teachers who are not there in the class you can't get feedback. There are some of them who are basically on vacation when you [ST] are there. How can you get feedback? This stems back from the way cooperating teachers who are selected. The principal makes the selection but sometimes it may be a bad selection. I got cooperating teachers who I think don't know what they should do when they have student teachers or just don't care.

All of the student teacher convincingly stated that a major role of the cooperating teachers is giving feedback. They also emphasized that feedback should be genuine and saw the need for feedback to show them the way forward in their practicum considering that they are trainees who need direction.

Contributing to Student Teachers' Assessment

This theme emerged from student teachers who recognized the need for cooperating teachers to contribute to student teachers' assessment. This theme differed from the feedback discussed earlier which the student teachers considered to be help or assistance given in post conferencing. There was agreement among the student teachers that the grade determined by practicum advisors was not enough to reflect their performance because of the rushed and infrequent visits they received from the practicum advisors. Candy said:

The cooperating teacher is there to assist you. If they assist then they can give you a mark, but if they don't assist you then of course they can't give a mark. If all cooperating teachers come on board with the same understanding on assessing then they can give a mark to add to the final mark. When the lecturers [PA's] come everything is close to perfection and when the lecturer is not there some student teachers teach without set inductions or resources. The cooperating teacher can fill the gap and be more a part of the training by helping with the assessment. If student teachers know that they will be assessed by the cooperating teacher and that will contribute to their final mark they will be more prepared.

Mindy also believed that there must be some collaboration between the cooperating teacher and practicum advisor:

I think a report will be good at the end of all practice sessions because it will tell the lecturer [PA] your level of ability in the classroom. You have to have dedicated cooperating teachers who would give an honest grade. The cooperating teacher must be fair in their assessment. The cooperating teacher really needs to give a mark and that should contribute to their final grade, because the lecturer only sees two to three lessons. Who is looking at the other seventeen? On final practice they see about four to five [lessons]. Who is seeing the other forty-five? But it boils down to selecting cooperating teachers who are capable and give them some sort of training as to what they are expected to do in assessing the student teacher. And student teachers knowing that would do their best all the time and not only for the practicum advisor.

Kim also related the value of having cooperating teachers contributing to student teachers' final grade. She said:

My honest opinion is that I think of having external supervisors [PA's from Trinidad], it would be fair for the cooperating teacher to give her report, because the supervisor would pass, and it may not be a good day or something might happen to affect the lesson negatively. But if you are there continuously with your cooperating teacher, she should be able to use a day to day guide to say the strengths and weaknesses of this teacher [ST], and definitely should contribute a fair grade.

Kim concluded “there should be some formal system for choosing master teachers as cooperating teachers”. However, Lisa summed up the conversation:

The advisor is there for two or three lessons and you are given a mark for that. What if on those days you didn't do good, and others you did well? The cooperating teacher has to contribute to some sort of assessment and they need to work with the advisors because right now one saying one thing and the other saying something else. Sometimes you work hard and get a 'C'. UTT has to get their act together with the practicum. They must include the cooperating teacher in the assessment as part of their role.

5.3 Research Question 3: What are practicum advisors' views of the roles the cooperating teacher can play in the practicum?

The third research question was concerned with how the practicum advisors perceived the role of the cooperating teachers. The interview protocol addressed this question and responses have been categorized into four themes:

1. Build student teacher confidence
2. Socializing student teachers into school and classroom context
3. Mentor student teachers.
4. Contribute to student teachers' assessment

Build Student Teacher Confidence

All three practicum advisors expressed the need for building student teachers' confidence as a major role of the cooperating teacher. This aspect of mentoring described by Butler and Cuenca (2012) as part of an emotional support system. The advisors recognized that the student teachers as pre-service teachers who only obtained classroom experience when they were pupils. They agreed that the practicum advisor cannot go to the cooperating teachers' classroom and dictate what should happen. The cooperating teacher is the one with experience to gently re-introduce the student teacher into the primary classroom. Kris started the interview with:

The cooperating teachers is really, really an important part of the preparation of student teachers but you have to deal with it on an individual basis because just like any other facet in teaching you have people who are suitable and some people who are unsuitable. A cooperating teacher must be experienced but they must also see teaching practice as being developmental. They see it as assessment and it's not about assessing but assisting. If you go into a classroom and see a lesson with 20 faults, you can't tell somebody you made 20 faults. You select two or three of the most glaring ones and talk about that. So you don't shatter the student teacher in one blow. You build their confidence in an incremental way.

Another practicum advisor, Paul summarized what Kris said when he explained “*you have to know when to turn a blind eye. Not everything you see you will criticize with a knock-out punch. You must give the student teacher self-assurance*”. John contributed to this theme when he stated:

These poor student teachers. Some of them just left secondary school and in their first year we send them out in the field. We don't even know who we are sending them too and if they don't get that support they may want to leave the course. For now we have to depend on the cooperating teachers' classrooms and the cooperating teacher to introduce them to the world of teaching as this is a delicate time for them. They have to embrace the student teachers and boost their confidence. Give them that support. Encourage them. The problem is that we are sending student teachers to cooperating teachers we don't know so we are not sure they [CT's] can give that support.

Kris continued to add his bit about confidence:

What teacher training students need probably more than any other thing is confidence, confidence. Their [CT's] first job is to inspire confidence and make you [ST] confident then they will work out problems.

Continuing the conversation I asked if presently cooperating teachers were instilling student's confidence. He further remarked:

I can't even volunteer a percentage. I would say that I have met teachers [CT's] like that but I have also met teachers that I have recommended to administration that nobody ever go back in that person's class. They destroy the students' confidence absolutely and make the student teacher worst off. You deal with the wrong doings of the student teacher in a professional way. It should never be personal that the person thinks they are worthless. Sometimes when I try to explain to the cooperating teacher that the teaching practice is developmental, they get annoyed telling me about their experiences and how hard they had it. It's not because somebody was unprofessional and somebody gave you trouble that you are going to pass that on. You are being a bad teacher, a bad mentor.

There was a sympathetic cry by one of the practicum advisors, John when he said:

There are student teachers who burn the midnight oil to try to do what the cooperating teacher wants them to do. When they go to the class with it these cooperating teachers shatter the self-esteem and confidence of the student teacher.

Every practicum advisor blamed the organization of the practicum particularly the manner in which cooperating teachers were selected. There was a feeling of urgency for the placement of student teachers to be re-visited. According to Kris:

We tend to forget that these student teachers are 'green', they never taught before. They don't have confidence in themselves so that we have to build that confidence in them. And when I say we I don't mean the practicum advisors, because as I said before we can't go in the cooperating teachers' classes and take over. The cooperating teacher has a role to play because without confidence there is this insecure feeling that could affect a person's performance. It all comes back to who we select as cooperating teachers.

Paul believed that cooperating teachers are the ones to make the student teachers believe that they can become teachers and that they will encounter problems, which can be solved. He said:

You see our student teachers are sometimes very timid. The cooperating teacher has to have a coolness in dealing with the student teacher. He has to give them the assurance that it is okay if you make a mistake and build confidence to try things.

At the end of the interview, I asked Paul *"Is there anything else you would like to tell me regarding your perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher?"* He answered:

Well as I said they must give that trust to the student teacher to let him know that the teaching practice is a process. But if you don't choose the best cooperating teachers as we did twenty years ago, we will be setting up the student teachers with poor mentors. In the past in the old Valsayn Teachers' College days the person in charge of the practicum was the principal Mr. Emmanuel. He divided Trinidad into smaller areas according to districts. and a group of lecturers was selected to be in charge of a district. These lecturers would move around, check the schools, the principals and look for the best schools and the best cooperating teachers for the student teachers. Perhaps we need to go back to what we used to do.

Socializing Student Teachers into School and Classroom Context

This theme emerged mainly from the fact that the majority of the student teachers have no previous classroom teaching experience. There was total agreement among the practicum advisors that another major role of the cooperating teacher should be to introduce the student teacher into

the real school and classroom settings. The practicum advisors admitted that it was impossible for them to engage in this activity at the campus. They agreed that socialization had to be done in the real classroom. According to Kris:

Remember, these students have no experience of teaching in the classroom so the cooperating teacher has to enlighten them about school culture and classroom life. This practicum is not only about teaching a lesson and the supervisor or cooperating teacher giving feedback. No you have to let the student teacher know there is a hierarchical structure in the school. How are things done generally? How do you deal with parents when they come to visit the school? What is the relationship between the school and the community? What kind of relationship do teachers in the school have? And you know that aspect of preparation for the classroom is lacking.

Paul believed that socializing the student teacher is extremely important. He explained:

The school is a social institution. There are things that happen in the school other than teaching. For example, understanding the relationship between the principal, vice principal, head of department. And every school is a different context so they will gather experiences of different school contexts.

John also concurred with the other practicum advisors. He continued saying:

Student teachers need to know how schools operate. There are many things that happen that you may not be able to read about in any book. There must be interactions not only with cooperating teachers but everybody in the school. There must be interactions to determine how to deal with things like, how teachers should get along, how staff meetings are conducted. They have to be involved in preparing children for sports meetings. They have to understand the whole school environment, the class climate and the school context.

John went on to talk about the hidden curriculum. He said “*even at break time or lunch time, the student teacher has to be aware of what happens then*”. The practicum advisors maintained that cooperating teachers must be included in the practicum triad and their skills are to be maximized in developing the true potential of student teachers. This is not only in lesson planning and delivery

but generally understanding the school culture and classroom climate and be socialized into the school system.

Mentoring Student Teachers

This theme resonated with all the practicum advisors interviewed. However, they gave varying definitions for mentoring. For instance, John said:

A mentor is somebody who would do their best at ensuring that a student [teacher] or a fellow co-worker, whatever it is, do their best. Someone who is teaching because you love it. A mentor is somebody you would look up to. These days we have teachers whose morale and attitude are not so good. There is a lot to be desired from some of them. To be a proper mentor you have to love what you are doing. Love teaching, love children, you have to be a great leader. A mentor is one who makes you comfortable and enjoys being around you, one who passes on good skills.

Similarly, Paul described a mentor as:

One who is there with that student teacher all the time and saying to that person this is how it's done. Remember these young people [ST's] are inexperienced they never taught, the mentor teacher will help them develop their skills and build their confidence in doing the correct things. The mentor is a model, they have to model good teaching, good behaviour and good relationships.

I continued to probe this response and asked “*doing what correct things?*” He responded:

How to approach the content and put the resources together with the content and the method, how to develop the lesson incrementally. When things didn't go right she gave her [ST] reasons why. That quality of mentoring is what we want for all our students, model schools and model mentors.

Kris defined a mentor as:

A person with sound philosophy of what education is. Someone who sees helping a student teacher as developmental. Not everybody in a class is a good mentor. You could be a good teacher but not a good mentor. Teacher training is a different skill from teaching. A mentor must have some teacher training skills and I always say we should have some training in a modern type university. You have short courses to bring teachers [CT's] on board with set skills in teacher training. Because we have teacher trainers [instructors] at our

university [UTT] who come in with a Ph.D. and no teacher training skills no teacher education background and I am not saying anymore.

I prompted the participant to continue but he concluded by saying:

There are some teacher trainers who never taught at a primary or secondary school and training student teachers to become primary school teachers, how contradicting.

All practicum advisors concluded that UTT has to be very careful in selecting cooperating teachers for mentoring. They also agreed that the method of selection remains ad hoc, which sometimes results in a bad selection of mentor cooperating teachers and re-structuring of the process of selection is necessary. They believed that the task of a mentor is very delicate and requires specialist skills and training if the mentoring process is to be meaningful. Kris was very graphic in suggesting who should be selected to be mentors and what mentoring entails. He stated:

A mentor cooperating teacher is like the sculpture who is given clay to work with. You can take the clay and you can work the clay to get out the particles and get out the defects. But it takes time, it takes patience and it takes know how. The aim is to get the best shape. But to mold out the clay you must have patience, you have to keep reshaping, and if you don't have that kind of personality you cannot be a good mentor.

Contribute to Student Teachers' Assessment

This theme centers on issues of getting the cooperating teachers to contribute to assessment of the student teachers' overall grade. The role of assessment that is suggested by the practicum advisors included completion of some form of assessment. They further recommended adapting the score card used by the practicum advisors making it more user friendly for the cooperating teachers. Including a narrative with specific events that would help to justify why the student teacher received specific ratings was also put forward. However, all practicum advisors made it clear that for this assessment to be reliable, the cooperating teachers must undergo some sort of training or workshop regarding the assessment exercise. One of the participants highlighted the

value of meeting with the cooperating teacher in what he called a ‘final post-conferencing’ at the end of the student teacher’s practice. Paul remarked:

We would want to meet with them [CT’s] to discuss the summative evaluation and the general growth of the student teacher. I value their comments because they are the practitioners, they are on the set. They are in their classrooms with their children. I would want to meet with them to be a part of it [assessment] because they know the class and they can give reasons why things happen in the classroom. I would value their input especially in post-conferencing. Added to that, cooperating teachers should give a grade or a mark for at least one lesson. So if we are there are four lessons we [PA’s] are supposed to listen to, one mark should come from them [CT’s]. Let them award a mark.

John shared his view about the cooperating teacher’s role in assessment. He said:

I think the cooperating teacher should be part of the assessment process for the student teachers. The cooperating teacher at the end of the practice should be able to make an important input, some kind of assessment into how effective or ineffective the student teacher had been. So yes they [CT’s] should have some kind of input.

When I questioned the participant as to what he meant by “some kind of assessment”, he explained “both qualitative and quantitative”. Kris, who at the beginning of the interview was not too keen about cooperating teachers contributing to the student teachers’ grade, had this to say:

If I selected the cooperating teacher and I am satisfied with that teacher and have had the experience of evaluating the cooperating teacher as a teacher trainer not just a classroom teacher that person can assess the student teacher. But this has implications. My job is to assess the student teacher. The only way I would suggest assessment as part of the role of the cooperating teacher is if they do specific training. That way we can have cooperating teachers engaging in assessing student teachers.

Each of the practicum advisors admitted to the lack of quality time given to the student teachers on practicum because of their heavy teaching load and large number of student teachers to supervise. As such, including the cooperating teacher to contribute to either qualitative or quantitative assessment was prominent in their conversations.

5.4 Research Question 4: What needs do cooperating teachers have regarding their roles?

This question focused on what the cooperating perceived their needs to be regarding their roles in honing or developing their skills related to the support and guidance they give to student teachers. The cooperating teachers had a variety of suggestions from which the following major themes were derived. From the interviews three themes emerged:

1. Collaboration with university/ practicum supervisors
2. Guidelines and expectations
3. Training for cooperating teachers

Collaboration with University/ Practicum Advisors

Cooperating teachers would like to have improved levels of communication with the practicum advisors and made the suggestion that the practicum advisors come in person to make arrangements for the practicum. All the cooperating teachers complained about the sore lack of collaboration and communication with the university supervisors although one cooperating recalled that one particular supervisor made an effort to establish a collaborative relationship. The cooperating teachers felt that they have been neglected and left out of the circle regarding what is happening at the university with respect to the practicum. They stated that student teachers were sent to them via the principal and they were unaware of the responsibilities of the student teacher. For example, how long the practicum would last? What are the responsibilities of the cooperating teacher? Do student teachers have to turn in lesson plans for the cooperating teacher to approve? Do cooperating teachers have to observe and give feedback to the student teachers? They seemed not to know what their duties were as cooperating teachers, because they never met with the practicum advisor until they came to their classroom to visit the student teacher. Roxanne said:

As the cooperating teachers, we just in the dark. You see the university supervisor just send [student teacher] them. No kind of meeting or discussion on what these teachers [ST's] are coming to do and how we have to help them. Most of the time when you see them [PA's] they come inside your class.

Drew complained about the only bit of communication she received. She said:

The only thing they may have said maybe to tell you, you had to evaluate the teacher. But to say your role is to do this, do that, itemized, no.

Joanne stated her concerns about what is required by the student teacher:

I know of some of the courses but I have never seen the practicum outline. This I have not seen or was sent to me. I have no idea of what is required by the student teacher. I know they have to prepare their folders, their units and their lessons. Prepare resources for each of their lessons. But other than that nobody ever informed me of what we are to do with the students. I used what I received from my mentorship training and my own experience to guide and mentor the students.

Roxanne shared similar thoughts like Joanne:

Well I think it is the collaboration that is lacking. That relationship with the practicum advisor. I think before they [practicum advisors] say the students are actually coming to teaching practice in your class, they should ask if the cooperating teacher is willing. You interview the cooperating teacher, then you meet with the student teacher before they come to the class. No collaboration before, they [PA's] just appear for observation of the student.

The whole idea of the practicum advisor meeting with the cooperating teacher before the start of the practicum seemed to be of great concern to the interviewees. The feeling was that practicum advisors paid them extremely brief visits with little or no time for communicating with the cooperating teacher. Roxanne commented:

There should be some collaboration between the practicum advisor or university and the school. This should happen before they [ST's] end up on teaching practice and not just come and have a chit chat when they come to observe the student.

Roxanne felt strongly about having a good working relationship with the practicum advisor. She maintained:

I believe the supervisors [PA's] should have a working relationship with the cooperating teacher. In other words when a student teacher is coming to my class I should not meet the supervisor the day they come to supervise. We have to meet before. If possible you take my number so we can talk. Supervisors come to listen to lessons back to back and that is crazy. I believe there should be some kind of meeting between the supervisor and the cooperating teacher before and during [practicum].

Stacey was the one cooperating who had some collaboration with a particular practicum advisor.

She explained:

I don't recall specifically him or her saying this is my role. But one particular supervisor [PA] whenever he comes he would ask you how is the teacher going and he would ask you to sit in on the lesson and even critique it. What I think. So we have discussions before the lesson and after the lesson. There are other practicum advisors I had who never asked anything about the student teacher. Nothing, not before, not after, never said anything to me. He would just come to the class look at the lesson and just talk with that student teacher.

The cooperating teachers believed that collaboration with the university is crucial in improving the supervision of student teachers.

Guidelines and Expectations

Cooperating teachers expressed concern regarding the amount of direction they were provided with during their course of guiding and supporting the student teacher. All cooperating teachers explained they needed more specific instructions so that they may be aware of what the university expected of both the cooperating teachers and the student teachers. The cooperating teachers were of the view that if they received guidelines and expectations from the university, they would be better able to provide a more effective experience to the student teachers. When as interviewer I asked “*Did you receive any information or training in preparation for serving as a cooperating teacher?*” They all said that they had not received any specific guidance and expressed their desire to have more direction regarding what is expected of them as cooperating teachers including written guideline or expectations, a package, or a manual outlining what is

expected because unawareness of these expectations could lead to conflict between cooperating teacher and student teacher.

For example, Roxanne stated:

Most of the times I had little collaboration with the lecturer [PA] concerning my role. The student teacher told me, miss, they [PA] would like you to appraise the lesson. No sort of preparation for my role. No, none. If student teachers come with a lesson planned and I don't understand something, we clear it up. And then the student teacher would say, that's how the practicum advisor wants it. So there seems to be conflict. There is no relation [relationship] between the supervisor and the cooperating teacher.

Roxanne went on [gesticulating]:

Student teachers feel they could pull wool over the eyes of the cooperating teacher's eyes. So we as cooperating teachers must be guided as to what we should expect from the student and what we have to do. And they [PA's] are not liaising with the cooperating teachers to help in training these student teachers how to teach. We doing one thing and the university doing another.

Mike had an experience similar to that of Roxanne. He commented:

I am realizing now that certain things are not the same since I left there [UTT]. There are certain changes. I would ask are you sure this is what the lecturer [PA] wants. I am saying what should come out is something should be addressed to the cooperating teacher with expectations of them.

Joanne shared this point regarding role expectation:

First we must have an idea of what are the expectations of the university. I don't think that they have ever shared with the cooperating teachers or least not me, what the expectations are of the cooperating teacher. What they [CT's] can do, so that students can achieve while being with you, what is expected at the end of the practice. There is a need to inform.

Stacey also expressed the need to have expectations for the cooperating teachers to be guided. She commented that:

I am not aware of what is my role. I just do what I could do. I never got any formal thing in writing saying okay you are supposed to do x or y or z. I am not too sure what is expected. Are we supposed to model lessons? Are we supposed to critique, appraisal on the lesson plan itself?

Drew supported this conversation regarding expectation. She explained:

From my own experience, there is no document as far as I am aware that details the role and function of a cooperating teacher.

Ella summed up her conversation with “*if we have guidelines, everybody will be on the same page*”. In another conversation I asked Stacey “*What do you perceive your needs are in respect to assisting the student teacher?*” She responded:

Number one and most important, bringing the cooperating teacher on board. We need to be trained or at least given some guidelines as to what is expected of us. If I know I have to model a lesson I would do it because this is what is expected of me.

Training for Selected Cooperating Teachers

The interview provided opportunities for cooperating teachers to explain what was needed to better equip them and improve their skills as cooperating teachers. There was probing for explanations about training that would distinguish cooperating teachers from general classroom teachers. When asked “*What do you believe could help ensure better preparation for your role as a cooperating teacher?*” All cooperating teachers stated training. This training should be focused on areas that would bring them up to date with UTT teaching standards. Cooperating teachers were aware that the university often initiated requests for cooperating teachers to accommodate the student teachers but were not consulted in the selection. In most cases, principals made the assignment of student teacher to selected cooperating teachers. During the interview, each of the six cooperating teachers reported on the process of selecting them to become cooperating teachers.

Ella’s experience was:

I don't even know. I really don't know. The teachers came, the principal told me that the teachers came and they are coming to second year infants.

Mike asserted that “*students came to school [and] indicated where they wanted to go. Principal approved.*” Joanne gave her view on the qualities that a cooperating teacher should have. She said:

The principal makes the choice as to where the students are assigned. He looks for seniority, number of years in the service, ability to interact.

Drew, who is very experienced and has been teaching for more than 20 years said:

I was selected by the student through the principal. She [ST] indicated to the principal, Standard 1 my class. Principal chooses. [I am] always chosen.

Stacey gave her own experience:

I was selected by the principal after the student teacher met with the principal saying she wanted to be in the infant class. The student teacher would have gone to the principal and the principal would have told me that I am getting a student teacher. The principal selects.

One cooperating teacher bluntly refused to accept a student teacher but persuasion from the principal helped her to change her mind. Roxanne explained:

The student teacher came to me said ‘Miss, I would like to use your classroom for teaching practice’. Principal came with them and I said I don't want another student teacher. The principal begged and I said alright. That's how it was.

Most of the cooperating teachers felt that they were selected on merit. Nonetheless, throughout the interview, the cooperating teachers provided their perception of what they believed would provide them with the most support necessary to work more effectively with the student teacher. They suggested training of principals or the training of cooperating teachers themselves. Joanne stated:

Most cooperating teachers don't go through any training. We just are selected either by the principal or the student teacher. My initial thought was that you give some sort of

training on a voluntary basis. Training for those cooperating teachers who are willing, but there must be a selection process. Collaborate with principals, take names of those who are willing and give them a professional development course regarding their role as cooperating teacher. Give us skills help us to understand the role of the cooperating teacher. Eventually if you do that course every cooperating teacher will be able to work with the student teacher knowing what to do.

Drew suggested that principals should be trained:

I don't know if something could be done with the principals. Train them in terms of what the cooperating teacher should do. Have a training programme for principals so at the end of the day when we receive student teachers, the principal would be in a better position to say look this is a document. Needs training, for the principal [to] have a document detailing duties and expectations.

Conversely, Drew stated that:

Maybe to provide some training for selected teachers [CT's]. Student teachers don't know which class has experienced teachers.

Mike also thought that training was important in preparing cooperating teachers:

Yes, a meeting with the cooperating teachers, training and that would be the ones who volunteer to be cooperating teachers. It is up to them [CT's] to be a willing participant.

Stacey suggested possible training for all cooperating teachers:

You can train all if possible, but if they don't want to come they can make the choice. The programme should include what the cooperating teacher should be doing. Well exactly what is expected.

Regarding the content of the training, some of the interviewees said that the training should include some social aspect. For example, Drew advised:

What should be included in the training programme would be the social aspect. That would be a different dimension, how to be welcoming, how to treat with somebody so they feel that they are a part of and welcomed.

On the academic side, Joanne proposed “*show them [CT’s] how to incorporate what the student teacher is doing [in their plan]. That’s the only way you won’t see it [ST’s plan] as a threat to your plan of work*”. She also suggested to “*train cooperating teachers to be mentors so that they will be able to guide them [ST’s] into every aspect of teaching in a classroom*”. Roxanne suggested “*with mentoring, they should have an idea of how it is done, what they [CT’s] are looking for. They have to know how to mentor*”. She continued:

The cooperating teachers have to be brought up to date with the new teaching methods because things have changed. We have to know the structure for lesson plans, new strategies, new methods and so on. Most of the times we use what we did at college and then that is not what the student teachers are doing.

Joanne insisted “*assessment has to be part of the training, part of the cooperating teachers’ work*”. Each of the cooperating teacher interviewed indicated their willingness to be part of a training programme. However, Roxanne insisted “*well I am not sure I will be willing to be a cooperating teacher if this training is not fixed*”. The cooperating teachers all agreed that CEPUTT should take the responsibility for the training of cooperating teachers.

Conclusion

The results presented in this chapter addressed the five research questions that were the basis of this study with questions revolving around the perceived roles of the cooperating teachers. The research questions which focused on the cooperating teachers elicited themes that defined and explained the perceived roles of the cooperating teacher from the cooperating teacher, the student teacher and the practicum advisor. These themes emerged from the in-depth analysis of the data guided mainly by the works of Bandura (1977), Vygotsky (1978 and Butler and Cuenca (2012). Answers to the first question: What are the cooperating teachers’ perceptions of their role yielded themes like, willing to accept student teachers, establishing good relationships, mentoring and

modelling, observing and evaluating and socializing student teachers. The second research question: What are student teachers' perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher revealed that cooperating teachers should keep up with current educational practices, establish collegial relationships, give feedback and contribute to student teachers' assessment. The third research question sought to determine the practicum advisors' views on the role the cooperating teacher can play in the practicum. Themes like build student teacher confidence, socialize student teachers into school and classroom context, mentor student teachers and contribute to student teachers' assessment came out of the data. The fourth research question: What needs do cooperating teachers have regarding their roles produced themes like collaboration with university supervisors, that they be provided with set guidelines and expectations and that they receive training in preparation for their roles as cooperating teachers. The next chapter will summarize the findings of the study and discuss these findings making linkages with the reviewed literature.

Chapter 6

Summary of Findings and Discussions

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to obtain an understanding of the perceptions of cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors regarding the role of the cooperating teacher and to find out the needs of the cooperating teachers. It was assumed that face-to-face interviews with cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors would provide an opportunity for them to provide perspectives on the role of the cooperating teachers by reflecting on practices in assisting student teachers in the practicum. Major themes developed from the data analysis in response to the research questions:

1. What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles?
2. What are student teachers' perceptions of the roles of the cooperating teacher?
3. What are practicum advisors views of the roles the cooperating teacher can play in the practicum?
4. What needs do cooperating teachers have regarding their roles?
5. How can the perceptions of the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors about the role of the cooperating teacher and their needs influence the improvement of the effectiveness of the practicum?

This chapter contains a summary and discussion of the findings.

6.1 Summary of Findings

The aim of my study was to investigate the perceived roles of cooperating teachers regarding their roles and needs in relationship to the student teachers they have hosted. The interview process provided opportunities to explore the research questions and encouraged the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors to reflect on their experiences. The analysis and coding led to emergent themes related to each of the research question. This section revisits the research questions and addresses the findings.

The first question asked cooperating teachers to report their perceptions of their role in the guidance and preparation of student teachers. They described and reflected on their perceived role in five categories. There was concurrence from all six participants in the study that their roles were to establish good relationships, mentor and model and observe and evaluate. Four of the six cooperating teachers considered their role to be willing to accept student teachers and they also considered socialization of student teachers into the hidden aspects of the teaching profession.

The second research question was concerned with student teachers' perceptions of what they believed to be the role of the cooperating teachers. All six participants indicated that cooperating teachers should keep up with current practices as they experienced some conflict between what they were taught at university and what they saw happening in the cooperating teachers' teaching. They were also in agreement that the cooperating teachers' role is to give feedback. Four student teachers saw that establishing collegial relationships as an essential aspect of the cooperating teachers' role while the majority believed that they should contribute to student teachers' assessment.

The third research question inquired into the role of the cooperating teacher from the practicum advisors' perspective. They fully agreed that the cooperating teachers' role should be to build student teachers' confidence reassuring them of their efforts at teaching and socialize the student teachers into school and classroom context extending to much more than just lesson delivery. They overwhelmingly stated that the cooperating teachers should be mentors and contribute to the student teachers assessment.

The fourth research question was designed to probe into what cooperating teachers perceived their needs were regarding their role in guiding and supporting and preparation of student teachers. They lamented the poor relationship that existed between the university and the cooperating teachers and called for greater collaboration with the university and practicum advisors. They indicated that there were no written guideline for them to follow when they accommodate student teachers and so expressed the need for some formal document outlining guidelines and expectations. They believed that the document should be accompanied with training for cooperating teachers regarding their role in working with student teachers since they have been relying mainly on their own experience.

The fifth research question which really summarizes the way forward with the practicum in response to finding out how the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher and their needs can influence the effectiveness of the practice required extrapolation from the findings discussed in the first four research questions. The revealed themes which are better selection of cooperating teachers, specific guidelines for cooperating teachers and training workshops for selected cooperating teachers will be further discussed in the final chapter.

6.2 Discussion of Findings

This study intended to examine the perceptions of cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors regarding the role of cooperating teachers in Tobago who facilitated student teachers in the practicum experience. The questions probed into the descriptive role of the cooperating teachers and the ways needed to be prepared to perform these roles. Believing that the role of the cooperating teacher is crucial in the teaching triad (Lu, 2008), I conducted three sets of interviews with members of the triad to glean ways in which the roles of the cooperating teacher are perceived. I also asked cooperating teachers about their needs in fulfilling their commitment to student teacher preparation. The findings from these interviews with the cooperating teachers, the student teachers and the practicum advisors are summarized in Figure 1.

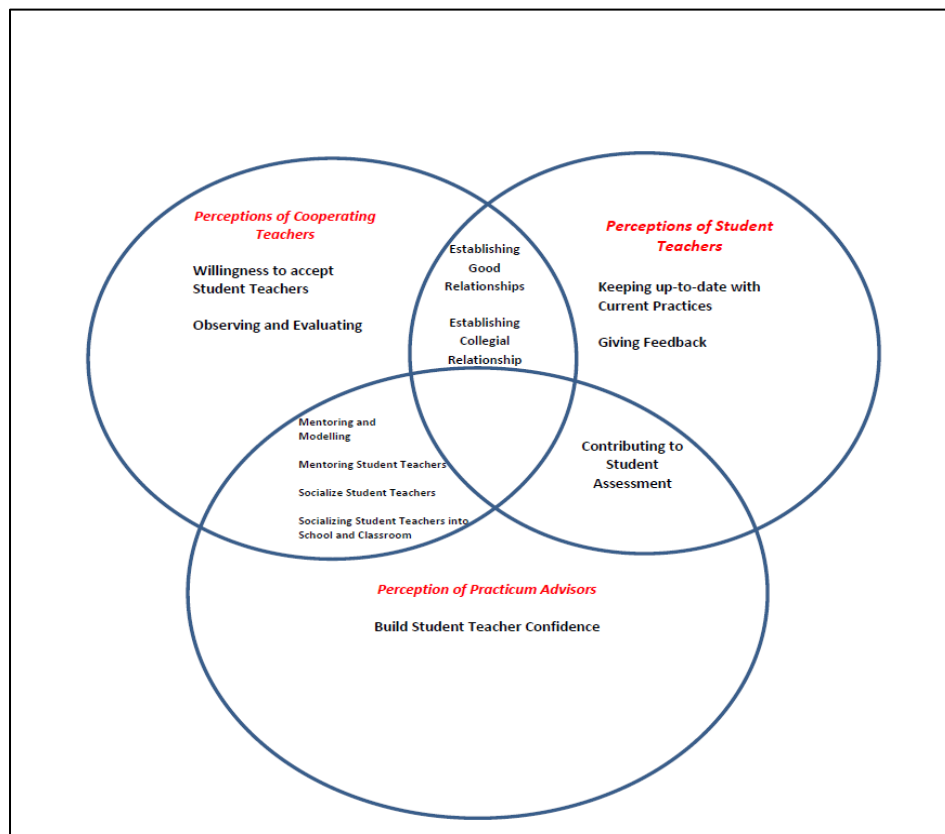


Figure 1 Diagram showing the overlapping themes of the Perceptions of the Cooperating Teachers, Student Teachers and Practicum Advisors.

There were themes which overlapped between sets of participants. For example, between the cooperating teachers and the student teachers the themes; establishing good relationships and establishing collegial relationships emerged and will be treated as the same. The themes contributing to student assessment and giving feedback will also be discussed as one. Mentoring and modelling and mentoring student teachers will be discussed under one section and socializing student teachers and socializing student teachers into school and classroom setting will be discussed together. The themes emerging from the fourth research question regarding the needs of the cooperating teachers which include: collaboration with university/ practicum advisors; guidelines and expectations; and training for selected cooperating teachers will end the discussion.

Several studies have expressed the importance of the role the cooperating teacher plays in guiding student teachers in practicalities of the classroom (Beck & Kosnick, 2000; Seperson & Joyce, 1973; Rajuan, Beijaard & Verloop, 2007) in the practicum and the importance of the role of the cooperating teacher (Clarke et, al.,2014; Cuenca, 2011; Hamman et al., 2006). Cuenca (2011) reported that one of the key factors in learning to teach during practicum is the cooperating teacher. Anderson (2007) also contends that the key person in the school support system during teaching practice is the cooperating teacher. The importance and impact of the cooperating teacher on practicum cannot be overlooked.

Willingness to Accept Student Teachers

Willingness to accept student teachers emerged from the first research question: What are the cooperating teachers' perceptions of their role? This theme has many implications for the

success of the student teacher on practice. The literature documents the poor match between student teachers and cooperating teacher (Johnson, 2010). This poor match is liable to occur if the selection of the cooperating teacher is done in an unsystematic manner. Schools are contacted by an administrative person from the CEPUTT via telephone. Zeichner (1996) found this to be a practice done by other institutions. This method of calling schools often results in blindly sending student teachers to schools as I mentioned in Chapter 1. Administrative personnel contact the school principal who either accepts or refuses to accommodate the student teacher. Once there is agreement to accept a student teacher, the selection of the cooperating teacher is also done by the principal. In such cases, the cooperating teacher really has no input regarding their willingness to accept the student teacher. Roxanne stated “*the cooperating teachers should be the ones who are willing and wanting to have you [student teachers] there*”. Joanne said “*yes, cooperating teachers should be carefully selected because we all know, not everyone is willing to have a student teacher in their classroom. Therefore they may not want to assist; they may not facilitate that person*”. Roxanne was not pleased that student teachers are just sent to them. She said “*Student teachers are just sent and we have to take them even if we are forced to*”. If cooperating teachers are not willing to accept student teachers they may render minimal support, and see having to deal with them as an inconvenience rather than as contributing to student teacher development.

Many cooperating teachers acknowledge that they accept the student teachers because they feel obliged to do so, having been asked by the principal. The university has no part in the selection and is not aware of the capabilities of the cooperating teachers who are selected. Cooperating teachers should be willing to accept a student teacher and should have mentoring capabilities (Galbraith & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2000). Roxanne agreed that the cooperating teachers should be the ones “*wanting to have you there and bring you up to standard, hold your hands and take you*

through, they are your mentors". Bird (2012) suggests that cooperating teachers should volunteer for the assignment of accepting student teachers. In a study conducted by Powell (2016), he claims that placement in classrooms with most effective cooperating teachers is crucial to student teachers. This is supported by Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, (2009) and Wang, Odell and Schwille (2008). Student teachers must be placed in classrooms where they can benefit from experienced cooperating teachers. During the interviews, cooperating teachers expressed their concern about the manner of selection of schools and cooperating teachers. They felt that the time between being informed that they were getting student teachers and the time for preparation was too short. George et al., (2001) also found that cooperating teachers were unhappy with the time for preparation. It would seem more appropriate if cooperating teachers meet more often with cooperating teachers before the actual teaching practice begins. As it is now the student usually makes one field orientation visit to collect information on what they are to teach. So that getting to know the cooperating teacher and building relationships is not considered the focus of the orientation visit.

In Tobago there are a number of classroom teachers who were trained under the teachers' training college system, some whom I taught some twenty years ago. Many of them are approaching retirement and are becoming tired so that they may not mind having a student teacher to help them. On the other hand there are those who do not want to take on additional work and are not the best cooperating teachers to be involved in the supervision of the student teachers. Beebe & Margerison (1995) stated that student teachers should not be placed with overworked teachers hoping to get support. Cooperating teachers must be motivated to accept student teachers knowing that they can contribute to their overall teacher development. In their study, Russell & Russell's (2011) findings support the need for motivated cooperating teachers to take on student

teachers. This is also supported by Zachary (2000) who believes that motivation drives participation. Russell and Russell's participants expressed the need for cooperating teachers to be motivated saying that they wanted to share their knowledge, gain knowledge on new trends in teaching, encourage new teachers, and collaborate with beginning teachers. This belief was supported by Roxanne who stated "*I will support you, I will help you when I can. I will give you advice*". Although the cooperating teachers saw their role as being willing to accept student teachers they believed that situations could arise where they are willing but cannot do the job. This view was expressed by some of the cooperating teachers as they willingly accepted student teachers but did not know what their expectations were. They expressed frustration with the lack of communication about the university's expectations for them and for the student teacher. Du Plessis et al., (2010) noted that although schools express willingness to take trainee teachers, they may lack mentorship structures for trainees due to, perhaps, staff shortage and workloads. Willingness to take on the role of cooperating teacher has been identified as an essential role of cooperating teachers in this study. The system of selecting schools and cooperating teachers to assist in student teacher development has to be revisited in order to avoid those who are inadequate or "incomplete mentors" from being chosen (Galbraith and Maslin-Ostrowski, 2000, p. 147).

Establishing Good Relationships/Establishing Collegial Relationships

Establishing good relationships and establishing collegial relationships were common themes that emerged from two research questions: What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of their role as a cooperating teacher? What are student teachers' perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher? Because of the commonalities between these two themes I decided to classify them under one heading for the discussion. This theme arising from the interviews regarding establishing good relationships was discussed by Delaney (2012), Myers and Anderson, (2012),

Fletcher and Mullen (2012), Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors, and Edwards-Groves, (2014) & Aspfors and Fransson (2015). They all focused on mentoring practices with newly qualified teachers and found that good collaborative relationships are necessary when mentoring student teachers. Glenn (2006) found that the focus on relationships was one of the characteristics of exemplary cooperating teachers. During the interviews, cooperating teachers and student teachers addressed establishing good relationships between the dyad as an essential role of the cooperating teacher in giving support and advice to the student teachers. They saw making the student teachers comfortable as an important aspect of good relationships. This view was supported by Latour (2005). Many of the cooperating teachers divulged their personal telephone numbers and email addresses to students advising that they were available for contact at any time. Joanne described her relationship with the student teacher, *“What I tell them is anything you have concerns about or you are not sure about you call me. So they have my phone number, they call me”*. Establishing personal connection with the student teacher is described as a precursor to being an effective advisor (Clarke, 2006). Lisa shared an experience *“He told me don’t be afraid to call on him for advice on what I need to find out”*. Pinder and Mc Donald (2006) revealed that a strong relationship between cooperating teacher and student teacher is key in enabling student teachers to learn. The cooperating teachers strongly suggested that when student teachers are comfortable with them they reach the point of freely expressing their views and ask for help on matters other than classroom teaching, leading to a more cordial relationship. Roxanne reported *“once you have a good relationship with your student teacher, it will be easy sailing. A good relationship is very important because you function better in a comfortable area.”* This was a similar view expressed by student teachers. Kim told me *“Well a good relationship can help because it can make you feel comfortable”*. This comfortable relationship is referred to as a safety net (Sadler, 2006; Phelps &

Benson, 2012; Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012). Clarke et al., (2014) purport that the connection between cooperating teacher and student teacher has to go beyond merely attending to day to day logistics of the practicum as the cooperating teachers in the interview suggested, and that cooperating teachers should be attentive to creating learning environments that are grounded in relationships.

This discussion on the role of the cooperating teacher as establishing good relationships is related to the first theme on willingness to accept student teachers and hinges on the selection of cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers should guide and mentor the student teachers (Hopper, 2001; Bray & Nettleton, 2006; Sundli. 2007; Hall, et al., 2008), so that sending them to teachers who are unwilling to work with them and don't have a good working relationship could make students feel unwanted. Kerry explained that her cooperating teacher was one of them who basically was on vacation so that sometimes she would not show up. George et al., (2001) found similar practices of cooperating teachers not being present. Sabar (2004) suggested that student teachers evoke an image of “*marginal*” people while on practicum placement and they may become vulnerable to stress in coping with unfamiliar situations (p 148). If student teachers lack confidence in their performance and in their social status they can become subject to control by others. Cooperating teachers in the schools in Tobago need to be aware of their contribution to teacher education in establishing good relationships with the student teachers, if they are to have a positive impact on student teacher development.

Mentoring and Modelling/Mentoring Student Teachers

Mentoring and modelling and mentoring student teachers emerged from responses of cooperating teachers and practicum advisors responding to the question on their perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher. These two themes focused on mentoring. As mentioned in the previous chapter cooperating teachers used words like “*a mentor is a model*” and “*to be a good*

mentor you must be a good model". The practicum advisors also used the words model and mentor interchangeably. For example one advisor, Paul said "*The mentor is a model, they have to model good teaching, good behaviour and good relationships*". Cooperating teachers indicated that mentoring is about guiding student teachers, scaffolding, supporting, being a demonstrator and showing student teachers what to do. A practicum advisor likened the mentor teacher to a sculptor who is given clay [student teacher] to work with. He *explained* "*You take the clay and you can work with it to get out the particles and get out the defects*". Cooperating teachers and practicum advisors used terms like "*someone to look up to*", "*someone who loves what they are doing*" and "*one who guides and is a great leader*". Those terms also associated with words reported in other studies (Hopper et al.; Bray & Nettleton, 2006; Sundli, 2007; Hall et al., 2008). The cooperating teachers' and practicum advisors' beliefs that mentoring is a major role of the cooperating teacher is also supported by Zellers et al., (2008) and Garies & Grant (2014) who identified key characteristics of successful mentoring and saw mentoring as one of the major roles of the cooperating teacher.

There was also some concern about student teachers' preparation of lessons and the actual delivery of them suggesting that as mentors one of the responsibilities is to demonstrate to the students' lesson delivery skills. Roxanne reported "*The mentor has to demonstrate or model to the student teacher*"... *when you model for your student teacher; they see what should be done*". Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) suggest that new teachers develop their own teaching skills by observing mentors who model good practice. The danger here though is having a mentor who is not trained in mentoring, because what they mentor to the students may be bad teaching skills as suggested by (Cochran-Smith, 1991). Interestingly, the practicum advisors made little mention of cooperating teachers modelling for student teachers. They focused more on

mentoring. I believe they were sceptical about having cooperating teachers model to student teachers because of the uncertainty of the capabilities of the cooperating teachers who are chosen. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, some cooperating teachers have been trained for quite a number of years and this could mean that their teaching techniques are out-dated. Modelling that kind of out-dated practice will not be best for present day student teachers.

All cooperating teachers acknowledged that mentoring student teachers was an essential role of the cooperating teacher. Handcock (2013) also agreed that modelling practice was a major role of the cooperating teacher. Holbert (2011) believed that the highest positive perceptions were related to cooperating teachers' modelling of classroom pedagogies. Similarly, in their study Epps (2010) found that their cooperating teacher modelled understanding of how students learn, how to help students grasp and understand concepts using examples and how to make subject-specific content make sense to students. Darling-Hammond (2010b) suggests that no amount of coursework can counteract the powerful experiential lesson. Danielson (2007) also believe that watching what teachers do is not sufficient. The model teacher must be able to explain to the teacher the thought process that goes into their instructions. So that cooperating teachers' modelling must be accompanied by explanations about the behaviours and attitudes displayed.

Cooperating teachers indicated that there is a difference between mentoring and supervision as highlighted by (Bray & Nettleton, 2006). They described supervision as just overseeing what a person is doing where the supervisor does not have much input, against mentoring which they associated with guiding, demonstrating, giving constructive criticisms, counselling and being a mother/father figure. This is also suggested by Bray & Nettleton (2006) who imply that supervising involves being boss, assessor, counsellor and expert, while mentoring is about assisting, befriending, guiding, advising and counselling. The cooperating teachers agreed that mentoring

and modelling are essential to student teachers' development. This too is suggested by Garies and Grant (2014) who believe that in teacher preparation programmes cooperating teachers must serve as mentors to teacher candidates.

Observing and Evaluating/Giving Feedback

Observation and evaluation and giving feedback were combined themes that emerged from interviews with cooperating teachers and student teachers. Hamilton (2010) identified the theme 'observe and evaluate' as one of the important roles of the cooperating teacher in her research (p.85). Observation was discussed by Richard & Farrell (2011). They believed that observation from both the cooperating teacher and supervisor is crucial in practicum. Evaluation is about making a judgement on a performance. Feedback is in fact giving an evaluation, one concept subsumed in the other. The reasons for observation by the cooperating teacher are to collect information about the lesson that would be difficult for the student teacher to detect, to observe how student teachers are implementing new strategies, to observe how the student teacher implemented different stages of a lesson, to identify those aspects of the lesson that could be improved and to identify techniques and practices that they themselves as cooperating teachers can implement in their own teaching (Richards and Farrell, 2011). Observation is not only about looking at a lesson being delivered but also scrutinising the lesson plan before the student teacher delivers. Joanne said *"I like to see it [lesson plan] beforehand so I can break it down and give feedback. Then let them sit down and discuss with you [cooperating teacher] what you did"*.

Both cooperating teachers and student teacher believed that feedback and evaluation are necessary if students are to improve their teaching skills and success as Powell (2016) suggested. Cooperating teachers are also expected to be providers of feedback to student teachers (Broad & Tessaro, 2010; Clarke, 2006; Grimmatt & Ratzlaff, 1986; Killian & Mc Intyre, 1985). Feedback

is the most powerful component of the professional experience (Copland, 2010). These are the same views suggested by the cooperating teachers and the student teachers about feedback in this study. Mike suggested *“after the lesson you come to me and I give honest critique”*. Joanne explained *“before the lesson I talk, while they were teaching I made little notes, what I liked, what they could improve on, what they could have added”*. This clinical approach to observing and giving feedback, very similar to that suggested by (Richards & Farrell, 2011).

Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Ferguson (2013) described feedback as existing on a continuum, ranging from formal written statements to giving a passing comment. Kim expressed the need for constructive feedback. She said *“I needed more on the lesson generally. When they [cooperating teacher] just tell you it was good or could have been better that doesn’t help much”*. Candy explained *“She just said either excellent lesson, good lesson, did not need too much improvement, whatever”*. Student teachers indicated that they wished for more detailed feedback from cooperating teachers but the reality is that cooperating teachers are more anxious to take back control of their class, so that feedback is usually quick and unsubstantial. As a practicum advisor I can attest to the poor quality of feedback because of the need to leave one student to visit another. So that saying *“Good, well done and we will talk at another time”* is a phrase of comfort to the student teacher who really doesn’t get much about their performance. Chalies, et al., (2004) attested to this technical form of feedback between cooperating teachers and student teachers which commonly validated prior knowledge but were rarely a source of new knowledge construction. Kahan, et al., (2003) also reported that even as student teachers’ knowledge and experience develops over the practicum, cooperating teachers’ feedback remains largely fixed on the technical aspects of teaching. Providing feedback is clearly one of the most significant elements

of cooperating teachers' work with student teachers and this provision is not just expected from the cooperating teachers but largely defines their role.

Socializing Student Teachers/Socializing Student Teachers into the School and Classroom Context.

There was consensus between the cooperating teachers and the practicum advisors pertaining to the socialization of student teachers into the school context. These two themes came to light from the research questions on the cooperating teachers and practicum advisors' perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher. Clarke et al., (2014) refer to cooperating teachers as agents of socialization. I agree that mentoring and socialization are inter-related as suggested by Colwell (1998) and Lanier & Little (1986) so that discussions in mentoring also relate to this section. This category surfaced from cooperating teachers who suggested that the role of the cooperating teacher is not only to focus on the practical aspects of student teacher learning but to engage in reflecting on the more hidden aspects of the profession, like dress code and code of conduct that teachers as professionals are expected to exhibit. If we review the objectives outlined in the Practicum Handbook (2014) we see that they relate to developing critical understandings related to unit planning and lesson planning; devising appropriate strategies and materials for teaching; making linkages between theory and practice and learning to teach in authentic classrooms. Where are the affective aspects of teacher development? Where are the teacher dispositions? How do prospective teachers learn to deal with issues that arise outside the classroom with other teachers, principals, parents and the extended school community? It seems as though that feature of professional development and deep understanding of initiating pre-service teachers into the teaching fraternity are severely lacking in the new dispensation of the practicum. Drew highlighted this point when she said "*the cooperating teacher is the one to let the student*

[student teacher] into what is happening in the schools. They must have an idea of the operation of the school”.

Socialization is about changing attitudes and grooming student teachers into the professional teaching life. Colwell (1998) claims that a mentor should help the student teacher develop the necessary skills for teaching, and become aware of the values and roles of the profession, which are important in providing a framework for them to hang their professional expertise on. Some of the suggestions given by the cooperating teachers to socialize student teachers were working on their mannerisms, changing their attitudes and deportment. In other words, the norms of the teaching profession as posited by Cuenca (2011). One cooperating teacher recalled *“It is not just about the lesson. It goes further than that. You have to change attitudes”*. Cuenca (2011) stated that often missing in the student teaching literature is the crucial role of the cooperating teacher in approving the entrance of the student teacher into the community of teaching.

Student teachers need to be exposed to real school life particularly the pre-service teachers who have no previous classroom teaching experience. The practicum advisors agreed that student teachers should take part in school assemblies. They should learn how to deal with situations with parents, teacher relationships and conduct in public life. One cooperating teacher explained that their role is to inform student teachers as to what is happening in the schools and what real school life is all about. Another cooperating teacher, Mike said *“you have to give student teachers advice on how they present themselves as a professional”*. Vumilia and Semali (2016) support what these cooperating teachers believe. They revealed that the mentoring and professional socialization activities had a trickle-down effect on the quality of teacher education and the student teacher.

However, some cooperating teachers felt that they only had time to focus on the student teachers' teaching and never really went beyond the classroom. This is not an unusual finding because I am aware that time is a variable which affects the role of the cooperating teachers. As part of their conditions of employment, they are expected to plan and prepare lessons, teach the pupils, collect and mark their work, assess, record and report on their pupils' development and progress to the best of their ability irrespective of new responsibilities allocated to them. Considering the fact that cooperating teachers get no time release from these duties they believe that they are already giving up some of their teaching time to allow students into their classrooms, so that external factors like socialization them into the school context is not given preference. A cooperating teacher openly confessed:

No, I never really focus on other things than the lesson. I have never really gone beyond the classroom because they [student teachers] are not here long enough to focus on other things. There is not enough time.

The cooperating teachers' role is to socialize student teachers into the classroom, (Clarke et al., 2014). Koc (2012) stated that the role of the cooperating teacher is facilitating socialization of the student teacher. Bird (2012) agrees with socializing student teachers into teaching. He believed that they must be sustained with the type of psychological support, instructional assistance, and understanding of educational politics that impacts them in the setting in which they work on a daily basis. Anderson (2007) suggests that cooperating teachers are not always cognizant of the full nature or scope of their influence on student teachers and in fact underestimate their influence on student teachers. It is the responsibility of the university to let cooperating teachers know about their roles and how influential they can be in preparing teachers to develop interpersonal skills.

Contributing to Student Teachers' Assessment

The sixth theme that emerged from interviews with student teachers and practicum advisors was contributing to student teacher assessment. The discussion on observing and evaluating, and giving feedback is related to this section. Assessment is the overarching umbrella under which aspects like observation, feedback, evaluation, marking and grading are all covered. From the data collected in the interviews, my interpretation of the type of assessment was summative, since the participants all indicated that one of the roles of the cooperating teachers should be to contribute a mark or grade to the student teachers' overall performance at the end of their practicum. I was very surprised when this theme surfaced from student teachers as in my years of practicum supervision, student teachers were always skeptical about their cooperating teachers awarding them a grade. They indicated that there could be bias in marking, that the cooperating teacher may not like them, that the cooperating teacher may favour a student teacher and award full marks to them. Phelps et al., (1986) suggested that cooperating teachers are unable to discriminate sufficiently when giving students a final grade.

Notwithstanding the above, it was agreed by both the practicum advisors and the student teachers that the cooperating teacher is the one who spends most time with the student teacher observing their performance, and therefore is most capable of awarding a grade along with the practicum advisor whose visits are sporadic. Student teacher Candy stated "*The cooperating teacher is there to assist you. If they assist you then they give you a mark*".

What I have observed over the years is that student teachers withhold their best lessons, which are usually undated, so that on the advisor's arrival, they are presented as the lessons to be taught for that day. This I refer to as "window dressing lessons". Cooperating teachers have also told me about that habit regarding student teachers withholding lessons. The implication for this

kind of practice is the contamination of the assessment process. One student said “*when the lecturers [advisors] come everything is close to perfection and when the lecturer is not there students teach without set inductions or resources*”. Another student teacher Mindy stated “*it would be fair for the cooperating teacher to give her report*”.

Younus and Akbar (2017) found that student teachers wanted the practicum supervisor to involve the cooperating teacher in their evaluation. Loughland and Ellis (2016) and Ure (2009) have already argued for the inclusion of supervising teachers in use of standards as assessment criteria. Thomas et al. (1986) believed that cooperating teachers were to guide students’ field experience through the varied activities outlined by the teacher education programme and to evaluate student performance relative to established field experience objectives. For this to happen at the CEPUTT there must be collaboration between the university and the cooperating teachers regarding the construction of an assessment instrument and training of cooperating teachers for this exercise. Australia is ahead in this practice because they already have set standards of assessment and all student teachers undertaking professional experience are formally assessed against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the Graduate level (AILSL, 2015). Ellis and Loughland (2017) examined the feedback received by student teachers from supervising teachers. They found that although the supervisors were already familiar with the assessment criteria the study revealed that they could do with more training in using the graduate standards as assessment criteria. This supports the notion that intensive training for cooperating teachers is required to develop competent assessors for student teachers.

Keeping Up To Date with Current Practices

The student teachers all strongly agreed that the cooperating teachers should be keeping up to date with current practices. During their interviews the student teachers recalled instances where

cooperating teachers criticized their lesson plans which followed the approach required by the university. They were told to restructure their lessons in line with what the cooperating teacher wanted. Smith (2007) reported a divide between the teaching strategies taught at the university and those modelled by the cooperating teacher. Mtika (2011) also found that there was usually discrepancy between what trainees learn in pedagogy classes in their teacher education and the practices adopted by their mentors in the schools. Anderson (2007) and Baum et. al., (2011) were also unclear about what needed to be taught. Kerry admitted that some cooperating teachers were not even familiar with the resources far more what should be taught. She recalled, *“I wanted to use the geoboard so I went to the cooperating teacher and said miss I am going to use this resource. Then she asked me “what is that?”* The student teachers agreed that cooperating teachers should be informed about new strategies used at the university. I mentioned earlier in this discussion that some cooperating teachers have been trained for years and are not familiar with new techniques and strategies used in the classrooms. That divide between the techniques taught at the university and what is seen in the cooperating teachers’ classroom was a common complaint by many student teachers.

I regard this theme as extremely important as I have also had conflicting circumstances with some cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers very often compare their experiences they had at their training institutions with what the UTT is now doing. A cooperating teacher blatantly disagreed with the new structure of the lesson plans and suggested that *“the UTT don’t know what they are doing”*. The pedagogical courses at the UTT stipulate the use of a constructivist approach to classroom instruction and this poses challenges for some cooperating teachers who continue to engage in expository teaching and their dissonances regarding these new strategies are apparent. Hamilton (2010) believed that there is a need for development of criteria, based on training, content

and pedagogical knowledge, mentoring skills and exemplary teaching skills for cooperating teachers. This is also supported by Pavlini (2014) who revealed that the cooperating teacher must be committed to professional development and continuous learning.

Building Student Teacher Confidence

All three practicum advisors in this study expressed the need for building student teachers' confidence as a major role of the cooperating teacher. Bullough (2005), Johnson, Berg & Donaldson (2005), Lindgren (2005) and Marable & Raimondi (2007), all support this role and believed that mentoring provides emotional and psychological support, which boosts the confidence of beginner teachers. Building student teacher confidence is tied in to the role of the cooperating teacher as mentor. Terms like guide, counsel, support and encourage are all commonly used to describe the mentors' role (Hopper, 2001; Bray & Nettleton, 2006; Sundli, 2007; Hall, et al., 2008) and are associated with building confidence. Kris believed that in assessment of student teachers, two or three serious issues should be selected for critique rather than a list of deficiencies. He said *"you don't shatter the student teacher in one blow. You build their confidence in an incremental way"*. I believe that building confidence is a very challenging task. It's good to reassure student teachers of their potential even if as a cooperating teacher you see that things are not going well in the classroom. However, I believe that the first reaction from the cooperating teacher should be to take back control of the class. But, if this is not done in a subtle way the result could very well be the deflation of the student teachers' confidence. Paul who is a very experienced practicum advisor suggested, *"you see the cooperating teacher has to have a coolness... give them the assurance that it is okay if you make a mistake and build confidence to try things"*. This is not that easy to do and certainly will require training on the part of the cooperating teacher in developing such a skill. Sabar (2004) explained that the student teachers are marginalized because

they lack confidence in their behaviour. Mentors must engage student teachers in a process of reflecting on the evidence of their teaching, leading to positive effects on the student teachers' practice and self-confidence (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Collaboration with University/ Practicum Advisors

Paulson (2014) studied the perceptions of cooperating teachers concerning the student teacher field experience which revealed that cooperating teachers valued interactions and support from the university supervisor and that their frequent visits to schools were extremely important. Hamilton (2010) suggested that there should be more university engagement to improve relationships between university and cooperating teacher. From my experience, I can say that collaboration between the university and the cooperating teachers in Tobago is minimal. For the period under review in this research there has never been any attempt to include the cooperating teacher as a collaborative partner in the practicum. Practicum advisors meet with cooperating teachers only when they visit schools to assess the student teachers. This visit is geared towards assessing the student teacher rather than collaborating with cooperating teachers. Conversations with cooperating teachers take the form of a mere courtesy rather than a discussion of the progress and development of the student teacher. In light of this shortcoming I am always left with a feeling of guilt since my area of expertise is in measurement and evaluation.

Handcock's (2013) study revealed that cooperating teachers thought that there should be improved communication with university supervisors. Cooperating teachers in that study indicated that they would like to have better communication from the practicum advisors and made suggestions that they come in person to make arrangements for the practicum. This same suggestion was made by cooperating teachers in this study. They also maintained that no collaboration was made before the student teachers began the practice and the practicum advisor

just appeared. They continued to make the point that they were not even consulted in their selection as cooperating teachers. Based on their body language during the interviews I detected dissatisfaction from the cooperating teachers regarding the support and communication they receive from the university.

In Paulson's (2014) study, cooperating teachers found it extremely valuable to be requested to have input in the practicum. Cooperating teachers suggested that lines of communication including specific guidelines and expectations of their role should be a major part of the practicum arrangement. Cooperating teacher Joanne said "*nobody ever informed me what we are to do with the students*". Roxanne said "*well I think it is the collaboration that is lacking*". Meegan et al. (2013) showed that future directions for the teacher education programmes revolve around the need for universities to consider ways of encouraging supervisors to work collaboratively with cooperating teachers to improve the teaching practice process.

Guidelines and Expectations

Grimmet and Ratzlaff, (1986) stated that cooperating teachers are not aware of what is expected from them. The cooperating teachers in my study expressed concern about the minimal level of direction they were provided with regarding their guidance and support for student teachers. All of the cooperating teachers explained that they needed specific instructions so that they may be aware of what the university expects of them and the student teachers. They believed that if they did receive guidelines they would be better able to provide a more effective experience to the student teachers. This view was supported by Valencia et al., (2009) when they stated that cooperating teachers are often provided with little guidance by the university in supporting the development of student teachers. The participants in my study also said that they received no sort of preparation for their role. In the Practicum Handbook (2014) there is just one paragraph

regarding the expectations of the cooperating teacher which I summarized in chapter two. These roles are not detailed and are not sent to the cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers inquired about any written guidelines from the university regarding their roles. In response I admitted that there was no official document for them but added that one of the purposes of this study was to do produce such a document. Hobson et al., (2009) stated that very often mentor teachers are not trained to help students learn to teach and are not aware of what is expected from them. Clarke et al., (2014) agreed that cooperating teachers lack specific training to enable high quality engagement and developmentally progressive support for student teachers. Valencia et al., (2009) in their research also confirmed the lack of training associated with supervisory skills when working with student teachers. At the end of my interview with the cooperating teachers, they all agreed that if they receive guidelines and expectations, the university and the cooperating teachers would be on the same page in supporting student teachers. They also believed that there should be closer relationships between cooperating teachers and practicum advisors and that they were very willing to participate in workshops which would inform them of their expectations. Hamilton (2010) suggested that there should be more university engagement to improve relationships between university and cooperating teacher.

Training for Cooperating Teachers

Without hesitation, all cooperating teachers agreed that they needed training. They specified that the training should not focus so much on their professional role but on what would bring them up to date with what is happening with teacher education worldwide. This view strengthens the student teachers' perceptions that the cooperating teachers' role is to keep up with current practices. Russell and Russell (2011) suggested that cooperating teachers receive mandatory training in preparation for their duties. The cooperating teachers in my study did not

agree with Russell and Russell. They believed that training should be on a voluntary basis for cooperating teachers who are willing. It was suggested that the university collaborate with principals; take names of those willing and provide them with professional development courses regarding their role. Joanne said “*Most cooperating teachers don’t go through any training but there must be a selection process*”. Suggestions were made by the cooperating teachers in this study for the contents of the training programme to include, new teaching methods, structure for lesson plans and assessment procedures. The NCATE (2010) explained that in preparing teachers for the 21st century, teacher education must develop programmes that are fully grounded in clinical practice, interwoven with academic content and professional courses. Melder (2014) indicated the need for preparation of cooperating teachers in the use of theory and research during student teaching practicum. She further explained that cooperating teachers need to be trained to move beyond the day-to-day supervision of teaching to a deeper analysis of links between pedagogy and theory which could improve student teachers’ understanding and application of theory in their teaching. In Hamilton’s (2010) study cooperating teachers suggested training and support for themselves if they are to have positive impacts on student teachers.

It should be noted that Gareis and Grant (2014) claimed that training focuses almost entirely on the outcomes associated with the cooperating teachers, but the long-term and more intended outcomes of cooperating teachers’ training is greater proficiency of the student teacher performance. There is evidence that training the cooperating teacher can improve mentoring behaviours, but there is little, if any evidence that such training improves student teachers’ performance (Gareis & Grant, 2014). However, Gareis and Grant (2014) maintained that training resulted in a greater sense of efficacy for aspects of cooperating teachers’ role which led to more effective evaluation practices and stronger performances by student teachers, similar conclusions

were drawn by Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2008), Clarke et al., (2012) Darling-Hammond (2010), Giebelhaus & Bowman (2002), Sykes et al., (2011) and Zeichner (2010). The cooperating teachers in this study viewed the university and the advisors primarily as those responsible for the training of cooperating teachers.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of the study related to the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teachers and their needs. Sixteen main themes were revealed from this study emerging from data collected from cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors. Some themes were combined because of their similarity. The final themes discussed included willingness to accept student teachers, establishing good relationships/ establishing collegial relationships, mentoring and modelling/ mentoring student teachers, observing and evaluating/giving feedback, socializing student teachers/ socializing student teachers into school and classroom context, contributing to student teacher assessment as stated by both cooperating teacher and practicum advisor, keeping up to date with current practices and building student teacher confidence. Three remaining themes pertaining to the needs of the cooperating teacher were, collaboration with university/ practicum supervisors, guidelines and expectations and training for selected cooperating teachers. The next chapter will go on to discuss suggested recommendations resulting from the research findings.

Chapter 7

Summary of Study, Recommendations and Conclusion

Introduction

This closing chapter presents a summary of the study. It also discusses how the perceived roles of those involved in the study and the needs of the cooperating teachers can influence the improved effectiveness of the practicum. This prepares the way for the proposed recommendations and is followed by suggestions for further research. The chapter ends with a reflection on the research process.

7.1 Summary of the Study

This study focused on cooperating teachers, their roles as perceived by themselves, student teachers and practicum advisors as well as taking into account their needs in supporting and assisting student teachers. The factors that gave rise to this study were centred on the organization of the practicum field experience and the long history of sending student teachers to do their practice in cooperating schools without adequate preparation. Many efforts were made to reform teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago by the Ministry of Education. To date, we have not been very successful in implementing recommendations which have emanated from official documents like the Draft Policy framework for Transforming and Restructuring Teacher Education and Development in Trinidad and Tobago (2005).

Arising from a mandate given by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in 2005 having accepted the recommendations of the National Advisory Committee in Teacher Education (2004), the SLCUTT came into being. This brought with it many expectations, a major one being the transformation of the practicum programme to meet the needs of 21st century teacher education.

This did not happen and the practical aspects remained the same including poor selection of cooperating schools and cooperating teachers. Generally, there was no coordination among the practicum triad. With so many nuances I delimited this study to what I felt was the most critical aspect of the practicum, the role of the cooperating teacher.

The research questions in this study were designed to explore perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher and their needs in the practicum. Informed by a comprehensive literature review pertaining to the practicum and cooperating teachers an interview guide was designed. The fifteen one-on-one interviews informed the study about the perceived roles of the cooperating teacher and their needs. Interview questions were framed to address the perceived roles of the cooperating teacher and their needs. The answers to these questions were coded and themes emerged. The questions were:

1. What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles?
2. What are student teachers' perceptions of the roles of the cooperating teacher?
3. What are practicum advisors' views of the roles the cooperating teacher can play in the practicum?
4. What needs do cooperating teachers have regarding their roles?
5. How can the perceptions of the cooperating teachers, student teachers and practicum advisors about the role of the cooperating teacher and their needs influence the improvement of the effectiveness of the practicum?

In order to answer these research questions, I decided to use semi- structured interviews. All participants were interviewed in agreement with times that were convenient to them and at places

where they felt comfortable. The conversations were digitally recorded. After every interview I thought it would be best to listen to the recordings at least two to three times before engaging in transcribing. This was a very tedious task. However, all recordings were transcribed and arranged into three categories: cooperating teachers; student teachers; and practicum advisors. I then proceeded to analyse the data beginning with the cooperating teachers' folder. For this I began with an initial coding process, underlining words and phrases that jumped out as suggesting the role of the cooperating teacher. There was a second set of focused coding where words, phrases and sentences were categorized together and themes were derived.

Findings from the research question one were that cooperating teachers believed that their roles were to be willing to accept student teachers, establishing good relationships with student teachers, mentoring and modelling of student teachers, observing and evaluating their work and socializing them into the classroom and school life.

The second research question produced themes that revealed that cooperating teachers should be kept up to date with current educational practices, establish collegial relationships, give student teachers feedback and that they should contribute to student teachers' assessment.

The third research question regarding the views of the practicum advisors showed that cooperating teachers should build student teachers' confidence, socialize them into school and classroom context, mentor and contribute to student teachers' assessment.

The fourth research question pertaining to cooperating teachers' needs generated themes like better collaboration between university and practicum advisors, the need for guidelines and expectations regarding how they should assist student teachers and the need for training in preparation for their roles.

The fifth research question summarized how the perceived roles of the cooperating teachers by those involved can influence the improvement of the practicum. These included better selection of cooperating teachers, specific guidelines for cooperating teachers and training workshops for selected cooperating teachers. There was then a discussion of the findings of the study which led to the emergence of recommendations. In my conclusion I reflected on the entire research procedure admitting that research never ends, and if done again the results may very well be different. The next section will discuss possible ways of improving the effectiveness of the practicum.

7.2 Perceived Roles and their Influence on Improving the Effectiveness of the Practicum

This research question really summarizes the way forward with the practicum. Finding out how the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher and how their needs can influence the effectiveness of the practice required extrapolation from the findings discussed in the first four research questions. The first step will be to bring the findings of this study to the attention of the Practicum Committee of the CEPUTT and to discuss the way forward in approaching some of the idiosyncrasies that are inherent in the practicum. For example, better selection of cooperating teachers, providing specific guidelines to cooperating teachers, providing training workshops for cooperating teachers in the areas of improving cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships, giving student teachers constructive feedback, developing assessment skills, all leading to the general improvement of the practicum.

Better Selection of Cooperating Teachers

In chapter one mention was made of the ad hoc manner in which cooperating teachers are selected. Many times schools are selected because of geographical location and is finalized by way

of telephone conversations. There must be a systematic selection of cooperating teachers who are willing to accept student teachers and be genuinely committed to their professional development.

Specific Guidelines for Cooperating Teachers

Since there is no specific document to guide cooperating teachers in their roles, the onus will be on the university to engage in conversations with the major stakeholders in the Education Department in Tobago. These will include school supervisors (persons responsible for the overall supervision and management of schools), principals and the intended and already existing cooperating teachers. With collaboration among these educators the expectation will be the production of a document which will provide guidelines for all cooperating teachers ensuring some measure of standardization of their roles which would help to reduce inconsistencies when supporting and mentoring student teachers.

Training Workshops for Selected Cooperating Teachers

In embarking on training workshops for selected cooperating teachers there will be the expectation that during these workshop sessions, cooperating teachers would receive training in areas like: relationship building, mentoring and modelling, observing and evaluating, socializing student teachers into classroom and school contexts, updating them with current educational practices, giving feedback, developing assessment skills, building student teachers' confidence and developing specific guidelines and expectations regarding the role of the cooperating teacher. Training sessions for cooperating teachers in those areas outlined, should ultimately improve collaboration between cooperating teachers and the university which can be influential in the overall improvement of the practicum.

If cooperating teachers are empowered and their roles redefined to reflect the crucial role they play during the teaching practice experience, an improved practicum will be undoubtedly be the result. According to Zeichner (2010) and Graham (2006) the practicum is one of the most critical components of teacher preparation. It is therefore essential that teacher training institutions have well designed practicum programmes if they are to facilitate learning and quality teacher preparation.

7.3 Recommendations

This qualitative study allowed me to better understand many of the issues pertaining to the role of the cooperating teachers and their needs in guiding and supporting student teachers in the practicum. The practicum can compromise the integrity of the teacher formation process because it requires that student teachers spend extended periods in schools working closely with cooperating teachers. Opportunities for professional development must be available and accessible at the level of the school which provides the best context for the professional growth of student teachers.

The CEPUTT who are the providers of the practicum programme and the Ministry of Education and by extension the Education Department in Tobago must engage in collaboration which must be planned and structured. The following areas are to be considered most critical in making recommendations. They include the practicum, procedures for selecting schools, criteria for the selections of schools, criteria for the selection of cooperating teachers and guidelines for training of cooperating teachers.

The Practicum

1. Criteria and procedures for selecting schools for practicum
2. The function and training of cooperating teachers

3. Protocols for cooperating teachers, student teachers and school administrators and practicum advisors regarding roles and responsibilities
4. School organization arrangements to accommodate student teachers

Procedures for Selecting School

The following procedures for selecting schools will provide the quality control that is necessary to ensure that the initial formation process of the student teacher is rooted in experiences that are acquired in schools that exemplify sound educational practice.

1. The Education Department in Tobago should identify and list possible schools based on agreed criteria outlined by both the CEPUTT and the Education Department.
2. The CEPUTT representatives and the Education Department should visit schools, interview principals and assess using the criteria.
3. The CEPUTT with the Education Department of Tobago select schools based on site visits and assessments.
4. Teachers from selected schools should be invited to participate in the programme as cooperating teachers
5. Teachers be selected on the basis of performance assessment, an interview, the principal's recommendations and peer reviews.
6. Selected teachers trained to function in their role.

Criteria for the selection of schools

Generally, schools that are selected for placement of student teachers should be models of sound and acceptable educational practices. Desirable characteristics include:

1. Exemplary leadership by principals academic climate

2. Academic culture
3. Strong professional culture
4. High levels of teacher commitment; and exemplary teachers reflecting best practices.
5. Exemplary teaching reflecting best practices
6. Student performance at or above average level overall

Criteria and for the Selection of Cooperating Teachers

Cooperating teachers assist with the field experience component of the practicum programme by working with student teachers in the schools. The specific tasks of the cooperating teacher are to be determined by the CEPUTT and the stakeholders in education system, namely school supervisors, principals and cooperating teachers. The desirable attributes of the prospective cooperating teachers should include:

1. knowledge and mastery of good pedagogical skills and best practices
2. High commitment to teaching
3. Strong leadership qualities
4. Good interpersonal skills
5. Displays responsible professional behaviour
6. Willingness to contribute to the profession by investing time and sharing expertise to guide the formation of new teachers. Cooperating teachers should be selected according to the recommended criteria.

Guidelines for the Training of Cooperating Teachers

Cooperating teachers function as co-tutors in the practicum programme, whatever the level of their input. They should be expected to promote the achievement of the programmes learning outcomes and should have a good working knowledge of the programme's goals and objectives. This will form part of the training of cooperating teachers in Tobago since they are not aware of what is required by the university. Accompanying the training will be the provision of a document with guidelines to give direction as to what is expected of them. Focus-areas for a training programme for cooperating teachers should include:

1. Inter-personal skills
2. Programme philosophy, objectives and outcome goals
3. Teaching performance domains, standards and indicators
4. Mentoring and feedback techniques
5. Instructional planning and analysis
6. Assessment of student learning.

7.4 Future Research

In light of the limitations of this study, additional information can be sought to add to the body of knowledge regarding the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teachers and their needs. Additional work in this same area could be beneficial if it focused upon one university but included representations from all schools that partner with the practicum. A study with this target group could give a better idea of all its cooperating teachers rather than just a sample of participants. Where there is a need for universities to improve their communication with their

cooperating teachers as found in this study, the department of education may conduct research that implements a new communication tool such as website solely for cooperating teachers.

7.5 Reflection on the Research Process

At the end of a research study like this which took more than five years of my life, it is only natural to reflect and wish I had done things differently. My reading made me become a more confident researcher. While this conclusion marks the ‘end’ of this thesis, research is never ending. I realize that if I were to revisit this entire research process and particularly my findings in the near future, I would analyse them differently, bringing different tools to the analysis. I was prompted to undertake this study because of my engagement in teacher education for the past 45 years and being at the centre of the practicum for 31 of those years where I was in the position to see and experience deficiencies in the practicum regarding the cooperating teacher.

As a reflective practitioner, I spent a lot of time re-thinking the focus of my research and my research questions. I am a scientifically minded person and enjoy working with numbers so my initial thought was to engage in quantitative research. However I have no regrets whatsoever doing this qualitative study and although this was my first attempt, I will do it again. I say this not because of preference between the two research paradigms, but in this study I wanted to open windows into the topic area, a sort of magnifying glass to find out about feelings and thoughts about people, which quantitative research cannot really do. Most of all I enjoyed being “inside” of the data from collection, to analysis to making interpretations.

Conclusion

This case study provided adequate information to contribute to the already existing body of knowledge regarding perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher as well as their needs in

the preparation of student teachers. The participants of this study reported on their perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher. The cooperating teachers reported on their needs. Considering the information that has been provided by the participants, this study has the capability of providing the CEPUTT with valuable information to be used in the development of student teachers in the future.

Giving cooperating teachers a place in the process of teacher preparation is necessary, as they spend more time with the student teachers than anyone else during their professional development. Reflecting on the needs of the cooperating teachers gives direction to provide better learning opportunities for student teachers during their practicum. Gaps involving the perceptions of the role of the cooperating teacher have been narrowed but more research ventures could help further improve learning experiences for student teachers. Recognizing this, I see myself as a resource person in teacher education with the challenge of influencing those who can initiate change in the practicum programme at the CEPUTT regarding the cooperating teachers' role. This is my mission, my way forward.

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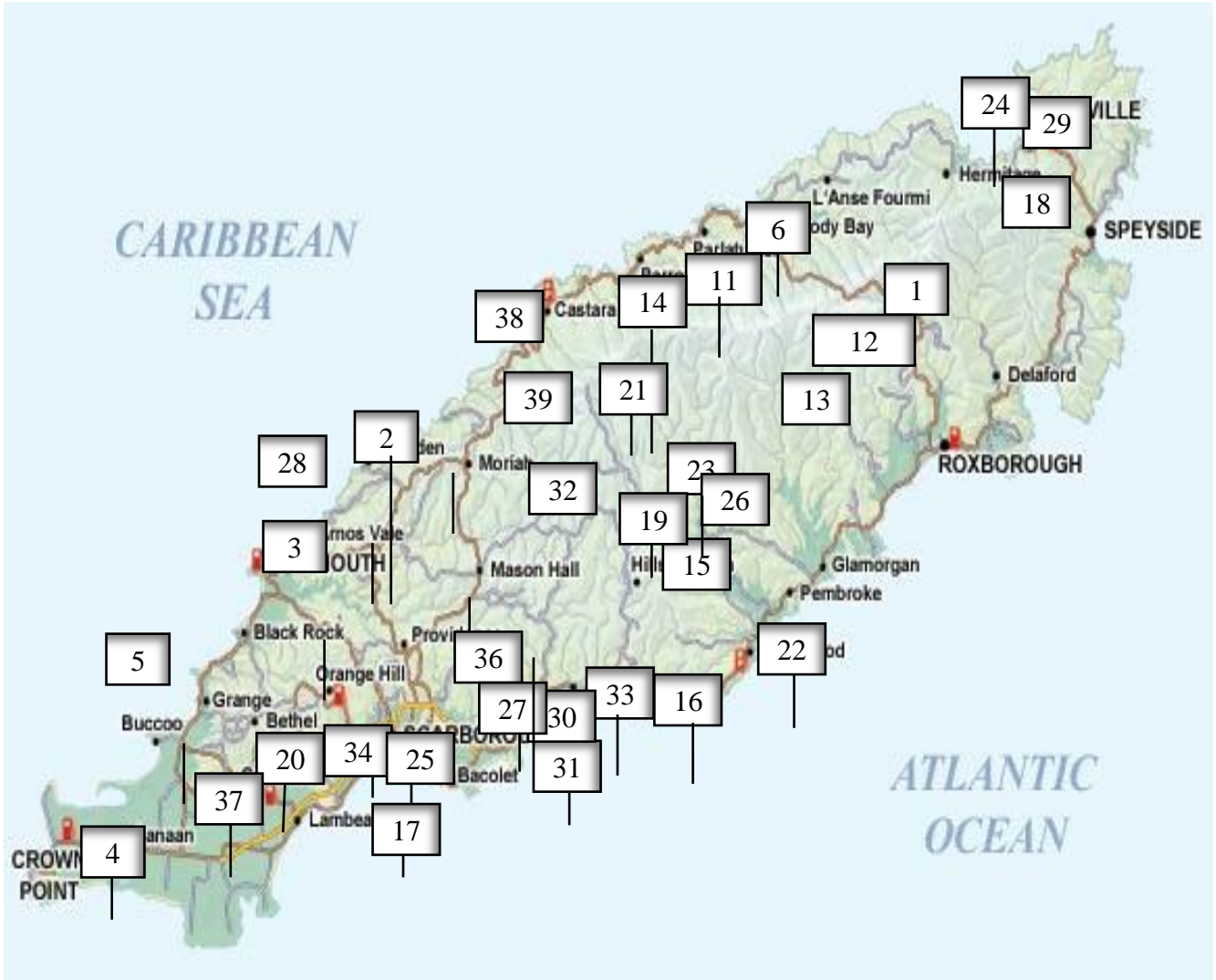
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APPENDICES
Appendix 1

Map of Tobago showing Primary School



Appendix (2)

Cooperating Teachers interview Guide

Research Question 1. What are cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles?

The following two questions will be used to build rapport with the cooperating teacher at the beginning of the interview.

- How long have you been teaching?
 - What is your highest qualification?
 - How were you selected to become a cooperating teacher?
1. What are your thoughts about the role of a cooperating teacher?
 2. What role do you play in assisting student teachers?
 3. How do student teachers react to your assistance?
 4. How can your role as cooperating teacher impact on student learning?
 5. What practices do you use to help the student teacher?
 6. What difficulties have you experienced as a cooperating teacher?
 7. Tell me about your relationship with student teachers.
 8. What do you think are the characteristics of a cooperating teacher?
 9. How were you prepared for your role as cooperating teacher?
 10. What do you think about cooperating teachers assessing student teachers, giving them a grade or mark? (If yes, should the practicum advisor use this grade or mark in determining the students teachers overall assessment?)
 11. Any other thoughts that come to mind regarding your role as cooperating teacher that we did not talk about?

Student Teacher Interview Guide

Research Question 2. What are student teachers' perceptions of the roles of the cooperating teacher?

The following two questions will be used to build rapport at the beginning of the interview.

- How many cooperating teachers have you worked with over your four- year practicum programme?
 - How did you get your cooperating teacher?
1. What are your thoughts about the role of the cooperating teacher?
 2. What roles did your cooperating teacher play in assisting you as a student teacher?
 3. How much did you value the cooperating teacher's assistance?
 4. Do you think anyone can become a cooperating teacher?
 5. How did the help from the cooperating teacher help in your teaching?
 6. What difficulties did you experience with your cooperating teacher?
 7. Do you think that supervising and mentoring are the same? Which did your cooperating teacher do?
 8. Do you believe that your cooperating teachers were prepared for their roles?
 9. If you were given the opportunity to say how the cooperating teacher can be more helpful, what would you say?
 10. What do you think about the cooperating teacher contributing to your overall performance by way of a grade?
 11. What kind of relationship did you have with your cooperating teachers?
 12. What characteristics would you look for in a cooperating teacher?
 13. Any other thought that come to mind regarding role the cooperating teacher that you would like to talk about?

Practicum Advisor Interview Guide

Research Question 3. What are practicum advisors views of the roles the cooperating teacher can play in the practicum?

The following three questions will be used to build rapport at the beginning of the interview.

- How long have you been involved in teacher training?
 - How long have you been involved with the UTT?
 - How long have you been involved in the practicum at the UTT?
1. What are your thoughts about the role of the cooperating teacher?
 2. What sort of collaboration do you have with the cooperating teacher about the teaching practice?
 3. What was your experiences like with the cooperating teachers?
 4. Do you think that any classroom teacher can be a cooperating teacher? Why?
 5. What characteristics would you say a cooperating teacher should have?
 6. How would you describe your relationship with the cooperating teachers?
 7. What do you think about the cooperating teacher having an input in the student teachers' final grade?
 8. Do you think that the cooperating teachers are adequately involved in the student teaching practicum? How can this be improved?
 9. Any other thoughts in mind regarding the role of the cooperating teacher?

Research Question 4: What needs do cooperating teachers have regarding their roles?

1. Do you know what is expected of you as cooperating teacher in the student teaching practice?
2. Tell me about your experiences during the student teaching practicum?
3. What do you perceive your needs are regarding guiding and supporting the student teacher?

4. What do you believe could be done to better prepare you for the role as a cooperating teacher? Is there anything else you would like me to know regarding your needs as a cooperating teacher?

APPENDIX (3)



The School Of Education.

Trevor Garcia

Head of School
Professor Jackie Marsh
Department of Educational Studies
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield S10 2JA

Telephone: +44 (0114) 222 8167

Fax: +44 (0114) 279 6236

Email: t.a.earnshaw@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Trevor

Ethical Review Application: EdD Caribbean Part II Dissertation

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project. The reviewers have now considered this and have agreed that you can go ahead with your research project. Any conditions will be shown on the Reviewers Comments attached.

This is subject to receipt of a signed hard copy of Part B (Declaration) of the School of Education Research Ethics application form which is available at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/ethics>. This hard copy is then held on file and ensures that we comply with university requirements for signatures.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Earnshaw

Tracey Earnshaw
Programme Secretary

APPENDIX (4)

School of Education

University of Sheffield Information Sheet

Dear Participant

You are being invited to take part in my research project. This means that you will be required to take part in an interview if you so desire. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear about or if you would like more information you can contact me at any time convenient to you. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Research Project Title: **An investigation into the roles of cooperating teachers who participate in the Practicum Programme at the Centre for Education Programmes University of Trinidad and Tobago (CEPUTT) in Tobago.**

Projects Purpose/ Aim

The aim of this study is to gather and analyse data on the perceptions of six cooperating teachers, six student teachers and three practicum advisors of the Centre for Education Programmes, University of Trinidad and Tobago (CEPUTT) in Tobago. This information will assist the Practicum Review Committee, now in the process of restructuring the practicum programme of the CEPUTT.

The aims of this research project are to:

- identify cooperating teachers' perceptions of their roles.
- identify student teachers' perceptions of the roles of the cooperating teachers.
- identify practicum advisors views of the role of the cooperating teacher.
- identify needs that cooperating teachers may have regarding their roles in the practicum.

Selection of Participants

Cooperating teachers you have been selected because you have accommodate and assisted student teachers during practicum. Student teachers you have been selected to participate because you have just completed the eight practicum programmes at the CEPUTT. Practicum

Advisors you have been selected because you have been in the field assisting and assessing the student teachers.

What is required?

You are required to share your perceptions of the role of the cooperating teachers who play a major part in the practicum programme of the CEPUTT. You are required to take part in an interview if you so desire. The interview should be no more than sixty (60) minutes. This will be held at a place and time convenient to you. If you do decide to take part in this project you will be given this information sheet to keep (and asked to sign a consent form) and, you can still withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You are unlikely to be identifiable in any reports or publications. The information collected during this research will be used only by me for analysis of the data. No other use will be made of them without your written permission.

DATE: 26th February, 2017

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

APPENDIX (5)

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: An investigation into the roles of cooperating teachers who participate in the Practicum Programme at the Centre for Education Programmes University of Trinidad and Tobago (CEPUTT) in Tobago.

Name of Researcher: Trevor Garcia

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 4th March, 2017 for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. (Researcher's contact: 769-9002)
3. I understand that my responses will be treated confidentially before analysis. I give permission to the researcher to record my confidential responses.
4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant Date Signature

Researcher Date Signature

:

I sincerely wish to thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. I look forward to working with you.

Yours in Education

Trevor Garcia
(Contact No: 1 868 769 90

Appendix (6)

SAMPLE

CODE

Cooperating teacher (CT) Student teacher (ST)

Rox 2

Int. How long have you been trained as a teacher?

Ct. 7 years

Int. What is your highest qualification?

Ct. Bachelors in Education

Int. How many times have you been a Ct?

Ct' 5 times. I have had students from USC and from UTT.

Int. How were you selected to become a CT.¹

CT. (Huh!) Actually the person came to me and said miss I would like to use your classroom for teaching practice, the principal came with them² and I said I don't want another Ct³, the principal begged⁴ and I said alright⁵. That's how it is that's how it is.

Int. You said you didn't want another Ct?

Ct. Yes, because when they come to your classroom, for instance the one I have now she is always unprepared⁶. In the earlies when⁷ we just came out of teachers college or when I did teaching practice you had to be prepared before you go into the classroom, your resources had to be made your worksheets already printed the lesson plans already revised edited and doctored you go into the classroom you show the CT⁸ and then you are allowed to teach for the day but of late the last two I had and especially this one she is coming into the classroom to prepare her lesson plans there and then full of errors and she is never prepared never prepared⁹. The same time she is about to teach she says could I teach from one o' clock for that session? She would now start preparing her resources at one O' clock and she can't start teaching as yet. And that wasting my time its wasting children's time. Realizing that I have a student teacher in my class wasting my time wasting my children's time¹⁰ is why I said no when I was asked to take a St¹¹.

I don't know what is happening at the university but many of the students don't know how to teach, they don't know how to teach.

The methodology they have no idea. Something is not right at the university and as¹² Ct's we don't know

what is going on. St's are just sent¹³ and

we have to take them¹⁴ even if we are forced to.¹⁵

Int. what are your thoughts on the role of the CT?

Ct. Oh yes. Very.¹⁶ The Ct has the experience¹⁷ she has done TP¹⁸ and she knows what to look for she is trained she went through that training. And she is in

1. Student came to me to be selected
2. Principal came with them
3. Don't want another CT
4. Principal begged
5. Alright
6. Always unprepared
7. Earlies - had to be prepared

8. Show to CT
9. Never Prepared
10. Wasting my time & children's' time
11. Refused - said no
12. Is going on
13. Just sent
14. Have to take
15. If forced to
16. Ct can be very useful
17. Has experience
18. Done to training

the classroom all the time¹⁹ to see²⁰ that teacher teach.
 Now copying somebody's lesson and bringing it is good on paper²¹ but when it comes to delivery many of them don't know how to teach a lesson²²
and sir I am telling you they don't like to take advice from the CT. That's what I have to cope with. As the Ct we just in the dark.²³ You see the university just send,²⁴ send no kind of meeting or discussion on what these teachers coming to do and how we have to help. So they come and we do the best we can do. We see some kinds of things in a lesson that we do know if that is what the students were taught because it is skimpy. No substance and we have to take that. They don't like to take advice and Don't know if they have respect for the Ct's. They not listening to us. What we can do, Nothing, just let them go through to teach their two lessons and then teach our class. I don't know but you see this one I have now it was a battle for her to take any advice from me²⁵ until the lecturer came the supervisor came and told her the same thing I was saying about the lesson was too long and the objectives were too many, the activities were not related to the objectives she was trying to achieve and when she was marked down for her first lesson²⁶ then and only then she started to take advice²⁷. I would tell her how to teach a particular lesson²⁸ or topic for instance living things and tell her how to teach it how to break it down to an infant level. And then she will come with the lesson²⁹ we talk about and it will be totally different³⁰ to what I advised her. And then she would say that is how the supervisor³¹ wants it. But my syllabus has it one way my school has it one way so you^{32 33} cannot deviate from it.

19. In classroom all the time
20. To see st
21. Bringing lesson on paper is good
22. Delivery they don't know (theory/prac)
23. As ct just in dark
24. University send them
25. Advice from me
26. Marked down by pa
27. Started to take advice
28. Tell her how to teach
29. Come with lesson so we talked about it.
30. Totally different
31. How supervisor wants it
32. School has a way
33. Cannot deviate

We doing one thing³⁴ and the university doing another³⁵.

Int. You mentioned the US or PA saying they want it one way?

CT. Yes that is what the ST was saying that the PA wants it so³⁶. But I don't think so I said I will have to ask.

Int. What do you think is responsible for that uncertainty happening?

CT. Well I think it is the collaboration that is lacking³⁷.

That relationship³⁸ with the PA. I Think before they say the students are actually coming to³⁹ do teaching practice in your class, as I said they send and they ask if the Ct is willing⁴⁰, but the same PA should come to the teacher the Ct you interview the Ct then you meet with the St.⁴¹ before they come to the classroom. Because most of the time when you see them is when they come inside of your class⁴². No collaboration before they just appear for observation of the student⁴³. It was not like that for us in our time.

Int. And do you think that just any class teacher should or could be a CT?

ST. No oh no!⁴⁴

I believe that you have to know which Ct you sending the St to⁴⁵. They should be carefully selected⁴⁶. Yes! Because there are some teachers who they themselves are not sure of how to teach certain⁴⁷ things and how can I change somebody if I am not sure. There are teachers who within the system⁴⁸ who don't know how to teach many topics and they refuse to ask. Then you have a St coming to you the Ct who don't know what is

right⁴⁹, and the St is lost because⁵⁰ they don't know what is right. The Ct's have to be brought up to date⁵¹ with new teaching methods⁵², because things have changed⁵³. And if we don't know how can we help. Most times we use what we did at college and then that is not what the St is doing. I believe that Ct should have a certain amount of years of experience⁵⁴, after being trained to take on a student teacher Int. A certain amount like how many years. Ct. 4to 5 years⁵⁵.

34. CT doing one thing
35. University doing another
36. St's say PA wants it so
37. Collaboration lacking
38. Relationship
39. Before students come
40. Ask CT is willing
41. Meet with CT
42. See them in your class
43. No collaboration before they just appear
44. No, not every CT should be a CT
45. Know the CT
46. Carefully select
47. CT's not certain how to teach certain things
48. May in the system like that
49. CT don't know what is right
50. ST will be lost
51. CT'S have to be brought up to date
55. Years experience

Because fresh out⁵⁶ of college you have all your knowledge and ideas but you still don't have the experience⁵⁷, you still don't know. We were lucky when we got here we got Ms. Best she is an experienced. She taught all the levels and she guided us when she passed she would say⁵⁸ Miss why you doing this this way so that you have time to check and reflect on what you have to do. There must be time to reflect. Giving little pointers of how to teach certain things. It is only years of experience that can give you⁵⁹ that.

How to teach this how to teach that because when we went we were under Valsayn Teachers⁶⁰ College where they taught us how to teach different areas⁶¹ and now I am seeing from some of the St's I got from UTT also it seems they are not being taught how to teach various subjects. And I wonder if the supervisors themselves know⁶². Do they have experience with primary teaching? They have to teach the St's how to teach because giving them a topic or giving them a subject, ok you have to go and teach that. If they have never seen somebody teach the topic you wouldn't know really what to do⁶³. So I feel as Ct's if we are given some idea⁶⁴ of what is being done or even be guided by those lectures⁶⁵ who also have the experience we would be moving in a better direction. At least the St's could look at us⁶⁶ and get some idea as⁶⁷ how to teach the topics. There should be some collaboration between the practicum or the university and the schools⁶⁸. This should happen before they send them on TP and⁶⁹ not just come and have a chit chat when they come to observe the^{70 71} student. It seems to me that students are just trained how to write lesson plans, now to write units and they can't really deliver them.

Int. What traits or characteristics do you think Ct's should have?

Ct. Dedication to her⁷² job, organizational skills⁷³, classroom management Skills⁷⁴, and she must be versed in delivery in her delivery. Strategic Delivery⁷⁵. The teachers have to know the methodology or method of⁷⁶ teaching different subject areas.

Int. When you say strategic delivery what do you mean?

Ct. Teachers who teaching mathematics and you doing time⁷⁷ you should know that you have to do fractions before you do time. The hierarchy has to come in there. The teachers have to be aware of that. If you don't know that structure you would just teach this and teach that and nothing will really flow. I had to explain that to my St's also that there are certain topics you have to teach before you teach the other. You just can't jump to teach something. Like mammals you can't jump to teach mammals you have to know living things first, what are living things what are non-living things.

56. Fresh from college
57. Don't have knowledge and experience
58. My CT passed on experience
59. Only years of experience can give little pointers
60. As ST Valsayn learnt to teach how to teach
61. Sts from UTT can teach various subjects
62. Wonder if Supervisor know/have primary experience
63. Never seen, wouldn't know really what to do
64. Cts given idea of what is done
65. Be guided by lecturers who have all experience
66. Sts look at us
67. Get ideas
68. Collaboration with PA
69. Before St come
70. Not just chit chat
71. Student unite, can't deliver
72. Ct's dedication
73. Organizational skills
74. Classroom management
75. Versed in delivery
76. Know teaching methods
77. Organize

A spiral curriculum⁷⁸. If the Ct does not have a knowledge of how to do this and to do that then how guide somebody⁷⁹.

Int. Ok and What are your views on the role of the Ct?

Ct. What it is now or what it should be⁸⁰?

Int. What it should be.

Ct. I think the role of the Ct should be⁸¹ to supervise to monitor and to critically critique⁸² the lessons but not li

what I see happening. This lecturer, PA she is asking⁸³ me how she is going in front of the St and then asking me to appraise the lesson. No. we could have different appraisals because all have different ideas. If it is that is the

case where the PA just coming to appraise on lesson and give a mark, if that is the case then the Ct should have a say or should have some weight in marking these St's.

They would then get a mark they should get because we are there every day during the practicum so we see what the lectures or PA's are not seeing. Cause I know there are St's who teach for the lecturer. They do a window dressing lesson when the lecturer is there and when they gone I see how they really operate. So this assessment or appraisal from the lecturer is false. People going out there feeling they could teach because they get high grades. (that is the next research you have to do.⁸⁴ to see what happening out there) When the lecturer⁸⁸ comes

78. Spiral curriculum
79. Lack of knowledge
80. Now I don't know
81. Ct should be to supervise, to monitor
82. Critically critique
83. PA & CT have different ideas on expectations
84. CT should have say in assessment, giving mark
85. We are there every day
86. We see what PA are not seeing
87. PA assessment (false)
88. Good lesson from PA

they teach a good lesson and for the Ct they worse⁸⁹ Int. Do you think that every Ct should be aware of their role?

Ct. Yes, because if they know then the St would know⁹⁰ that the Ct knows what to expect so that they will always be on their P's and Q's always prepared. You understand? But if the Ct for instance me I am not aware of what to do you lost⁹¹. Once a PA came to listen to a lesson and asked me to leave the classroom, my classroom for her to supervise the St. Then they left. For the entire five weeks practice I was asked once only once to sit in on the lesson. So I don't know what went on there. I couldn't see how the PA went about appraising so I could follow up. I didn't understand that. We have to know what to look for.

Int. OK. You said you are not aware of your role. Have you been spoken to or given some sort of guidelines on your role?

Ct. No. Is their guidelines⁹².

Int. Yes in the practicum handbook for students there are a few guidelines for Ct's.

Ct. Really! (Laugh) I have never seen that.

Int. Any PA sat with you and spoke about what is expected?

Ct. No. No. Nobody ever did⁹³. Most of the time I had little collaboration with the lecturer concerning my role. The student teacher told me Miss they would like you to appraise⁹⁴ the lesson. No sort of preparation⁹⁵ for my role. No none.

Int. So then how did you go about assisting and guiding these students?

Ct. To tell you the truth sir, most of the time I⁹⁶ taught my class. The St⁹⁷ was there sometimes and others she left⁹⁸. I taught my class because⁹⁹

89. CTs none

90. If Cts now roles then Sts know that Ct is aware of what is expected - P's & Q's

91. Not aware you're lost

92. No, No guidelines?

93. Nobody spoke to me about what is expected

94. St. said Ct to appraise team

95. No preparation for my role

- 96. Most times I taught my class
- 97. St there sometimes
- 98. Others she left
- 99. I taught my class

I¹⁰⁰ have my work to complete and when the lecturer came the St taught. As I told you I was asked to leave the class

Int. So if you got no guidelines¹⁰¹, the times you helped the St what did you do.

Ct. (Laugh) The student teacher will come and ask me about the scheme. I would ask about the duration of the practicum because I was not sure of when it would start¹⁰². I gave the subject areas and the topics to teach. This last one it was chaos the St didn't know how many lesson¹⁰³ they had to teach. So I assumed the role of the lecture¹⁰⁴. And based on what I know from my experience and¹⁰⁵ what I learnt from my practicum¹⁰⁶ I told her and hoped that they took the advice¹⁰⁷.

Int. Why you said hoped?

Ct. Well in the earlies I told them what to do and they don't take the advice. Like they know we just there¹⁰⁸. And when they begin to teach you just itching to get up and say "Hey stop"¹⁰⁹. This happened many times wanting to stop the lesson because you can't teach them that you can't do it like that. We don't know how much¹¹⁰ authority well¹¹¹

101. so if you got no guidelines

100. I have my work to complete and when the lecturer came the St taught

102. Not sure of when it (TP) would start

103. St. didn't know no. of students

104. Assures role to lecturer

105. Based on my experience

106. Learnt from Practicum

107. Took advice

108. We just there (no role)

109. Itching to say 'Stop'

110. Don't know how much authority

111. Not authority

Int So if you got no guidelines, the times you helped the St what did you do.

Ct. (Laugh) The student teacher will come and ask me about the scheme. I would ask about the duration of the practicum because I was not sure of when it would start¹⁰². I gave the subject areas and the topics to teach. This last one it was chaos the St didn't know how many lesson¹⁰³ they had to teach. So I assumed the role of the lecture¹⁰⁴. And based on what I know from my experience and¹⁰⁵ what I learnt from my practicum¹⁰⁶ I told her and hoped that they took the advice¹⁰⁷.

Int. Why you said hoped?

Ct. Well in the earlies I told them what to do and they don't take the advice. Like they know we just there¹⁰⁸. And when they begin to teach you just itching to get up and say "Hey stop"¹⁰⁹. This happened many times wanting to stop the lesson because you can't teach them that you can't do it like that. We don't know how much¹¹⁰ authority well¹¹¹ not authority but what we can and¹¹² cannot do then we have so we let things go¹¹³.

Int. But if you have guidelines would that help¹¹⁴.

Ct Yes certainly. Why I used the word authority is because we need to be directed particularly for some¹¹⁵ students. Because I had a student who ¹¹⁶was always prepared. I had no problem with her she would bring lessons way beforehand. Miss how you find this sound. Should I change this. And when I give¹¹⁷her advice she would take a note¹¹⁸ and go and change up and bring it back before teaching¹¹⁹. If I have St's like her taking pointers and advice, I am OK. But when you have those who are not cooperating¹²⁰ with the cooperating teachers then you have problems¹²¹ and at this point I do not want any student teachers back in my class.

Int. You mentioned advice after the lesson. Tell me about that.

Ct. Well after the lesson as a Ct you should give feedback. We must give feedback to let them know where they are right and wrong. But 112. What we can't cannot do

113. We let things go

114. If we have guidelines that would help

115. Certainly

116. need to be directed particularly for some students

117. when advised

118. take note, change

119. Bring back before teaching

120. Sts not cooperating

121. Don't want any student back

sometimes I don't give feedback¹²⁵ depending on the St's attitude¹²⁶. But most of the times I try to give¹²⁷ especially if I see something really wrong. If they are willing to change it good¹²⁸, if not I have to go and teach it over¹²⁹. (Interested in class not so much St). And that happens where I have¹³⁰ to teach over. But I give feedback right after the lesson¹³¹. If you leave it longer they might not remember what they did. I encourage them to reflect on their work¹³².

Int. Are their benefits in having a St in your classroom?

Ct. Honestly no¹³³.

125. Don't give feedback sometimes

126. Students' attitudes

127. Most times try to give

128. St willing to change

129. If not I teach over

130. That happens, I teach over

131. Give immediate feed back

132. Reflection (encourage)

133. Honestly no benefits in having St.

What I saying some of them not coming with any new strategies, it might be that they are not being taught, or not applying it I don't know¹³⁴. Before when teachers came out of training college their ideas were good now! We used to go out of our way to do a lesson.

Int. Regarding the assistance you give to students did you just supervise them or did you do more than that.

Ct. When I started teaching I had a mentor. St's need mentors¹³⁵. So I supervise yes¹³⁶ but I see my role as mentor¹³⁷.

Int. Is there a difference?

CT. Yes. They are not the same¹³⁸. On my practice I sat down and watched¹³⁹ the class teacher teaches then she would allow me to teach¹⁴⁰. She was actually teaching me how to teach¹⁴¹. Supervising is that you coming just to see let me see just coming to see mistakes and I have never seen a lecturer demonstrated¹⁴² to a student teacher¹⁴³ how to teach. I have never seen it. But when you have a mentor you see the mentor¹⁴⁴ teach. You teach in front of your mentor.

134. I don't know

135. St's need mentors

136. Supervise yes

137. See my role as mentor

138. They are not the same

139. I watched CT Teach

140. Allowed to teach

141. Teaching how to teach

142. Supervising to see mistakes

143. Never seen PA demonstrates

144. Teach for mentor

They will show you how to do¹⁴⁵ it. That is what I did when I had my mentor. Look at her teach then try to do the things she did. That teacher was side by side by me in the classroom even making up class tests. She sat with me and showed me how to set tests. But with a supervisor now they pop in¹⁴⁶ to see the student on TP and they pop out.

Int. So what words would you associate with mentoring?

Ct. A guide¹⁴⁷, demonstrator¹⁴⁸, one giving constructive criticisms¹⁴⁹, counselor¹⁵⁰, mother figure¹⁵¹ my Ct was a mother figure to me, always organized you have to be a very kind and compassionate person¹⁵². Very understanding¹⁵³, you have to be patient¹⁵⁴ because the St. is learning from you¹⁵⁵.

145. Show you how to do it

146. Supervisor pop in to see and pop out

147. Guide, mentor is a guide

148. Demonstrator

149. Giving constructive criticisms

150. Counselor

151. Mother figure

152. Kind and compassionate

153. Very understanding

154. Patient

155. St learning from you

Int. What words associated with supervising?

Ct. Coming to find my mistakes¹⁵⁶, somebody very rigid¹⁵⁷, not easily approachable¹⁵⁸, they looking for everything to give a mark and the mentor in guiding¹⁵⁹ you in how to do your teaching of your job, supervisor not always there and accessible¹⁶⁰, come and go.

Int. So you think that Ct's are mentors

Ct. Yes they could be depending on the relationship you have with the St¹⁶¹. So you can have Ct's who are not mentors¹⁶². The ones who are willing and wanting to have you there and bring you up to standard¹⁶³, hold your hands and take you through¹⁶⁴, those are mentors. The mentors must have certain characteristics¹⁶⁶, willing they have to be a guide if I am not willing to guide you then I can't be your mentor. The mentor has to demonstrate or model to the St.

156. Supervise - coming to find mistakes

157. Someone rigid

158. Not easily approachable

159. Mentor - guiding how to teach

160. Supervisor come and go

161. Cts are mentors depending on relationship with St

162. Have Cts not mentors

163. Willing to bring you up to standard

164. Hold hand

165. Mentors have certain characteristics

Int. Do you model to your St's.

Ct. Yes I hope I do because with some of them when I taught I went¹⁶⁷ to them and say "You saw how I did this?" "You saw how I asked questions". When you model for your student they see¹⁶⁸ what should be done. They see teaching in action¹⁶⁹ especially if the Ct is a very effective one. They getting the experience looking at you¹⁷⁰. Sitting in a class in the university¹⁷¹ they would not get that. When they are in a classroom with you they learn how to keep the class how to manage the class¹⁷². They see the strategies¹⁷³ you use in building on a lesson. So they actually seeing you using different techniques¹⁷⁴ and they could mimic that to get¹⁷⁵ that same outcome. So the Ct must be a good example to the St¹⁷⁶

Int. You mentioned relationship. Talk to me about relationship.

Ct. I believe I am a very good CT¹⁷⁷.

167. I hope I model

168. Model to show what to do

169. Teaching in action

170. Get experience looking at you

171. Sitting in class at university - won't get that

172. With Ct - learn how to keep & manage class

173. See new strategies

174. See you using different techniques

175. Could mimic you

176. Good example to students

177. Good Ct

I will support you I will help when I can¹⁷⁸, I will give you advice whether they¹⁷⁹ take it or not. I will give you advice and I will try my best to make you feel as comfortable as possible¹⁸⁰ Once you have a good relationship with your St¹⁸¹. It will be easy sailing. A good relationship is important, very, very important because am you function better when you in a comfortable area. If you feel wanted you feel safe you feel at ease then you perform better but if you are stressed, you know that you are not wanted you will feel that anything you do is not good enough for that person then you would not want to perform you would not want try anything new, you wouldn't want to come out of your zone. If you have a good relationship with the student teacher¹⁸¹ and you feel comfortable you give the St her own table her own area and everything in the classroom. I helped when I can though I get frustrated¹⁸² at times I help (laugh) I try to make them comfortable I know that I was in that same position, the Ct's I had they were darlings, if I had to bring my own paper though and spend all these things they were very helpful they were very nice and my experiences were really, really good.

Int. You said you got frustrated at times do you feel.....

St. Yes that is a challenge for me. Disorganization¹⁸³ I don't like. Mediocrity¹⁸⁴ I don't like it, unpreparedness I don't like it. I can't take it and I am I wouldn't say perfectionist but when I don't see things going a particular way I get flustered. That is time wasting¹⁸⁵. So if you are going to do a lesson and the children are making noise and you are not taking the time to get their attention because you are there making a chart and that chart should have been made the night¹⁸⁶ before and I am sitting there I can't just see that when I give you that time to teach. That just frustrates me¹⁸⁷. She has to leave the classroom now to make copies, Uh! That frustrates me. When I give you advice and I say you have to do it this way do this activity this way yea, try that you just don't come and teach something totally different having no relationship¹⁸⁸

178. Support when you can

179. Give advice

180. Make you feel comfortable

181. Good relationship is important

182. Frustrated at times

183. Disorganized

184. Mediocrity

185. Time wasting

187. Frustrates me

188. Having no relationship

with what I said that frustrates me and it shows on my face¹⁸⁹.

Int. If you are to foster a good relationship¹⁹⁰ with your St what would you do?

St. I asfree to come to me to help¹⁹¹ them with their lessons. Even if you have resources¹⁹² to make here you have this you can use this. I usually open my whole classroom¹⁹³ to them; they use all my resources¹⁹⁴, all. They are able to use all my books¹⁹⁵ if I know they are doing a particular topic "I have a book with the worksheets on that topic". You could do the worksheet like this. I will give you ideas and I will help to the extent of preparing resources¹⁹⁶. You will get my number so you will call me anytime¹⁹⁷. If St's come with their lesson planned and I don't understand something we clear it up¹⁹⁸. Sometimes they have to change their worksheet or assessment sheet. You cannot have 5 activities when the duration of the lesson is 25

minutes. And she say that's how they want it. So there seems to be some conflict. There is no relation between the supervisor and the CT¹⁹⁹.

- 189. Shows on face frustrates
- 190. Good relationship
- 191. Feel free to ask for help
- 192. Help with resources
- 193. Open whole class to St.
- 194. Use all my resources
- 195. Use all books
- 196. Help to extent of preparing resources
- 197. Call anytime
- 198. Clear up things
- 199. No relationship with supervisor CT

So there is a kind of rift until the supervisor came herself and I asked her about the lesson, she said the same thing. Students feel they could pull wool over the Ct's eyes²⁰⁰ so we as Ct's must be guided²⁰¹ as to what we should expect from the student and what we have to do. Because student teachers tend to do their own thing²⁰². So there was no communication²⁰³. That first two weeks before the supervisor came it was chaotic.

Int. You mentioned assessment earlier in the lessons. What about Ct's assessing the lessons.

Ct. Yes the Ct has to assess the lesson to determine strengths²⁰⁴ and weaknesses²⁰⁵ and to give feedback. You must give constructive feedback²⁰⁶

Int. And do you think the Ct should give the St a grade that should help the Lectures with his grade?

Yes. We are there on the spot all the time²⁰⁹. We know what the students do²¹⁰ and don't do. I told you earlier that the supervisor pops in and pops out²¹¹.

- 200. Pull wool over the Ct's eyes
- 201. Cts must be guided
- 202. Students do their own thing
- 203. No communication
- 204. CT has to assess lesson
- 205. Lesson strays and weaknesses
- 206. Give feedback
- 207. Constructive feedback
- 208. Feedback-before during after
- 209. Cts need to give grade on
- 210. Know and don't know
- 211. Pop in and pop out

Not much can be done in that short time²¹².

Int. Are there any needs you have as Ct that would help you better assist the St's?

Ct. I believe Ct's should be, the supervisors should have a relationship with the Ct²¹³. In other words, when A St is coming to my class I should not meet the supervisor the day they come to supervise²¹⁴. We have to meet before just as I meet the St before we should meet before. I am so and so and I will be the supervisor

for this student. If possible you take my number²¹⁵ so we could talk. Because its only when the supervisor came and listen to the St teach lesson back to back and it was just crazy. She taught a whole week of lessons that was not approved by the supervisor I was not pleased with it and I told the supervisor that was a whole week of my children's time wasted²¹⁶. I believe there should be some kind of between the Supervisor and Ct before and during²¹⁷.

Int. Are you saying some training with the Ct.

212. Not much done

213. Relationship with PA

214. Meet with Pas

215. Have contact

216. Wasted children

217. Meeting supervisor and CT before and during

218.

219. If willing

220. Training

221. University gas to provide

222. Same page

Int. Any suggestions about the criteria?

Ct. (Laugh) Am for on experience, they should have experience some years of teaching²²⁷ and not just teaching one level like for instance a teacher who is going to a classroom for the first time in her career that teacher should not be a Ct for the class. Because I have been in infants for so many years I know that level. But if I go the Std. 3 and I have a St I have to now feel around for that Std. 3 know how to deal with that Std.3 moving from an infant level. That Ct should not have a St. The Ct should be a seasoned teacher in that class for about 1to 2 years. Choose Ct's from different levels for more than two to three years not 1 to 2 years, sorry. But generally Ct's should have 4,5 6 years teaching²²⁸ and up to be Ct's and they must be trained²²⁹. Because I know of Ct's who are untrained now attending UTT and doing the role of Ct²³⁰. They should not be a Ct.

Int. Who should decide which teachers should be trained as Ct's?

Ct. To select the Ct?

Int. (head shake for yes)

Ct. The principal. The principal would know her staff or²³¹ should know her staff should know the qualities of her staff members. Those who are dedicated²³², those who are there, those who are good model teachers and use them. The principal should guide the US and from there if the Ct is willing, then they do their training²³³. If the teacher doesn't want to do it nothing that you do is going to make it easier.

223. Include CT as partner

224. You can't do this alone

225. Select those with certain traits and train

226. Don't know what criteria but select

227. Experience for some years in that class

228. 4, 5, 6 years experience

- 229. Trained
- 230. Untrained who are CTs
- 231. Principal could select
- 232. Dedicated, there
- 233. Willing

Int. What do you think should be included in that training programme?

Ct. A structured programme where the courses should entail delivery of the lesson²³⁴, the skills²³⁵, not that we don't know but things would have changed²³⁶. Classroom management,²³⁷ administrative skills²³⁸ and organizational skills²³⁹. And with mentoring they should have an idea of how it is done, what they are looking for.

They have to know how to mentor²⁴⁰. So that the Ct would know what they should look²⁴¹ and how to mentor²⁴².

Ct. Yes. If I decide to. (Laugh) Yes it (mentoring) will help²⁴³. Because then I will have a clear idea of what it is exactly that I should be looking for²⁴⁴.

- 234. Training includes deliver of lessons
- 235. Skills
- 236. Things have changed
- 237. Classroom management
- 238. Administrative skills
- 239. Organizational skills
- 240. Know how to mentor (mentoring programme)
- 241. What to look for
- 242. How to mentor
- 243. Mentoring will help
- 244. Clear idea of what to do

And what I may deem as satisfactory it may not be that for the university or whatever²⁴⁵. There should be a... I would say a rating scale right²⁴⁶. Every Ct should have that. Rating them so on the days when the supervisor is not²⁴⁷ there you rate them so you will be able to move them from one area to the next. And that rating could assist in the final assessment²⁴⁸ by the supervisor. They could even collaborate on a mark²⁴⁹, yea. So the training will give me a clear way in how to guide them²⁵⁰ because you know if you are selected you will feel more dedicated to doing the role as a Ct²⁵¹.

Int. Any other thoughts that come to mind regarding your role as cooperating teacher that we did not talk about? Any closing remark?

Ct. Well I am not sure I will be willing to be a Ct is this training is not fixed²⁵². I believe it is not the St to blame for their unpreparedness. It is the university and the method or structure for the practicum²⁵³. I wonder how it is that a St could go through all the Practicum courses and on the final TP they can't teach. The technique and structure of their courses, something is wrong. They should take a page from the programme that the Valsayn teachers college had before and start using that²⁵⁴ because most of the lecturers seems to me they are sending lecturers who have a PhD or a doctorate or a Masters or what- ever and they have never taught at the primary level or otherwise²⁵⁵.

- 245. Cts satisfactory may not be from university

- 246. Rating scale
- 247. Rate when PA not there
- 248. Could assist in final assessment
- 249. Collaborate on a mark
- 250. Training shows how to guide
- 251. If selected CT more dedicated
- 252. Will be CT only if training is done
- 253. University and structure of programme
- 254. Take a page from Valsayn
- 255. Lecturers never taught in Primary school

You cannot teach somebody to teach when you have never been a teacher. The requirements of the lecturer should be that they should be a teacher before you can teach somebody how to teach because most of them don't know how to teach. And you cannot teach somebody something that you don't know²⁵⁶. So the St's that they are sending to the classrooms now they are coming to the classrooms and they don't know how to teach. And they are not lazing with Ct's to help in training these St's how to teach²⁵⁷. So until they change the way that they approach this training²⁵⁸ or this Bachelor degree programme or whatever they are doing now, then and only then I will be willing to take back St's into my class. From what I am seeing now they are not interested in how to teach. They are interested in how to pass an exam. If they pass the exam they end up in the same boat they have no idea how to teach a class.

- 256. Can't teach what you don't know
- 257. CTs & Pas not lazing
- 258. Change the approach to the training

Theme: Mentoring and Modelling

66- At least the ST should look at us and get some idea as to how to teach the topic.

139- On my practice I sat down and watched the class teacher teach, then she allowed me to teach

145- They will show you how to do it. Look at het teach and try to do the things she did

166- The mentor has to demonstrate or model to the ST

167- I hope I model because some of them when you model for your ST they see what should be done. They see teaching in action especially if the CT is a very effective one. They getting the experience looking at you (CT). Sitting in a class in the university they would not get that. When they (ST) are in the classroom with you they learn how to keep the class, how to manage the class. They see the strategies you use in building a lesson. So they actually seeing you using different techniques and they could mimic that to get that same outcome. So the CT must be a good example for the ST.

161- Yes the cooperating teacher could be a mentor depending on the relationship you have with the student teacher.

163- The ones who are willing and wanting to have you there and bring you up to standard, hold your hands and take you through, those are mentors. The mentors must have certain characteristics; willing; they have to guide you. If you are not willing to guide then I Can't be your mentor. The mentor has to demonstrate or model to the student teacher.

167- The cooperating teacher must be a good example to the student teacher.

135- Student teachers need mentors. So I supervise yes but I see my role as mentor.

139- On my practice I sat down and watched the class teacher teach. Then she allowed me to teach.

144- But when you have a mentor you see the mentor teach. You teach in front of your mentor. That is what I did when I had my mentor.

146- A mentor was side by side by me in the classroom even making up class tests. She sat with me and showed me how to make tests.

147- Mentoring is associated with; a guide, demonstrator, one giving constructive criticisms, counsellor, mother- figure. My cooperating teacher was a mother figure always organized. You have to be a very kind and compassionate person, very understanding. You have to be patient because the student teacher is learning from you.

159- The mentor is guiding you in how to do your job.

Example showing how themes emerged from the coded data

Theme: Establish good relationships.

27. When she was marked down on her first lesson she started to take advice.

38- Collaboration is lacking; that relationship

108- Well in the early [early times] I told them what to do and they don't take advice. Like they know you just there. And when they begin to teach you itching to get up and say "Hey stop! This happens many times wanting to stop the lesson. You can't teach that. You can't do it like that. But if you do then that relationship spoils.

110- We don't know how much authority well not authority but what we can and cannot do. So we have to let them go for good time sake, so we let things go.

120- If I have a student teacher like her taking pointers and advice I am okay.

121- But when you have those who are not cooperating with the cooperating teacher then you have problems. And at this point I do not want any student teacher back in my class.

125- But sometimes I don't give feedback depending on the student teachers' attitude.

128- If they are willing to change it's good

161- Cooperating teacher is a mentor depending on relationship with the student teacher

177- I believe I am a very good cooperating teacher. I will support you, I will help you when I can. I will give you advice whether you take it or not. I will give you advice and I will try my best to make you feel as comfortable as possible.

180- Once you have, you have a good relationship with your student teacher it will be easy sailing. A good relationship is important. Very very important because am, you function better when you in a comfortable area. If you feel wanted, you feel safe, you feel at ease, then you perform better. But if you are stressed, you know that you are not wanted you will feel that anything you do is not good enough for that person. Then you would not want to perform. You would not want to try anything new. You wouldn't want to come out of your zone. If you have a good relationship with the student teacher, you give the

student teacher her own table, her own area and everything in the classroom. I try to make them comfortable. I know that I was in that same position.

188- When I give advice and you don't take it that frustrates me and it shows on my face.

192- To foster good relationship with the student teacher I ask them to feel to come to me to help them with their lesson

197- You will get my number [phone] so you can call me anytime.

199- So there is a kind of rift until the supervisor [PA] comes herself and asks about the lesson.

Theme: Observing and evaluating

25- Until the lecturer came, the supervisor came and told her the same thing I was saying about the lesson; too long and the objectives too many.

29- I would tell her how to teach a particular lesson or topic, she will come with the lesson, we talk about it and will be totally different to what I advised.

117- When I give her advice, she would take a note and go and change up and bring back before teaching

122- Well after a lesson as a cooperating teacher you should give feedback. We must give feedback to get them to know where they are right and wrong.

127-But most of the times I try to give feedback especially if I feel something really wrong.

131- But I give feedback right after seeing the lesson. If you leave it longer they might not remember what they did.

81- I think the role of the cooperating teacher should be to supervise, to monitor and to critically critique the lesson, but not like what is happening now.

204- Yes the cooperating teacher has to assess the lesson to determine strengths and weaknesses and to give feedback.

206 - You must give constructive feedback before the lesson is done and give feedback at the end. Then the assessment and comments are meaningful.

209- We are there on the spot all the time. We know what the student do and don't do.

16. Oh yes the cooperating teacher is very useful. The cooperating teacher has the experience and she knows what to look for.

19- She is in the classroom all the time to see that teacher teach.

91- Once a practicum advisor came to listen to a lesson and asked me to leave the classroom, my classroom, for her to supervise the student teacher. So I don't know what went on there. I could not see how the practicum advisor went on appraising [the lesson] so I could not follow up. We have to know what to look for.

Theme: Contribute to assessment of student teachers

82-83 This lecturer, practicum advisor she is asking me how she [ST] is going in front of the student and then asking me to appraise the lesson. No, we could have different appraisals because all have different ideas.

84- If it is the case where the practicum advisor just coming to appraise a lesson and give a mark then the cooperating teacher should have a say or should have some weight in marking these student teachers.

85- They would then get a mark they should get because we are there every day during the practicum so we see what the lecturers or practicum advisors are not seeing. Because I know there are student teachers who teach for the lecturer. I see how they really operate. So this assessment or appraisal from the lecturer is false. People going out there feeling they could teach because they get high grades. When the lecturers come they teach a good lesson and for the cooperating teacher they worse.

246- I would say a rating scale right. Every cooperating teacher should have that. Rating them so on the days when the supervisor is not there you rate them so you will be able to move from one area to the next. And that rating could assist in the final assessment by the supervisor. They could even collaborate on a mark.

Theme: Training for cooperating teachers

12- Something is not right at the university and as cooperating teachers we don't know what is going on.

23- As the cooperating teachers we just in the dark. We see some kinds of things in a lesson that we don't know if that is what students were taught because it is skimpy.

53- The cooperating teachers have to be brought up to date with the new teaching methods because things have changed.

64- So I feel as cooperating teachers if we are given some idea of what is being done or even be guided by those lecturers who also have the experience, we would be moving in a better direction.

115- We need to be directed particularly for students.

213- I believe the supervisor should have a relationship with the cooperating teacher.

217. I believe there should be some kind of working relationship between the Supervisor and Ct before during and after.

218-220. Yes of course. If they are willing some sort of training for ct's would help

221-222. The university has to provide that training so that all cooperating teachers would be on the same page. We have to know the structure of the lesson plan, new strategies, new methods and so on.

224- Take those cooperating teachers who are willing and include them as a partner in the training process. I don't think you all could do this alone.

225- You may not be able to train all teachers but you select those with certain traits and select them to be trained and updated.

234- A structured programme where the courses should entail delivery of the lesson, the skills, not that we don't know but things have changed. Classroom management skills, administrative skills, organizational skills.

239- And with mentoring they should have an idea how it is done, what to look for. They have to know how to mentor so that the cooperating teachers would know what they should look for and how to mentor.

94- The student teachers told me "miss they would like you to appraise the lesson". No sort of preparation for my role. No none.

200- Students feel they could pull wool over the cooperating teachers' eyes. So we as cooperating teachers must be guided as to what we should expect from the students and what they have to do.

254- They should take a page from the programme that the Valsayn Teachers' College had before and start using that.

Appendix 7

The Data Analysis Process

