

# A STUDY OF GROUP LEARNING AMONG ELT PRACTICUM STUDENTS THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF THEIR TEACHING PRACTICUM JOURNALS IN A MA - ELT PROGRAM AT ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY

*Hoang Oanh Vu*

IELE, Assumption University

[hoshisora501@gmail.com](mailto:hoshisora501@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Journals and teaching practicum (TP) are always related as they help to improve the quality of TP and trainee teachers. This research aims to analyze journals written by ten trainee teachers during their practicum in a MA - ELT program at Assumption University. The significance of this study is to enhance the use of journals among the trainee teachers in self-study and self-evaluation as well as highlight how fellow trainee teachers could improve and train themselves to be professional teachers in the future. In addition, the outcomes also provided helpful implications for both trainee teachers and supervisors in using journals more effectively.

**Key words:** trainee teachers, reflection, journal writing, teaching practicum.

## Introduction

For inexperienced teachers, encountering numerous problems in class is inevitable such as the use of teaching approaches, materials and effective language for communication to encourage students to learn. Therefore, TP is crucial for trainee teachers to develop and improve their skills in teaching by learning from their supervisor and fellow trainee teachers. There are many studies on teaching practicum, and in terms of second language teaching, some researchers, such as Richards and Nunan (1990), think that practicum is the process of teaching a class of second language learners and receiving feedback, so that a student teacher has a chance to apply knowledge and

language in the lesson. Different universities with different policies and curricula will have different targets in the practicum.

In many teacher training programs, trainee teachers will be in charge of one English section in which students are on an intermediate English level with the idea in mind that students are able to communicate to teachers while the class is supervised by the practicum coordinator and recorded so as to be discussed later. However, the TP in this research differs in the students' English level because they have very limited English skills in reading, listening, writing and speaking. Moreover, the focus of the practicum is on communication or speaking skills. The remarkable thing of this practicum is the role of trainee teachers as they play the main role in their TP from self - study to mutual influence with the idea that they will encourage each other to learn and improve. They are trained during three-week preparatory classes and they have to be on their own from the time they see their students. It is the challenge for trainee teachers in this particular practicum and the issues here are whether these trainee teachers could work together as a group in the practicum; whether they could learn from each other and how they communicate within their group members in order to improve their teaching skills individually and within the group.

This small – scaled research study will explore journal writing by ten trainee teachers who are MA students in English Language Teaching program at Assumption University (ABAC). The paper is conducted through trainee teachers' journals formulated in a teaching practicum course which requires participants to keep regular journals on their teaching. The study aims to investigate how trainee teachers 'do' their teaching practicum as a group. All ten trainee teachers are divided into two groups. As part of the participants in this practicum, the researcher aims to explore the feelings and opinions of the trainee teachers in this practicum, in particular to see how these two groups, compare and contrast the approaches used by each member in the group, the progress and development of the group throughout the teaching practicum. The development here includes the inner communication of each group to see how these trainee teachers support and evaluate each other so that they can improve their teaching skills and gain

experience through the practicum. They are the ones, who are judging whether they are improving through the teaching practice, whether they are gaining confidence in their teaching skills and creating good ideas, as well as whether they are learning something by communicating with and seeing each other during the practicum. In order to achieve these aims in such a short period as the practicum, trainee teachers have to adapt, change and develop what they are doing every day through communication.

## **Literature Review**

There are numerous issues in terms of teacher training, mainly focused on teaching practicum and trainee teachers. Some studies are conducted in order to evaluate the TP and help improve it to be better and useful. The study conducted by Peacock (2009 in City University of Hongkong suggested that there should be a procedure in evaluation of foreign language teacher education in terms of how relevant the needs of the program to the trainee teachers were; how well the program could prepare the trainee teachers for their real teaching class. According to him, this procedure of evaluation would be a step towards the professionalization of the field of English language teaching and make a useful contribution to theory. This actually helps the teachers involved in making the teacher training program not only in Hongkong but also in other places to be more conscious so that they can help improve the quality of the course and the trainee teachers.

Another important point in the practicum is the teaching approach. The approaches of TP can be divided into the micro approach to teaching and the macro approach to teaching, according to Richards and Nunan (1990). The micro approach to teaching tends to be more traditional where teachers were often evaluated according to how they matched the profiles of good teachers derived from the opinions of experts, despite the fact that there was no evidence that teachers having these characteristics were actually successful in bringing out higher level of learning in their pupils (as cited in Richards and Nunan, 1990). Different from the micro approach to teaching, the macro approach to teaching gives a clearer and more practical access to teaching since it is "termed direct, or active teaching which is based on

studies of effective teachers of content subjects.” (Richards and Nunan: 1990:10) In other words, macro approach to teaching is teacher directed in which the classroom environment is managed by the teacher only and things will be done according to the teacher’s instructions. Teachers make final decision in terms of what students learn, how the lesson is taught and how long the lesson will last, etc. from teacher’s point of view in terms of the importance of the lesson they teach. It is hard to say which approach is better due to the various ways of thinking and the experiences of the trainer teachers. However, based on the definition above of micro approach and macro approach, it can be seen that the macro approach to teaching gives trainee teachers more opportunities to perform and learn from the teaching practicum as all the decisions should be made by them so that they have to pay attention and be in charge of what they do. This is actually challenging for them and the advantage is that they can make mistakes and learn from them, which cannot be done after they have become professional teachers in the future. To put it in a different way, the macro approach to teaching gives more opportunities for trainee teachers to learn and improve how to be professional.

In terms of trainee teachers, a number of experts pointed out that teachers should be critical, empowered, capable of independent thought, and aware of their own conceptualization of teaching (Berlak and Berlak, 1987; Duffy, 1994; Smyth, 1987 cited in Watson Todd, 2004) (as cited by Kulavichain and Thepsiri, *The New English Teacher* 2012:103). It raised the issue of how trainee teachers could be aware of these points in order to improve themselves, especially be aware of their weaknesses and strengths so that they can change to be more flexible and adaptable to different teaching situations and circumstances.

Together with morality and ethics as the requirements for trainee teachers to be professional, their beliefs towards second language teaching and teaching as a professional career should be taken in consideration. As English teachers, trainee teachers have to keep in mind that their goal in teaching is to help their students use English effectively in their daily lives. In order to gain this belief, the trainee teachers have to be confident in

themselves so that they can become professional English teachers after the training session.

For the above reasons and to become professional teachers, trainee teachers need reflective journals in which they can see themselves in the teaching process as they have to express their points of view, thinking and share opinions by writing journals in order to be better. As Howell, Richardson and Parkinson (1988:75) have suggested, "the largest possible use of diaries appears to be pedagogical, with the teacher and learner being the two interacting parties. They also propose various other purposes of diaries as diaries are indirect learning tools, independent of being read by a teacher; an authentic language practice or evaluative tools". Moreover, Gebhard gave a function for journal as "a teaching journal can also function as a place to celebrate discoveries, successes, and "golden moment" (Fanselow 1987), as well as to "criticize, doubt, express frustration, and raise questions" (Bailet 1990: 218). In addition, it can create an opportunity to confront the affective aspects of being a teacher, including what annoys, disconcerts, frustrates, encourages, influences, motivates, and inspires us." (Gebhard and Oprandy, 1999:79). They also mentioned that journals are useful not only "to explore our teaching beliefs and practices" or "plan and analyze our lessons", but also "to plan and carry out our own exploration projects." In addition, journals can be a place for us to collaborate on projects with other teachers and teachers educators, as well as to focus attention on the "assumptions underlying exploration itself." (Gebhard and Oprandy, 1999:79). According to Gebhard, writing journals was the way for teachers to be open and truthful to themselves in expressing ideas and feelings. In other words, it was a way of self – reflection and it was believed it would help teachers to improve themselves to be more professional and flexible.

Gebhard also mentioned two types of journal as an intrapersonal journal and a dialogue journal with different goals of them, and he states it could help teachers to express their opinions in different ways by using these two types of journals. (Gebhard and Oprandy, 1999: 79-82)

- An intrapersonal journal gives a chance for the teachers to be both the writer and the audience of our journals. “The intrapersonal journalist sees no particular need to worry about grammar, style, or organization, because the emphasis is on obtaining a record of teaching and feelings and thoughts about it.” Since this is a free writing, teachers can mention “whatever comes into our minds” and it is “a form of exploration that can generate lots of ideas and awareness about ourselves as teachers and our teaching.”

- A dialogue journal is used when teachers write journals and give to the outsiders to read, so that the process of writing will be different from it of an intrapersonal journal. The reason for having a dialogue journal is that teachers sometimes want feedback from the outsiders as “outside audiences for our writing also provide a source of feedback, as well as a way to share teaching ideas, and explore practices and beliefs. As a result, some of us prefer to work with a dialogue journal because it creates both an audience for our writing and a relationship with someone who is sensitive to our teaching explorations.”

Brock, Yu, and Wong (1992:295) gave a summary of benefits from writing journal in teaching education:

- They provide an effective means of identifying variables that are important to individual teachers and learners.
- They serve as a means of generating questions and hypotheses and what a student learns.
- They enhance awareness about the way a teacher teaches and a student learns.
- They are an excellent tool for reflection.

- They are simple to conduct.
- They provide a firsthand account of teaching and learning experiences.
  - They are the most natural form of classroom research in that no formal correlations are tested and no outside observer enters the classroom dynamic.
  - They provide an ongoing record of classroom events and teacher and learner reflections.
  - They enable the researcher to relate classroom events to examine trends emerging from the diaries.
  - They promote the development of reflective teaching.

(as cited in Wallace M J. 1998)

All of the mentioned elements indicate how trainee teachers reflect themselves in their teaching in order to train themselves to be confident in professional teaching as well as be able to handle any situation well enough. In addition, some of the previous research and studies are given as support to these theories and to make the connection between this study and the previous research.

## Methodology

### *Description of Context:*

TP and Microteaching was over a twelve-week trimester at the Graduate School of English at Assumption University. It took place twice a week over nine weeks for two hours each day. For the first three weeks trainee teachers were prepared for the real teaching with some practices in class and psychological preparation. The later nine weeks would be the practicum for student teachers where they had to apply all their knowledge

learnt before in the preparatory class in terms of developing the lesson plans, teaching materials for their class, teaching the students, evaluating themselves and their co – teachers by writing journals and group discussion after every class and these journals were required to be submitted to the course advisor every week. Moreover, during the practicum, there would be some classes held by the coordinator of the practicum after he checked the journals of trainee teachers in order to listen to their problems during the teaching and help student teachers share their problems and suggest solutions as well as their feedback to each other in the bigger group. These meetings were conducted randomly by the coordinator on a need base because during the practicum, the advisor was not inside the class observing the teaching process; he just checked the journals weekly and called for the meetings if necessary.

This teaching practicum was aimed at conversation skills only and it tried to direct the teaching practicum in alternative perspectives in which the trainee teachers had to create their own schedules and materials based on their students' level and they had to write journals after every class to reflect on themselves. Another reason which made this practicum interesting and different was the communication between teachers and students since they did not have the same mother language to communicate with and so it would affect the teaching styles and approaches of these trainee teachers in their lesson plan(s) and teaching. Moreover, among trainee teachers themselves, they also needed communication in order to make final decision of what to teach, how to teach and who would be in charge of the class day by day.

### *Subjects of the Study:*

The subjects of the study were ten graduate students from the MA - ELT program. The students were of varying ages from twenty three to thirty seven from many different countries such as Britain, Vietnam, Burma and China. They were divided into two groups in order to teach two groups of students with different backgrounds: one -community leaders and the other medical doctors. These students were also of varying ages from forty to sixty seven and they were all Thai whereas only one trainee student was a native

English speaker. Due to the limitation of the students, each group was divided into two small groups so that each person in the small group would teach for one hour. Some of them had had English language teaching experience, while some had a little and some none. They were divided into two groups as listed below, and according to their own division of teaching task, there would be a dominant teacher group and observant teacher group among the sub unit groups.

Group I:

	Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	English Language teaching experience
<b>Group I.1</b>	T.T1	22	Female	Chinese	No
	T.T2	27	Female	Burmese	Yes
<b>Group I.2</b>	T.T3	28	Female	Vietnamese	Yes
	T.T4	22	Female	Chinese	No
<b>Group I.3</b>	T.T5	25	Male	Chinese	No

Group 2:

	Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	English Language teaching experience
<b>Group 2.1</b>	T.T6	30	Male	Chinese	No
	T.T7	30	Female	Chinese	No
<b>Group 2.2</b>	T.T8	22	Female	Chinese	No
	T.T9	37	Male	British	Yes
	T.T10	25	Female	Chinese	No

The main two groups were divided by the course coordinator; he indicated T.T3 and T.T9 were the leaders of two different groups; the rest of trainee teachers just chose which person they wanted to work with and joined in. Then the sub units were formed by the trainee teachers themselves as they paired up with the person they were close to and could work well

with. In other words, the groups were constituted by the trainee teachers themselves under the standard that they wanted to work with the person that they were close to. This accidentally created the big difference between the two groups in which there was one group with high English proficiency (group 1) and another with low English proficiency (group 2). It meant that among five members of group 1, the three Chinese members grouped themselves together with another two non-Chinese members in the group so that the main language used in this group would be English when they communicated with each other. However, it was different in the division of group 2. Two members T.T6 and T.T7 decided to group themselves together as they were a couple; therefore the remaining two Chinese trainee teachers (T.T8 and T.T10) had to group with T.T9 as another group. Additionally, the researcher knew that T.T6 and T.T7 were not satisfied with this course as they had to attend it as a compulsory course. Therefore, their attitude towards this teaching practicum was not as positive as compared to other trainee teachers.

Before the course began, these trainee teachers had been taught useful teaching techniques and effective classroom management. The trainee teachers were given a book called "Role Play" which they used as the guidance for the activities in the class since the main skill taught in this practicum was conversation. During the first three weeks of preparatory classes or microteaching, the trainee teachers were asked to make presentations and discussions about the topics and activities in the book so that they would be able to apply some activities suitable for the level(s) of their students. The presentations and discussions, at this time, were under the supervision of the coordinator of the course, in which he gave comments after each presentation of the ten trainee teachers, and discussed problems and solutions with them. This was the difference in the microteaching and microteaching in this program as there were no video records of student teachers' performances. There were only presentations followed by direct discussion between the course advisor and the students as the whole group.

After three weeks of microteaching, it was time for the trainee teachers to deal with students and apply knowledge they learnt during preparatory classes. The first class was the time for trainee teachers to get to know their students in person and to assess their English levels; so that they

could gain insight in how to make the lesson plan suitable for their students' levels. Trainee teachers also started writing journals at that time, from their first class, describing their feelings and opinion about their preparation before teaching, their teaching in class and their evaluation of the teaching as the role of the dominant teachers or the observers. The important thing was that all ten trainee teachers in both groups had to be there in the classroom to observe the teaching and learning process. Depending on the discussion of trainee teachers in their groups, there would be a group of dominant teachers and observant teachers based on their own choice.

### *Instruments:*

This study used a qualitative research methodology which was supported by qualitative data. The data used was the journals of these ten trainee teachers in this practicum of a MA -ELT program.

A journal is the record of what people think and reflect themselves from their point of view on a particular topic or situation. In this study, trainee teachers' teaching journals were the base data, in which they recorded their feelings, opinions and stated the difficulties or problems they had in every class. They also expressed how they taught, how students reacted to their teaching and how they communicated with their fellow trainee teachers in the group. In other words, there were ten students put into two groups, so there would be ten journals with different points of view about their class based on their cultural background and perceptions. Therefore, these ten journals all together would be able to help the researcher tell the story about these two groups of trainee teachers in terms of organization of the groups, communication in groups, evaluation individually and within the group, interaction with students and the progress of the group through the TP.

Particularly in this practicum, the course advisor suggested some crucial points that he would like the trainee teachers to put in their journals; nonetheless, it would not be a problem if student teachers did not mention all the points in their journals as long as they could write clear and informative journals. The points can be listed as:

- Preparation
- What happened in class?

- How do you feel?
- Your own observation:
- Problems
- Solutions
- What works? Why?
- What doesn't work? Why?
- What might happen in the next class?
- Connection between classes.

The reflective journal is used “by a large number of many action researchers, teacher trainers, and theorists to promote the thinking and learning process” (Francis, 1995; Yahya, 2000; Hull et al., 2004; Watson Todd, 2004) (as cited by Kulavichain and Thepsiri) It helped make clear the intention of the researcher in using journals as the main data in this study. In addition, the specification of this practicum was that journals would be used as the main tool for the course coordinator to evaluate each trainee teachers. Therefore, as mentioned there was requirement to cover all the points listed above, the trainee teachers in this practicum still had to conduct an informative journal in which the preparation, teaching process and evaluation were the main parts to discuss.

### ***Participant Observation Method:***

Beside journals, participant observation is also a method of data collection used in qualitative research. Since this study is based on the observation and self evaluation of trainee teachers during their TP, participant observation method is another way to conduct data for this study. Kawulich (2005) stated in her article “Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method” on Forum: Qualitative Social Research (FQS) that participant observation was the primary method used by anthropologists doing fieldwork. Fieldwork involves active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field notes, and perhaps most importantly, patience. Participant observation is the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities. It provides the context for development of sampling guidelines and interview guides.

As the study was conducted to see how the trainee teachers worked together as the group and how they could interact, communicate with each other to learn and improve themselves and since they were from different countries with different background, participant observation method helps researchers with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities. Participant observation allows researchers to check definitions of terms that participants use in interviews, observe events that informants may be unable or unwilling to share because doing so would be impolitic, impolite, or insensitive, and observe situations informants have described in interviews, thereby making them aware of distortions or inaccuracies in description provided by those informants (Kawulich, 2005). By using participant observation method, the researcher was able to find out and understand the trainee teachers' thoughts and approaches in their various chosen activities in the practicum based on different background of culture and education when the researcher analyzed journals of the trainee teachers.

Kawulich (2005) summarized the reasons to use participant observation method in research as follows:

- to identify and guide relationships with informants;
- to help the researcher get the feel for how things are organized and prioritized, how people interrelate, and what the cultural parameters are;
- to show the researcher what the cultural members deem important in manners, leadership, politics, social interaction, and taboos;
- to help the researcher become known to the cultural members, thereby easing facilitation of the research process; and
- to provide the researcher with a source of questions to be addressed with participants

Kawulich (2005) also lists five reasons for including participant observation in cultural studies, all of which increase the study's validity:

- It makes it possible to collect different types of data. Being on site over a period of time familiarizes the researcher to the

community, thereby facilitating involvement in sensitive activities to which he/she generally would not be invited.

- It reduces the incidence of "reactivity" or people acting in a certain way when they are aware of being observed.
- It helps the researcher to develop questions that make sense in the native language or are culturally relevant.
- It gives the researcher a better understanding of what is happening in the culture and lends credence to one's interpretations of the observation. Participant observation also enables the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data through surveys and interviews.
- It is sometimes the only way to collect the right data for one's study. (Kaluwich,2005:142-3)

Together with the journals, participant observations are two main data collection method for this study. In this practicum, all ten trainee teachers were not informed of what kind of journal they should write, and there was no format, the points listed above were only suggestions from the supervisor of the course. The data would be various in thought and experience since the participants were from different countries with different backgrounds.

## Data Analysis

### *Data from Trainee Teachers' Journals:*

The researcher used the extracts of from the journals to find the similarities and differences among journals and then focus on the language used by the ten trainee teachers to see whether they saw the same things of what happened in class, and whether there were any other kinds of communication among the trainee teachers.

### *Data Presentation and Interpretation*

This section aims at presenting the findings of the study from the journals to answer the following research questions:

- 1.How do trainee teachers communicate to each other to prepare the lessons for their teaching and to help each other during the practicum?**
- 2.How do trainee teachers evaluate their teaching and other fellow students' teaching?**
- 3.How do trainee teachers learn from their teaching?**

In order to analyze the data more efficiently, the excerpts were taken from the selected entries to show the similarities or differences among these ten trainee teachers based on their points of view, teaching experiences and ways of writing journals. They did not write journals based on the same structure. Due to their ways of thinking, some of them wrote the journals clearly with the suggestions from their supervisor but some of them wrote as if they were simply essays.

#### Group I:

There are two small groups among five trainee students so that it would be easier to set up the task for each individual. The two small groups were T.T1 and T.T2 as one group; T.T3 and T.T4 as the second group whereas T.T5 was alone in the last group. However, sometimes he was co teaching with trainee teacher T.T4. As it was stated clearly in the analysis, only the trainee teachers who had to teach on a particular day would have to prepare the lesson plan and share it with the rest of the group.

In terms of communication, there was very little conversation among members in the group when they were separated into small groups of teaching. As the researcher was a part of this group, she knew that when they started on the first day, there was detailed communication among them before the actual teaching since they did not know who the students would be therefore they had to meet each other in order to establish the teaching plan. However, when they were in their own groups, the communication for preparation part became less and less, and it developed to where there was no

communication at all before the teaching, until they received suggestions from their supervisor.

During the teaching, it depended on the dominant teachers on that day to decide whether they needed help from the others. If they really needed help, there would be some short communication among them while the teaching was occurring. Besides that, it was good for this group that whenever there were activities, both the leading teachers and the observing teachers joined in. The reason for this may be because the students' skill level was really low and they needed assistance while doing the activities. When the whole group of trainee teachers took part in the activity, based on the difficulty of the activity and its type, trainee teachers would be the helpers or the players to work with them.

Different people have different ways of learning, so the ways these trainee teachers evaluated the lessons were different. On the same day of teaching, some of them thought the lesson was good while others disagreed. In addition, based on what the trainee teachers planned to teach and what really occurred in the teaching class, they were able to learn many things, but what exactly each of them took from the lesson varied among them. Furthermore, even when trainee teachers did not share their thoughts of what they could learn from the real teaching on a particular day, it did not mean that they learnt nothing; it was the silent learning style that was seen mostly in Asian students based on their cultural background and their schooling culture. Therefore, although they did not share or mention certain 'happenings' in the journals, they would keep it to themselves.

The table below was the brief summary of five members in **Group I** in terms of their performances of teaching and interaction with others.

Teachers	Performance	Activity Type	Overall Classroom Atmosphere	Collaboration In Teaching	Own Reflection	Evaluations Towards Other Trainee Teachers
<b>T.T1</b>	Co - teaching with trainee teacher T.T2. Always gave the instruction with T.T2, sometimes T.T2 encouraged her to be the monitor of the activity. Did not use Thai in teaching.	Pair - work, role play, individual activity. Using power point to teach. She gave demonstrations and let students do the activity. Repetition of the demonstration, Rarely gave verbal instructions.	Students were confused about what they had to do. Depending on the difficulty of the activity: it took time for students to understand. Students asked teachers to write on the board.	Only interaction with her co teacher T.T2. Got some communications with trainee teacher T.T4 and T.T5 in Chinese. Little or no interaction with trainee teacher T.T3.	At first disagreed over using Thai in teaching English. Later realized that teachers should be flexible in using students' L1 and English to describe abstract things.	Shared the same ideas with trainee teacher T.T2, but different descriptions of details. Sometimes shared the evaluations to trainee teachers T.T4 and T.T5. No direct feedback to trainee teacher T.T3.
<b>T.T2</b>	Co - teaching with trainee teacher T.T1. Being the leader and help T.T1 in her teaching. Being fine with using Thai in class. Encouraged students to listen rather than write the content on the board.	Pair work, Role play, Individual work. Using power point to teach. She and T.T1 gave demonstration to make students understand what to do. Often giving verbal instruction	Students were confused of what they had to do. Students also asked to write the content on the board. Students felt comfortable talking to her.	Had interaction with other trainee teachers. Together with trainee teacher T.T3 helped T.T5 in his teaching. Sometimes got trainee teachers involved in activities.	Well prepared before teaching and following the lesson plan. Always encouraging students to speak as much English as possible.	Being the supporter to trainee teacher T.T1. Being the connection between the sub units of group I. Shared the same ideas with T.T1, sometimes with T.T4 and T.T3.
<b>T.T3</b>	Co - teaching with trainee teacher T.T4. Encouraged T.T4 to lead the activity alone and sometimes helped if necessarily. Flexible in using Thai and English to teach. Wanted to give students as much knowledge as possible.	Individual work, Group discussion, Role play. Used flash cards and power point to teach. Repetition to make all students have a chance to talk. Gave verbal and non -	She had the most interaction with students due to her ability of Thai. She knew what students wanted to learn and made lesson plans based on it. Sometimes, students felt confused as well. Tried to make	She tried to get all trainee teachers and students involved in the activity. Got close interaction with trainee teacher T.T4. Sometimes got small talks with T.T5 and T.T2. Little or no communication with trainee	Tried to give students as much knowledge as possible. Learned and improved herself through writing journals. Tried to make students feel relax.	Being the assistant to trainee teacher T.T4 all the time. Helped all trainee teachers if they called her name. Had more communication with T.T2 than T.T1 Not satisfied with T.T5

Teachers	Performance	Activity Type	Overall Classroom Atmosphere	Collaboration In Teaching	Own Reflection	Evaluations Towards Other Trainee Teachers
		verbal instructions.	students relax	teacher T.T1		sometimes Shared the same ideas with T.T4, sometimes with T.T2.
<b>T.T4</b>	Co-teaching with trainee teacher T.T3. Wanted to focus on speaking skill of students. Had an attempt to teach without help. Had good cooperation with others.	Individual work, Role Play. Using video and power point to teach. Instructions and repetition to make students understand.	Students understood her teaching and enjoyed it; however, sometimes they got confused. Could interact with students in Thai.	Could interact with all trainee teachers. Had communication with trainee teacher T.T1 and T.T5 in Chinese. Talked to T.T2 and T.T3 in English. Was the connector between T.T3 T.T1, and T.T5.	Tried her best to learn and improve. Lack of patience sometimes.	Shared the same ideas with T.T3, but different in explaining. Shared the same ideas with T.T5 and sometimes T.T1.
<b>T.T5</b>	No professional appearance. Spoke very fast and sometimes ignored students. Used Thai to teach.	Short questions and answers with students, Role play. Sometimes had no visual aids, sometimes used power point.	Due to his behavior, students liked him and relaxed in his class. However, students were confused sometimes.	Could talk to all trainee teachers, however, preferred to talk to T.T4 and T.T1 in Chinese. Only talked to T.T2 and T.T3 for help.	Proud of himself in his first class. Got more confident after his first class.	Sometimes shared the same ideas with other trainee teachers. Could give some suggestions to help improve communication in the group.

### Group 2:

There were two small groups inside this big group, T.T6 and T.T7 and the remaining T.T8, T.T9 and T.T10 as another group. In this group, there was a clear distinction of what they had to do, which meant that only the trainee teachers had the duty to teach on a particular day; they would have to make the lesson plan and manage the class without any help from other trainee teachers and it was stated clearly in their journals as the main teachers and the observers.

In terms of communication, there was really little conversation among this group, and the evidence of communication was not clear as well;

therefore it was difficult to identify the communication in this group, especially in the preparatory stage. Besides, during the time of teaching, there was also no or very little communication among the trainee teachers. The lead teachers also did not encourage the observer trainee teachers to take part in the process of teaching or activities. Everything was done totally separately, and this was mentioned in trainee teacher T.T9's journal only. In general, during the teaching time, there was no discussion between the lead teacher group and the observers, they did things separately and they did not need any help from the outsiders. This could be explained that they were well prepared and they were confident enough to work it out without any help.

Furthermore, there was even less communication within the sub-groups, and it could be seen clearly in journal of T.T9 as he stated that he would not want to have any arguments with his members. This could be explained that in this small group, another two trainee teachers T.T8 and T.T10 were too dependent on T.T9, they had little participation in the teaching and T.T9 had to find a way to get them involved.

In terms of evaluation, it was again based on the way of thinking of each individual trainee teachers, they had different evaluation. For group 2, it could be concluded that the small group of trainee teachers T.T6 and T.T7 was more structured and secure with their traditional ways of teaching, in which they would like to provide visual aids such as video clips, pictures, and posters; they followed their plans strictly and did not like to try anything new.

In some journals of evaluation, the trainee teachers were not clear in their ways of using words to express their observations and ideas. As for T.T8 and T.T10 used the pronoun "we" in the journals to talk about the process of teaching of their group. The reason to use "we" might be because they wanted to refer the whole group as one, it was the group work and they all agreed on it. However, looking at the journal of T.T9 as their teammate, he used the personal name in order to clearly on which part T.T8 and T.T10 took part in. In addition, T.T7 missed writing up some of the journals on the teaching day, so it was difficult to assess the overall evaluations.

As there was little evaluation and self-learning lessons from the other trainee teachers besides trainee teacher T.T9, the possible explanation for their silence on this subject could be that they have different ways of thinking but chose not to speak about it. This is especially true for trainee teachers T.T6 and T.T7. For trainee teacher T.T8 and T.T10, sometimes they stated clearly what they would have done if they had been the leader in that specific activities.

The table below was the brief summary of five members in **Group 2** in terms of their performances of teaching and interactions with others.

Teachers	Performance	Activity Type	Overall Classroom Atmosphere	Collaboration In Teaching	Own Reflection
<b>T.T6</b>	Co-teaching with trainee teacher T.T7. Followed the lesson plan strictly. Did not use Thai in teaching. Gave instructions and let students work out. Helped trainee teacher T.T7 in her teaching.	Pair-work, role play. Using power point, posters, handouts and video to teach.	Students were fine with the activities. Students were shy to talk to teachers sometimes.	Only interaction with his co teacher T.T7.	Felt satisfied by the teaching because of the well prepared lesson plan and the content was suitable for students
<b>T.T7</b>	Co-teaching with trainee teacher T.T6. Got help from trainee teacher T.T6 in teaching. Did not use Thai in class.	Pair-work, role play. Using power point, posters, handouts and video to teach.	Students were fine with the activities. Some students were not clear enough when describing in tenses.	Only interaction with her co teacher T.T6.	Well prepared before teaching and follow the lesson plan. Always encouraged students.
<b>T.T8</b>	Co teaching with trainee teacher T.T9 and T.T10. Distributed handouts and gave instruction.	Role play, Group discussion. Used power point and video to teach.	Students were having fun with the activity.	Mostly had conversation with trainee teacher T.T10 in Chinese. Had a misunderstanding problem with trainee teacher T.T9 once.	Wanted to encourage students to speak more.
<b>T.T9</b>	Co teaching with trainee teacher T.T8 and T.T10.		Students were having fun with the activity.	Trying to get other two trainee teachers T.T8 and T.T10 involved in teaching. Had a misunderstanding	Got his new idea of applying another theory of teaching.

Teachers	Performance	Activity Type	Overall Classroom Atmosphere	Collaboration In Teaching	Own Reflection
				problem with trainee teacher T.T8 once.	
T.T10	Co teaching with trainee teacher T.T9 and T.T8.	Role play, Group discussion. Used power point and video to teach.	Students were having fun with the activity.	Had close interaction with trainee teacher T.T8.	Learnt new things from trainee teacher T.T6 in one activity.

## Discussion

To answer the first research question, the researcher found that there were not many similarities among the ten trainee teachers in terms of communication. There were problems of communication in both groups even though they were in the same learning group and saw the same thing in class. Mostly there were similarities within the sub units in the big group because they were teamed up to work together so that they had more opportunities to discuss with their partners than other trainee teachers in the big group. However, sometimes the observant teachers would have similar impressions when they paid more attention. It did not mean other trainee teachers did not pay attention, but in every class, there were domain teachers and observant teachers so that the observers would have more time to observe and analyze the procedure of class more in detail and if they wanted, they would raise the issue what they found in their journals and then discuss it within their groups or in the meeting with the course coordinator. On the other hand, the dominant teachers would not have enough time to observe and think of their behaviour in class because they had to teach. Therefore, they would only know their strengths and weaknesses from their fellow trainee teachers so that they compared those observations to their own thoughts in order to improve themselves. This led to communication within the group, in which the trainee teachers had to interact with all members in the group, not only their partners. Nonetheless, the researcher found very little cross communication among them, especially in members of group 2.

For the second research question, the researcher also found only a few similarities among the evaluations of trainee teachers. They had different ways of describing the evaluation and different points of view to evaluate. There was no problem with their evaluation but it showed the difference of how they perceived their surroundings. Seeing the same thing in class, the

two groups had ten different points and aspects of evaluation, such as whether or not using Thai could be good for one trainee teacher, but it would not be acceptable for another trainee teacher since it was a conversation class. So clearly discrimination took place among the trainee teachers as they could not agree on an objective set of markers by which to examine each other. In group 1, the evaluations were varied individually such as being satisfied or not satisfied of a particular activity and the members' performance in their journals. There were mostly general comments about the class situation in group 2, whether the students were satisfied and enjoyable. Among the ten trainee teachers, only three of them had previous experiences in English teaching, and it could be the reason for the different points of evaluation because the non - experienced trainee teachers would find it hard to mention what they wanted to evaluate; therefore, their evaluation tended to be general.

To answer final question, the researcher felt that since people have different perception of things, they would have different points to take into consideration in their own lessons. In this practicum, even though all ten trainee teachers had completed the same courses on the MA program, but they were on different levels in terms of what they had acquired on the courses. There was the question of confidence in their own teaching ability, cultural background, personality, and beliefs about teaching. Moreover, besides their expected grade, the experience they underwent during their teaching was more important than what they could have acquired from lectures and books. In the opinion of the researcher, if the trainee teachers had had more time for the practicum and clearly formulated points to observe in the journals as well as regularly scheduled meetings for the purpose of discussion, there would be more opportunities to learn. Such as in **group 1**, trainee teacher T.T2 and T.T4 were the connectors between the other trainee teachers in the group. If they had tried to talk to their team members more often and created more opportunities for discussion, they all could have improved even more and gained more experience. The same applies to **group 2**.

## **Conclusion**

Although the study was carried out using journals from a small number of trainee teachers, the researcher still hopes that it may help other

trainee teachers who, like herself, are trying to gain insight into the roles of teachers in an EFL classroom and to be able to think critically and be creative in order to maximize the learning outcome of students. The researcher also hopes that this study may help teachers who are in charge of this TP to encourage student teachers to think critically and learn not only from their teachers but also from their peers. Even though the study shows more differences than similarities in the journals of the trainee teachers, the study does show another aspect of teaching practicum: trainee teachers play a role in their own evaluation and the outcome of the teaching practicum. Though the way of writing is different among trainee teachers, they could learn from their own experience and by seeing what other student teachers do. This gives some indication of the potential of trainee teachers to train themselves to be flexible and adaptable to different teaching situations and environments. Consequently, it is important for teacher trainers to explain to their trainees the kinds of journals they are supposed to maintain together with clear points on what they should write in order to make the teaching journals an effective tool for reflection and improvement in their profession.

## References

- Crookes G. (2003). *A Practicum in TESOL: Professional Development through Teaching Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kulavichain, I. & Thepsiri, K. (2012). Teacher's Journals as a Means to record Teachers' problems and solutions. *The New English Teacher*, (6.2), 100-122.
- Peacock M. (2009). The evaluation of Foreign Language Teacher education programmes. *Language Teaching Research*, 3(13), 259-278.
- Lockhart, C. and Richards, J. (1996). *Reflective Teaching In Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. and Nunan, D. (1990). *Second Language Teacher Education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaluwich, B. (2005, May). *Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method*. Retrieved from <http://www.qualitativeresearch.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/466/996>