

# A Developmental View of Practicum for Enhancing Experiential Learning – Experiences from Teacher Training in Early Childhood Education

**Vicky Wong, Benjamin Fung, Leo Hung**  
**Caritas Institute of Community Education**

**24 November 2017**



- 1. Practicum as experiential learning**
- 2. Practicum in context of teacher training in Early Childhood Education (ECE)**
- 3. A developmental view of practicum in enhancing experiential learning in ECE**
- 4. Some survey findings from the operation of practicum in a HD-ECE programme**
- 5. Conclusion and recommendations**



自資高等教育聯盟  
Federation for Self-financing  
Tertiary Education



# Practicum as Experiential Learning



## Experiential Learning

- **Experiential learning is learning from experience of doing; reflection about the experiences help to increase knowledge, develop skills and change attributes**
- **Simple participation in a prescribed set of learning experience does not make something experiential**
- **Some characterizing features of experiential learning – mix of content and process, encourage the big picture perspective, important role of reflection, re-examination of values, presence of meaningful relationships with stakeholders and the learning environment**

***(Chapman et al 1995)***



## Practicum: Role and Contents

- **Role: Essential and integral part of training of professionals: knowledge, skills and attitude requirements**
- **Contents: Observations, documentation, activities, tasks in workplace as well as evaluation and reflection based on field experience**

## Practicum: Development Scope and Process Outcome

- **Experiential learning context of practicum should take a broader scope of analysis, hence progressive development stages of practicum in a curriculum**
- **Interacting with contents and process of taught elements / subjects in enhancing students' holistic understanding of professional practice in the field**
- **Improve curriculum design for more effective learning**



自資高等教育聯盟  
Federation for Self-financing  
Tertiary Education



# Practicum in Context of Teacher Training in Early Childhood Education (ECE)



## Practicum in ECE Teacher Training Curriculum

- **In general: Experience of teacher in developing their practice whilst in the classroom (Girvan et al, 2016)**
- **In ECE context: Impact of active practicum programme in teacher education, some integration of theory and practice, practicum reported to be of generally short duration which is inadequate, potential for enhancing personal and professional growth, need for continuous pedagogical innovation (Whitcomb et al, 2007 and Levine, 2006)**





自資高等教育聯盟  
Federation for Self-financing  
Tertiary Education



# A Developmental View of Practicum in Enhancing Experiential Learning in ECE

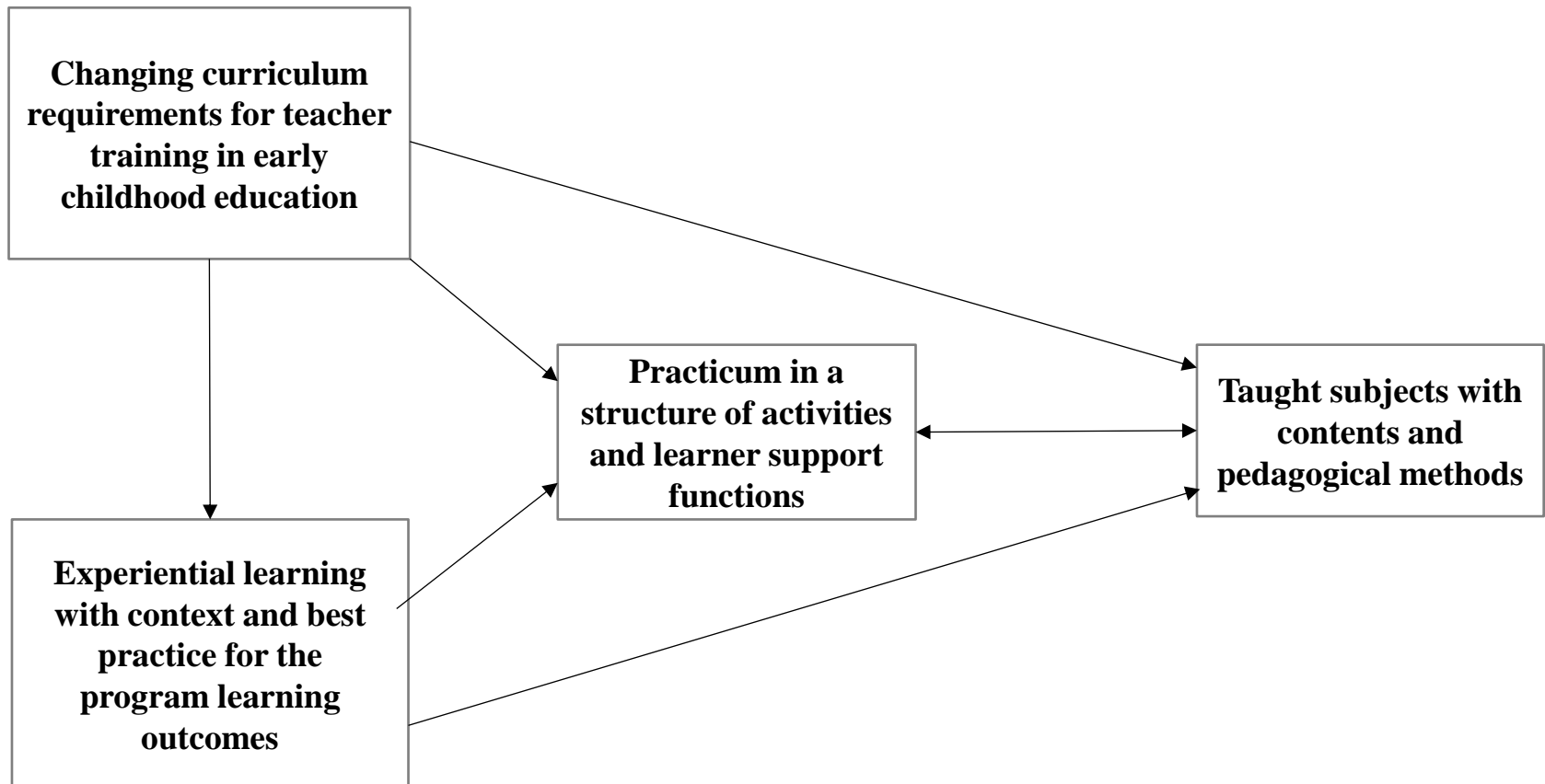




## A Study Framework for a Developmental View of Practicum

- **Incremental development of learning experiences in a multi-stage practicum programme**
- **Students' reflection and group sharing in enhancing practicum outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes**
- **Interactions between practicum and other taught elements / subjects leading to pedagogical innovation and curriculum review**

## A Diagrammatic Representation of the Study Framework



## Year 1 Attachment and Practicum I

Practicum	Activities & Purpose	Extended Outcomes
Attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist to take care of children</li> <li>Familiar with learning environment</li> <li>Observe and record children learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciate the holistic view of ECE setting</li> </ul>
Practicum I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handle daily routines in the kindergarten</li> <li>Plan and organize a learning environment</li> <li>Plan and implement curriculum</li> <li>Communicate with parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on the importance of play-based and dramatic-based activities</li> </ul>

## Year 2 Practicum II

Activities & Purpose	Extended Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handle daily routines in a different kindergarten</li><li>• Plan and organize learning environment in different resources and physical settings</li><li>• Plan and implement thematic-activities</li><li>• Observe and reflect on children's behaviors</li><li>• Communicate with parents</li><li>• Reflect more on practices embodying individual differences</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflection on differences of learning environment and routines in schools as well as resources use in different settings</li><li>• Focus placed on the six learning areas</li></ul>

## Year 2 Practicum III

Activities & Purpose	Extended Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance thinking and capacity to handle daily routines as well as setting of learning environments</li><li>• Embark on project approach in curriculum planning</li><li>• Reflect on integration of curriculum, teaching approaches and learning environment setup</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deepened learning of a holistic approach to ECE activities through group sharing</li><li>• Reference is also made to context of other subjects to strengthen learning in the curriculum as a whole</li></ul>



自資高等教育聯盟  
Federation for Self-financing  
Tertiary Education



# Some Survey Findings from the Operation of Practicum in a HD-ECE Programme





## Background of the Study

- **HD-ECE programme of CICE, first started in 2015/16 as a recognized training course for kindergarten teachers (EDB) as well as child care workers and supervisors (SWD), successful revalidation by HKCAAVQ and approval from EDB and SWD in 2017**
- **Curriculum characterized by extended practicum with partnership and support from nurseries, kindergartens and professional associations**





## Survey of Graduates and Employers on Effectiveness of Students' Learning in Practicum

- **Background: defined and regulated process of engaging students, supervisors and kindergarten consultants in the operation of the practicum**
- **Survey scope**
  - curriculum
  - teaching strategies
  - classroom design
  - classroom management
  - observation and evaluation
  - professional disposition

## Summary of Graduate Views

Category	Percentage on rating Scale				
	1 Vy Satisfied	2 Satisfied	3 General	4 Dissatisfied	5 Vy Dissatisfied
Curriculum	24%	71%	4%	0%	0 %
Teaching Strategies	16%	71%	13%	0%	0%
Classroom Design	7%	64%	29%	0%	0%
Classroom Management	11%	73%	16%	0%	0%
Observation and Evaluation	17%	64%	19%	0%	0%
Professional Disposition	14%	59%	21%	5%	0%



## Some Further Views of Graduates on Practicum

- **Well-designed orientation for preparing students and stakeholders**
- **Operational yet practically useful experience in performing tasks and managing relationships in progressive stages**
- **Reflection on daily observations and tasks, with help from documents and guided tutorials**
- **Frequent reference made to practicum experience during the study of other subjects**



## View of Stakeholders

- **Role of supervisors and consultants with their feedback to support improvement in practicum**
- **Overall satisfaction from current employers on skills and knowledge as well as professional disposition of the student teachers**
- **Future work on tracing progressive development and outcomes of practicum**



自資高等教育聯盟  
Federation for Self-financing  
Tertiary Education



## Conclusion and Recommendations



## Conclusion and Recommendations

- Assurance of quality in practicum supervision
- Encourage interactive sharing among students and enhance learning outcomes of practicum with experiences acquired at different stages
- Promote opportunities and engage students in actively cross-referencing experiential learning activities in different subjects and learning settings