

**INCREASING PRACTICUM COMMUNICATION WITH TECHNOLOGY**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this project was to examine alternative methods for supervising students within the Faculty of Education, practicum programs—specifically Professional Semester II. As the Undergraduate program grows in size, students need to be placed further afield for the practicum portion of their programs. With this comes the increased cost of supervision as well as the logistical problems associated with trying to put experienced supervisors into all of these classrooms on a weekly basis. From these pressures, grew a pilot project to test the use of different forms of technology to help increase the amount of communication between the Practicum Students, Teacher Associates, and University Consultants. From this starting point, a literature review was conducted to look for current trends in the use of technology-based communication in education. Successful instruments and methodologies from other locations were used as the basis of design for a strategy for the Faculty. With the assistance of the Curriculum Re-Development Centre (CRDC), several online tools were constructed and the University Consultants, Teacher Associates, and Practicum Students were instructed in their use. These tools were then implemented and evaluated over the course of two Professional Semester II practica (2003, 2004). Modifications were made between the first pilot and the second to address issues that were raised by Students, Teacher Associates, and University Consultants. The results of these pilots are presented here in the hope that they will help the Faculty find methods of increasing the amount of contact and support for students while at the same time enable Faculty to place them further away from Lethbridge.

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## Introduction

### *Background*

As a sessional instructor for the Faculty of Education and having worked with students and Faculty members in the area of technology and technology integration for the past eight years, I am constantly searching for new ways to combine different parts of the program with the technology and skills that the students will need in the field when they leave our program. Getting involved with practicum supervision for Professional Semester II while at the same time teaching three days per week in the public school system, brought to my attention a new area in which technology may be integrated. Because of the day-to-day requirements of teaching, I realized that I was going to have a limited amount of time to devote to my student teachers. This, coupled with a Faculty decision to lower the number of required face-to-face visits from six to five during the practicum, created the potential for even less contact time with the students and supervising teachers. As a result, I wanted to create a series of online instruments that would help support increased communication between the students, the teachers, and myself. I believed that this would allow me to have a better feel for how the students were doing while at the same time increase the effectiveness of the limited face-to-face communication time that I would have with both student and teacher during my visits. From this perceived need I generated my research question:

“Can technology be used to help facilitate increased communication between the Student Teacher, Teacher Associate, and University Consultant during the practicum portion of our professional semesters?”

Through discussions with the other instructors in the Science Methods section about the tools that I was designing and building for use with my students, they became interested in integrating them as well. While this shift would definitely provide me with a better indication of the value of the instruments that I was creating, it had an important impact on the way in which they needed to be designed. Due to the larger number of people involved in the study, it was evident that more than one practicum was going to be necessary to create a set of tools that would meet a more diverse set of needs. By testing them over the span of two practicum sessions, I would be able to make modifications after the first session and then evaluate how these modifications influenced their impact on the people who used them.

In spite of the fact that technology is becoming associated with more and more aspects of our everyday life, some things are still better handled outside of the technological realm. One such thing is the nuances of face-to-face communication. In many situations, a few minutes of conversation can eliminate discomfort, alleviate misunderstanding and put the people involved at ease with a situation. I was not sure that technology would be able to replace this type of communication, but what I hoped to examine was if the use of technology to facilitate communication could function to help improve the quality of the limited face-to-face communication. One thing that was identified from the very beginning was that if at any time the tools were not useful or impeded the lines of communication, they were to be scrapped immediately. The ultimate goal of the practicum: the success of the student teachers was to be maintained at the cost of the pilot project if necessary.

### *Terminology*

Throughout this paper, several terms that are very specific to the University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Education, will be used. It is important that these terms be clarified to understand them throughout this paper.

The key players in this research project are the Student Teacher, the University Consultant, and the Teacher Associate. The student teachers are students who are taking part in the practicum portion of their Professional Semester II (PS II). Professional Semester II consists of six weeks of practical work in classrooms around Southern Alberta. Students are placed with practicing teachers called Teacher Associates. The student teachers are ideally asked to teach half of their Teacher Associates' teaching load at the beginning of PS II and are expected to increase to their full teaching load by the end of the six weeks. During this process, a designated representative from the University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Education, called a University Consultant, supports the students. This person's role is to ensure that the guidelines of the program are being adhered to, while at the same time supporting both the Teacher Associate and the Student Teacher. The University Consultant also plays the role of a mediator should problems arise between the student teacher and teacher associate.

The terms "network bandwidth" and "bandwidth" are used interchangeably in this project to refer to the amount of data that can be transmitted and received across a computer network within the schools. Different types of activities require different amounts of bandwidth to sustain them. Basic Internet surfing can be done on a limited basis with very low bandwidth (56 kb/sec) and only in bursts, while activities such as

desktop video conferencing requires much higher data rates (256 kb/sec – 512 kb/sec) to be sustained over long periods of time.

### *Timeline*

The groundwork for this project began in the summer of 2002 with the realization that I had a need for something that would allow me to do the best possible job of my practicum supervision while at the same time fulfilling the demands of my classroom responsibility. Because of the lengthy nature of the preparation, delivery, and data gathering, I have chosen to present the project time in graphical format for quick and easy viewing.

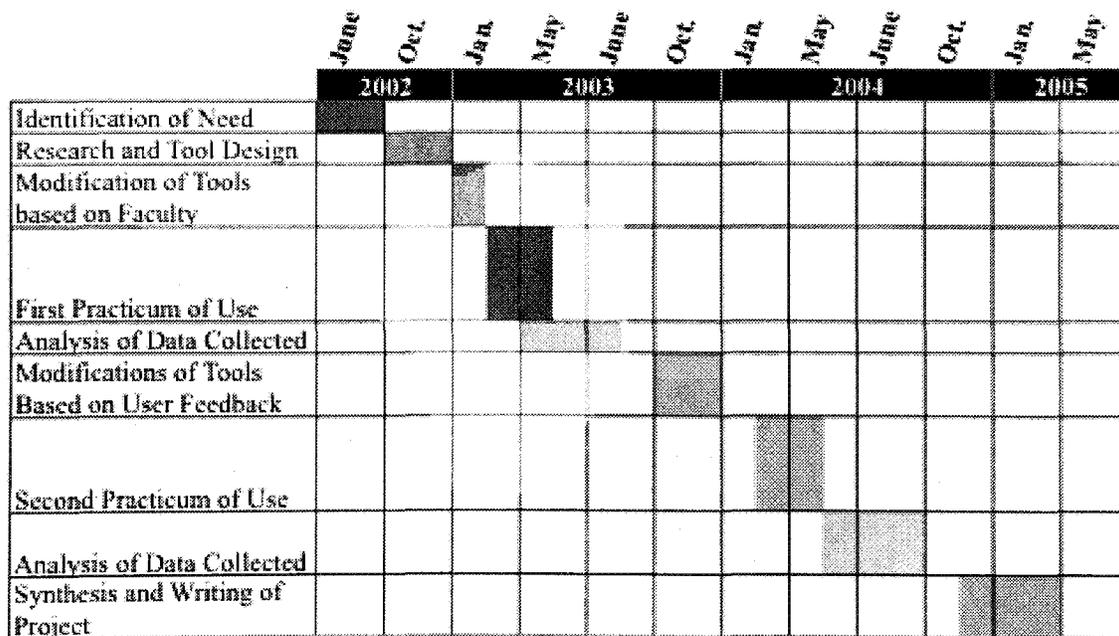


Figure 1  
Project Timeline

## Literature Review

In reviewing the literature on research in facilitated communication using technology, it quickly became clear that there are two main obstacles inherent in a project of this type. The first main obstacle is the wide range of comfort and familiarity with technology on the part of the people involved. Coupled with this comfort level are the individual's personal views of how useful technology is to him or her and can be to his or her teaching and learning process. The second main obstacle is the necessary technology for all parties to easily engage in the communication process. Almost all of the literature that I reviewed had specific sections within them that discussed each of these two obstacles in one form or another and made suggestions for how to address them. I was surprised at the amount of literature that directly related to the use of technology to assist with preservice teacher education.

One of the core pieces of literature that I have used to design my project is a book titled *Emerging Trends in Teacher Preparation: The Future of Field Experiences* (Slick et al., 1995), that has some very good insights into the direction that pre-service teacher education is going. Of specific interest is Chapter 7, that deals specifically with the use of technology in preparing teachers. In this chapter, Sebastian [in Slick] talks about the use of technology as a support system as well as specifically to help mediate communication during teacher preparation to help increase communication (pp. 60-69). Sebastian also dedicates a section of her chapter to the challenges facing the increased use of technology in teacher preparation applications. Other articles have been written about projects in which websites were created and software employed to help increase

student-supervisor communication during practicum placements (Hodder, 1997; Shea, 2001; Wittenburg, 1998).

In some cases, researchers are beginning to experiment with using consumer quality desktop video equipment to augment the communication between the field and the supervising Faculty members. At present, The Electronic Enhancement of Supervision Project at Indiana University Southeast is in the process of testing and researching the viability of this methodology currently (<http://homepages.ius.edu/Special/EESP/>). While this project is still ongoing at the time of this writing, much of what is being written about is the barriers that must be overcome before this type of communication can be effective, and not research around how effective it actually is. The University of Indiana researchers Joyce Garrett and Kurt Dudd, discuss their attempts to integrate videoconferencing software into their supervision model back in 1998 (Garrett & Dudd, 1998). Fortunately, the hardware, software, and network bandwidth have come a long way since then. For moderately computer-literate individuals the setup of a videoconference can be quite simple if the necessary hardware and software are made available.

One thing that almost all of the articles shared was the necessity for the tools and technology to be modeled and used with the students from the beginning of their Education courses. Students had to be comfortable and experienced with the tools that they would be using to minimize the stress associated with their use, but to also make the tool itself less of a focus and more transparent to the communication that they were being used to facilitate. At least one university is experimenting with providing laptops for all

of their students in an effort to allow instructors to create collaborative learning communities (Dvorak & Buchanan, 2002).

To address the issue of participants' familiarity with technology and their willingness to openly participate in a project of this nature, I reviewed the literature on implementing technology change in schools as well as articles that addressed resistance to technology. There is a wealth of ideas surrounding implementation of technology and some of the common barriers to the adoption of new methods within schools. Some authors have taken currently existing behavioral psychology models and adapted them to better explain what is often perceived as a resistance to change or the use of technology (Wolski & Jackson, 1999). Others discuss the specific use of technology as a tool in the administrative and everyday lives of Faculty members and teachers within their institutions and offer suggestions on how to increase the effective use of technology while understanding when and where to make use of the tools and when to use face-to-face communication instead (Lamb, Rhinehart, & Still, 1996).

## Research Methodology

### *Research Model*

The research and design model for this project is based upon a basic Scientific Inquiry process model. Because of my science background, this is an integral part of how I approach problems. The steps in the process are as follows:

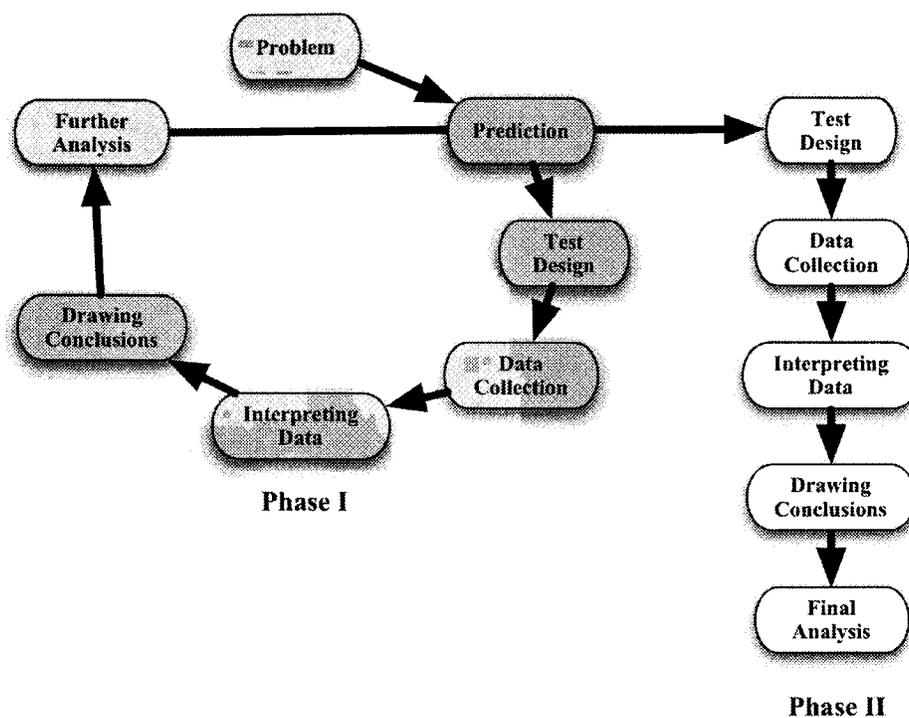


Figure 2  
Modified Scientific Inquiry Model

Phase I of the study followed one complete cycle of the model and Phase II focused on refining the tools and methods tested in Phase I and re-evaluating their effectiveness again in the field. Right from the beginning the University Consultants and I agreed that this model would only be used with students who were doing reasonably well in their practicum. In the case of uncertainty or difficulty with a Student Teacher, the pilot study would be dropped and Consultant interactions with both the Student Teacher and Teacher Associate would be increased on a face-to-face basis as needed. Again, the success of the student in their program was the primary goal of PS II and far outweighed this pilot study.

### *Identification of Instruments*

Like most of the work that I have been involved in, the starting point for this project was that of a need (perceived or real) for a way to increase the lines of communication between me and the practicum students that I was going to be supervising. Even before I started to look at what other people were doing in similar situations, I had a number of ideas and tools in mind based on my experience and background with technology. While instinct and opinion do not carry much weight in an academic paper, they have served me well in my role as both an educator and as a technology-support person. It was both my instincts and my opinions of how technology could and should be used that shaped this research project the most.

The first phase in the identification of the tools involved examining different aspects of the practicum that could be enhanced through the use of technology. This process began by taking into account the assignments that the students were already being asked to complete during their practicum so as to not add additional work for the student. It was important that if possible, these instruments would not be perceived as an increased amount of work for the people involved. As it turned out, many of the students were being asked to keep journals or reflections on how their teaching was progressing. This reflective writing process was not only implemented to assist in their personal and professional growth and development, but was also to help University Consultants identify areas of concern. I believed that this was a very powerful activity, but the inaccessibility of these reflections made it very difficult for the University Consultant to use them in a pre-emptive manner to forecast possible problem areas for the student and Teacher Associate. This struck me as the first and possibly the most powerful tool to

create to allow the University Consultant to examine the students' reflective writings on a daily or weekly basis.

The next area that I examined was the use of some of the newly available desktop videoconferencing software and hardware to view and critique a class remotely. Desktop videoconferencing hardware like iSight<sup>TM1</sup> cameras, Apple Computers and iChat<sup>TM2</sup> software were becoming more prevalent around the Faculty and easier to set up and use. My initial intention was to set up a laptop and iSight<sup>TM</sup> camera so that they could be sent out to students and the system rotated from school to school. Unfortunately, the reality of the school systems and their often-limited network bandwidth made this idea unrealistic at the time. It is hoped that with the final establishment of *SuperNet* in the schools, that this method of communication will be attempted, but that is outside of the scope of this project. In light of the lack of adequate bandwidth I decided that a conference call would be set up and tested to see if that was a viable method of reducing one face-to-face visit. Not wanting to give up on the idea of the use of video, the inclusion of a videotaped lesson was also included in the pilot. The videotaping and critiquing of a taught lesson has been used in preservice teacher preparation for years as an effective method of self-evaluation for students. In an attempt to utilize this self-evaluation approach, one of the visits was replaced by having the student videotape a lesson, critique the video, and then send it to his or her University Consultant for viewing and feedback. Students were able to use their own video equipment if they had access to some, or were able to reserve cameras and tripods through the Education Computer Lab for a period of time.

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<sup>1</sup> iSight is a registered trademark of Apple Computers.

<sup>2</sup> iChat software is a registered trademark of Apple Computers.

I then examined the evaluation methods that were being used for the students during their practicum. For Professional Semester II, students are evaluated in two very separate ways. The Student Teacher and Teacher Associate use a Competency Checklist (Appendix A), that is to be completed three times over the course of the practicum. While this process does not need to include the University Consultant, it is a powerful tool to see how the student is doing as well as how both the student and the Teacher Associate perceive the student's growth during the practicum. One of the largest problems with this process is the amount of time outside of class that it takes to go through this document. For it to be an effective method of assessment for the University Consultants, they need to be included in the process, but the restrictions of time make this a prohibitive activity. By creating a tool that allowed all three parties to complete the checklist as well as view the other parties' responses, each person could familiarize his or herself with the other parties' responses and sit down for a quick meeting ready to discuss the differences and points of concern (theoretically saving a great deal of time). This same rationale was used for the final Field Experience Report Form (Appendix B). I designed this form to be used by both the Teacher Associate and University Consultant in a cooperative evaluation. While this sounds good in theory, the practicality of it in the field is far from the ideal. In most cases, the Teacher Associate completes this form on his or her own unless there are significant differences of opinion on the part of the University Consultant. But if this form were online, both parties could collaborate in the writing of the report to allow for much more of the University Consultants' viewpoints being present, as well as to provide more support for the Teacher Associates in the creation of the students' final evaluation.

The final online tools to be designed were the evaluation tools that would be used to assess the usability and effectiveness of these tools. Because of the online nature of the tools and the pilot project, it made the most sense to have the evaluation tools online as well. Two different exit surveys, one for the Student Teachers and one for the Teacher Associates, were designed to address the different methods of using the tools that each had. The University Consultants were asked to provide written summaries of how they felt the instruments functioned as well as how they would like to see them modified for future use. The use of online survey tools made the collection and synthesis of the data much easier because no transcription was required. Paper versions of the evaluations were also available for individuals who were not comfortable using the online versions or who were unable to use the online tools during the pilot project (but still made use of the conference call and the videotaped lesson).

### *The Instruments*

*Instrument security and design.* Because of the sensitive nature of the information being shared through these tools, user levels and security were a major concern for the design of the tools. Through several meetings and working with John Kometz of the Curriculum Re-development Centre (CRDC), the instrument structure and back-end design were laid out and developed. The resulting product allows for the creation of different user levels (Administrators, University Consultants, Teacher Associates, and Student Teachers), each having a different type of access to the information. The Administrators are able to add new University Consultants to the system and view all of the data within the system to allow for troubleshooting and technical support during the

pilot project. The University Consultants were then able to access the system and add their Teacher Associates as well as their Student Teachers to the system. Each of these was associated with the University Consultant who was supervising them and the University Consultants could access only their students. The Student Teachers have access to add their reflections to the system, print them for inclusion in their professional portfolios or own personal journals, and their version of the Competency Checklists. The Teacher Associates only had access to their own Competency Checklist and Field Experience Report Form.

*Reflective journal instrument.* The primary goal of the reflective journal instrument was that it be easy for the student teachers and University Consultants to use, but also that it be flexible enough that it could be adapted to the specific style of the University Consultant. The concept for this tool was not a new one because Dr. Richard Mrazek and a few other Faculty members have been using a tool similar to this for several years. They have used it with their graduate level students as well as with summer institute participants as a method for evaluating the impact of different teaching and learning situations, as well as a forum for students to raise questions and concerns if they felt unable or were unwilling to do so during class time. The primary difference between this tool and the one that was used with this pilot project was that for this pilot, the tool needed to be easily adaptable for the variety of University Consultants who would be making use of it. From a user standpoint, this did not change things very much, but from a technical and administrative aspect it had a very dramatic impact on the design of the tool. The reflective journal can be set to allow students to view other students' reflections

(under the same University Consultant), or they can be set to be private between the Student Teacher and University Consultant. The University Consultant, depending upon what the students are focusing on or happen to be struggling with in the field at that time, can easily edit the guiding questions that are being asked. These questions and the student's reflections are stored in the system and can be reviewed at any time.

*Conference call.* Of the tools used, the conference call required the least amount of planning and preparation to implement. All of the schools involved had access to speaker telephones at some location within the school and the hardest part of integrating this method of communication was the coordination of a time to place the call. Arrangements were made in advance if actual multiple number of conference calls had been required, but this proved to be unnecessary.

*Videotaped lessons.* The use of the videotaped lesson plans required ensuring that students had access to the necessary video cameras, tripods, and appropriate videotapes. The Faculty of Education and University Information Technology (IT) department stock a small supply of digital video cameras, tripods, and tapes for student use through the Education Computer Lab. Arrangements were made for University Consultants and Student Teachers to make extended bookings of these cameras for the purpose of this pilot project. Students commuting from Lethbridge daily were expected to pick up their own cameras. The University Consultants agreed to act as couriers for students billeted out of town for the necessary equipment on a prior visit. Students were expected to "test tape" a few lessons to get accustomed to the equipment and to acclimatize their students

to having the camera in the room and then videotape and critique a lesson. Guidelines were given for this activity and are shown in Appendix C. Students were then asked to either deliver their videotape to their University Consultants or place it into the courier for delivery to them and email their critique. The expectation was that this lesson be reviewed and that the student receive feedback from their University Consultant within a few days to make the entire process timely and relevant to what the student was going experiencing.

*Competency Checklist instrument.* The Competency Checklist is a standard assessment form that has been designed by the Office of Field Experiences for the Faculty of Education. University Consultants and Teacher Associates have used this tool to assess practicum students for many years. It is a required document within the program and as such, a natural one to try to incorporate into the pilot study. The common method of use for this form in the field is to have both the Student Teacher and the Teacher Associate complete their own versions of the form and then sit down and compare notes to see if they are both seeing the same things, and then use that as a vehicle to address areas of strength and those of concern. Based upon this type of use, one thing that an online version of the checklist could facilitate is the inclusion of the University Consultant in this evaluative process. By having both the Student Teacher and the Teacher Associate fill out their checklists online, the University Consultant could view the discrepancies as well as identify areas in which the Student Teacher may not have been interpreting the feedback appropriately. This process was made more difficult because the checklist does not employ a rating scale for the different areas of

competency; rather, it uses a continuum scale ranging from weak to strong. Without getting into the vast differences in interpretation of this scale and what it means to different people, this proved problematic for the reason that computers cannot easily display this information. As a result, it was decided to switch from the continuum scale to a numerical scale that ranged between 1 and 10.

*Field Experience Report form.* The Field Experience Report Form is the official evaluation form that Teacher Associates submit to Field Experiences and used as the record of the students' practicum. While the form itself is a good summary assessment tool, the Field Experiences office has been struggling with the fact that this form has been paper based for a number of years. As the schools and teachers have become more accustomed to the use of technology, teachers have increasingly requested to be able to fill this evaluation form out digitally. As a result, Field Experiences has made a digital version of the form available in Rich Text Format (RTF) for the schools, but there has been a negative effect of this as well. With a digital version of the form, Teacher Associates are able to dramatically extend the length of the document as well as make modifications to the layout and format of it. The result has been that the Field Experiences staff has had to deal with versions of the forms being returned in a varied state of formatting. My hope was that by creating an online version of the tool, we could address several problems at one time.

My primary concern for the form was that it needed to facilitate a collaborative evaluation between the Teacher Associate and the University Consultant. This would allow the Teacher Associate to take the lead on the Student Teachers' evaluations, but

still keep the University Consultant informed about what was being written so that he or she could make suggestions for language and direction before coming out to the school for the final meeting. At the same time, this would allow the University Consultants to see which evaluations were completed and which ones still needed to be finished, allowing them to send or place some reminders to those Teacher Associates who were lagging behind a bit.

A secondary concern for this form was that it ultimately gives us the evaluation in a format that was acceptable to Field Experiences in the hope of reducing the amount of stress and hassle that office staff endure as a result of the digital evaluation forms. To accomplish this goal, several meetings were held with the Field Experiences office staff throughout the process of preparing the forms in order to ensure that the information that we were collecting was acceptable to them and Faculty.

### *Evaluation Instruments*

To evaluate how well the instruments were working for each of the participants, I created surveys for the Student Teachers and Teacher Associates. Because of the different ways in which the University Consultants chose to implement the use of these tools in their supervision, they were asked for their feedback only on how they thought the tools had performed and how they had used them. Records were kept during the implementation process as well as the requests and modifications that were made as a result of interactions with the Student Teachers and Teacher Associates in the schools. This data was collected and summarized to make refinements to the instruments in preparation for Phase II of the pilot study. Because of the ethical implications of

collecting data from the Teacher Associates, Field Experiences agreed to handle the survey. In doing so, they significantly modified the length and wording of the questions that were given to the Teacher Associates to fit with their goals of moving to a five-visit practicum model. Appendix D shows the survey form that I had proposed for use and Appendix E is a copy of the actual form used. While the look and length of the survey was modified, the core questions that I wanted to ask were still included and I was able to collect the data that I needed. Appendix F is a sample of the Student Teacher survey questions that were given.

For Phase II of the project, the evaluation instruments were modified slightly to reflect the modifications that were made to the pilot project, but the core questions remained unchanged in the hope of being able to gather some correlative data. Appendix G reflects the modifications that were made to the Student Teacher survey and Appendix H shows the Teacher Associate modifications. Again, the University Consultants were asked to summarize their experience during the practicum and the oral feedback that they had received from Student Teachers and Teacher Associates so that it could be included in the conclusions for this project.

## Results

### *Phase I Results*

*Student Teacher feedback.* Of the 40 students who began Phase I, survey results were received from 38 of them. The students' responses to each individual question will be summarized.

The first question, “Please rate the overall experience with your Teacher Associate,” was important to get an overall feel for how the students’ experience with their Teacher Associate during the practicum had gone. I felt that it was important to show that regardless of the supervision strategies used, and the students felt that they had done quite well in their placements and were generally happy with how things had gone. Their responses reflected this with 86.8% of the students responding either 5 (excellent) or 4 in this area. Interestingly enough, none of the students rated their experience with their Teacher Associate below a 3.

The second question, “How would you rate the effectiveness of the videotaped lesson with respect to impact on your teaching?” was specifically directed at the use of the videotaped lesson. Unfortunately 13 (34.2%) of the students involved answered Not Applicable for this question. As it turned out, some of the University Consultants (either because of their comfort level with the technology or the comfort level of the Teacher Associates) chose not to include all of the tools in their practicum. One of the least used tools according to the data was the videotaped lesson. To my knowledge, of the 5 University Consultants who participated in the pilot study, only 2 used the videotaped lesson the way in which it was laid out in the pilot design. One of the University Consultants chose to videotape the lessons for the students so that they could see themselves teach, but would not have to worry about booking the camera, setting it up and then dealing with any problems as they taught. While this still benefited the students as far as getting to see their teaching, it did not eliminate a classroom visit for this particular University Consultant. Of the students who did use the videotaped lesson, 39.5% of them rated the effectiveness with respect to the impact on their teaching as

either a 4 or a 5. The remaining 26.3% rated it as either a 3 or below. Many of the comments that students made were directly aimed at this tool because they felt that while beneficial, it took too much time to setup, videotape, and evaluate what they had taped. It was also discovered later that some of the students who went to the trouble of taping their lessons did not receive feedback from their University Consultant and this degraded the students' view of its effectiveness.

The third question, "How would you rate the effectiveness of the telephone conference call with respect to communicating your concerns with the Faculty Advisor and clarifying the upcoming events?", asked about the effectiveness of the telephone conference call that was used during week #4 to help communicate concerns and clarify what still needed to be completed during the practicum. As it turned out, 27 of the 38 students (71.1%) did not use this tool. Of the students who did use this tool, only 5.2% rated its effectiveness as either a 4 or a 5 while 23.7% rated it as either a 2 or a 3. For whatever reason, University Consultants chose not to test this tool and those who did met with mixed results. Generally I believe it was felt that students either needed face-to-face contact to address some potentially serious issues or that they were doing very well and that this "meeting" was almost a waste of time for all involved. While I personally made use of this tool with all of my Student Teachers and Teacher Associates, I also met with mixed results. For the most part the meeting felt almost superfluous and without the face-to-face element it was difficult to address any concerns or strengths that the students had. In one instance this method was almost detrimental because of a scheduling conflict that upset one of the Teacher Associates. Fortunately, this situation was remedied and all of the conference calls were able to take place.

The fourth question “How would you rate the feedback that you received from your University Consultant with respect to giving you concise feedback on your teaching areas of strength and weakness?” was meant to be a reflection of how the students felt the practicum experience had gone with respect to the Student Teacher to University Consultant relationship. All but one of the students rated the feedback that they received as being concise in identifying their strengths and weaknesses during the practicum as either a 3 or above. In fact 68.4% of the students rated this feedback as being excellent (5). While this does not get at the volume of feedback that each of the students received as a result of the decreased classroom visits, it does show that what they did receive was helpful to them in their growth and development.

The fifth student question “How helpful were the online reflections in helping you to evaluate your daily performance?” addressed the Student Teachers’ assessment of how effective the reflective journal instrument was. This was by far the least valued of the tools that the students used during their practicum. In fact 76.4% of the students rated this tool as a 3 or lower on the scale. In general the students failed to see the purpose of this reflective process and felt that it was just more work for them to do while they were in the field. I found it very interesting that while all of the students were expected to keep a reflective journal, the fact that it was online and viewable by others, ensured that they had to keep it up. In a few instances the Internet access was so slow that it made the use of this tool very onerous for the students. While interesting, the students’ answers to this question were really almost irrelevant because the tool was not for their benefit but in fact for the University Consultant as a means to keep up to date on what was going on from the student’s perspective. For me as a University Consultant, this tool was invaluable in

getting more insight into what the students were going through and the areas that they were comfortable and confident with, and the areas that they were struggling in. It allowed me to be better prepared when I talked to them face-to-face and also identified areas that I needed to address or discuss with their Teacher Associates.

The sixth question on the student survey was whether or not they felt this type of supervision model should be used again in the future. The students responded 63.2% in support of this model being used again. Because at this point students have very little to use as a frame of reference for whether or not their practicum supervision went well, the fact that they were successful and felt that others could be, should be taken into consideration. Each of the students had experienced a traditional supervision in Professional Semester I and found ways to make this new type of model work for them in Professional Semester II.

Finally, students were given the opportunity to add comments or recommendations to their survey form. Almost all of the students took the opportunity to give some feedback (25 of the 38). Of the feedback given, many of them dealt with either the online reflections (6) or the videotaped lesson (11). These two areas seemed to draw the most attention by the students. In the case of the videotaped lesson, many of the students felt that the time to set it up and evaluate it was too much, coupled with their daily planning and teaching loads. As well, many of the students did not see the point in the online reflections and questioned their use in the future. This feedback factored very heavily into the design of Phase II and was greatly appreciated.

*Teacher Associate feedback.* Unfortunately, because of complications in getting the survey form through the Field Experiences office, the information on how to access the online instrument was not sent out to the Teacher Associates until after the practicum had been completed. As a result only 22 of the possible 40 responses were received. Of those 22 teachers, 36.4% were first-time Professional Semester II teachers. While this does not diminish their input towards this new pilot, it does put them at a disadvantage with respect to comparing the pilot model to the traditional model of practicum supervision.

For the purpose of this pilot study, some of the question data was disregarded as the Field Experiences staff added the questions. Questions #3a to #3c all dealt with how effective the teacher felt the number of visits that they received were at addressing different areas of the practicum. Again, for the purpose of this study, these questions have a decreased impact (as they do not address the issues that we are examining very well), but I have included them for the purpose of completeness. In this case, all of the teachers should have responded 4 (1 presupervision orientation visit and 3 practicum visits). In fact the data reflected that 31.8% of the University Consultants visited 3 times, 45.5% visited 4 times and 22.7% visited 5 times. This was a direct result of some University Consultants modifying the pilot to better fit with their teachers and situations.

The third question that was posed to the teachers was whether or not the number of visits that they received from their University Consultant sufficiently oriented them to the PS II practicum expectations or not. Regardless of the number of visits that the teachers received they almost overwhelmingly answered that they received enough information “to a large extent” (72.7%) and the remaining 22.7% said that what they

received was “somewhat” sufficient. Interestingly enough, there was one teacher who said that the number of visits that he/she received was “not at all enough.” This teacher received four visits from his/her University Consultant but obviously did not feel that he/she was given the information that he/she needed during these visits.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth questions all dealt with the effectiveness of the number of visits in dealing with both teacher and student concerns during the practicum. For each question 95.2% of the teachers answered either “somewhat” or “to a large extent.” In each case only one teacher answered “to a small extent” (4.8%). This showed that regardless of the number of visits that were used, for the most part the teachers’ concerns were addressed along with the questions and problems that the students encountered.

The seventh question on the survey asked the teachers how effective they felt the videotaped lesson was. The teachers were fairly divided on their views towards the videotaped lesson with 6 teachers (27.2%) being either “not at all” or “to a small extent” while another 3 teachers (13.6%) felt that it was “somewhat” effective, and the remaining 6 (27.3%) felt that it was effective “to a large extent.” Only 15 of the 22 teachers responded to this question suggesting that 7 teachers who responded did not have it used in their classrooms. Almost all of the comments mentioned the videotaping of lessons. It seemed that teachers either really liked the fact that students were examining their own teaching this way or they felt that they were just too busy with everything else to put time and effort into this activity. One teacher suggested that this type of activity is best used on-campus rather than in the field, while another felt that it was an excellent way for the students to see their strengths and weaknesses through the students’ eyes.

The eighth question was directed at the effectiveness of the telephone conference call that was to take place in week four of the practicum. Much like the videotaped lesson 6 of the teachers (27.2%) felt that it was either “not at all” effective or “to a small extent.” In this case 6 of the teachers (27.3%) felt that it was “somewhat” effective while the remaining 3 teachers (13.6%) felt that it was effective “to a large extent.” One of the common comments about the telephone conference was that it was not used and this was reflected by the fact that only 15 of the 22 teachers responded to this question. There were comments both supporting and criticizing this tool. One teacher felt that “these student teachers deserve face-to-face consultation with their faculty advisor, especially considering what tuition fees are!!” This comment was directed not only at the telephone conference call, but also the videotaped lesson, and does reflect the sentiments of several of the teachers who participated in the pilot study.

The ninth question that was asked of the teachers (besides the two open-ended questions) was whether or not they would recommend the use of this type of model again in the future. The results reflected that 13 of the teachers would recommend that this type of model be used again in the future (59.1%), while the remaining 7 teachers (31.8%) who responded felt that it should not be used again (without modifications in some cases). Many of the comments attached to these responses clearly stated that this type of model would only work with strong students in good placements and those weaker students or problematic placements would require more face-to-face visits and direct contact with the University Consultant. Those teachers who did not support the model were pretty adamant about the need for direct contact and that anything else is a poor

substitute for properly understanding the context that the student is experiencing, and maintaining clear and open communication during the practicum.

The final question in the survey asked how many visits the Teacher Associate would recommend for the PS II practicum. While the statistics suggest that between 3 and 5 visits is optimal (31.8% said 3 visits, 13.6% said 4 visits and 40.9% said 5 visits), the comments told a slightly different story. The comments suggested that only in the case of strong students should fewer than five visits be used and that with weaker students more than five visits would be necessary in some cases. It was also made clear that a decrease in visits would be viewed as a lack of effort and support for the students that are being sent out into their schools. Some of the comments took the approach of meeting the needs of the students while others suggested that the students would not be getting what they paid for if they did not receive the traditional five visits.

*University Consultant feedback.* Unfortunately the participating University Consultants were not very forthcoming with their feedback on the first phase of this pilot study. Only two of the five participating University Consultants provided written feedback at the end of the study.

In general it was found that the online competency checklists were not well utilized by the teachers. Many of them preferred to use the former paper versions because they could work on them at any time and place when they happened to have a few minutes. I think the barriers to the use of these types of forms come partly from a lack of comfort with their use and a lack of access to the technology when and where it is needed. Many of the teachers that I have worked with are very good at using spare

moments throughout the day to get tasks like this completed and the need to use a computer made this a more difficult proposition. On the other hand, the students made good use of these forms (as they had a version that they could complete) and in almost all cases it was recommended that they complete their own version and then the teacher and student compare their versions. I have found that this approach often makes for a very focused meeting between the teacher and student as well as putting the meeting in a very positive light.

Each of the University Consultants used the online reflections differently. I had my students completing their reflections daily where possible and every two days at the least. This was more time consuming for me than for them as I made a habit of checking nightly to see how each of their days went and tried to stay on top of small problems before they became larger problems. While this approach worked in most cases, my supervision group had one student who chose to withdraw from the practicum and another who had to complete an additional practicum. The other University Consultant chose to do weekly reflections with his students but found that the University Consultant portion of the tool was not very easy to use and did not allow him to limit his listings to just his students. As a result he did not make much use of the information. His recommendations were taken into account and their input helped to shape the changes that were made to the reflective journal instrument for Phase II.

The online Field Experience Report form met with very positive feedback from everyone who made use of it. The opportunity to work on the document over time and make changes was excellent and an added bonus because both the University Consultant and Teacher Associate could collaborate on the creation of the evaluation. Both

University Consultants used this information to view ahead of the final meeting to ensure that everything was ready to go, and as a result, our final meetings went very smoothly.

The feelings about the videotaped lesson were much the same as those of the students. While it was felt that it was a very valuable activity, it was also agreed that to try to get a feeling for what was going on in the classroom and to give any meaningful feedback to the students based on the videotapes was a very difficult task. The technical issues related to this did not stop with the student, but continued to the University Consultant in the form of multiple formats of tapes being delivered without any method of viewing them. In my case, each student received feedback on their lesson within 5 days of giving me the tape, but this was still far too long a time frame, especially when you had to consider that many of the students took a week to view their own tapes and make comments on what they observed. Suggestions were made to have the University Consultant bring the camera out to the classroom and videotape the lesson (removing the burden from the students) while at the same time allowing the University Consultant to make comments while they were taping and then have the students view the tapes and look for the areas that were highlighted by the comments. While this would no longer eliminate one of the Consultant visits, it would keep the positive aspects of this activity for the students.

The conference call was also problematic. I was the only one who used the conference call and found it met with some very mixed results. While it did allow the students and me to touch base and clarify what was expected for the final week of the practicum, in some cases it caused more problems than it solved. Firstly, in two cases several people spent a significant amount of time trying to learn how to set up the call

(they had never used the hands free feature of the phone before), and secondly, it even upset one of the teachers when the scheduling had to be modified to accommodate a change by another teacher. All in all very little was gained from this interaction that could not have been handled by an e-mail informing people of what was still to be completed. There was some question about removing this visit, as it was the least productive of the practicum for students who were doing well. By the same token it was at this point that I had one placement begin to completely unravel as a result of a lack of clear communication between the Teacher Associate, the student, and myself, so in this case this visit was absolutely crucial.

### *Modifications for Phase II*

Between the implementation of Phase I of this project and Phase II, the Field Experiences staff and Faculty of Education Administration chose to extend their pilot study of five supervisory visits in place of the traditional six. Based upon the feedback received in Phase I, several modifications were made to the pilot study in preparation for Phase II. Due to a change in my employment status, I was unable to participate in this round of practicum as a University Consultant. While I did not believe that this would have an effect on the pilot study due to the fact that I still inserviced the other University Consultants and went through the expectations of the pilot study, it turned out that it had a very dramatic effect on the outcome of the study. I will discuss this influence further in the conclusion portion of this project.

The first major changes were the removal of both the videotaped lesson and the conference call. Both of these attempts at increasing communication while decreasing

travel had met with a high amount of opposition (from all parties involved) while at the same time failing to achieve the goals that had been set out for them. The other changes were modifications to the online instruments that were being used. The following changes were made as a result of feedback from Teacher Associates, Student Teachers, and University Consultants:

1. The Competency Checklist was modified so that a printable version was available that showed the ratings of the Student Teacher, Teacher Associate, and University Consultant. This allowed for printing the forms in preparation for a conference about them and also allowed the student a nicely formatted and signed version for their records.
2. The Field Experiences Report Form was modified so that all parties could view the others' comments, but the final printed version was based upon the Teacher Associates' version of the feedback. This would allow for a greater level of collaboration during the completion of this evaluation.
3. Originally only the University Consultants were able to access the final printed version of the Field Experiences Report Form. This was opened up to the Teacher Associates as well so that these forms could be printed ahead of time and ready when the University Consultant arrived for the final visit.
4. The Competency Checklists and Field Experience Report Forms were modified so that the Teacher Associates could modify the information at the top of the forms (school, Teacher Associates' name, grade level, subjects taught).
5. The linkage between the report forms and the reflective journal tool was strengthened so that it was now a one-step process to create forms for the students

and set up a reflection instrument for them. This would reduce the amount of work that the University Consultants had to do to prepare for their practicum supervision while at the same time make it easier for all involved to move back and forth between the different instruments.

6. It was decided that all three groups should have read access to the Competency Checklist and Field Experiences Report Form, while at the same time only having write access to their versions of the forms. It was felt that this would provide an increased sense of transparency for the documents.
7. The reflective journal instrument was modified to make it easier for students to print their individual reflections for inclusion in their teaching journals.

### *Phase II Results*

*Student Teacher feedback.* Out of the 40 possible responses from the Student Teachers who participated in Phase II of the pilot study, only 28 responses were received. This was partially the result of one University Consultant holding his/her final practicum wrap-up meeting off-campus and thus not taking the students into the computer lab to complete the survey. The students' answers to each individual question on the survey are examined and summarized.

The first question on the survey, "Please rate the overall experience of your practicum," was designed to help identify those students who had generally bad experiences in their practicum so that their data could be examined and removed if they did not make use of the instruments being examined. Only 1 student out of the 28 responses rated his/her practicum experience as poor. The remaining students all rated

his/her experience between “good” and “excellent.” It was unfortunate to note that the one student who rated his/her practicum as being poor stated that he/she felt he/she could not tell anyone that it was going poorly because the teacher that he/she was working with was well known and liked within the community. With all of the tools and support available it is very sad that a student had to feel this way during his/her practicum experience.

The second question addressed the usefulness of the online Competency Checklist. Students were asked to “rate the effectiveness of the online competency checklist in providing you with feedback on your teaching?” Using a rating scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, the mean score on this question was 3.0 with a standard deviation of 1.17. Overall the students rated this as at least a “good” tool, but their responses were evenly distributed between poor and excellent. There were a few comments directly pointed at the Competency Checklist. These statements described technical difficulties using the forms with their Teacher Associates because of a lack of Internet access or slow access as well as problems getting the text into the forms because they were copying and pasting from word processors. There was one statement made that the student’s Teacher Associate was unable to log into the area and did not request assistance.

The third question asked students how they would rate the feedback that they received from their University Consultant during their practicum. While this question did not directly address the instruments being tested in this phase of the pilot, it did help to describe their satisfaction with the interaction between themselves and their University Consultant during their practicum. Over 82% of the students rated their feedback from

their University Consultant as being either “very good” or “excellent.” For reasons that cannot be explained, 2 of the possible responses were left blank on this question. I am at a loss to understand why students would choose to not answer a question like this, but possibly they felt that there would be repercussions to their anonymous responses. It is possible that the students missed answering this question, but with the brevity of the survey and because they did manage to answer the remaining questions, it is unlikely. There were comments made that specifically addressed the feedback that students were receiving from their University Consultants.

The fourth question specifically asked how helpful the students felt the online reflections were in evaluating their daily teaching. With the removal of the videotaped lesson and conference call, this instrument was the only remaining tool that could help to increase the communication between the University Consultant and the Student Teachers. From the students’ perspective, the instrument was not highly regarded. Over 60% of the students rated this instrument as being either “not great” or “poor” in helping them to reflect on their daily teaching. Only 3 of the students felt that it was excellent for their reflection. While these numbers were very discouraging, examination of the students’ comments helped to make some sense of them. The majority of the open-ended comments on the surveys dealt specifically with this instrument. Five of the student comments specifically identified frustration with understanding how this tool was supposed to be used. One student stated that he/she was frustrated by the amount of feedback that they were expected to provide in the form (too many questions), and another stated that he/she dutifully filled them out, but never received any comment or feedback on his/her reflections from their University Consultant. Several of the students

stated that these types of activities simply took time and energy away from what they felt their true task was the preparation and delivery of lessons to the students. While I agree that they felt that their primary goal during the practicum is the successful planning and delivery of their lessons, without reflection on what they are doing on a day-to-day basis, they are not meeting the expectations of our profession with respect to professional growth and development.

Question five asked students if it was helpful for them to see the reflections of their peers with respect to helping them feel like they were a part of a learning community. It was not surprising to see that the students generally felt that this was not helpful because many of the students were either not using the tool or were unsure of how it was designed to help. One student did not even know that he/she could view the reflections of their peers until the end of the practicum. His/her comment in the survey was that it would have been great to know that he/she could do that all the way along! Only 3 students rated this question above “good,” the remainder of which were evenly distributed between a rating of “good” to “poor.”

Question six asked if they felt that the online reflections increased their contact and communication with their University Consultant. Although this tool was actually designed to increase the amount of information that the University Consultant was receiving about student performance in the classroom, I felt that it was important to see if the students thought that this was having an effect on their communication. Only 11 of the 28 students felt that it either definitely had an effect or that it maybe had an effect. The remaining 15 students answered that it had no positive effect on the communication (with 2 students not answering). While I was surprised to see so many students who felt

that it had some positive effect on their communication with their University Consultant, especially after the poor feedback on the previous question, it was not the overwhelming support for the use of this instrument that I had hoped for.

The final question on the survey asked if they felt that these tools should be used again with Student Teachers. Their answers were limited to a simple yes or no with the no's winning by a 2-student margin (13 students for yes and 15 students for no). Almost all of the students made recommendations in their written responses. Some of the students felt that the instruments were a complete waste of their time, but the majority of them felt that with more information about what they were supposed to do with them, more technical support for their use in the field, and more emphasis placed upon their importance from their University Consultant, that they could be very valuable tools in their development and communication while in the schools.

*Teacher Associate feedback.* Unfortunately I received only 1 response from the participating Teacher Associates. While the same information was given to the University Consultants about the survey as was in Phase I of the pilot, I am unsure if this information was adequately passed on to the Teacher Associates. Without this data it is very difficult to draw any hard conclusions about how well the second phase of this pilot study went. The one teacher who did respond felt that the Competency Checklist was a valuable tool, but did not comment on his/her satisfaction in the instruments nor make any recommendations for changes. Initially the very poor participation in the survey troubled me, but after examining the University Consultants' feedback and their modifications to the pilot, it became clear to me that the lack of interest and engagement

in the survey was a result of their lack of understanding of what the instruments were trying to accomplish, and what their roles were in the pilot study itself. There also appeared to be lack of communication of the location of the survey instrument between the University Consultants and their Teacher Associates.

*University Consultant feedback.* The University Consultants did provide some insight into not only how they had been using the instruments in the schools, but also provided some feedback on how the Teacher Associated perceived them. As in Phase I of this pilot project, the University Consultants had to modify the research design to meet with the comfort level and needs of their Teacher Associates and Student Teachers. This again made for a variety of implementations of the study, but it is the reality of this type of research. For the most part the University Consultants agreed that the instruments all have the potential to be very powerful. I will break down their feedback based upon the different instruments being addressed.

For the most part the reflective journal tool was used by all of the University Consultants. This means that almost all of them had their students fill them out regularly. This does not mean that they reviewed them regularly and used them as a method of communicating with the students, nor does it mean that they addressed concerns that were raised in the students' reflections. One of the University Consultants never changed the guiding questions that he/she used throughout the practicum (which probably made the students feel like their reflections had little or no value), while another used too many guiding questions and the students felt like they had to write too much. Both of these

University Consultants reflected that if they use this tool again, they would change this and use it differently.

The Competency Checklist was probably the most widely used instrument and met with the most favorable response from the University Consultants. Almost all of them made use of it with teachers who were agreeable to it. There were some technical issues related to the printing of these checklists, but those recommendations were passed along to the CRDC and the changes have been made if the forms are ever used again in the future. The single factor that influenced the use of this instrument was the Teacher Associate's comfort level with the use of the computer. One Consultant actually commented that one of their Teacher Associates wrote the checklist out by hand and then copied it into the online format. In this situation, the online version of the tool was definitely much more work for the Teacher Associate and was not viewed as an asset.

The Field Experiences Report form's use was favored by all of the University Consultants, but again was dependant on the comfort level of the Teacher Associates they were working with. Those who did make use of the instrument liked the format and appreciated the collaborative nature of the creation of it. There was some concern raised that this form needed to be able to be submitted online instead of having to print it at the end of the practicum. While this option was discussed, at the time the Field Experiences staff requires that the report have a signature on it to be considered official. Until this issue can be resolved in some electronic format, this form will have to remain a printed version.

## Conclusions

Over the course of this pilot project, several themes have arisen in the feedback that have been gathered, as well as the discussions that have taken place with the participating Teacher Associates and University Consultants.

One of the issues that have been identified time and again in the data is that unless these instruments, specifically the use of the reflective journal, are emphasized to the students, and the information that the students put into them used in the communication process, then they hold very little value to either the University Consultant or the Student Teacher. This has very little bearing on the value or effectiveness of the instrument itself, but instead, is a direct reflection of the value that is being placed upon the reflective writing process and how that information is being used. Faculty members have used this instrument with great success both within this study by individual University Consultants and outside the scope of this study. The difference is the importance that is placed upon its use and the value that is placed in the information that the students put into it. Students are just like the rest of us in the respect that nobody wants to spend valuable time doing something that is perceived to be a waste of time. If the Faculty wants this reflective process to be a part of the practicum, then they need to place the necessary amount of value on the process. If this takes place, then a tool like the online reflective journal can make the sharing and use of that information to aid in communication between the Student Teacher and the University Consultant a more positive one. If not, no matter how effective an instrument is built, it will never reach its potential.

Another thing that was brought to light time and time again was the personalities of people that we work with during the process. One thing that I failed to account for in

my original pilot study design was that virtually all of the people in the educational field like to interact on a face-to-face basis. It is the nature of who we are as educators that we like to see whom we are talking to and respond to, not just what is being said but the body language, tone, and inflection of the conversation. While this is not to say that we cannot communicate with people using different media if necessary, I believe that the people who participated in this pilot study all preferred to communicate face-to-face. As a result, it makes sense that this would show up in the results of the data as well as the amount of interest and enthusiasm towards these different methods of communication. What most of the participants failed to understand was not that we wanted to show that we could replace the face-to-face component of the practicum, but rather, we needed to find other ways of supporting students who were being placed too far from Lethbridge to receive an adequate number of face-to-face visits. I believe that in this context, the reaction to the communication like the videotaped lesson and the conference call might have taken a heavier weight and would have played a much more important role in the supervision process.

There was also the aspect of the amount of money that students pay in order to participate in the practicum. Several Teacher Associates stated that the students deserved as much face-to-face interaction with their University Consultant as it took to ensure that they did well in their practicum. To be honest, I agree with them on this point. If the Faculty is committed to producing quality teachers and supporting our students to become quality educators, they may need to re-examine their recent increases in enrollment to the program and decide if they are willing to compromise the education of the students who are being marginalized by the increased distances that they are being

placed from Lethbridge to do their practicum. Another side issue that is related to this is that many of our Teacher Associates needed this face-to-face interaction with the University Consultants to gain more information about our program, the expectations, and just a general reassurance that what they are seeing is in fact taking place. For the Teacher Associates, these University Consultants are ambassadors for the program and the institution and the Faculty needs to be very careful with this delicate relationship. This relationship can only be fostered through the continued communication between the school system and the University on a personal level. It is the teachers in the field that support and allow the program to place students into these practicum positions.

One of the things that I knew was going to be a factor in the success of these instruments (especially the ones that were designed to be used with the Teacher Associates) was the comfort level with technology. It is often easy for us to forget that not all teachers in our school systems are making use of the technology that is available to them. The feedback that I received illustrated the existence of a wide variety of comfort levels with the use of computers in the classrooms with our teachers. At the University level we have been able to combat this through mandatory courses in technology as well as by making technology a component of many of the assignments within the courses that our students take. But we do not have this type of control over the use of technology in the schools. It is hoped that with each passing year, more and more of our teachers will become comfortable with the use of technology not only in their own planning, but also in their methods of teaching their students. This issue was also brought to light with the varying comfort levels with technology that the University Consultants

had. Their comfort level with the tools influenced their use of them as well as the level of importance that they placed upon their use with their students and Teacher Associates.

Finally, where do we proceed from this point? Based on the feedback that has been received there are a number of recommendations that I can make to the Faculty based around the use of these instruments in future Professional Semesters:

1. The Faculty needs to decide if placing students further and further afield is something that is really necessary (does the ends justify the means?) Do they want to risk putting students in situations where they may not be receiving the support they require and are they willing to jeopardize the lines of communication between the Teacher Associates who support the program?
2. These or any other tools will only be truly effective when the students use them in a meaningful way. This means that they need to be taught how to use them and their practicum needs to be set up in such a way that they have a role in their growth and development. This also means that the Faculty members who teach as a part of the PS I and II programs need to be inserviced on their use and potential impact in the growth and development of their students so that they can integrate them into their modules.
3. Without someone within the Faculty to take the lead in the use and continued development of these and other tools like them, they will not be successful. This point was made very clear in the difference between Phases I and II of this project with my decreased involvement in the supervision process. Tools like these require almost constant refinement to meet the ever-changing ways in which they can be effectively used with the students and teachers. Without

someone who is willing to do this, they will only ever be used by a handful of people who find value in their use on a personal level with their students.

Based upon my experience with these and other technology-based tools as well as the supporting literature, for these types of techniques to be successful, the Faculty is going to need to change the way in which it structures the use and integration of technology starting in Professional Semester I and continue that model through to Professional Semester III. The change must start with the Faculty members who participate in the component modules of PS I as well as those people brought in from the field to help with supervision. There will need to be an open discussion of the potential value of these tools in supporting those students who run the risk of being marginalized by a distant placement during one of their practica. Faculty members will need to make up their own minds about the value of these tools, but I believe that with a better understanding of the whole solution, more Faculty members will be willing to accept the idea. Without knowing which students will be potentially marginalized, it is necessary for all students to be exposed to the use of these tools in their growth and development. Not all of the instructors in PS I or II will need to make use of these tools, but every student must have at least one instructor who is using them. From a practical point of view, the best fit for this integration in PS I would probably be the Teaching Seminar. The foci of this course are teaching strategies and teacher development, and the connection between the Faculty members and the students is quite often a very personal one. In PS II, this integration would most logically fit into the Curriculum and Instruction for Majors module. It is from this module that the students will receive the majority of their teaching ideas as they relate to the content that they will be teaching. Once Faculty begins to see the value of the

tools, they will need to be inserviced in their use. Time must be spent helping them understand how this best fits into what they are currently doing in their courses and how it can be modeled and used to best help their students share their experiences with their peers and their instructors. Once the Faculty members who teach in the program are familiar with the tools and are moderately comfortable with their use, they will be able to instruct their students on how best to integrate them into their development. If the students are taught how to use the tools and feel that the information that they put into them has some value, they will be much more inclined to make use of them and will be much more comfortable doing so while they are in their field placements. It will also be vital that the University Consultants take time during their prepracticum orientation with their Teacher Associates to familiarize them with the tools that will be utilized. While it is impossible to force these participants to make use of the tools, by placing emphasis on their use and explaining the potential importance for students who are placed farther afield, I believe that common sense will prevail and the tools will be utilized where the technology will allow. In situations where face-to-face communication is possible, it should remain the method of choice. It is only where face-to-face communication is difficult to maintain or limited that these tools should be employed in the practicum supervision process.

I believe that the use of these tools for all students will enable the Faculty to place stronger students at a greater distance and still ensure that they are successful even in spite of limited face-to-face contact with their University Consultants. I also believe that once students have passed through this process in PS I and II, the Faculty will be able to employ these same tools to help support those students who choose to take an out-of-

province or even out-of-country placement for PS III. At present, the students' contact and support from the Faculty is limited to email and occasional phone communication. I hope as the technology evolves and more bandwidth is available to the schools, the possibility of making use of videoconferencing to help enhance communication will become possible. If this does become available, a great deal of research will need to be done to evaluate its potential to help supplement or replace the current use of face-to-face communication that is so necessary in the development of our Student Teachers, as well as the contact with the Teacher Associates who support the Faculty of Education practica.

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## Appendix A



Faculty of Education  
**COMPETENCY CHECKLIST**

Student Teacher:	Practicum: <input type="checkbox"/> 3500 <input type="checkbox"/> 3600
Dates of Practicum:	School:
Teacher Associate:	University Consultant:
Grade Level(s) Taught:	Subjects / Themes Taught:

This is a working document to facilitate instructive, formative assessment. Please use it to provide the Student Teacher with periodic feedback. Indicate the Student Teacher's current level of development in a competency area on the continuum from weak to strong. In order to indicate improvement over the term of the practicum, use a number on the continuum. E.G. For the first formative evaluation place a "1" at the appropriate location on the continuum to indicate current level of development. For subsequent evaluations, use the number 2, then 3.

Formative Assessments: #1 \_\_\_\_\_ #2 \_\_\_\_\_ #3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Date Date

Please sign below after the final formative appraisal. The Student Teacher should retain this document for his/her records.

Teacher Associate	University Consultant	Student Teacher
-------------------	-----------------------	-----------------

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS****All Practica**

	WEAK	STRONG
<b>Verbal:</b>		
1. Fluency and clarity of speech.		
1. Correctness of language - grammar.		
1. Appropriateness of language - level, colloquialisms.		
1. Quality of voice - projection, inflection, tone.		
1. Ability to elicit responses from pupils.		
1. Appropriateness of responses to pupil questions.		
<b>Written:</b>		
1. Organization - sequential, logical development of ideas.		
1. Mechanics - grammar, spelling, punctuation.		
1. Handwriting/printing.		
<b>Non-verbal:</b>		
1. Gestures, expressions, eye contact.		
1. Congruence between verbal and non-verbal.		
1. Effective use of technology where applicable.		

**PREPARATION****Education 3500**

The Student Teacher is expected to:

1. Prepare for assisting in classroom activities.	
2. Master, in advance, the content of the lesson - know what is being taught.	
3. Write appropriate learning outcomes - objectives in accordance with Alberta Programs of Study.	
4. Organize concepts to be taught in a logical and understandable sequence.	
5. Select and develop resource materials (print & non-print) for instruction.	
6. Plan for instructional activities - particular attention to introduction, teaching strategies and pupil activities, closure or culminating activities, and evaluation of attainment of objectives.	



28. Remediate learning of pupils requiring additional instruction.	
29. Extend learning of pupils who are able.	
30. Extend use of technology as appropriate to major subject area.	

**CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT****Education 3500****The student is expected to:**

1. Administer rules consistently and fairly.	
2. Handle classroom routines - assembling and dismissing, distribution of materials, grouping for instruction, etc.	
3. Establish and maintain classroom control - codes of conduct, pupil attention, etc.	
4. Create and maintain positive learning environment.	

**Education 3600**

All the competencies listed under Education 3500.

**EVALUATION****Education 3500****The Student Teacher is expected to:**

1. Observe classroom interaction – learner/learner, learner/teacher.	
2. Analyze classroom interaction – learner/learner, learner/teacher.	
3. Assess pupil learning using appropriate informal assessment instruments.	
4. Modify and adapt teaching based on analysis of observations.	
5. Maintain accurate records of assessment.	

**Education 3600**

In addition to the competencies listed under Education 3500, the Student Teacher is expected to:

6. Determine adequacy of learners' prior knowledge and skills to assimilate new material: oral and written questions, observation, pre-tests, etc.	
7. Measure learning - select and develop effective techniques and instruments to measure.	
8. Analyze and evaluate measurement data to assess learner progress.	
9. Develop teaching/learning strategies based on above items - re: teaching, individualization, grouping, changes in strategy, etc.	
10. Develop and maintain accurate recording system of pupil grades (grade sheets, database, etc.).	

**PROFESSIONAL GROWTH****Education 3500****The Student Teacher is expected to:**

1. Conscientiously reflect on personal suitability for teaching profession.	
2. Incorporate learning from observation and discussions into personal performance classroom.	
3. Evaluate his/her own performance and development making suggestions for improvement, analyzing effectiveness, etc.	
4. Develop and present his/her professional portfolio depicting goals, growth, and achievements.	

**Education 3600**

In addition to the competencies listed under Education 3500, the Student Teacher is expected to:

5. Evaluate his/her own performance in teaching major subject area.	
6. Develop awareness of teachers' roles and responsibilities within Alberta education system.	
7. Demonstrate preparedness to assume responsibility of internship.	

**All practica****PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Indicate those items which need attention with the number representing the date of the assessment.

**NEEDS ATTENTION**

1. The student acts in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, color, gender, sexual orientation physical characteristics, age, ancestry or place of origin.	
2. The student treats pupils, peers, school personnel, and faculty with dignity and respect and is considerate of their circumstances.	
3. The student demonstrates empathy for others by showing concern for and understanding of others' feelings and/or ideas.	
4. The student shows enthusiasm and initiative by being actively involved as a participant while encouraging the involvement and participation of others.	
5. The student maintains positive interpersonal relationships with peers, faculty, school personnel, parents and pupils by contributing, cooperating, participating, and working with others in a flexible and adaptable way.	
6. The student responds to feedback by listening, evaluating, and responding to suggestions.	
7. The student demonstrates a commitment to teaching through interest in learning about teaching, consulting, questioning, reading and discussing.	
8. The student acts in a responsible manner which includes being punctual, dependable, trustworthy, consistent, and reliable.	
9. The student will recognize that attendance in practicum and professional semester courses is a professional responsibility, and student will apprise appropriate personnel at the University and/or school in advance of unavoidable absences.	
10. The student shows maturity and judgment.	
11. The student criticizes (verbally or in writing) the professional competence or professional reputation of others only in confidence to proper officials and only after the other person has been informed of the criticism.	
12. The student respects the confidentiality of information about pupils, peers, school personnel, or faculty received in confidence or in the course of professional duties.	
13. The student acts in a manner which maintains the honor and dignity of the profession and the University of Lethbridge.	
14. The student does not make representations on behalf of the Faculty of Education, the University of Lethbridge, the school, or the teaching profession.	

## Appendix B



Faculty of Education  
**FIELD EXPERIENCE REPORT FORM**

This is a **summative** appraisal of the Student Teacher at a particular level of practicum, based on expectations at that stage of teacher development. This form is to be completed at the end of the practicum.

Student Teacher:	Practicum: <input type="checkbox"/> 3500 <input type="checkbox"/> 3600 <input type="checkbox"/> 4510 <input type="checkbox"/> 4520
Major:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Major / Minor:
Teacher Associate:	School:
University Consultant:	Dates of Practicum:
Grade Level(s) Taught:	Subjects / Themes Taught:

Please refer to **Competency Checklist** for topics within each area and a description of basic expectations and competencies for each practicum level. Also please refer to KSA's for Interim Certification as included in Field Experiences Handbook.

**Communication skills:**

**Preparation:**

**Content Knowledge:**

---

**Instructional Skills (includes integration of technology):**

---

**Classroom Management:**

---

**Evaluation of Student Learning:**

---

**Professional Growth and Conduct (includes student's ability to self-evaluate his/her professional growth and student's engagement in professional portfolio development):**

General Comments (includes strongest aspects of student's performance and areas in need of improvement):

Recommendation:  Pass  Fail  Incomplete

If incomplete, provide reasons and recommendations for additional practicum on a separate, attached and signed sheet.

Student Teacher:

Date:

Please put a check mark beside the originator(s) of the document.

Teacher Associate

Date:

University Consultant

Date:

Submit completed original form to Field Experiences, Room B830, the University of Lethbridge. Please provide a signed copy to the Student Teacher.

## Appendix C

**PS II Video Observation – Guiding Questions**

The following questions are designed to help get you started with your self-evaluation of the videotaped lesson. Please feel free to expand on the questions below as they are only a starting point.

1. **Overall how did you feel the lesson went? What worked very well and what would you want to change the next time that you delivered this lesson?**
2. **Identify 2 areas that you were focusing on from a teaching perspective and comment on what you were doing to try and improve in these areas. Did what you try work out? If not, what are you going to try next?**
3. **What were some of the things that you noticed about your use of language in seeing yourself teach? Are there things that you say that may be distracting or confusing for students? Are there things that you do during the course of teaching that may distract students from what you are saying?**
4. **Describe the quality of your voice. Is it flat or monotone or do you vary your volume and pitch when you speak? Does it “sound” like you are excited to be there or more like you are “going through the motions?” Do you sound enthusiastic? Do you sound like you are in charge of the class?**
5. **Pick 3 different times in the lesson and explain what you were trying to do with the students and what ended up actually happening (use the time code on the tape if possible).**
6. **What was this experience like? Was it valuable to see yourself teach and then critique your teaching?**

## Appendix D

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER II  
TEACHER ASSOCIATE PRACTICUM SUPERVISION SURVEY**  
Spring, 2003

Until Spring 2003, Professional Semester II University Consultants in the Faculty of Education were expected to make five supervisory visits to each Student Teacher during the practicum. In Spring 2003 we are conducting a pilot project with the Science students in which there were only 3 face-to-face observations and 2 alternative supervision methods tested (1 video observation and self-evaluation and 1 telephone conference). Your feedback on this project is essential for us to accurately assess the viability of this model in the future. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions, and return this form either via e-mail to [jeff.meadows@uleth.ca](mailto:jeff.meadows@uleth.ca) or via regular mail at:

Jeff Meadows  
Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge  
4401 University Drive  
Lethbridge, AB  
T1K 3M4

---

1. Please rate the overall experience with your practicum student. (circle only one)

Poor					Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of the videotaped lesson with respect to impact on the student teachers teaching? (circle only one)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3. How would you rate the effectiveness of the telephone conference call with respect to communicating concerns with the Faculty Advisor and clarifying the upcoming events? (circle only one)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. Would you recommend the use of this type of supervision model again in the future? (check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ no

5. Was this your first Professional Semester II student?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ no

Comments or Recommendations:

## Appendix E



**FACULTY OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER II (Science Student Teachers) TEACHER ASSOCIATE PRACTICUM SUPERVISION SURVEY**

**Spring, 2003**

Until Spring 2003, Professional Semester II University Consultants in the Faculty of Education were expected to make five supervisory visits to each Student Teacher during the practicum. In Spring 2003 we conducted a pilot project with the Science students in which there were three supervisory visits and two alternative supervision methods (one video observation and self-evaluation and one telephone conference). Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions, and return this form either via e-mail to edu.fieldexp@uleth.ca. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

1. Was this your first time supervising Professional Semester II Student Teacher?

- Yes  
 No

2. How many University Consultant visits did your Student Teacher receive?

- Three  
 Four  
 Five  
 More than five

3a. Did that number of the University Consultant's visits provide sufficient opportunity for: (a) initial orientation to Professional Semester II for you (i.e. practicum expectations, standards of performance, etc.)?

- Not at all  
 To a small extent  
 Somewhat  
 To a large extent

3b. On-going discussion with you?

- Not at all  
 To a small extent  
 Somewhat  
 To a large extent

3c. On-going monitoring of the Student Teacher's progress?

- Not at all  
 To a small extent  
 Somewhat  
 To a large extent

3d. On-going discussion with the Student Teacher to address concerns, issues, etc.?

- Not at all  
 To a small extent  
 Somewhat  
 To a large extent

4. How would you rate the effectiveness of the video taped lesson with respect to impact on your Student Teacher's teaching?

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- Somewhat
- To a large extent

5. How would you rate the effectiveness of the telephone conference call with respect to communicating concerns with the University Consultant and clarifying the upcoming events?

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- Somewhat
- To a large extent

6. Would you recommend the use of this supervision model in the future?

- Yes
- No

7. Please explain.

--

8. How many University Consultant Visits would you recommend for Professional Semester II Practicum?

- Three
- Four
- Five
- More than five

9. Please explain.

--

## Appendix F

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER II  
STUDENT PRACTICUM SUPERVISION SURVEY**  
Spring, 2003

Until Spring 2003, Professional Semester II University Consultants in the Faculty of Education were expected to make five supervisory visits to each Student Teacher during the practicum. In Spring 2003 we are conducting a pilot project with the Science students in which there were only 3 face-to-face observations and 2 alternative supervision methods tested (1 video observation and self-evaluation and 1 telephone conference). Your feedback on this project is essential for us to accurately assess the viability of this model in the future. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions, and return this form either via e-mail to [jeff.meadows@uleth.ca](mailto:jeff.meadows@uleth.ca) or via regular mail at:

Jeff Meadows  
Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge  
4401 University Drive  
Lethbridge, AB  
T1K 3M4

6. Please rate the overall experience with your Teacher Associate. (circle only one)

Poor					Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	

7. How would you rate the effectiveness of the videotaped lesson with respect to impact on your teaching? (circle only one)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. How would you rate the effectiveness of the telephone conference call with respect to communicating your concerns with the Faculty Advisor and clarifying the upcoming events? (circle only one)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. How would you rate the feedback that you received from your Faculty Associate with respect to giving you concise feedback on your teaching, areas of strength and weakness? (circle only one)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. How helpful were the online reflections in helping you to evaluate your daily performance? (circle only one)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11. Would you recommend the use of this type of supervision model again in the future? (check one)

yes                       no

Comments or Recommendations:



Applicable	Poor			Excellent
------------	------	--	--	-----------

5. How helpful was it so see the reflections of your peers as well and see what each of them were going through day-to-day and how they were dealing with issues that arose?

Not at all helpful Very helpful

6. Did the online reflections increase the amount of contact and communication with your Faculty Supervisor?

No Maybe Yes

7. Would you recommend the use of these tools again in the future?

Yes  
 No

Comments or recommendations:

Thank you for your participation - your comments are appreciated.

If you experience technical difficulties with this page, please contact the Curriculum Re-Development Centre.

## Appendix H

## PS2 Practicum Supervision Survey

FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER II  
TEACHER ASSOCIATE PRACTICUM SUPERVISION SURVEY  
Spring, 2004

As you know, you have been part of an extended research project that is examining the effectiveness of using on-line tools to increase the contact and communication between all of the parties involved during PS II practicum. As such, we would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to complete the following survey. Your feedback on this project is essential for us to accurately assess the viability of these tools for use in the future. Your comments will be anonymous, but if you would like to speak to me about anything on this questionnaire, please contact me. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions, and return this form either via e-mail to [jeff.meadows@uleth.ca](mailto:jeff.meadows@uleth.ca) or via regular mail at:

Jeff Meadows  
Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge  
4401 University Drive  
Lethbridge, AB  
T1K 3M4

1. Please rate the overall experience with your practicum student.

Poor Excellent

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of the online competency checklist in providing your student teacher with feedback on their teaching?

Not Applicable Poor Excellent

3. How would you compare the use of the online competency checklist to the traditional paper version?

Not Applicable Worse Better

4. How would you rate the effectiveness of the online final evaluation form?

Not Applicable Poor Excellent