

**Developing Field-Experience of English  
Language Teacher Programs at University  
Level in Light of Educational Contemporaries**

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## Developing Field-Experience of English Language Teacher Programs at University Level in Light of Educational Contemporaries

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هدفت الدراسة إلى تطوير الخبرة الميدانية في برنامج إعداد معلم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة المستقبل في ضوء المستجدات التربوية. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي. تضمنت أدوات جمع البيانات استبيانًا لتحديد أهم المستجدات التربوية بناءً على آراء خبراء المناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية. علاوة على ذلك ، تم استخدام مجموعة التركيز لجمع البيانات النوعية من الخبراء في هذا المجال. تضمنت نتائج الدراسة وصفًا للخبرة الميدانية في برنامج معلم اللغة الإنجليزية الحالي وتصورًا مقترحًا لتطوير الخبرة الميدانية ؛ حيث تضمن هذا التصور الأهداف والمحتوى وآليات التنفيذ. كما قدمت الدراسة توصيات موجهة وإجرائية حول تطوير الخبرة الميدانية وإعداد معلم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل عام.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الخبرة الميدانية - معلم اللغة انجليزية - المستجدات التربوية

# Developing Field-Experience of English Language Teacher Programs at University Level in Light of Educational Contemporaries

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## Abstract

The study aimed to develop field experience of the English language teacher program at the university level in the light of educational contemporaries and for the scope of the study, Mustaqbal University was purposely selected as a case. The study adopted the descriptive and analytic method. Data collection tools included questionnaire to determine the most important educational contemporaries based on expert's inputs. Further, focus groups was used to collect qualitative data from experts in the field. Findings of the study included description field experience in the current English language teacher program and a suggested proposal for developing the field experience particularly; objectives, content, and ways of implementation and mechanism. The study also provided recommendations about developing field experience in English language teacher programs.

**Key words:** field experiences - English language teacher - educational contemporaries

## Introduction

Practicum experiences are an extremely critical component of any teacher education program (Wyss et al, 2012, 600). An early field experience is one aspect of the process for any student preparing to enter the teaching profession. An early field experience allows preservice teachers to begin experiencing—or immerse themselves in a real classroom environment (Smalley & Retallick, 2017, 352). For preservice teachers, field experiences are the best opportunity to observe experienced teachers, make practice of reforms in a classroom setting and learn from their own teaching experiences.

A practicum is a setting designed for the task of learning a practice. In a context that approximates a practice world, students learn by practicing. They learn by undertaking projects that simulate and simplify practice; or they take on real-world projects under close supervision. The practicum is a virtual world, relatively free of the pressures, distractions, and risks of the real world, to which, nevertheless, it refers. It is also a collective world in its own right, with its own mix of materials, tools, languages, and appreciations. It embodies particular ways of seeing, thinking, and doing that tend, over time, as far as the student is concerned, to assert themselves with increasing authority. (Darrell Morris, 2011, 55)

Early field experiences are an important feature of many teachers' preparation programs that help preservice teachers learn how to teach (Karthigeyan Subramaniam, 2013). Countries around the world with higher academic achievement in international tests such as The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) concentrate on developing teacher preservice and in-service experience in particular (Al-Khatib, 2013).

To ensure bringing up a qualitative transition in programme development and execution, the Commission for Training and Education Assessment (2018) stated that the executive framework for renovating teacher preparation programmes has been formulated according to teacher profession-related perspectives. One of the four most important perspectives is field experience enrichment. That is, if the teacher is not exposed in preservice training to various teaching and professional situations challenging his performance ability from which he learns from academic supervisors and teachers and assistant teachers, he may avoid such situations when in-service and fail to deal with them or learn them by trial and error that consequently

harm students. Therefore, a growing trend is emerging worldwide to adopt practicum- or school-based teacher preparation.

Indeed, field experiences not only contribute to preservice teachers' professional development but also provide an opportunity for teacher educators. This would update their knowledge of teaching-learning theories and practices as well as evaluate the effects of recent reforms on students' and teachers' views and practices (Rodgers & Keil, 2007).

Practicum experiences have been a critical aspect of the education and training of school psychologists at both the specialist and doctoral level. At the specialist level, the National Association of School Psychologists recently updated their standards for practicum, but the content, quality, and length of practicum vary tremendously across training programs. (Li and Fiorello, 2011, 901)

The role of practicum training in educating professional psychologists has come increasingly into focus following the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives' resolution to count practicum experience for licensure in the model licensure law (APA, 2006). Effective practicum training depends on good administration to realize its full educational potential as part of the graduate curriculum in professional psychology. This article reports the results of a survey of APA accredited Clinical, Counseling, School, and Combined and Integrated programs regarding their practicum policies and procedures (n = 195). Basic policies are implemented by most programs; identified competence goals, individual student practicum plans, and other potentially useful policies and procedures are evident in some programs. The authors recommend careful review of graduate program policies and procedures to enhance full integration of practicum into the educational process. (Hatcher et al., 2011: 902)

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, NCATE, (now known as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation) along with the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Council of Chief State School Officers, (CCSSO), and National Education Association (NEA) have criticized

existing field experience models and called for programs to develop new approaches to improve this component of their programs.

In TESOL teacher education, the practicum is recognized as a crucial, socio-educative experience where practice teachers both witness theory in application and become members of a real-world community of practice (Ishihara, 2005 cited in Andrew and Razoumova, 2017: 174).

New changes and developments have appeared and asserted themselves strongly in the educational field, which forced teacher training institutions to adopt them to keep abreast of the changing times we are living in. One such development is the transition of the teaching process from teacher-centred to student-centered.

A new development also occurred in teacher roles, the 21st century teacher, according to Bishr (2005), must be inevitably able to carry out all the new roles and functions assigned to him. These would include expert or educational counsellor role, student advisor role, supervisor and advisor role, scholar and scientific analyst role, educational subject specialist and expert role, social change creation impact aide role, technological specialist role, effective teacher role in helping students in integrative development, innovator role in helping students to innovate and invent, and modern age developments' participant role. The dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has also unfolded a new scenery replete with teacher challenges requiring knowledge and new skills for effective practice. Moreover, it requires new methods in teacher, family, and community development, subject content teaching knowledge, and professional assessment and development. From kindergartens to second secondary class, teacher will face a greater cultural variety, increasing numbers of English learners, and a wider combination of student needs and abilities (CAEP, 2018).

In addition, the growing use of automation and digital learning tools will notably change how teachers do their jobs, giving teachers more time to interact with students (up from 29 hours in 2006 to 33 hours in 2030). By 2030, teachers will routinely use digital technology to make classroom education a more interactive, student-centered experience. They will likely spend less time grading (down from 5 hours in 2006 to 1 hour in 2030) and more time

facilitating self-directed learning (up from 4 hours in 2006 increasing to 14 in 2030).

New directions emerged that call for dealing with the following contemporaries<sup>1</sup> or changes in field experience such as Teacher Development Through Reflection, Teacher Development Through Curriculum Design, and Teacher Development Through Classroom Research.

Daily instructional duties boost up the value of early field experience as students observe both peers and cooperating teachers in elementary classrooms. Such claim is supported by the notion that teacher education programs that emphasize reflection can accelerate teacher development (Piro, Anderson, and Fredrickson, 2015, 32). In a practicum, student-teachers develop as teachers through reflecting on practice, observing other teachers, and enacting curriculum; during practicum, most student-teachers experience personal as well as professional development (Betsy Gilliland et al, 2020, 2).

Change has also affected the assessment processes, tools, and types, of field experience journey including allotting more concentration on assessment as learning rather than assessment of learning. Tools of assessment included portfolios and student journal, and e-portfolio. Finally, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, there appeared what could be called as *Emergency Remote Teaching* and its consequences in changes in teaching, technology, and teacher education. Hence, the idea of the current study is to develop field experiences in light of educational contemporaries at a purposely selected higher institute, Mustaqbal University, so as to achieve the goals of the study and where findings can be reinvestigated, and maybe extended to other programs in similar settings.

### **Research Problem**

Findings of recent studies on teacher education pointed out a need for comprehensive reforms in teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith et al.,

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<sup>1</sup> Contemporaries in this study refers to emerging development, changes, directions, and trends in field experience at the university level based on international practices which strives to enhance teacher preparation.



2015) such that of preservice teachers should be given opportunities to experience the classroom settings that they will be teaching in near future (Cooper & Nesmith, 2013). In addition, high-quality field experiences enable in-service teachers to learn about new trends in the field from both pre-service teachers and teacher educators, such as recent technologies used in teaching and learning (Zeichner, 2010). In other words, there is a strong relationship and collaboration among pre-service teachers, teacher educators and mentor teachers provide rich opportunities for improvement of all bodies of this process.

Further, studies on the effectiveness of field experiences revealed that partners of this process do not gain much benefits from such collaboration as intended to be so (Cakir, Ogan-Bekiroglu, Irez, Kahveci, & Seker, 2010; Sowder, 2007; Yalin-Ucar, 2012; Zeichner, 2010). Therefore, the researcher has noticed, through his experience in supervising field experiences and from literature, that there are certain shortcomings in field experience program could be summed up as follows:

- a) Focusing on the theoretical aspect is more than that on the applied one which deprives the graduate students from attaining quality;
- b) Micro-teaching is not often tried whether before or during training;
- c) There is almost no standardized, refereed, and activated pro forma designed in light of expected program learning outputs to be assessed accordingly;
- d) There is almost no standardized, refereed, and activated pro forma for student self-assessment;
- e) There is almost no standardized, refereed, and activated pro forma for training center directors cooperating with the University, specifying their actual roles in assessment and follow-up.

Due to the scope of the study and to come up with a proposed model or framework that should be included in the field experience component of a teacher English language program, it would helpful to put in hand for the purposes of analogy a current running program; the field experience in the English program at Mustaqbal University, which is a basic component of the program that prepares student-teachers professionally and trains them

to be English language teachers after graduation. Although the field experience in this program is built upon essential pedagogical competences and skills associated with manipulation of achieved knowledge of subject matter, teacher roles, position in the teaching process, and professional development which should necessitate proper training matching his/her sublime status, this study is to investigate the extent to which it goes along with recent contemporaries in the field and how it benefits from such contemporaries.

The research problem can be expressed by the following main question:

How can field experience in the English teacher program at Mustaqbal University be developed in light of educational contemporaries? This general question can break down into sub-questions as the following:

- a) What are the educational contemporaries associated with field experience in English language teacher programs?
- b) To what extent field experience of the English language teacher program at Mustaqbal University goes along with educational contemporaries?
- c) What is the proposed framework for developing field experience at an English language teacher preparation program?

### **Aims of the Study**

The study aims to achieve the following:

- a) Identifying contemporaries interacting with field experience as a part of English language teacher preparation program.
- b) Assessing field experience at the English language program at Mustaqbal University in light of the provided contemporaries.
- c) offering a proposal for developing field experience at an English language teacher preparation program.

### Significance of the Study

After the completion of the study, its findings and recommendations should participate in achieving the following:

- a) The availability of an integrative framework for developing field experience at quality level;
- b) Reinforcing the applied aspect of English Teacher Preparation Program as the actual standard for theoretical program quality;
- c) The study will benefit Field Experience Program personnel at Mustaqbal University and KSA universities;
- d) The availability of a mechanism which aids the educational decision maker for ensuring field experience program quality.

### Delimitation of the Study

The study has the following limitations:

- a) Demographic limitations in dealing with male and female students at Mustaqbal University, Buraida City; Saudi Arabia;
- b) Place limitations in dealing with Mustaqbal University, Buraida City, Saudi Arabia;
- c) Time limitations in dealing with 2021.

### Study Terminology

A number of terms have been used in the study which include:

### Field Experiences

Guyton and Byrd (2000) defined field experiences as the range of school experiences that occur prior to student teaching for students in preservice teacher education. Interactions with peers, cooperating teacher and teacher coordinator is known as the triad. This triad is vital for the preservice teachers to learn from the field experiences and develop an understanding of the profession (Smalley & Retallick, 2017, 352).

### **Pre-service teachers/ student-teacher**

Pre-service teachers are the people for whom practicum is constructed and through which they gain experience of the practicalities of teaching in schools. They are usually students at a later stage of an English language teacher program.

### **Contemporaries:**

Contemporaries in this study refers to the emerging development, changes, directions, and trends in field experience at the university level based on international practices which strives to enhance teacher preparation.

### **Literature Review**

The study of teacher education placement programs has been widely discussed in the literature. The student teaching experience is a pivotal component of most teacher education programs and a focus within teacher education literature.

There are different kinds of field experiences that have different goals. For example, some of them would be in the first year of the college as an exploratory course, some other ones would be in the middle to help pre-service teachers learn every possible thing about teaching, and the last ones would be in the final year of the college and aim to apply the theoretical knowledge on real students (Posner and Vivian 2010). Cooperating teachers, course instructors, students, and Pre-Service Teachers take the main roles in the field experiences.

The school psychology program requires supervised practical experiences that include the following:

- Completed for academic credit or are otherwise documented by the institution
- Specific, required activities consistent with goals of the program and in settings relevant to program objectives for development of candidate skills

- Systematic development and evaluation of specific skills in multiple, relevant domains of school psychology graduate education and practice
- Direct oversight by the program to ensure appropriateness of the placement, activities, and supervision
- Collaboration between the program, placement site, and practicum supervisors
- Close supervision by program faculty and qualified practicum supervisors
- Inclusion of appropriate performance-based evaluation by program faculty and supervisors to ensure that candidates are developing designated competencies
- Are distinct from, precede, and prepare candidates for the school psychology internship. (Hatcher et al., 2011 ,902 )

### **Field Experience Outputs**

The program requires that its students receive adequate and appropriate practicum experiences. To this end the program should:

- (a) Place students in settings that are clearly committed to training; supervise students using an adequate number of appropriate professionals; and provide a wide range of training and educational experiences through applications of empirically supported intervention procedures;
- (b) Integrate the practicum component of the students' education and training with the other elements of the program and provide adequate forums for the discussion of the practicum experience;
- (c) Ensure that the sequencing, duration, nature, and content of these experiences are both appropriate for and consistent with the program's immediate and long-term training goals and objectives; and
- (d) Describe and justify the sufficiency of practicum experiences required of students in preparation for an internship. (Hatcher et al, 2011, 902)

### **The Importance of Field Experience**

Almost all people who are interested in teacher preparation agree on the importance of field experience as it is considered a real encounter with the profession and its problems as well as hands-on training under the supervision and direction of specialists in which the trainee acquires a number of teaching skills and varied activities, through which he will be exposed to direct educational experiences like viewing, observation, direct contact, experiencing, and acting in the teaching process.

The structure and content of field experiences is paramount for preservice teachers to transfer skills to the classroom and for lifelong learning to take place. It is defined as “the ability to take what was learned in one context and utilize it in new contexts” (Retallick & Miller, 2010, p. 70). The implementation of early field experiences in collaboration with the university and school is imperative in the development of a well-rounded teacher candidate (Piro, Anderson, & Fredrickson, 2015, 32).

Beside theoretical and semi-practical courses involved in teacher education programs, field experiences open a window for such teaching experiences and contribute more to development of preservice teachers’ professional knowledge and skills (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015). A high-quality field experience provides opportunities for preservice teachers to relate real world contexts with teaching-learning theories (Appel & House, 2007) as well as develop their knowledge of students including an appreciation of student differences (O’Brian et al., 2007) and collaborate with and learn from experienced teachers (Doğan & Kılıç, 2020, 1-2).

Further, field experiences have a potential to help Pre-Service Teachers to reflect on their experiences in the teaching-related fieldwork. (Ulusoy, 2016, 534). Pacticum leads students to see, think, and act like the coach — like an experienced, effective practitioner (Darrell Morris, 2011, 55).

When pre-service teachers visit several schools prior to student teaching in multiple contexts, they observe both effective and ineffective ways of working with at-risk children. Early, structured field experiences connect preservice students with the reality of the classroom by creating “both dissonance between connections to prior beliefs and understandings and current clinical experiences to better meet the needs of their students in the future” (Eisenhardt, Besnoy, & Steele, 2012, p. 7).

Hudson et al. (1993) identified five issues that affect the impact and effectiveness of field experiences: (a) lack of a common goal, (b) lack of control, (c) limited learning due to the lack of experiences the preservice teacher can compare, (d) the difference between what is being practiced in the classroom and what is being taught on campus and (e) limited opportunities. Moore (2003) noted that many field experiences are procedural activities that focus on time management, classroom management and content. (Smalley & Retallick, 2017, 352).

### **Field Experience Models**

Field experience portfolios or pro formas are varied without any agreement on which form has the best effect in its success. Alkhatib (2013) summarized the most important pro formas of field experience as follows:

First, there is the model which considers field experience as a continuous task in teacher preparation from beginning to end. It is commonly widespread in the UK, Australia, some US states, and some European countries.

Secondly, another model offers field experience in a certain period in the preparation program. Some teacher training programs in Arab countries, Europe, America, and Asia use it.

Thirdly, there is the model which offers field experience in the last academic year in such institutions as used in some European countries, America, and Asia.

Fourthly, another model provides field experience in the last semester in teacher preparation program, which is the most commonly used one in KSA. Such a model requires the trainee to be fully dedicated to training.

Fifthly, there is the model which offers field experience in the last year or semester in teacher preparation program partially (e.g., a day or two per week). It does not require full-time trainee dedication. Some teacher training programs in KSA and Arab countries adopt this model.

Below is a brief review of field experience in some international universities:

DePaul University's approved Teacher Education programs that require supervised field experiences with students in schools. Field experience hours are included as course assignments in specified courses within each program. The minimum number of hours required varies by program (100-200 hours). Field experiences are identified as Level I (beginning) or Level II (intermediate). This practice offers education majors a gradual introduction to the full range of experiences associated with a teacher's role.

DePaul University's recognizes that teaching internship experience is a full-time responsibility; therefore, other than internship courses, interns should not enroll in other university/college courses, including correspondence, web, distance learning, or courses at other universities or colleges. In addition, the University does not allow student-teachers to work full time while they are enrolled to practicum. Part-time employment is subject to the approval of the Director and the Dean of the College of Education.

The Department of Teacher Education strongly recommends that students who plan to work part-time jobs during their internship cautiously consider the consequences that working other jobs may have on their teaching performance. The department suggests that interns who feel it a necessity to work should attempt no more than 20 hours of work per week and should have at last a 2.76 GPA. All interns must meet the same internship



performance standards as stated in the Field Experience Level III (Student Teaching) Handbook. Working a part-time job could interfere with the intern's maximum performance.

Bloomsburg University's field experience program is illustrated by the certain stages on its website. Four stages of field experience are required for all certificate areas. A description of each stage includes:

Stage 1: Observation

Stage 2: Exploration

Stage 3: Pre-student Teaching

Stage 4: Student Teaching

### **Previous Studies on Field Experience**

Most previous Arabic research work, the researcher found, dealt with field education from a partial perspective (e.g., student-teacher perspective, supervisor perspective, or director perspective only). For example, Alshehri and Muhammad (2013) stated that the aims of practical education should not be keeping abreast of educational development. In addition, there is no guide for practical education showing field training plan. Abdul-munim and Abdul-majid's study (2013) found that the greatest obstacles facing students in the practical education course related to written lesson preparation and execution, school milieu, school administration, and educational supervision.

Alkhasawnah (2014) showed that female student assessment of field education program efficiency was as follows: in first place came field education supervisor assessment, followed by cooperating teacher, then field education program procedures, next cooperating school, and finally cooperating school head. Zaqzooq (2017) indicated that there are shortcomings in field education planning and in applied aspects such as the lack of sufficient class periods, inconsistency of school timetable, and supervisor performance drawbacks. Al-Budaiwi (2018) demonstrated that most difficulties were college-related, followed by assessment process, and finally school and its facilities. Alruwaili and Alnabrawi (2015) was concerned with building a guide proposal for field education in light of total quality standards. Alarfaj et al. (2019) identified field education program difficulties: some of which were female school student-related, some were

supporting training workshop-related, some program-related, and some school management-related.

Also the researcher reviewed literature of the field and found vital findings which helped excute the study at hand. For example, Subramaniam (2013) examined the content of pre-service teachers' reflections of early field experiences. Ramos, Esslinger, Pyle (2015) tackled the effects of field experience on delivery of feedback. Welsh & Schaffer (2015) dealt with the demonstration of effective pedagogy to secondary education candidates in an early field experience. Andrew and Razoumova (2017) addressed being and becoming TESOL educators: embodied learning via practicum. Qin & Villarreal (2018) described Chinese pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching practicum under contrasting contexts: implications for rural teacher preparation. Montgomery and Akerson (2019) discussed facilitating collaboration through a co-teaching field experience.

In most of the above studies, only one aspect of field education experience was described, thus avoiding a comprehensive examination of the program which may provide an integrative picture for the decision maker to help the student-teacher in coming to grips with program reality, strength reinforcement, and weakness rectification as a prelude to quality attainment, taking into account educational contemporaries, with which this study is concerned.

Since the emergence of international standards such as Council Accreditation of Educator Preparation CAEP Standards, most universities try to obtain accreditation in order to align their programs with such standards. The present research adopts such standards in upgrading programs.

## Research Methodology

Based on the research problem and aims of the study, the study uses a descriptive and analytic approach in answering the first two questions; however, a qualitative approach has been used for the third question through focus groups.

As a method of collecting data in qualitative research, a focus group is an interview on a topic with a group of people who have knowledge of the topic. Since the data obtained from a focus group is socially constructed

within the interaction of the group, a constructivist perspective underlies this data collection procedure. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, 113). Further literature and implemented procedures are to be discussed when addressing the second data collection tool.

## Study Population

English language teacher programs at the university level in Saudi Arabia and experts in such programs.

## Study Sample

According to study population, a simple random sample of the population has been selected which represents the population.

## Study Tools

### The questionnaire

It was designed according to the following steps:

- a) Specifying the aim of the questionnaire: it aims to determine the most important contemporaries in the educational settings as to field experience.
- b) Initial version/form of questionnaire: The first draft of the questionnaire has been constructed on the basis of literature review of educational contemporaries in order to determine its dimensions and items, which consisted of six dimensions.
- c) Questionnaire validity: This has been verified through face validity where the questionnaire has been refereed in its primary format by ELT specialists, using a refereeing form designed for this purpose. Based on their modifications.
- d) Questionnaire reliability or consistency: This has been measured by Cronbach's Alpha Co-efficient. Table 1 shows reliability coefficient values for all fields and tools in general.

Table 1. Reliability Coefficient Values

<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
A. Contemporaries related to the teacher	0.76
B. Contemporaries related to the educational process	0.82
C. The growing use of automation and digital learning tools	0.73
D. Contemporaries related to assessment	0.73
E. Contemporaries related to class environment	0.84
F. Contemporaries related to professional responsibility	0.79
All Domains	0.90

The above values are considered suitable according to research methodology literature.

- a) The criterion of judging the importance of educational contemporaries has been formulated according to the following formula:
- b)  $\text{Group length} = (\text{maximum end} - \text{minimum end}) + \text{number of levels}$
- c) Applying this to the performance of the used study, group length = 0.80. Based on that, study performance and importance specification of the degree of educational contemporaries have been corrected according to the following table:

Table 2. Range Calculation Method

<b>Mean</b>	<b>Degree of Importance</b>
1.00 - less than 1.80	Very Large
1.80 - less than 2.60	Large
2.60 - less than 3.40	Medium
3.40 - less than 4.20	Few
4.20 - less than 5.00	Very few

- d) Final Draft of the Questionnaire:

Following the previous procedures, the questionnaire has been finalized as is shown in Appendix 1.

## The Second Tool: Focus Group

Data collection by means of focus groups according to Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson (2001) is one of the qualitative research methods which first appeared in commercial fields and then in applied human sciences in the 1940s. Focus groups aim to collect qualitative data from individuals formed in groups systematically and harmoniously so as to ensure intergroup interaction and avoid disputes and differences in desired data collection. To collect all focus group participants' responses, they are tape-recorded with the researcher's role being the director and assistance of the discussion. The obtained data from the focus groups is then analyzed following transcription and systemic and logical or deductive organization to arrive at the desired results which have qualitative judgements for the case being studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The focus group tool has been used according to the following steps:

### Aim

It aims to collect opinions from focus groups about how to develop English students' field experience in an English language teacher program.

### Participant Identification

The researcher selected a group of four experts in addition to the researcher, who is an expert in ELT curriculum and methodology as is shown in the table below.

Table 3. Field Experience Expert Focus Group

Academic Degree/ expertise	Specialty	No.
English Language Teacher with 20 years experience	Expert	١
Assistant professor in EFL	Expert	٢
Supervisor of English language teachers	Expert	٣
Professor	Educational Expert in ELT Curriculum and Methodology	٤
Associate professor	Researcher – an expert in ELT Curriculum and Methodology	٥

### Question Specification

Open-ended questions were used based on literature review in the field and the researcher experience. Discussing them with specialist colleagues, the following questions were set:

1. In your opinion, how can we develop field experience to meet the requirements of the twenty first century teacher?
2. How can we help the future teacher gain the knowledge and expertise needed to teach content, and evaluate students' knowledge, and motivate them?
3. How can we prepare future teachers to understand and use digital learning opportunities to foster diverse students learn?
4. What is your suggestions to include in a proposal/ framework of the field experience in an English language teacher program, which contributes to the production of the researcher teacher and the reflective teacher?
5. What are the bases of teacher preparation curricula so that the future teacher can contribute to spreading the culture that school learning is more than what happens in classroom?

6. What is your suggested proposal of the field experience program, which contributes to providing the future teacher with teaching skills during crises (emergency remote teaching)?

### Session Meeting and Management

Four focus group meetings were held as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Focus Group Meetings

Members	Meeting's Aim	No.
Researcher	Focus Group Meeting Preparation	١
Researcher & Experts	Specifying current field experience obstacles	٢
Researcher as educational expert & ELT Experts	Formulating a suggested proposal for developing field experiences	٣
Researcher & Educational Experts	Analyzing focus group data	٤

### Study Procedures

The following procedures have been used in the study:

Firstly, obtaining the required permissions from Mustaqbal University to analyze the needed documents for answering the questions of this study.

Secondly, specifying the educational contemporaries through:

- Educational literature review and related previous studies,
- Listing the most prominent educational contemporaries associated with field experience in English language teacher programs,
- Preparing a questionnaire including those contemporaries after ensuring their validity and reliability,
- Specifying a targeted educational expert sample, and
- Applying it to educational experts.

Thirdly, identifying the current reality of field experience in a purposely selected program,

Fourthly, proposing a suggested framework for developing field experience component to be included in an English language teacher program through:

- Preparing and judging the suggested framework/ proposal by educational experts,
- Offering the suggested proposal,

- c) Providing recommendations and future studies in the field in light of the research findings.

### Statistical Analysis

- a) Frequency and percentage scores for calculating questionnaire findings,  
 b) Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for measuring reliability,  
 c) Arithmetic means and standard deviation.

### Results and Discussion

In calculating the responses to the first question stating "What are the educational contemporaries based in which field experience in English teacher preparation program should be developed?", frequency and percentage scores, means, significance, and rank have been employed in all the six fields and items as well as the total items. Table 5 shows the arithmetic means, standard deviations, degree of significance, and rank for all fields and items of educational contemporaries.

Table 5. Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, level of Significance, and Rank for All Fields and Items of Educational Contemporaries

No .	ITEMS	Mean	STDEV	Degree of Importance	Rank
	<b>A. Contemporaries related to the teacher</b>				
1	Preparing the teacher as a researcher	3.89	0.83	Large	6
2	Preparing the reflective teacher	4.18	0.68	Large	3
3	Preparing the creative teacher, helping his	4.56	0.66	Very large	1



No .	ITEMS	Mean	STDEV	Degree of Importance	Rank
	students to be creative				
4	Preparing the teacher as a facilitator or guide to his/her students	4.53	0.79	Very large	2
5	Preparing the teacher to observe other teachers	3.98	0.84	Large	5
6	Preparing the teacher to focus on enacting the curriculum	4.16	0.77	Large	4
Total Domain		4.21	0.80	Very large	2
<b>B. Contemporaries related to the educational process:</b>					
7	The educational process is shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered.	4.33	0.64	Very large	4
8	The shift from traditional ways (methods) of teaching to problem-based learning	4.29	0.79	Very large	5
9	Emphasis on knowledge of students' skills, knowledge, and	4.49	0.55	Very large	2

No .	ITEMS	Mean	STDEV	Degree of Importance	Rank
	language proficiency				
10	Considering Knowledge of students' special needs	4.36	0.61	Very large	3
11	Emphasis on reciprocal communication with students	4.29	0.55	Very large	5
12	Engaging students in learning	4.60	0.54	Very large	1
Total Domain		4.39	0.62	Very large	1
<b>C. The growing use of automation and digital learning tools:</b>					
13	The shift from face-to-face teaching to emergency remote teaching.	4.11	0.75	Large	1
14	The shift from face-to-face teaching to e-learning.	4.07	0.94	Large	2
15	The shift from face-to-face teaching to blended learning.	3.98	0.84	Large	3
Total Domain		4.05	0.84	Large	5
<b>D. Contemporaries related to assessment:</b>					

No .	ITEMS	Mean	STDEV	Degree of Importance	Rank
16	Paying more attention to assessment for learning	4.29	0.76	Very large	1
17	Paying more attention to assessment as learning	4.11	0.80	Large	4
18	Using new assessment techniques such as portfolio	4.24	0.83	Very large	2
19	Using e-portfolio assessment	4.13	0.79	Large	3
20	Using student journal assessment	3.67	0.90	Large	6
21	Criteria-based assessment and standards-based assessment	3.98	0.66	Large	5
Total Domain		4.07	0.81	Large	4
<b>E. Contemporaries related to class environment:</b>					
22	Establishing a culture for learning	4.33	0.64	Very large	1
23	Managing student behavior	4.18	0.58	Large	2
24	Organizing physical space	4.13	0.76	Large	3
Total Domain		4.21	0.66	Very large	2
<b>F. Contemporaries related to professional responsibility:</b>					

No .	ITEMS	Mean	STDEV	Degree of Importance	Rank
25	Communication with families	3.89	0.96	Large	4
26	Participation in school and district initiatives	3.93	0.81	Large	3
27	Participation in the professional community	4.24	0.61	Very large	2
28	Showing professionalism	4.36	0.61	Very large	1
Total Domain		4.11	0.78	Large	3

The above results in Table 5 show that the degree of significance for all fields of educational contemporaries were highly significant with an arithmetic mean of 4.19. More precisely, the results indicate that the second field "Contemporaries related to the educational process" was ranked first and very highly significant; the first field "Contemporaries related to the teacher" and the fifth field "Contemporaries related to class environment" were both ranked second and very highly significant; the sixth field "Contemporaries related to professional responsibility" was ranked third and very highly significant; the fourth field "Contemporaries related to assessment" was ranked fourth and highly significant; the third field "The growing use of automation and digital learning" was ranked fifth and very significant.

The results in Table 5 indicate the degree of significance for the first field "Contemporaries related to the teacher" was very highly significant with an arithmetic mean of 4.21, which is due to the teacher being the corner stone in the educational process upon whom its success is dependent despite modern technology. The arithmetic means of field one items "language reading skills" had a range of 3.89-4.56. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that the two items (3) "Preparing the creative teacher, helping his students to be creative" and (4) "Preparing the teacher as a facilitator or

guide to his/her students” were very highly significant and were ranked first and second in that order. All the other items were highly significant: the second item “Preparing the reflective teacher” was ranked third; the sixth item “Preparing the teacher to focus on enacting the curriculum” was ranked fourth; the fifth item “Preparing the teacher to observe other teachers” was ranked fifth; the first item “Preparing the teacher as a researcher” was ranked sixth and last.

As to the second field “Contemporaries related to the educational process”, the results in Table 5 show that the degree of significance was highly significant with an arithmetic mean of 4.39. This is due to the fact that the subjects of the sample feel the importance of changes in public life and its effects on the educational process, especially the student being the dimensions of the educational process, and because of the necessity to use modern methods in teaching like problem-based learning.

The arithmetic means of the second field items ranged between 4.29-4.60. The results indicated all such items were very highly significant. The item “Engaging students in learning” came first in rank; the item “Emphasis on knowledge of students’ skills, knowledge, and language proficiency” came second in rank; the item “Considering Knowledge of students’ special needs” was ranked third; the item “The educational process is shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered” was ranked fourth; finally, the two items “The shift from traditional ways (methods) of teaching to problem-based learning” and “Emphasis on reciprocal communication with students” were ranked fifth.

Concerning the third field “The growing use of automation and digital learning tools”, the results in Table 5 indicate that the degree of significance was highly significant with an arithmetic mean of 4.05, which is due to the digital gap in emergency distance teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The arithmetic means of the third field items had a range of between 3.98-4.11. The results showed all such items were highly significant. The item “The shift from face-to-face teaching to emergency remote teaching” came first in rank; the item “The shift from face-to-face teaching to e-

learning” came second; the item “The shift from face-to-face teaching to blended learning” was third in rank.

As regards the fourth field “Contemporaries related to assessment”, the results in Table 5 demonstrate that the degree of significance was highly significant with an arithmetic mean of 4.07. This resulted from many changes in the assessment process and the attention accorded to it by the educational systems to such an extent that assessment should be considered a prelude to educational process reform.

The arithmetic means of the fourth field items ranged between 3.67-4.29. The results showed all such items were highly significant. The item “Paying more attention to assessment for learning” came first in rank and was very highly significant; the item “Using new assessment techniques such as portfolio” came second which was very highly significant; the item “Using e-portfolio assessment” was third in rank and was highly significant; the item “Paying more attention to assessment as learning” came fourth in rank and was highly significant; the item “Criteria-based assessment and standards-based assessment” was fifth in rank; finally, the item “Using student journal assessment” came last in sixth rank.

As for the fifth field “Contemporaries related to class environment”, the results in Table 5 demonstrate that the degree of significance was very highly significant with an arithmetic mean of 4.21. This came as a result of the fact that the majority of educationists feel that the teaching environment is very important, which should be safe and supportive of the students, concentrating on the moral milieu, not only on the physical one.

The arithmetic means of the fourth field items ranged between 3.67-4.29. The results showed the item “Establishing a culture for learning” came first in rank and was very highly significant; the item “Managing student behaviour” came second which was highly significant; finally, the item “Organizing physical space” was third and last in rank and was highly significant.

Finally, as to the sixth field “Contemporaries related to professional responsibility”, the results in Table 5 showed that the degree of significance was highly significant with an arithmetic mean of 4.11. This was brought about by the emergence of national professional standards, which were interested in the teacher’s professional responsibility in general and that of the English teacher in particular.

The arithmetic means of the sixth field items ranged between 3.89-4.36. The results showed the item “Showing professionalism” came first in rank and was very highly significant; the item “Participation in the professional community” came second which was very highly significant; the item “Participation in school and district initiative” was third in rank and was highly significant; finally, the item “Communication with families” came forth in rank and was highly significant.

These results go along with the findings of some studies like Albudaiwi (2018), Bishr (2005), Alkhatib (2013), Betsy, Jay and Bethany (2020), and Cooper and Nesmith (2013).

### **Response to Question Two**

In responding to the second question stating “To what extent field experience of the English language teacher program at Mustaqbal University goes along with educational contemporaries?”, the researcher conducted an analytic study of international standards and educational contemporaries to identify the extent of agreement between the current reality of field experience at the English language teacher program of Mustaqbal University and such standards and contemporaries.

Through using the list of contemporaries as outlined under the procedure of this study, the researcher was able to uncover the following:

- a) The availability of documents illustrating the reality of field experience in the current program,
- b) Providing trainee students with opportunities to use new strategies in teaching,
- c) The presence of supervision system and a guide showing the tasks of participants in field experience program,

- d) The presence of assessment system and standardized assessment tools used in student follow-up and assessment, and
- e) The existence of training programs for *remote emergency teaching*.

The findings were as follows:

- i) Concerning partnership between Mustaqbal University and Educational Administration in Qassim Region in planning field experience program:

Through the analysis of the available documents of the targeted program, the partnership with Educational Administration was apparent in many schools taking part in field experience program. However, the researcher did not find any meetings' minutes held between the University's field experience officials and Educational Administration ones. Similarly, no letters addressed to cooperating school heads concerning planning for field experience program were found. Also, no documents were found specifying the roles of participants in supervising students during the execution of the program. Nor was there any description the cooperating teacher task or school head. The researcher noticed also the lack of standards for selecting field experience supervisors. Finally, no documents were found specifying field experience registration requirements or conditions.

- ii) In regard to providing trainee students/ student-teachers/ pre-service teachers with opportunities to use modern strategies in teaching:

This could not be verified due to the little number of classes allotted to trainees to practice teaching in reality. Also, no specified teaching skills were available for training students to use before joining the program. Nor was there any micro-teaching timetable inside the University. Furthermore, there is no skill guide for trainees for helping them to deal with special needs' students. In addition, trainee students lack guides of skills that assist them in dealing with students from different social, economic, and scientific backgrounds.



- iii) Regarding the presence of a study guide or course showing the tasks of student, supervisor, and head in executing the field experience program:

The researcher could not put hands on any guides for field experience to be distributed to students before joining the program so as to know their specific roles, supervisor and school head roles as well as field experience procedures.

- iv) Concerning assessment tools and mechanisms:

The researcher was not able to find any evidence of observation forms prepared by the University for students to write down their notes and opinions. He also noticed the use of a technical assessment by the University supervisor, an administrative assessment by the school head, and an oral assessment by the cooperating teacher. Thus, there is no unified assessment form approved by College Council. Also, assessment standards are lacking except for mark division: 60 for university supervisor, 20 for school principal, and 20 for cooperating teacher. Furthermore, there is no specified form for ELT. No evidence was also found concerning support by the supervisors to trainee students in diverse processes like observation, group discussion, and e-mail. Trainee students are deprived of taking part in self-assessment just like any other school teacher in exclusion from assessment. The time allotted for feedback from peers and supervising staff members is not enough where every supervisor does his supervision personally with no specified time and timetable for such matters. Finally, the portfolio was not employed in the assessment process.

- v) As for the existence of training programs for trainee students in remote emergency teaching.

No training programs were available, qualifying students to move from direct teaching to e-teaching platforms and technological applications as an e-response to school closure due to Corona Pandemic.

### **In regard to professional responsibilities**

The researcher found no evidence for training students on how to deal with families to change their views on studying English. There is also no

participation in professional learning communities for English teachers. The principle of professionalism and its culture are neither activated nor spread. No opportunities for taking part in community educational events prior to joining the field experience program are available. Finally, the practical training time for qualifying student teachers to be able to perform their prescribed professional roles is not sufficient.

**In response to the third question** which is “What is the proposed framework for developing field experience at an English language teacher preparation program?”, the researcher analyzed focus group collected data by transcribing, and classifying participant responses into a logical manner, contributing to constructing the following framework/ proposal:

#### 1. Framework/Proposal Justification

The justification for developing the field experience program is represented by the following:

- a) The rapid and subsequent educational developments, the necessity to prepare teachers to cope up with them, and regarding field experiences as one of the pillars of a teacher preparation program in general and for English language teacher in particular,
- b) The changes affecting the teaching process due to Corona pandemic, the recourse to *remote emergency teaching*, and the necessity to prepare the teaching milieu to deal with such teaching,
- c) Trying to obtain academic accreditation for English teacher preparation program and the enrichment of field experiences as a prelude to creating a qualitative transition in the program and placing it as a basic constituent of its preparation,
- d) The keenness of the University to adopt the latest trends in teacher preparation program in general and English language teacher in particular, and
- e) The shortcomings in the performance of some English teachers which may be due to field experience setbacks through which the student went during studying at university.

#### 2. Aims of the Suggested framework/Proposal

The aims of the suggested framework/proposal for developing the field experience program are the following:

- a) Developing the field experience in an English language teacher program should result in a qualitative transition in English teacher preparation nationally and locally,
- b) The program should cope with time changes that guarantee the production of a distinguished graduate who is able to adapt educationally and culturally with Corona pandemic consequences, and
- c) Contributing to English teacher preparation for raising assumptions and generations capable of confronting contemporary and future challenges scientifically, intellectually, educationally, and socially.

3. Suggested framework/Proposal Preparation Sources:

The following sources have used in preparing the suggested proposal:

- a) Educational literature related to English language teacher preparation programs,
- b) Educational literature related to field experience,
- c) Previous studies uncovering field experience shortcomings in English language teacher preparation programs,
- d) Research findings which handled educational contemporaries, especially *remote emergency teaching*, and
- e) The researcher's own findings about the reality of field experience in the English language teacher program at Mustaqbal University.

4. Suggested Proposal Execution Mechanisms:

- a) Regarding field experience as an integral part of teacher preparation program which is a link between two aspects of university work: one academic, one educational,
- b) Creating an independent unit called "field experience unit" with a clear strategic vision in addition to conceptual frameworks governing field experience progress, processes and directing its execution stages, consisting of teaching staff members, educational supervisor representative, school principals, one distinguished teacher, and one student,

- c) The unit's tasks include setting up strategies of field experience progress in planning, execution, assessment, as well as following up the latest studies and research in field experience,
- d) Providing the material and human facilities necessary for the success of field experience program, including qualified supervisors, heads, and experienced cooperating teachers, teaching equipment and materials needed by students before undertaking practicum and during it in schools,
- e) Preparing a Student Teaching Handbook including the knowledge, skills, and professional responsibilities required for effective teaching as well as identifying the tasks of participants in the program (trainee, supervisor, cooperating teacher, head) precisely based on task analysis,
- f) Setting up a fully equipped micro-teaching lab for training student teachers in lesson execution skills, which is supplied with effective teaching skill films,
- g) The cooperation of faculty members in curricula and ELT methodology in preparing canonized tools for assessing the four stages of the developed field experience program, and
- h) Setting up tools for registration on the multi-stage field experience program, beginning from the first level to the last on the English language teacher program.

### **Developed Field Experience Program Stages**

Since the trainees/ student-teachers encounter increasingly more complex teaching tasks such as individual student support, student micro-group teaching, tutoring students, student progress assessment, co-teaching, macro-group teaching and in-class and in-school teaching tasks, the researcher views that the proposal/ framework or conception should include the following:

The ELT teacher preparation program provides four stages of subsequent field experience in which the field experience program begins from level one until the end of the program. These four stages are the following:

### **Level 1. Observation**

During this level, the trainee observes various situations in teaching and learning including early stages, middle stages, upper stages of school. It would be better for the observations to take place in several schools ranging from high- to low-performance ones so that the trainee acquires varied experiences and learns professional responsibility as much as possible.

### **Level 2. Exploration**

It is an experience in which the trainee is under the supervision of a cooperating teacher with more expertise during individual classes and/or a small or large group of students. Level 1 and 2 can be combined to handle shared competencies in early field program process framework.

### **Level 3. Partial Teaching or Pre-student Teaching**

Here the trainee works directly with students in schools. This field experience provides trainees with increasingly more complex field tasks such as dealing with students as individuals, student micro-group teaching, tutoring students, student progress assessment, co-teaching, macro-group teaching and in-class and in-school teaching tasks as well as the participation of trainees in in other tasks required for fulfilling the professional responsibilities in the teaching milieu competently. The trainee begins by showing his knowledge and skills in planning, assessment, and thinking. These field experiences are supervised by a university faculty member and an accredited teacher.

### **Level 4. Student Teaching**

This level may be considered a group of carefully organized and planned field experiences required from all trainees/ student-teachers /pre-service teachers on the preparation program. It is an experience culminating the preparation program for a whole semester in which the trainee is given a teaching timetable for one class or more who is closely supervised and directed by an expert cooperating teacher in partnership with the University supervisor. During student teaching experience, the trainee demonstrates an increasing responsibility in teaching where he takes the role of the English language teacher. Regular feedback is given to the trainee about teaching and professional performance in class. All trainees should exhibit the knowledge,

the skills, and professional inclinations required for effective teaching performance. Sufficient information must be provided about this experience in Student Teaching Handbook.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations may be offered:

Considering the possibility of adopting the suggested proposal/framework of the study for developing field the experience in English language teacher programs in light of modern educational trends and present time requirements by the responsible authorities of the teaching process,

Developing the current English language teacher program at Mustaqbal University in light of the suggested framework,

The necessity for training student teachers before graduation with tools and mechanisms of English language teaching electronically or in a blended way to confront *remote emergency teaching*, and

Conducting further studies and research in the area of field experience, especially at earlier stages of the English language teacher programs.

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