



**School of Education and Lifelong Learning**

**Investigation into the Adopted Supervisory Practices in the Teaching Practice of Special Education Needs Student Teachers in Saudi Arabia: Different Perspectives**

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative research explores the perceptions of participants in the supervision of student teachers during their field placement as a key element in the initial teacher education of special education needs specialist teachers in Saudi Arabia. Participants in supervision are here taken to mean college supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers. The research was prompted by a move to implement inclusive education policies in Saudi Arabia and an associated and significant expansion of the numbers of special education needs specialist teachers being trained. Further initiatives, in particular the widespread introduction of ICT throughout the education system, reinforced the need to examine this area at this time. General acknowledgment of the importance of teaching practice in the professional life of student and novice teachers means that the role of supervision during the field placement is also an essential component of initial teacher education. Within the context of a case study approach that used questionnaires, interviews and observations as the main data collection instruments, an activity theory perspective provided a theoretical and conceptual lens through which to reach a more complete understanding of the role of supervision in teaching practice. Specific components of activity theory were particularly useful in examining an activity system of supervision within student teacher field placements and perceptions of that supervision by college supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers, in the setting of the schools systems where supervision was taking place (Engeström, 1999). Study participants were student teachers in the final semester of a four-year special needs specialist initial teacher education programme at King Saud University, Riyadh, together with their college supervisors and co-operating teachers.

Analysis of the findings showed that college supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers had different perceptions of supervision and also of the role of both supervision and the field placement. Experiences of supervision were both positive and negative, depending on the relationship between the individual student teacher and supervisor and the supervision approach adopted by supervisors. The dominant supervision approach adopted by college supervisors was directive, while co-operating teachers tended to use a far more collaborative approach. Student teachers found the co-operating teachers' input more helpful, partly because of the frequency and ease of contact. Relationships between the university and schools involved were relatively weak, a feature that was sometimes reflected in relationships between college supervisors and co-operating teachers, and this proved to one of the factors limiting the effectiveness of student teacher supervision in Saudi Arabia. Despite the fact that student teachers clearly learned a great deal about how to teach from co-operating teachers, and also college supervisors, during the practicum, participants highlighted a general lack of planning in supervision arrangements. Overall, there was a lack of systematic development, related to the lack of planning, which prevented all groups of participants from maximising the benefits of supervision. Some of the difficulties arose from conflicting demands and heavy workloads required of college supervisors and co-operating teachers. All groups of participants suggested ways in which some of the difficulties could be alleviated. These included improved planning of the practicum, starting with written guidelines regarding expectations of student teachers, a more structured and consistent approach among schools, co-operating teachers and college supervisors and more practical teaching placements throughout the university course. It is proposed that key elements of a clinical supervision approach are introduced in order to significantly improve the positive impact of supervision in the short term, supported by

consideration of options based on university research in the longer term, in order to strengthen the contribution of supervision to future improvements in initial teacher education in Saudi Arabia. It is further proposed that in education research the application of activity theory, which is a cultural theory of learning, could be strengthened by combining it with culture of learning theory, which postulates how learning is absorbed in sociocultural and professional contexts.

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# **Dedication**

**To my lovely wife and children**

**To my supervisors Nigel, Keith and Hazel**

**To my tutors, teachers and colleagues**

**To the research community**

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# **Chapter 1 Introduction and background to the study**

## ***1.1 Introduction to the Research and Thesis***

This introductory chapter presents an overview of the research which is focused on the extent to which supervisory practices meet the changing needs of pre-service special educational needs teachers, special educational needs pupils and the education system as a whole. The introduction sets out the background to, and structure of, this thesis and begins by providing essential insights into the Saudi cultural context within which the research took place in order to frame the research. Definitions used in the thesis are detailed at the end of the section on background and context. It defines the focus of the study and the reasons for choosing this particular focus at this time, specifying the research problem, aims, objectives and the research questions and highlighting the significance of the study and its contribution to knowledge. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the complete thesis, outlining the contents of the remaining chapters, chapter by chapter.

Supervision is a major component of the practicum – the field placement or teaching practice - and is therefore highly influential in the preparation and development of student teachers (Sullivan and Glanz, 2000; Tang, 2004; Graham, 2006). However, there is no overall agreement about what “supervision should be or what educational supervisors should do” (Daresh, 2001, p.3). At the same time, the practice of student teacher supervision continues to spread even though field placements have been the subject of criticism (Tang, 2004; Wilson, 2006). Studies have shown that field placements for pre-

service teachers can exert both positive and negative influences on the pre-service teachers (Sabar, 2004).

### ***1.2 Background and Context of the Problem***

Saudi Arabia has recognized many needs in primary and secondary education and hence in what the country expects of its teachers. These expectations include the recommendations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO EFA reports 2000, 2007, 2008). Significant recommendations are the need to develop learning strategies and methods that produce required skills and desired behaviours and improve the efficiency of education in terms of outputs meeting targets, with in-service education to support this, in addition to teaching students how to learn so that they can teach themselves within a framework based on concepts of continuous education and lifelong learning. Two far-reaching programmes started in the late 2000s are rollout of inclusion (IBE-UNESCO, 2007), and the introduction of computers to primary and intermediate schools within a national project for using ICT in teaching. Furthermore, the redesign of pre-service teacher training is in progress, accompanied by a move towards learner-centred education (UNESCO EFA, 2008).

To achieve the goals of 'Education for All' and ICT literacy, the government launched the King Abdullah Project for the Development of Public Education in February 2007 and a vocational infrastructure and training programme in April 2007. These initiatives acknowledged that improvements to the educational environment, extra-curricular activities, curriculum development and teacher training were essential. The improvements

to teacher training have been expressed in terms of “updating teachers on teaching methods including the use of increased class participation, active problem solving methods, and small group workshops, and to ensure that tolerance is promoted within the education system, but did not include revising substantive material” (UNESCO, 2007). Three critical elements are omitted from this: the nature of the future content of the curriculum, the influences of long-established habits on the development of existing teachers, and the development of new teachers. Although the current study is concerned with the third, pre-service teacher training is influenced heavily by the other two.

The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia will implement seven training programmes for over 400,000 teachers, covering specialization, school management, educational supervision, computer science, self-development and skills improvement. New programmes will be introduced for pupils including scientific, cultural, social and sports activities. This has significant implications for teacher training programmes both for pre-service and experienced teachers.

It is important to understand the expectations placed upon student teachers, together with those who teach and inspect them, in order to ensure that any reframing of the role of supervision within field placements in initial teacher education meets the needs of new teachers and hence the needs of pupils. It is also essential to take account of the cultural dimension of pre-service teacher training and to recognise that there exist deeply embedded values, concepts and practices based on experience among pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, teacher mentors and supervisors as well as longstanding administration practices operating in schools.

Teacher education and training continues to be considered by UNESCO as a critically important activity which requires sustained and substantial support. There are two key consequences of this viewpoint, the first being that, whatever model is chosen, teaching practice experience is necessary in order to link theory to practice. In the context of teacher education, student teachers need to be sufficiently qualified to be able to relate the theoretical educational courses throughout the years of their degree at the Faculty of Education to their teaching practice experience. The extent to which this is supported through practices such as micro-teaching is open to discussion although there clearly needs to be some appropriate preparation for real classroom situations. In this respect, the university has a vital role to play in guiding pre-service teachers towards the best possible methods of teaching that meet the needs of every learner. This is more relevant now than ever before, as concepts and implementation of inclusive schools and inclusive classrooms become more widespread. Secondly, the selected model needs to suit the purposes of the education system which include, for any society, meeting the needs of that society and reflecting cultural norms and values. Supervision in one form or another remains an important component of teaching practice.

Abdulkareem (2001) emphasizes that instructional supervision should aim to continuously improve teaching through a process of providing teachers with the support that they need in order to develop. Teachers are regarded as the centre of this improvement process. The term 'supervisory practices' is used here to refer to the approaches used by supervisors whether at schools or at university to guide, monitor and coach student teachers in their teaching practice. When teachers accept the supervisory practices and interact with them,

this should result in supervisory success which in turn should lead to the success of the processes of teaching and learning inside the classroom. However, as highlighted by Firth (1997), successful implementation of supervision requires knowledge and understanding of teachers' expectations of supervision and of their response to supervision itself. In addition, investigation into the perceptions of supervisors at both the placement school and the university, together with those of student teachers, helps to identify ways of improving the enactment of these practices and also to identify and, as far as possible, avert any potential difficulties.

Research has shown that for many years supervision has suffered from a number of problems such as a lack of trust between teachers and supervisors, weak communication channels, working in isolation, and frequent misunderstanding (Blumberg, 1980; Alhammad, 2000). Supervisors in universities and schools are required to conduct a range of supervisory practices that are intended to benefit student teachers such as consulting each other, sharing information, establishing personal rapport, evaluating class performances, giving and accepting constructive criticism (Anderson et al., 1992). However, supervision has over time earned a bad reputation for teacher-supervisor relationships that are fraught with difficulties and tension (Blumberg, 1980; Pool, 1994; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000). In view of the important role played by supervision in student teacher development, these problems indicate that supervision is a field that merits careful study, examination and evaluation in order to identify the factors behind these problems and to try to overcome them with recommendations appropriate to the particular context in which they arise.

Reviewing the literature has led to the exploration of various aspects of instructional supervision in Saudi Arabia. Previous studies (Adwani, 1981; AlTuwaijri, 1985; Abdulkareem, 2001) have quantitatively highlighted the perceptions of supervisors about supervisory practices. These studies have revealed strong support from supervisors and student teachers alike for reconsideration and revision of the instructional supervision system in Saudi Arabia. However, at the time this current research was proposed, it appeared that no qualitative interpretive study had been conducted to examine and evaluate contemporary supervisory practices in Saudi Arabia as viewed from the different perspectives of school supervisors, university supervisors and student teachers themselves.

Thus, this exploratory study was undertaken for the following reasons. First, to provide a qualitative and interpretive study investigating the different supervisory practices dominant in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) teaching practice context. Secondly, to identify implications for updating and improving supervision programmes and enhancing their contribution to development of teaching skills and performance of Saudi student teachers. Thirdly, to deep understanding of the supervisory practices and hence address points of weakness while identifying points of strength to be capitalized upon in the future.

### ***1.3. Definitions***

Certain terms employed in this thesis requires clarification, as the terminology used in Saudi Arabia differs from that in use in the UK. These terms are defined in the following paragraphs.

**Assessment.** English uses ‘formative assessment’ and ‘summative assessment’ to refer to the interim and final comments and marks given to student teachers regarding their practical teaching and professional development. The Arabic equivalents are ‘formative evaluation’ and ‘summative evaluation’ respectively.

**Co-operating teacher.** ‘Co-operating teacher’ is used to describe the teacher in the school who has responsibility for ensuring that student teachers are given written guidance on their teaching placement and on cooperation with the college supervisor (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.17 and Al Dawood, 1994). Critically, the co-operating teacher is responsible for supervision and direct guidance of the student teacher (Ezzuddin, 2003). ‘Main teacher’ refers to an in-service special education needs teacher.

**College supervisor.** The college supervisor is a member of the university teaching staff who is authorized to supervise student teacher training in collaboration with special education programmes and institutes, with the objective of instructing, advising and encouraging the student to develop his practical teaching capabilities. The college supervisor’s role includes allocation of student teachers to schools, liaison with the education departments with which these schools are associated, setting out conditions related to supervision and monitoring the progress of the student teachers as they undergo training in their teaching placement (College of Education, 2002, p.8). The college supervisor also has overall responsibility for the practicum and for determination of marks for formative and summative assessment.

**Practicum.** The equivalent term used in Saudi Arabia is ‘field education’, referring to ‘teaching placement’ or ‘teaching practice’, the applied aspect of knowledge, skills and experience that the student gains through designing, writing and implementing an educational or training programme suitable for his specialization programme (College of

Education, 1986, p.72). The emphasis of field education is on practising instructional techniques and experiencing a range of facets of school life.

**Student teacher.** In this thesis the term ‘student teacher’ is used to describe students in the second semester of the fourth and final academic year who wish to qualify as special education teachers and are undertaking an appropriate teaching placement. ‘Beginner teacher’ is applied to a teacher in their first year of service (Attari, 1996, p. 356). The term ‘preservice teacher’ is used to apply to all those who are on initial teacher education programmes other than special education specialists. ‘In-service teachers’ includes all teachers who have completed their qualification and are working in schools.

It is also important to comment on the use of the terms ‘initial teacher training’ and ‘initial teacher education’. In practice these are often used interchangeably, although in certain cases ‘education’ is used to refer to the knowledge and theory that teachers need in order to perform their role as educators, whereas ‘training’ in certain instances places a greater emphasis on the acquisition of the practical skills required to operate effectively in the classroom. Wherever it is important to make the distinction or to include both theory and practice in this study, the meaning is made clear. For example, a section in the literature review refers to Initial Teacher Education and means the complete course and qualification, with all its components.

#### ***1.4 The current context in Saudi Arabia***

Any discussion of initial teacher education (ITE) needs to take into account the country context, the aims of the education system, the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and

beliefs that those being educated are expected to acquire and hence the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs that teachers are required to have and how best they should teach them.

According to the UNESCO (2007) report on World Data on Education:

“the general goals of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are: to have students understand Islam in a correct and comprehensive manner; to plant and spread the Islamic creed; to provide the students with the values, teachings and ideals of Islam; to equip them with various skills and knowledge; to develop their conduct in constructive directions; to develop the society economically and culturally; and to prepare the individual to be a useful member in the building of his/her community.”

(<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/Countries/WDE/2006/index.html>)

Turning to the special educational needs context in which the research took place, educational provision in Saudi Arabia for children classified as having special educational needs comprises a spectrum of separate special schools, separate classrooms co-located with mainstream school premises, and inclusive classrooms, the latter typically supported with sessions when individual children or small groups are withdrawn from the mainstream lessons (Al Musa, 2007). There are more than ninety separate schools catering for over 5,000 pupils who are classified as blind, deaf, mentally retarded (a term used to describe individuals with an IQ below a specified score) or suffering from autism or multiple disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2005).

College supervisors participating in this study were from the Special Education Department at King Saud University, Riyadh. This department, the first of its kind in the Arab world,

was established in the academic year 1984-85 and teacher education courses started in the second semester of that year. Since 1984 all pre-service teachers who wish to specialize in SEN are required to train for four years. The department has a clear published vision of attaining the leading position among special education departments in the Kingdom ([www.ksu.edu.sa](http://www.ksu.edu.sa)) and to be recognized as one of the world's most distinguished departments of special education. The department mission has three dimensions; training and development of specialists, research and consultancy and other services.

“1. Preparation of special education teachers academically, morally, and educationally at the undergraduate level together with successful researchers, leaders, and administrators at the graduate level to become faculty members at universities and other educational organizations.

2. Preparing national research projects and supervising, by request, other projects, also initiating joint projects at the national and international levels.

3. Consultancy and training services for the government and private organizations as well as diagnostic and training services for the children and their families through the department specialized centers.” (Translated from [www.ksu.edu.sa](http://www.ksu.edu.sa))

The department designs, delivers and implements specialized training courses in various areas of SEN including talented and gifted, at times independently and at others in cooperation with the community service centre at the university and the centre for diploma courses. An integrated development programme for both teachers and special education teachers is delivered, consisting of 128 modules, of which 52 are in the compulsory special education field and 15 units

make up the university requirements. In addition to the standard ITE programme, pre-service SEN teachers must take an extensive range of specialist modules. Successful students who choose the SEN route receive a degree after four years in one of the following specialisms: visual impairment (disability), audial impairment (disability), mental impairment (disability), excellence and innovation, or learning difficulties. The department prepares special education teachers to work with children with special needs (whether disabled or gifted) at primary and secondary levels in special education institutes and charities or private sector agencies that offer services and special education programmes ([www.ksu.edu.sa](http://www.ksu.edu.sa)).

Many special education teachers have already graduated from the Department and work in a variety of specialized fields, some in the public sector others in charitable organisations or private sector businesses, all aimed at improving the quality and quantity of special education services provided to children assessed as having special needs. The numbers of university students registered in this department in 1999-2000, as shown in the records of the second semester of that academic year, were 1176 male students and 1272 female students (2398 in total). The increasing demand for teachers reflects the growth in special education institutes, of which there were 2268 for boys in 2007 and in the number of boys attending them which reached 48547 in the same year (Al Musa, 2007, p.222-223). However, the vast majority of SEN learners, estimated at 93% according to Al Musa (2007, p.225) attend regular schools.

The programme of ITE at King Saud University is specified and supervised by the Department of Special Education through the College of Education ([www.ksu.edu.sa](http://www.ksu.edu.sa)). It should be noted that initial teacher education is provided separately for male and female student teachers and that those who succeed go on to teach in schools that are also separated on the basis of gender. For this reasons, the current study focuses on male supervisors and student teachers in the context of inclusive primary schools for boys, where inclusive refers to partial inclusion, i.e. many lessons taken with regular pupils in regular classrooms and some pullout sessions. SEN specialist teachers do not teach in the regular classrooms but work in the designated area for separate sessions, named the resource room, and separate classrooms if they are teaching pupils with severe learning difficulties.

### ***1.5 Statement of the Research Problem***

The practicum, which constitutes a highly important component of any initial teacher education (ITE) programme worldwide, is also one of the cornerstones of Saudi student teacher preparation programmes. In view of the increasing demand and expectations being placed upon teachers and associated changes to initial teacher education, the practicum and supervisory practices take on greater importance. These changes are happening at the same time as the implementation of inclusion in Saudi schools, which entails a significant increase in the numbers of student teachers undertaking ITE in the specialist area of special education needs. For the Faculty of Education which leads on special needs teacher education in Saudi Arabia, the focus of the research problem is therefore to identify whether the current supervisory practices meet the changing needs of student teachers and their supervisors, as well as those of special educational needs pupils and the education system as a whole. Participants in the current study are student teachers, college supervisors

and co-operating teachers. Student teachers are specializing in the teaching of special needs learners in mainstream schools, teaching individuals or small groups in the resource rooms and separate classrooms co-situated with mainstream classes. Since the focus of the research is supervisory practices, the unit of analysis is the activity of supervision itself.

At the same time, this study addresses a gap in both the literature and the theory. Very few studies have been conducted or reported in the field of Saudi student teacher supervision at the school level (Al Dawood, 1994; Al Zahrani, 1995 and Ambabi, 2002) and no previous research has been found that addresses the issues of student teacher supervision for special needs specialists in Saudi Arabia or the Arab world. To date there appears to be no body of literature that brings together the theories underlying initial teacher education and training including the role and purpose of the practicum, perspectives on disability and inclusion, and approaches to supervision.

### ***1.6 Significance of the study and contribution to knowledge***

The study has made a timely and important contribution to the overall body of knowledge arising from research into higher education in Saudi Arabia in terms of initial teacher education, pre-service teacher supervision and meeting the needs of special educational needs learners and their teachers. From the perspective of student teacher supervision, the study has contributed not only to the body of literature and knowledge but also to the practice of student teacher supervision in the following ways:

- a) It has helped identify the development needs of student teachers specializing in special educational needs and this will enable their supervisors to ensure that they provide relevant and meaningful experiences in order to meet the student teachers' needs.
- b) It has deepened an understanding of the teaching challenges facing these student teachers and their perceptions of those challenges. This has a direct bearing on the work of their supervisors since supervisory programmes are intended to be based on clearly defined goals.
- c) It has examined significant points of development in the way special educational needs specialist student-teachers apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired into teaching practice contexts in schools. As a result, it has highlighted good practice together with areas for improvement in both teaching practice and supervision and hence helped to better prepare highly qualified, competent and confident teachers in the field of special education.
- d) It has explored the different approaches to supervision available and identified the most appropriate approaches for the Saudi practicum context of special educational needs specialist teachers working in inclusive settings.
- e) It has also examined the assessment techniques used in student teacher supervision, ascertaining what is most appropriate for the Saudi educational context.
- f) Finally, it has explored and valued the perspectives of college supervisors and co-operating teachers concerning supervisory practices.

At the level of educational research in Saudi Arabia, the contribution of the current study is threefold:

- a) It offers a qualitative study in a context which is typically dominated by quantitative studies and, as such, offers a variety of new perspectives, in particular by adopting activity theory as a lens through which to view the research problem. These include not only the perspectives of the participants in the supervision triad but also, clearly stated where appropriate, the perspective of the researcher, developed through analysis or observation and reflection.
- b) It serves as an example for further studies in education using an interpretive-constructivist research framework, in particular using activity theory as a framework. Relatively few studies in Saudi Arabia and the Arab world as a whole use such approaches in educational research, and no previous study has used a similar approach to investigate the supervision of Saudi SEN specialist student teachers.
- c) It provides an example of the triangulation of research methods to corroborate data, in this study through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and semi-structured observations. This mix of research methods is not extensively used in Saudi Arabia or the Arab world.

### ***1.7 Research Aims***

The practicum of Saudi student teachers has not been well explored, resulting in a lack of understanding of some of the challenges and problems they face and how best to address them. This is particularly important in the context of inclusion and education for all in the Saudi education system and the initial teacher education of special education needs specialist teachers. One major element of the practicum is supervision, with the influence, whether positive or negative, of the supervisory practices in use. With the focus on

supervisory practices relating to Saudi special educational needs specialist student teachers clearly in mind, the study aims to examine current practices in the light of relevant theories in order to improve the processes and outcomes of supervision.

The overall aim of the research is to deepen understanding of how student teacher supervision operates in Saudi Arabia in order to identify potential improvements. The aims can be articulated more fully as: (1) to explore the different ways in which pre-service teachers are supervised in their teaching practice in terms of investigating (a) the principles governing supervision of student teachers during the practicum (b) the supervisory approaches adopted in schools and (c) the assessment practices used, (2) to explore views and perceptions of participants in the supervision processes and practices in the KSA teaching practice context.

### ***1.8 Research Objectives***

Following from the research aim, the research objectives were, with reference to Saudi special educational needs specialist student teachers to:

- 1) explore the different ways in which student teachers are supervised in their teaching practice
- 2) investigate perceptions of principles and practice in supervision in the practicum
  - a) perceptions of university supervisors
  - b) perceptions of co-operating teachers
  - c) perceptions of student teachers
- 3) identify potential improvements that could better equip student teachers for the profession

### ***1.9 Research Questions***

Following from the research aims and objectives in chapter one and the themes emerging from the literature review, the research questions of this study were framed as follows:

- 1) How are Saudi special education needs specialist student teachers supervised in their teaching practice?
- 2) To what extent do the roles of different supervisors enhance pre-service teacher education?
- 3) To what extent do supervision approaches contribute to professional development of all those involved?
- 4) What are the perceptions of supervision held by the participants in the supervisory process?
- 5) How do these perceptions influence the practice of supervision?
- 6) How can the existing model or models of supervision be improved?

There were two aspects to the first question about how the student teachers are supervised in their teaching practice; finding out firstly what instructions exist and secondly what happens in practice. This entailed reviewing the documentation relating to supervision, the general guidelines for supervision produced by the Higher Education Ministry together with any further sources of guidance customised by the university or school involved, in particular any additional guidance relevant to special educational needs specialist teachers. However, it was also necessary to know how the guidelines are implemented in practice, by

schools, by college supervisors and co-operating teachers through understanding what they said they did and seeing what was actually taking place.

It was also important to ascertain to what extent the roles of the college supervisor and co-operating teacher differed, and what part they played in student teacher education and professional development, for example by enhancing the student teacher experience or by having little impact. Investigating differences in the roles also required exploration of the school administration system which impacted directly on supervision practices. Another aspect of this question concerned the extent to which supervision as a whole and different supervision approaches contributed to student teachers' professional development.

The question concerning perceptions of participants in the supervisory process raised an additional question about how to link perceptions to any relevant influence of demographic factors such as age, qualifications and personal and professional experience. It was important to be able to link perceptions to the actual experience of the supervision process and to the approach to supervision employed in that process. The question concerning the influence of perceptions on the practice of supervision was made up of a number of smaller questions. What influence did the participants think their perceptions had? What influence did the researcher think they had? Bearing in mind that there were three or four perceptions attributable to each supervision meeting, what impact did the interactions of perceptions have?

The final question about how existing model(s) of supervision could be improved also raised a series of questions. What were the existing model(s)? What did a critical analysis

of the models reveal? What were the alternative models? What did participants in the supervision process consider ‘improvements’ to be? What developments were feasible and acceptable? The first three questions required a review of literature including any available relevant empirical research, while the last two entailed a process of checking back with at least some of the participants.

### ***1.10 Outline of Thesis Structure***

This first chapter has introduced the focus of the research and related key issues. It has also outlined the background and context of the study, together with the research problem, aims, objectives and the research questions.

The second chapter is the literature review which examines dimensions of educational theory and systems relevant to the current study under four main headings. These dimensions are; the culture of learning and learning cultures, Special Educational Needs, Initial Teacher Education (ITE), and the role of supervision. Each of these is considered in turn, beginning with an introduction to the relevant theory then analysing and critically evaluating how the theory relates to the situation and interpretation in Saudi Arabia. This is followed by a summary of previous studies concerning perceptions of supervision. Chapter two concludes by drawing together the key issues and provides a summary that prepares the ground for the chapters related to methodology (activity theory, followed by methodology).

Chapter three, entitled ‘Framework for the Research’, explains the use of activity theory as an underlying theory in this research. A brief presentation of activity theory is followed by

a critical evaluation of its use in the current study, highlighting the relevance of this particular framework to an investigation of student teacher supervision.

The fourth chapter justifies the research design, theoretical stance, methodology, data collection methods and instruments. In addition, it describes the sample selected and the techniques selected for data analysis. The final sections address the ethical considerations relating to this study and the challenges faced by the researcher.

Chapter five presents an analysis of the findings of the study in the dimensions identified through the literature review and the activity theory framework and additional dimensions which emerged during the analysis process. Findings related to each of the main participant groups involved in supervision are reported under the appropriate dimensions, while the final section brings together the key findings.

Chapter six discusses the findings, identifying key themes and issues for development of the theory and practice of supervision of student teachers, with particular reference to special education needs specialist teachers. Furthermore, it summarizes the study findings in relation to the original research questions as a useful reminder to the researcher and readers before moving on to the final chapter.

The seventh and final chapter presents the conclusions of this study. It also presents the most significant recommendations that follow on from the conclusions. First it presents recommendations relating to supervision and then ends with recommendations for further research.



## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

This chapter examines relevant literature from seven key strands that impact on supervisory practices in the teaching practicum for special needs specialist teachers, namely the culture of learning and learning cultures, inclusion, Special Educational Needs, Initial Teacher Education (ITE), ITE for special needs specialist teachers, the role, purpose and models of supervision and finally supervision of special needs student teachers, each with reference to the Saudi Arabian context.. These are grouped under four broad subheadings of; the culture of learning and learning cultures, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs, Initial Teacher Education (ITE), and the role of supervision. This is followed by an overview of research findings to date on perceptions of supervision and chapter two concludes with a summary of the literature review that will provide the framework for the research in chapter three and lay the theoretical foundations that support the methodology as detailed in chapter four.

The first section explores the concept of the culture of learning and learning cultures in order to set the references to Saudi Arabia into their appropriate theoretical context. The second section examines special educational needs in Saudi Arabia in the context of inclusion and in terms of definition, models of disability and intervention, and the current position. The third section focuses on Initial Teacher Education (ITE), models and programmes of ITE, with an examination of current provision for special needs specialist teachers. Section four explores the role and nature of supervision in the context of ITE for special educational needs student teachers, considering in turn the overall position in Saudi Arabia, how this differs for special educational needs student teachers, the responsibilities

of the different participants in the supervision process and an examination of key elements in the process in order to set the scene for the fieldwork for this study. This is followed by a summary of a selection of empirical studies concerning perceptions of supervision in section five, and the chapter concludes with a section that summarizes and pulls together the main points of the whole chapter.

## ***2.2 Teaching and Learning - The Culture of Learning and Learning Cultures***

Any discussion of initial teacher training needs to take into account the country context, the aims of the education system, the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs that those being educated are expected to acquire and hence the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs that teachers are required to have and how best they should teach them. Brisard (2003, p.51-52) refers to a range of studies comparing perceptions of the teacher's role in England and France and also a three-way comparison of English, French and German perceptions, which shows that perceptions of teacher's role are culture-specific.

Even within a single country, there can be considerable debate about the preparation of new teachers and about who is best-qualified and best placed to teach new teachers, for example teacher educators or practising expert teachers (Young et al., 2007). The context is also a matter of debate, "whether courses should provide specific practical solutions to specific practical problems or the knowledge teachers could use to solve problems on their own" (Lanier and Little cited in Dunne, 2003, p7), in addition to the balance between subject specialism, general and specific pedagogical topics and academic disciplines such as child development. In England teachers are required to demonstrate competencies that cover both

subject knowledge and generic teaching skills and have been set out in Professional Standards for Qualified Teachers Status (Young et al., 2007). With regard to the relationships between professional skills and competence in the UK, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of schools or HMI (1991) emphasized that in the structure of teacher education programmes there is the need for strong links between the theoretical components of the courses and the practical experiences with children.

Brisard (2003) observed that the English approach was more school-based, apprenticeship-like and individualized than the French approach which was strongly concentrated on academic learning for postgraduates. This links to differing approaches to the practicum, for example with supervised teaching practice in England compared with full teaching responsibility in France, which in turn leads to differences in roles in the practicum from one country to another (Brisard, 2003).

Initial Teacher Education (ITE), however it is envisaged and implemented in different countries, is unavoidably linked to the whole education system and hence to the socio-political environment and practices of the country in which it exists. ITE cannot be discussed in isolation from other aspects of education and the same is therefore true of supervision and practicum elements of ITE. The purpose of ITE is to produce or form teachers who can teach what the politicians and public expect in a way that is expected and accepted. ITE is "based on assumptions about what constitutes good teaching at both expert and novice levels, and about the processes involved in learning to teach" (Brisard, 2003, p.51-52). In some countries this may require teachers to perpetuate traditional subjects and methods, whilst in others there may be expectations of constructive criticism and challenge,

even transformation, of the education system and society of which they are part. In many countries, the position may be somewhere in between and in general, as technologies and science advance, developments and changes occur that reflect these advances, in society, in the education system and in ITE. Saudi Arabia is a case in point, as it implements a far-reaching programme of ICT in educational institutions through its partnership with Microsoft and an extensive programme of teacher development. At the same time, it strives to achieve four key objectives in its education system. The first is to maintain its primary purpose which is, as cited by the Higher Committee for Educational Policy, to “understand Islam in a proper and complete manner, to implement and spread the Muslim faith, to provide a student with Islamic values, and teachings” (Al-Zaid, 1982, p.51).

The second and far more recent purpose and goal is to harness the advantages of science and technology to assist with the country’s economic and social development (<http://faculty.ksu.sa>). These are included in the four overarching purposes of education in the country; to satisfy the needs of the society, to reflect cultural norms and way of life, to represent the cultural values, beliefs and ideology of its members but above all “a continuation of its Islamic educational heritage” (ibid.).

Appropriate frameworks for analysing what is happening in the Saudi Arabian education system include the theory of learning cultures as developed by James and Biesta (2007) and communities of practice. James and Biesta argue that learning cultures determine learning and consequently focus on learning opportunities rather than the more traditional ‘teaching and learning’ concept of education. Education, in their view, is a set of complex interrelationships between “teachers, teaching, learners, learning, learning situations and

the wider contexts of learning” (James and Biesta, 2007, p.11) and the learning cultures in which they exist are “complex and multifaceted entities” (ibid., p.4).

The work of James and Biesta draws heavily on that of Pierre Bourdieu who developed a theory based on a concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Habitus consists of dispositions to every part of an individual’s life, dispositions that often operate at a subconscious level and are enduring, transposable yet capable of change. These dispositions derive from the individual’s social position and life and can be viewed as social structures functioning in and through individuals” (Hodkinson et al., 2008). Habitus proposes that social agents such as teachers develop unconscious strategies which suit the social worlds that they inhabit. A second key concept developed by Bourdieu is that of field which can be described as the social arena in which people seek to obtain desirable resources. The teaching profession is one example of a field. Bourdieu further argued that fields were structured in terms of power relationships, such as clerics and ministry officials, university professors and Headteachers in schools, where differences in power can be clearly seen (Bourdieu, 1990). Ownership and allocation of resources are one way of determining power relationships. In respect of pupils with SEN in Saudi Arabia, teachers, equipment and other resources are owned and allocated centrally, although there is some regional flexibility in the case of mainstream pupils. Classroom teachers have very little flexibility or power.

Remaining with Bourdieu’s theory, the Islamic setting would be described as doxa, as would the Bedouin tradition. Doxa refers to beliefs that are so deeply founded and held that they profoundly influence actions and thoughts. Indeed, doxa is so deeply embedded that it is rarely considered and even more rarely discussed. Combined with the power-holders in

the education system and the socio-political structure in Saudi Arabia, the doxa works against change. In addition to Islam, strong elements of the doxa have their roots in Bedouin traditions. Bedouin society was a strongly family-oriented patrilineal and patriarchal society and the influence remains. Despite challenges posed by modern influences and Western thought, the family remains the fundamental social and economic unit of society in the Arab world (Patai, 2002). Within the family group, there was and is great pressure for family members to conform to the values of the group, as in the absence of support from the family group, the individual would be lost (Patai, 2002). Support is exchanged for conformity with group norms. The importance of the family group requires its public image to be defended, and the success of the group and hence the community is determined by compliance with norms, commitment to norms and values, especially honour, strong emotion and patriarchal and hence authoritative behaviour (resulting in autocratic behaviour in some individuals). The dominance of the father figure extends to individuals holding responsible positions such as teachers and supervisors (Barakat, 1993). One consequence of the strength of the family unit is stability. Another contrasting consequence is that individuals who think differently from other group members may experience considerable conflict and will often prefer to be the same as others rather than express their individuality. Their social status and public image are more important in the end than their individuality. Another consequence is that great importance is attached to ensuring that children reflect well on their parents. The success or perceived failure of a child is mainly attributed to the parents.

Bourdieu would assert that habitus – the teachers’ space for adjustment to the world they inhabit – is the space where change can be made because it is central to generating and

controlling the practices that make up social life. There is an interplay between the individual and social structures that reflects the past and can shape the future. The interplay itself affects individuals' perceptions of current structures and practices (Bourdieu, 1984). However, the three concepts of doxa, habitus and field remain tightly aligned in Saudi Arabia and so there is relatively little room for manoeuvre. Time will tell whether this is a positive or negative factor. For instance, if the Arabic word for "read" – literally meaning read, examine, question and understand – is taken to the heart of the education system, and the range of academic research and learning materials is considerably extended, there is capacity for creating a new model of education and the potential for the country to become a leader among nations. At the other end of the spectrum, if there is little or no change in the current interpretation of "read", which through social tradition is close to 'read and memorise', then the education system could continue to lag behind those of many other countries.

The culture of learning within a specific field based on a profession such as education or medicine is also likely to be influenced by the interaction of practitioners and scholars in that field. This concept, the 'community of practice', has gained popularity in Western countries since being defined by Lave and Wenger (1991). Teachers in a particular school or SEN teachers in a region may be examples of communities of practice, as indeed are scholars specializing in special education and communicating internationally. Communities of practice can be defined as networks where people participate in socio-cultural activities to share learning which leads to collective learning and hence to practices that reflect the goals of the network and the social relations that accompany them.

A single school, however, is not necessarily a community of practice. Teaching staff may have very different viewpoints and strong opinions, so may not always work cooperatively. In Saudi Arabia for example, schools termed inclusive schools mostly consist of two distinct teaching teams; SEN teachers receive the majority of the initial teacher education separately from general teachers and specialize in teaching pupils with particular types of learning disability or difficulty rather than in particular subjects. Two Ministries of Education are involved and Headteachers have little or no involvement with SEN teachers, hence there are typically two communities of practice present in the school.

Participation in communities of practice leads learners to gain knowledge and skills, with a movement towards full participation in the social and cultural practices resulting in a shared identity. In Saudi Arabia this process is explicit through the Islamic principles and beliefs on which education and other social systems are based. “This social process includes, indeed it subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.29). The related term used to describe learning through a wide range of academic and social experiences is ‘cognitive apprenticeship’ (ibid.). Although in this context religion was not specifically highlighted, it must be recognized that daily life in Saudi Arabia is itself a cognitive apprenticeship in Islam, privately in prayer and personal daily habits, with the family and in social and religious gatherings. Therefore an understanding of disability in Islam and in Saudi Arabia is essential to the understanding of the case study, as is an understanding of special education needs, together with an understanding of ‘teacher’, ‘supervisor’, ‘student’ and power relationships between them. At the same time, one of the central duties of a Muslim is to strive for knowledge and education. These issues and some of the tensions they raise are explored in the current study.

The definition of a teacher in the learning culture of Saudi Arabia is above all the ‘transmitter of knowledge’ (Halstead, 2010). However, this poses a number of difficulties for special educational needs teachers. On one level many of the learners understand in concrete rather than abstract terms and this may tend to limit the knowledge they absorb. On another level the emphasis on transmitting is less person-centred than may be appropriate for individuals with special education needs.

Considering these factors, together with the theory-into-practice model of ITE in Saudi Arabia, the role of the practicum for SEN specialist teachers is crucial, as are the contributions of the different players, the supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers. The current study examines these roles and contributions in the light of the concepts of fields and habitus, supported by an analysis of the learning culture in terms of the different fields of ITE and Special Educational Needs, all set within the wider framework of the interpretation and implementation of inclusion and education for all in Saudi Arabia.

### **2.2.1 The Culture of Learning in Saudi Arabia**

It is striking that whereas James and Biesta talk about learning culture as “the social practices through which people learn” (James and Biesta, 2007, p.23), in the case of Saudi Arabia it is made explicit that people learn everything through the social and religious practices. This is a significant difference inasmuch as the rules for daily living, many of the social practices and almost all the underlying values and beliefs are taken as coming directly from Mohammed (PBUH) and therefore from Allah and so cannot be changed.

Much of the learning that takes place in the early years in Qur'an schools entails traditional forms of teaching and learning with a strong emphasis on memorizing and repetition. It can be seen that this tradition has persisted throughout history and has permeated all forms of education, continuing to co-exist alongside more recent innovations. This is essential to an understanding of Saudi Arabia's education system, in accordance with the premise that "learning and development occur as people participate in the socio-cultural activities of their community" (Rogoff, 1994, p.204) is central to a socio-cultural view of learning and experience.

As described in chapter one, the main aims of education in Saudi Arabia are the correct understanding of Islam, its values and ideals, and the acquisition of skills and knowledge that will prepare citizens to develop their society constructively (UNESCO, 2007). The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education (2007) expresses this as

"Engendering a new generation of male and female youth who embody the Islamic values in their persons, both theoretical as well as practical, are equipped with necessary knowledge, skills, and endowed with the right orientations, capable of responding positively to, and interact with the latest developments, and deal with the latest technological innovations with ease and comfort. They should be able to face international competition both at the scientific as well as technological levels to be able to meaningfully participate in overall growth and development. This is to be achieved through an effective and practical system of education which is capable of discovering the potentials and predispositions, and, create the spirit of action. All this, in an environment

of education and training, charged with the spirit of instruction and edification.”

([www2.moe.gov.sa](http://www2.moe.gov.sa))

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education (2007) also emphasize the importance of enabling Saudis to interact with the latest developments including technology so that they are confident and capable of active participation in international competition. To ensure that all Saudis have the opportunity to be properly educated to their potential in Islam, to enable all abilities and talents to be fully developed for the economic benefit of the country and also to care for all children in accordance with the faith, inclusion and education for all were initiatives that were considered to be highly suitable to the country context.

### ***2.3 Inclusion and Special Education Needs in Saudi Arabia***

Inclusion in education is itself an element of a wider human rights agenda which was first clearly stated in a global context in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). As regards education, the Statement declares that every child has a fundamental right to education and promotes the concept of inclusive mainstream schools as “...the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all” (Clause 5, paragraph 2). At the World Conference on Special Needs Education held in June 1994, through delegates attending the conference, 92 governments and 25 international organisations signed up to the declaration. Saudi Arabia ratified the Convention and Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including their access to appropriate inclusive education, in 2008.

According to Avramidis (2005), implementation and achievement of inclusion necessitate a general movement away from deficit models and towards a socialization model. In contrast to deficit models which emphasize need and expert intervention to counteract problems, as far as possible to assist individuals in a normalization process, socialization models are based on concepts of fairness, equity and justice. The shift, argues Avramidis (ibid.), requires educationalists to turn their attention towards productive pedagogies, which he defines in terms of foregrounding issues of equity and social justice. In his view, the capacity of teachers to make the necessary changes depends on professional development through reflective practice and an associated development of communities of knowledge, if not communities of practice.

However, one of the implications of learning cultures as complex entities that encompass education systems that are also complex is that the nature and implementation of inclusion will tend to vary from one country to another and even within a single country. In the UK, provision of segregated educational facilities varies considerably, as shown by Ellis et al. (2008, p.101):

“In 2001 the London Borough of Newham had the smallest percentage of pupils in special schools with 0.35% and Manchester had the highest, with 2.64%. Thus a disabled pupil in Manchester was more than seven times as likely to be placed in a special school in 2001 than a pupil in Newham”.

As a result of the comprehensive schools policy aimed at creating schools for all, irrespective of social class, ability or gender, segregated schools for children with

disabilities or special education needs (SEN) came to be regarded less favourably, and after the publication of the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) the UK Government implemented an official policy of integration through the 1981 Education Act. Children with SEN were to attend mainstream schools provided that the educational provision met their needs, that the integration did not act as a hindrance to other children's education, that the initiative was supported by parents and, finally, that the new arrangements were efficient in terms of resources used. The UK legislation allowed for a mixed model of provision and continues to do so. In England, current conditions for placement in mainstream schools are that this is supported by parents and that other children's education is not disrupted (Education Act, 1996).

Mary Warnock, who chaired the 1978 Government Committee which recommended integration, has in recent years rejected the concept of inclusion as all children learning in one building, preferring instead a definition of inclusion which focuses on "including all children in the common educational enterprise of learning, wherever they learn best" (Warnock, 2005, p.14). This concept has been shown to be shared by some teachers working with children with SEN who consider that some hours spent in a separate setting can enable some of those children to participate in following the same curriculum as other children and benefiting from doing so, when this would not otherwise be possible (Norwich, 2007). Such teachers describe this as inclusive practice. Evidently, concepts of inclusion vary and can conflict. In terms of the relative social and academic effects of inclusion and separate education, whether part-time or full-time, research has to date provided no clear evidence one way or the other, although studies suggest there is support for both points of view (Lindsay, 2007). The movement towards increasing education

provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities in ordinary schools continued to be accompanied by what has been termed as a continuum of provision. Although the continuum has been described in a variety of ways, the primary focus has been extending the range of placements from the most included to the most separate (Farrell, 2001).

However, the problem with such a variable and complex concept is that it becomes difficult to ascertain how it should be applied in practice to policy and educational provision. The difficulties were acknowledged by a House of Commons Education Select Committee Report on SEN (House of Commons, 2006). Trying to establish what policy implications of a commitment to inclusion might mean in practice, the Select Committee exhorted the Government to “work harder to define exactly what it means by inclusion” (House of Commons Report, 2006, section 64). However, the attempted Government response in the form of a definition of inclusion still failed to clarify the extent to which children assessed as having SEN should be educated in neighbourhood mainstream schools. Here is what the Department for Education and Science (DfES) proposed:

“The Government shares the Committee’s view that inclusion is about the quality of a child’s experience and providing access to the high quality education which enables them to progress with their learning and participate fully in the activities of their school and community” (House of Commons Report, 2006, section 28).

Though this complex definition addresses certain aspects of inclusion (quality of experience, access to quality education, learning progress and participation in school activities and community), it sidesteps the important, indeed critical, question of placement in neighbourhood schools. The difficulty lies in the ambiguity of ‘their school and community’; this Department for Education and Science (DfES) definition allows for an overall system of educational inclusion which could involve special schools to a greater or lesser extent alongside neighbourhood mainstream schools. Whilst the retention of separate special school provision appears to run counter to efforts targeted at promoting inclusion, it seems highly unlikely that such separate provision will be abandoned in the near future (Norwich, 2002b; Lindsay, 2003).

Although integration is often defined as educating children with special needs in mainstream settings, it is useful to draw on Bayliss et al (1997) and Avramidis et al. (2002) to be clear about the meaning of inclusion as distinct from integration. In their view, inclusion is about belonging, whereas integration is the process for achieving inclusion. Integration can be locational (all learning on same school site), functional (interaction between for example groups of children with SEN and groups of children with no SEN), social (individuals make wider social contacts for activities) or psychological (linked to teaching and learning strategies) (Avramidis and Bayliss, 2002). Other classifications of integration include terminological (avoiding labelling differently), administrative (same legislative framework) and curricular (eg National Curriculum for everyone). Despite these careful distinctions in the English language, it should be kept in mind that the same word is used in Arabic to mean both inclusion and integration and means ‘all together in the same place’. Inclusion in Saudi Arabia is understood as inclusion into the specific Islamic and

Saudi society, as evidenced for example by the requirement for children of non-Arab workers to learn Arabic in order to access education in Saudi schools. There is no additional help learning the language since one element of the doxa holds that it is essential for children to learn Arabic so that they can read the Qur'an and aspire to the ideal Saudi Muslim citizen. Education inclusion in Saudi Arabia is directed towards providing the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), in keeping with the policies of the USA which were adapted and adopted by the Saudi education system, and continues to be provided in a range of settings. As more has been learned about the different types of special needs and disabilities, a greater number of programmes have been developed and offered in resource rooms or separate classrooms, or, in the case of talented and gifted children, through the development of a new curriculum in partnership with selected schools.

### **2.3.1 Special Educational Needs in Saudi Arabia**

This section defines special educational needs (SEN) in Saudi Arabia, within the historical context of the development of educational provision for pupils classified as having SEN. There follows a discussion of alternative models of special educational needs and associated interventions, which concludes with an assessment of the current situation in the next section. In concentrating on special educational needs related literature it is important to be clear about definitions. It is equally important to bear in mind what Wilson pinpointed (2002) that deciding if a person is classified as having special needs is not clear cut but is instead a value judgment.

### **2.3.2 Definitions of Special Educational Needs**

One issue in defining special educational needs is the different ways in which special needs can be conceptualized according to the theoretical models in use. These models fall into four broad categories; deficit models, medical/psychological models, educational models, and social models that emphasise the interaction between individual characteristics and contextual circumstances. Definitions are also linked with the language in which they are framed; as illustrated earlier with 'inclusion', meanings are not common across languages. Moreover, interpretations can differ even with the same word in the same language. For example, in the UK a distinction is drawn between disability and handicap and the word 'handicap' is considered offensive to people who are classified as having disabilities. The use of 'mentally retarded' in Arabic is as a term to describe individuals with an IQ below a specified score. At this point in time, the use of the term does not give offence, although the

researcher recognizes that this could change as it has in other countries. The definitions in use in Saudi Arabia are set out in the following paragraphs.

As asserted in a report by IBE-UNESCO (2007), inclusive education in Saudi Arabia adapts international definitions to the country context and focuses on two groups of students. The following quote from the report illustrates in the language of the report the tension between the up to date desire for inclusion and the use of ‘disabilities’ and ‘disabled’ in a way that many Western scholars and educators might find unacceptable. Expressions such as ‘suffer from’ and ‘badly need’ may also be found unacceptable but they are reproduced here as the words used in the document.

“Inclusion in Saudi Arabia targets two categories:

1. Students with minor physical and communicative disabilities. They are included into mainstream schools and are considered to be the majority of mainstream students who need special education.

2. The second category consists of blind, deaf, mentally retarded students as well as those who suffer from autism or multiple disabilities. These students are traditionally taught in special classrooms which were affiliated to mainstream schools. They, however, badly need full inclusion with peers in ordinary classrooms, and efforts are being made to try to include them into mainstream schools.

Three categories however still cannot be covered: behaviourally and emotionally disabled, hyper-active, and inattentive students.” (IBE UNESCO, 2007, p.30-31)

Al Musa (2007) supports both these points. He notes the continuing efforts towards greater inclusion and the need to support these efforts by increasing the number of teachers trained to deal with behaviourally and emotionally disabled, hyper-active, and inattentive students.

However, it should also be noted that special educational needs includes the needs of gifted and talented children. This raises some interesting questions about the conceptualization of special educational needs which are addressed in the following section that deals with the theoretical model or models in use in respect of special educational needs and appropriate educational interventions.

### **2.3.3 Models of Disability and Intervention**

Models of intervention do not exist in isolation from models of disability therefore this section begins with a brief look at models of disability. Models of disability, and hence of special educational needs, fall into two main categories - the medical model and the social model (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). The medical model assumes that the person has or is the problem, so is also known as the 'individual model'. The social model, on the other hand, assumes that it is society that is or owns the problem. The social model ascribes perceptions and definitions of disability and special education needs, as well as reactions to them, to societal values and actions that have led to the exclusion or marginalization of the individuals concerned. Change is therefore required in social and societal structures and process to change perceptions. In other words, schools need to create environments to meet the needs of individuals. Some newer models such as capability, transaction and systems

models, stress economic issues and human rights, but all models can be traced back to the fundamental perception of the problem and who owns it (Cline and Frederickson, 2009).

Examples of the medical model include the 'administrative model' with a focus on identification of needs through correct assessment and matching the correctly assessed need to provision. A second example is the so-called 'charity' model which perceives disability as a personal tragedy deserving help from others. In contrast, one example of social models of disability and, by association, special educational needs is the capability approach proposed by Sen (1999) which focuses on society's facilitation of opportunities for individuals to use their abilities to achieve a particular functioning. Furthermore, models have been advanced that attempt to reconcile medical and social models, such as the 'bio-psychosocial model' that takes into account a range of biological, psychological and social factors in an attempt to reflect the complexity of the individual situation and avoid simplistic problem definition and resolution. The 'bio-psychosocial model' and more importantly the capability model seek to value the diversity and uniqueness of each individual (Cline and Frederickson, 2009). These models, especially the capability model, seek to combine individual human rights with the responsibilities of the wider society to maximise potential and benefits in society as a whole.

There are at present no clear intervention strategies that can be pinpointed to solve particular problems or overcome specific barriers to learning, but a range of models is in use; the deficit or medical model which aims to diagnose and as far as possible cure the problem, the human developmental model that in essence comprises a series of customized steps, working with the individual in what is described as a self-directional model and using

techniques such as co-operative learning within a socialization model of intervention. These terms and models originate in social work rather than education but teachers attempt to find a similar range of models (Riddick, 2001).

Sugarmann (1986, p.166) acknowledged that intervention is “generally concerned with particular types of change for particular purposes” and furthermore acknowledged the part that power plays in interventionist relationships. A citation from Havighurst, 1972 (cited in Sugarmann, 1986, p.170) on the teachable moment states that this comes “When the body is ripe, and society requires, and the self is ready”, but the age when children start school and are thought ready to read varies from country to country, as does the material they are expected to read, so the pressure of socialization is considerable.

Turning to the situation in Saudi Arabia, forty years ago the educational policy stated that the education of disabled and talented students, which together make up the ‘SEN’ students, forms an integral part of the national educational system. People with disabilities have rights guaranteed by the State, rights to protection, care and rehabilitation. Regulations governing education for disabled children specify that the natural environment for education is the regular or ordinary school in order to facilitate psychological and social development alongside the educational development. Education, the curriculum and inclusive education are all considered highly important in Saudi Arabia and the country’s leadership pays great attention to people with disabilities. This is reflected in the attitudes of society which has started to accept people with disabilities more widely, setting up suitable services and opening up more opportunities for them (Al Musa, 2007).

In terms of the curriculum, the intention remains to apply all or part of the mainstream curriculum for all students with special education needs, “even mentally retarded and deaf students” (IBE UNESCO, 2007, p.31) who study mainstream curriculum topics at a slower pace, in keeping with the aim of inclusion. It is recognized that there is a need to adapt the curriculum “according to the disability” (ibid.). It is also acknowledged that teachers may require support in the form of “certain frameworks which revise and define necessary skills” (ibid., p.31). Moreover, the country has started to recognize the need for individualization of education programmes, although diversity within groups still tends to be expressed in terms of the disability; “(e.g. among the visually impaired, some students can see a little, others are completely blind)” (ibid. p.32).

The key issues arising from this section are: whether the continuing use of medical models in assessment, diagnosis and treatment adversely affects specialist student teachers’ professional development and their pupils’ learning; and whether interventions and curricula designed for different categories of special education needs help or hinder teaching and learning. These are important in terms of what supervisors look for and promote in their interactions with student teachers.

### **2.3.4 Current Position in Saudi Arabia**

Currently, the reach and success of inclusion programmes is dependent on “the perspectives of school management and teachers’ abilities” (IBE-UNESCO, 2007, p.32). The main model of intervention reflects the fact that the medical model of pupils with special education needs predominates. Assessment, for instance, still follows specific rules on assessment methods that vary according to disability, although improvements and the search for comprehensive assessment systems continue (Al Musa, 2007).

At the time of writing this thesis, inclusive education in Saudi Arabia is one that combines separate, integrated and inclusive solutions. For the majority of pupils with disabilities and mild and moderate learning difficulties (MLD), education takes place in the normal classroom, with some lessons being provided on a pullout (withdrawal) basis. For those with more severe difficulties and disabilities, education is provided in designated classrooms on the same site as mainstream schools. In actual fact, most of the separate classrooms are found in urban schools, whereas the vast majority of rural schools have no separate facilities for pupils described as having special education needs, although the programme of building special classrooms and providing equipment and materials continues (Al Musa, 2007).

Progress is being made with premises and teacher education and training (IBE UNESCO, 2007) and the issues being addressed reflect the cumulative findings of a considerable number of studies. Much of this research has been aimed at identifying organisational structures and practices that can be related to facilitating or hindering the development of

inclusion (Ainscow, 1999; Clark et al, 1999; Florian and Rouse, 2001). Among the most important findings has been identification of features shared by schools where inclusion has been successful; key success factors have been shown to include collaborative teamwork, opportunities for training, effective use of support staff, parental involvement and the attitudes of teachers themselves towards pupils classified as SEN (Nutbrown and Clough, 2006).

In all of these models, the role of teacher education is important and supervision can make an important contribution as a crucial element of ITE. There follows an exploration of ITE in Saudi Arabia, examining general models and programmes of ITE as the backdrop to the country context.

#### ***2.4 Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Saudi Arabia***

It has been argued that the majority of preservice teachers carry within themselves perceptions of teaching from their own days as learners and that these perceptions reflect the prevailing sociocultural model of education, as shown by Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985) in an early study on supervision with respect to the transmission model of teaching. Therefore an understanding of the model underpinning Saudi ITE is important to an understanding of how teachers are expected to learn to teach in the way they are expected to teach after qualification.

The currently prevailing Western view is that a constructivist model based on the theory of Vygotsky (1987) is the best way to teach, with a strong element of critical reflection on the

part of teachers and a similar but generally much smaller emphasis on critical analysis on the part of learners. This implies a sociocognitive dimension to learning in which knowledge is created by the learners together with the teacher developing individual understanding and meaning (Bruner, 1996) while being firmly situated in the wider context.

It is important to distinguish between models of teacher education and teaching styles, although the latter have the capacity to reinforce or weaken the existing predominant model and therefore deserve brief consideration here. Teaching styles can be said to range from totally directive to, as in the experimental examples of UK schools such as Millfield and Summerhill in the 1960s, almost wholly non-directive (Reid, 2005). This means that at one extreme, the teacher provides all information and instructions necessary to succeed in a test or a task, with the learner simply required to follow instructions and to copy what has been done before. Directive styles may also include individual support for students and working in pairs or small groups to carry out tasks and achieve goals, thereby developing socialization and communication skills. At the other extreme, students will decide what they want to study, when and how to study it, and whether they wish to involve other people in their learning process, for example students, teachers, family members. In between there are experiential learning or learning through discovery, co-operative learning among peers and guided discovery in which teachers use questions to lead the student to the right conclusion (Mosston and Ashworth, 1989). Although new Saudi student teachers are learning a variety of approaches including co-operative learning, the predominant teaching style in schools is, at the time of writing, at the 'command' end of the spectrum, with relatively little evidence of teaching at the 'discovery' end.

Many researchers from Wilson (1987) onwards have asserted the importance of student teachers' professional preparation. Al-Karasneh (2001) showed that for student-teachers to be able to teach their pupils effectively they must attain different kinds of knowledge and skills during their professional preparation programmes. He identified these as subject knowledge, pedagogy and pedagogical content, curriculum, learners and learning, educational contexts, and education philosophies. He further argued the need for sufficient subject knowledge in specialist core subjects to teach and assess across the national curriculum, and for giving teachers the skills to create learning environments that help children create meaning in their lives. Many studies have indicated that increasing teachers' knowledge of both subject and learners correlates with increased confidence in the classroom. Some writers such as Bowman et al. (cited in Gahwaji, 2006, p.73) noted that teaching quality is improved by teacher training that is related to the ages of the children. It has been argued that teacher education programmes should focus on developing student teachers' understanding of all these areas, to enable them to interact and manage their teaching practice (Al-Karasneh, 2001). Although most of these areas are covered in Saudi ITE, there is considerable emphasis on the causes, diagnosis and assessment of special education needs in the specialist ITE track and relatively little time given to pedagogy or to teaching different age groups.

#### **2.4.1 Models of Initial Teacher Education**

According to Su (1992), student teaching and cooperation from other teachers were the most important influences on preservice teachers' educational beliefs and values. Other scholars have found that cognitive development (Smith and Gillespie, 2007), the politico-

social paradigm (Zeichner, 1983) or the cultural paradigm (Toh et al., 2003) have been key factors. In other words there are multiple strong influences on preservice teachers.

Globally, there have been several clear patterns of change in initial teacher training over the last thirty years. These are a shift of emphasis from knowledge alone to knowledge combined with practical skills, an increased focus on teaching individuals rather than teaching knowledge alone, a recognition that teachers are more effective when pre-service training includes practice that is observed and improved, and, in the Western world, that reflection on their own practice may be a powerful tool for developing teachers' awareness and performance. The understanding of the role of a teacher in the UK and in many other countries has developed from that of subject expert and transmitter of knowledge to a range of other roles including facilitator, enabler, tutor and counsellor (White, 2005). Saudi Arabia has made rapid progress in the last thirty years in respect of extending education at all levels from primary through to higher education, ensuring that females have equality of access to education and reducing illiteracy rates (IBE-UNESCO, 2007). However, it is the researcher's view, informed by experience, that the current situation can be usefully and appropriately related to the position set out just over twenty years ago by Shulman (1987). In the first decade of the twenty-first century in Saudi Arabia, education has undergone a major transformation, questioning the nature of teacher education, in order to equip the country for significant future changes in the wider economy and international environment.

Shulman (1987) summarized the beginnings of very similar changes in his seminal article "Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform". Tang (2004, p.187) refers to Shulman as "providing a framework of examining the various domains of teacher

knowledge”. Among his most relevant ideas in terms of the current Saudi Arabian situation, Shulman reports a “marked shift from examination of management of the classroom to management of ideas within classroom discourse” (Shulman, 1987, p.1), certification and the associated idea of “appropriate normative conceptions of teaching and teacher education”, and in particular an exploration of the knowledge base needed for teaching which emphasizes that sources of knowledge include “processes of pedagogical reasoning and action within which such teacher knowledge is used” (Shulman, 1987, p.5).

Shulman identified key sources of knowledge as scholarship in the subjects taught, the educational setting or environment, research findings and learning from experience or the “wisdom of practice itself” (Shulman, 1987, p.12), arguing that the “the knowledge base must deal with the purposes of education as well as the methods and strategies of educating” (Shulman, 1987, p.13). He identified a cycle of professional development and learning that consisted of understanding, transformation, instruction evaluation, and reflection leading to new understanding. In terms of the current study he also noted that in educational reform, teacher observation and assessment required consideration of lesson content as well as techniques; “teachers cannot be adequately assessed by observing their teaching performance without reference to the content being taught” (Shulman, 1987, p.20). According to Shulman, therefore, Saudi Arabian ITE and student teacher supervision during the practicum should be focusing on content to support the desired changes as well as on variety of teaching strategies employed.

On the part played by practical experience in initial teacher education, Tang (2004) explored the dynamics of school-based learning in initial teacher training and found that the

gap between theory and practice experienced by pre-service teachers can be significantly reduced through school-based experience accompanied by a process of what she described as ‘the teaching self’ (Tang, 2004, p.197) operating in the teaching context. The context included both the teacher’s and the students’ experience and that context ‘talking back’ to the teaching self. The language Tang uses may be more appropriate to the Saudi Arabian context than that of Schön (1990) who formalized the concept of the reflective practitioner, or Bolton (2005) who later updated it. ‘The teaching self’ carries connotations of the profession of teaching and hence less of a focus on the individual as a person, an approach with which Muslim Arabs are traditionally more comfortable, according to the researcher’s own experience as a student teacher and later as a college supervisor. The 2000 special issue of the International Journal of Educational Research on ‘Design of initial teacher education’ reported and highlighted differences in teacher roles such as subject expert and facilitator of learning (Stephens and Samuel, 2000), different teacher training programmes (Stuart and Thurlow, 2000) and different types of reflection, their relationship to action and the extent to which they are feasible and desirable (Griffiths, 2000). It was recognized that the reflective practitioner model would not necessarily suit all countries, cultures and education systems (Griffiths, 2000). The role of the Saudi teacher remains the subject expert rather than the facilitator of learning. However, research in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) indicates that the reflective practitioner model could be appropriate for some Arab cultures. In a study of potential cultural influences on the adoption of reflective practice in initial teacher education for women, Richardson (2004, p.435) found that the framework of cultural values in the UAE contained assumptions about society and also about teaching and learning that were “incongruent with the underlying assumptions of reflective practice”. Specific potential barriers were considered to be the difficulty of changing a

lifetime's education habits in a four-year teaching course, the return to the established school environment, and the fact that "individual growth is seen as a concept that could cause disharmony within families" (Richardson, 2004, p.433). This may be a factor in Saudi Arabia, as the importance of the family coincides with the role of the family as the main source of the doxa. Richardson further anticipated that the school-based mentor would expect deference from a student teacher, especially as the mentor would probably be unfamiliar with reflective practice. The study concluded that reflection on teaching techniques should be introduced before other levels of reflective practice and that curriculum developers and supervisors should be more aware of cultural influences, although it was recognized that statements by the Arab Education Forum pointed toward converging views of reflective practice. Richardson's fears appear to have been unfounded, as two years later it was reported that women student teachers in the UAE were enthusiastic about reflective practice and were actively implementing it as well as encouraging their own students to reflect on their learning and, in some instances, seeing themselves as agents of change (Clarke and Oktay, 2006). Clarke and Oktay proposed that culture "could be usefully understood as a never-finished site of competing historical and social discourses rather than as a received set of beliefs and values" (Clarke and Oktay, 2006, p.120).

The apparently conflicting conclusions of Clarke and Oktay with those of Richardson imply that greater understanding of culture is required before assumptions are made about the transferability or otherwise of a particular education initiative from one country to another. One example from 2012 illustrates this point. Whilst English is being introduced in Saudi schools from year 4 using Arabic native speakers as teachers, the UAE has made English compulsory and is bringing in teachers from the USA with American qualifications.

According to the researcher, one possible influence might be differences in doxa and habitus that could help to account for differences in transferability of education initiatives.

Pre-service teachers are heavily influenced by experienced teachers in the school setting and so those experienced teachers will also need to develop their professional practice. The most popular way of doing this in Western settings is through reflective practice. In an article describing a fundamental review of teacher education in the University of Reading working with schools providing practical placements, Amos and Postlethwaite (1996) examined three models of developing expertise, “theory into practice, apprenticeship, reflective practice” (1996, p.11). They argued that reflective practice had greatest validity because teachers are required to make decisions every day that are based on judgment of situations, and also criticized the apprenticeship approach on the grounds that it tends to assume that continuing to do what is already being done is the best way to do things. Reflective practice on the other hand is about a teacher knowing what they did, understanding why they did it in the light of theory and experience, critically analysing their actions and considering how to do things differently and better next time a similar situation arises, and how to extend what they have learned to other situations (Schon, 1990). Amos and Postlethwaite (1996) also highlighted the importance of support for student teachers.

Although the models of theory into practice, apprenticeship and reflective practice are well established, cultural theories of learning are beginning to extend the spectrum of ITE provision at one end, with an increase in practice-based partnership models of ITE at the other. Each model is underpinned by different concepts and understanding of the process of

learning to teach and the role of formal courses in that process (Furlong and Maynard, 1995).

The tradition of reflective practice is a long one stretching back to Plato, but one which has increased rapidly in both popularity and critical attention since Habermas (1972) clearly distinguished between a concept of knowledge and understanding which essentially reinforces the status quo and existing agreement, and a concept which challenges the current position with a view to improvement. Based on the work of Habermas (1972 and 1973), Van Manen (1977) classified reflection into three levels; technical, practical and critical, which have persisted into current models of mentoring and supervision. The use of reflective practice in teacher education and development probably owes most to Schön (1983, 1987) who distinguished between ‘reflection-on-action’ and ‘reflection-in-action’, the first of these involving teachers in the application of their theoretical knowledge to what they do in practice after teaching, and the second describing the process of using both theory and previous experience to modify their practice during the actual process of teaching. Schön’s work was reinforced by Kolb (1984) who argued that reflection was an essential component of the learning cycle. Following proposals by Gore and Zeichner (1991) that reflective practice could be classified under several headings, an ever-increasing range of models has been put forward, and classifications have multiplied, for example into a distinction between reflection on content and reflection on process. Similarly, methods of promoting reflective practice have multiplied, such as learning logs, teaching diaries and personal learning journals.

In view of the extent to which reflective practice has been adopted in Western systems of teacher education and, increasingly, worldwide, there is some evidence from research that reflection can enhance learning through linking a particular experience with learning from that experience (Blackwell et al., 2001). However, as acknowledged by Gore and Zeichner (1991) and recently by authors such as Richardson (2004) and Gopinathan (2006), the adoption of reflective practice and the type of reflective practice adopted will depend on the educational system, and on the role and purpose of education and of teacher education.

According to Hatton and Smith (1995), a critically reflective approach demands an ideology of teacher education different from that traditionally employed, which usually involves models of 'best practice', emphasis on competencies, and unrecognised conflicts between institutional ideals and workplace socialization. Best practice models are still in use today in higher education institutions (Edmonds, 2007).

The apprenticeship model derives from the centuries-old tradition of learning skills from a master of a particular trade. It has been the model used for hundreds of years in the teaching of Arabic teachers, notably during a strong and early initiative to train teachers, the opening of the Islamic university, the Madrasah al-Nizamiyyah, in 1955 CE in Baghdād. Although the education began with education of the trainees in all available sciences at first degree and master levels, in the final stages of their education, student teachers were required to teach groups under the supervision of their own teachers, learning and demonstrating as far as possible the same approach and techniques. These supervisor-teachers were responsible not only for the student teachers' academic and teaching performance but also for their moral character and piety.

The third model, theory-into-practice, links with an additional relevant way of classifying models of initial teacher education, which relates to the timing of delivery of the programme. The classification based on timing places teacher education programmes into one of the following categories; concurrent, integrated, consecutive, modularised, and phased – one-phase or two-phase. Under this classification, teacher education in Saudi Arabia is consecutive, with all the theory preceding classroom experience. Therefore, whilst the administrators of the education system could argue that this form of ITE is one of theory into practice, there is a considerable time interval between some of the theory and its practical application (see Appendix 1 for details of the specialist ITE modules covered in the seven semesters before the practicum).

The concurrent models that predominate in the UK, whether ITE is full-time, part-time, work-based or partnership-based, provide opportunities for student teachers to put theory into practice without too long a gap. Theory into practice models may also include elements such as lesson planning, handout preparation and micro-teaching in university modules. These enable student teachers to practice for the real-life classroom situation and to gain feedback from their own teachers before they move to the next attempts at applying the new knowledge or skill in the classroom and thence to being observed and supervised.

#### **2.4.2 Initial Teacher Education Programmes**

It must be remembered that student teachers are also learners and that their personal experiences and preferences in learning will impact on what they gain from ITE. At a time

of great changes in the education system, the implementation of seven training programmes for over 400,000 teachers will be a real challenge for Saudi Arabia. As Eraut (2000, p.453) acknowledged, the “majority of the research literature is generated in Western countries” and a continuing “imbalance in research outputs still leads to comparisons being framed by concepts developed and interpreted in the literature of the West”.

Tang’s 2004 article brings these threads together in a way that sets the context for the current research. The formation of the teaching self, she asserts is “shaped by their socio-professional relationship with the schools” and that relationship can be one of ‘detachment’; ‘affiliation’; ‘engagement’ or ‘isolation’”. The impact of the relationship can be positive or negative (Tang, 2004, p.192). The importance of the supervisory role is highlighted:

“In the supervisory context, tertiary supervisors’ affirmation, constructive feedback and attempt to bridge campus-based and school-based learning provide an appropriate mix of challenge and support to student teachers”. Tang adds that “student teachers probably have unproductive learning experiences if they face severe criticisms, in the absence of encouragement and reassurance, from tertiary supervisors”, where tertiary refers to university-based supervisors (2004, p.193).

Where there are what Tang describes as missing links between coursework and fieldwork, between theory and practice, these have sometimes been institutionalized. The gap between theory and practice has been reinforced by the lack of formal partnerships. “Lack of formal

institute-school partnership between the [Higher Education Institution] HEI and placement schools have institutionalized some missing links in the teacher education programme” (Tang, 2004, p.197) which means that in the absence of effective dialogue or tripartite conferences, the preservice teachers have been left to ‘sink or swim’ in trying to integrate university-based and school-based learning in their own thinking and practice.

Research into teachers’ attitudes to inclusion has revealed a strong demand on the part of teachers for more training that focuses on specific or distinctive groups of learners identified by their learning difficulty or disability. This is fundamentally paradoxical in view of the lack of sufficient empirical evidence to support or substantiate the existence of special pedagogies that can be distinguished from good practice in pedagogy for all pupils. Literature reviews conducted by Norwich and Lewis (2001) and Lewis and Norwich (2005) examined whether differences between learners (categorized according to particular special educational needs groups) could, firstly, be distinguished and, secondly, linked in a systematic manner with those learners’ needs for differentiated teaching. In challenging the claim that children with special needs require distinctive teaching strategies, the authors concluded that the idea of ‘continua of teaching approaches’ may be useful inasmuch as it encompasses the idea that more intensive and explicit teaching may be appropriate for pupils with varying degrees of learning disability or difficulty. The concept of teaching approach continua enables the ‘normal’ adaptations in teaching strategies and methods which accommodate the needs of most pupils be distinguished from the greater degree of adaptation that is necessary to accommodate the learning needs of children experiencing more severe difficulty. The adaptations of more typical teaching strategies that are geared specifically to meeting the needs of children with SEN have been referred to as 'high

density' teaching and called specialised adaptations. Although there is very little empirical evidence that supports a requirement for a clearly recognizable pedagogy for pupils described as having SEN (Kershner and Florian, 2006), such pupils are still regarded in some educational systems and schools, and by a proportion of mainstream teachers, as 'someone else's problem'. In the Saudi system, pupils with SEN are taught separately for some lessons if they have MLD or in completely separate classrooms in regular school premises if they have SLD and during this time they are taught by SEN specialist teachers. Regular teachers typically have no preparation for teaching in inclusive classrooms nor for understanding the needs of pupils with SEN, other than a week's course before a school becomes an inclusive school, provided that the Headteacher of the school or an Education Supervisor arranges the training. The question is whether in ITE student teachers do and should learn different pedagogies for working with children with SEN and, if so, whether they implement them in the classroom situation.

One concept that has become more evident in ITE over recent years is that of professional development, laying the foundations for continuous professional development (CPD) of in-service teachers. One possibility is prompted by the concept of "communities of knowledge" proposed by Olson and Craig (2001), similar to the community of practice but with a stronger focus on learning. The community of knowledge concept incorporates the exchange of experience and ideas within a learning framework. Opportunities for effecting the knowledge exchange can include workshops and seminars organised by peers as well as others, collaboration on day to day work or special projects, mentoring and secondments. The Western concept of communities of knowledge specifically includes long-term opportunities for autonomy and reflection, supporting the continuous professional

development of in-service teachers as well as the development of student and novice teachers. According to Poulson and Avramidis (2003), establishing a meaningful community of knowledge entails the creation of long-term opportunities for individuals within that community to be able to articulate and share the knowledge they have gained through practice. They stress the importance of individuals participating in learning and development opportunities beyond the confines of their employing school, also emphasizing the need to articulate and understand connections between theory and practice in order to better apply their knowledge and hence improve their practice. Knowledge communities potentially offer safe environments for teachers to constructively share their stories and experiences with a critical friend, mentor or colleague (Holden, 1997). This, in turn, could create a rich knowledge base capable of informing and supporting innovative educational practice. Communities of knowledge would be strengthened by drawing membership and participation from researchers and educational psychologists, Local Education Authority (LEA) advisers and teacher educators in addition to practising teachers thereby stimulating the interchange of theory and practice and hence increasing the potential for learning and development. These arrangements differ significantly from the dominant theory-practice relationship apparent in Saudi Arabia where practitioners tend to be provided with ready-made answers based on theory or technical solutions to complex classroom or staffroom problems by so-called ‘experts’.

#### **2.4.3 ITE for Special Needs Specialist Teachers: Current Position**

In order to understand their own role in schools relative to the inclusion agenda and the drive towards the individually tailored curriculum, trainee special needs specialist teachers

need a good knowledge and understanding of the different theoretical models of disability and ways of categorizing SEN (Pearson, 2009). In comparison with the amount of detailed content on specific SEN categories in Saudi ITE, underpinning theories receive little attention. In addition to understanding theoretical models, student teachers need to explore and understand how the different models and categories relate to practice in the classroom in terms of teaching and learning strategies (Pearson, 2009). As the Saudi student teachers have only one semester at the end of a four-year course in which to achieve this, it is unlikely that sufficient time is allowed. In respect of all teachers in the UK, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI, 1991) emphasized that in the structure of teacher education programmes there is the need for strong links between the theoretical components of the courses and the practical experiences with children. All pre-service teacher education in Saudi Arabia, including ITE for special needs specialist teachers, incorporates observed practice aimed at developing competencies. However, the gap between some modules and the practicum, together with the short period allocated to the practicum, may not be enough for strong links to form between theory and practice. In order to address both theory and practical requirements, Powell (2009) argues that ITE for specialists should include reading relevant research papers that address models of disability and SEN and follow up classroom practice linked to their reading. In the Saudi Arabian context, the research function of the specialist Department at King Saud University has the capacity to promote these links effectively.

Assessment of disability is another key topic in ITE for specialist SEN student teachers. Both the underpinning theory and alternative methods of assessment and diagnosis are important and are linked with models of disability and SEN. In the case of visually impaired children, there is a whole suite of assessments in English ([www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)); the same is true for children with dyslexia ([www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)) and deaf children, but not

all special needs have the same possibilities for assessment, certainly not in the full range of languages, although Saudi Arabia now has everything in place and is continuing to improve assessment instruments and methods.

By far the most immediate issue for Saudi Arabia, however, has not been the content of ITE, but the training and deployment of sufficient numbers of qualified professionals and specialist teachers to work with pupils with SEN and students. This remains a significant challenge, as it does in the rest of the Arab world, where specialist teachers are assumed to be necessary and therefore the scarcity of appropriate specialist training has constituted an acute problem (Alquroni, 1991). One key factor in teacher education programmes is time; course length should be sufficient to ensure that student teachers have understood “the knowledge of subjects, of curriculum of learners and of assessment” (Bennett, 1993 p.1) by the end of their course. KSA demands four years in order to ensure sufficient time is available (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). Within the integrated development programme for both regular and special education teachers, almost half the modules are in the compulsory special education field.

In contrast with this emphasis on difference between teaching children with SEN and children without SEN, and on ITE tailored to differences based on the apparent cause and category of the special educational need, some studies have indicated there is very little benefit in attempting to distinguish between teaching strategies in this way. The findings of Davis and Florian (2004) concerning teaching strategies reflected those of twenty years earlier by Karim (1983) who reported findings of a comparative analysis of studies into special education teacher competencies conducted in a number of Arab countries. Karim’s

goal was to identify what needed to be included in teacher preparation programmes; however, the analysis of the study comparing performance between regular class teachers and teachers of disabled children found little difference between the two types of teacher in terms of the competencies required.

Despite these findings, Saudi Arabia takes the view that teaching quality with SEN pupils is improved by teacher training that is related to knowledge about the different categories of SEN and specialized teaching methods where appropriate. Therefore the practical element of special education teacher training is one of the main strands emphasized in current SEN teacher training and is closely related to the roles that have been identified for these teachers. This wide-ranging and specialist role, in which special education teachers work with different categories of disabled, requires them to develop and use a complex set of skills embracing both specialized academic and social skills (Al Musa, 1999, p.13). In Saudi Arabia, the role of supervision in equipping pre-service SEN specialist teachers to teach in the classroom is therefore absolutely critical as the researcher's experience as a university lecturer and supervisor show that it provides the only real guidance to practical teaching in their specialist context.

### ***2.5 The Role of Supervision***

This section addresses the following issues: definitions of teacher and student teacher supervision, models of supervision, the roles of the partners of student teacher supervision including co-operating teachers in the classrooms, significance of providing feedback, and approaches to providing feedback. Light is also shed on some of the problems related

to giving feedback to student teachers, the varied roles of supervisors, and reported perceptions of what constitute helpful and unhelpful supervisory practices. Furthermore, the main barriers to effective supervision and challenges of supervising student teachers are highlighted.

### **2.5.1 Student Teacher Supervision Defined**

Supervision of student teachers and in-service teachers can be defined in diverse ways, and the definitions have evolved over the last thirty years, as illustrated in the following paragraphs. Writing in 1980, Neagley and Evans (1980, p.2) defined supervision as “Any service rendered to teachers that eventually results in the improvement of instruction, learning, and the curriculum”. Three years later, Lovell and Wiles (1983, p.4) focused more precisely on instructional supervision as

“an additional behavior system formally provided by the organization for the purpose of interacting with the teaching behavior system in such a way to maintain, change, and improve the design and actualization of learning opportunities for students”.

As continuous professional development came to the forefront in the 1990s, supervision was defined in such a way as to be aligned with professional development. Glatthorn for instance defined supervision as “the comprehensive set of services provided and processes used to help teachers facilitate their own professional development so that the goals of the school districts or the school might be better attained” (Glatthorn, 1990, p.84). Evidence to support this shift in emphasis came from a study conducted by Webster (1993) of the

University of Melbourne with two schools undertaking to supervise practising students, in which the responses to questions about what constituted 'good supervision' were oriented to caring, socialising practices including welcoming atmosphere, modelling, discussion and feedback on student teacher's work.

A stronger focus on organisational performance followed, with the mid to late-1990s giving rise to definitions such as the process of overseeing individuals' ability to meet the aims and objectives of their employing organization (Daresh and Playko, 1995). In relation to teaching techniques, supervision was seen as a way of providing teachers with "specialized help in improving instruction" (Oliva and Pawlas, 1999, p.11) or as expressed more concisely by Glickman et al. (1998) as an aid for improving instruction.

In the new millennium supervision increasingly came to be seen as a collaborative process between teachers or student teachers and their supervisors. In this sense, Beach and Reinhartz (2000, p.8) offered the following definition: "A complex process that involves working with teachers and other educators in a collegial, collaborative relationship to enhance the quality of teaching and learning within schools and that promotes the careerlong development of teachers". The foregoing definitions illustrate that the nature and purpose of supervision can vary considerably and, importantly, that supervision can refer only to student teachers or to all teachers.

### **2.5.2 Contribution of Supervision to ITE**

Teacher supervision is an organizational function concerned with promoting professional growth, leading to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning.

"Teacher supervision is a broad label that encompasses many different activities designed to enhance teacher growth. Classroom coaching designed to examine and improve specific aspects of teaching performance is a supervisory process whether carried out by two teaching colleagues or by a teacher or someone designated as a supervisor" (Nolan and Hoover, 2008, p.6-7).

Whether for formative development to reach or improve professional standards or for summative assessment related to those professional standards, supervision of student teachers is of central importance to ITE in Saudi Arabia, certainly from the viewpoint of the student teacher. For them, supervision is the element of field placement, itself the culmination of four years of study, that determines whether or not they pass and can start their careers as teachers.

As with the definitions of teacher supervision, the contribution it makes to ITE and hence the role and responsibilities of the person(s) carrying it out can vary considerably. The researcher's own view is that student teacher supervision should be a continuous collaborative process in which the university-based supervisor and the school-based supervisor work effectively together according to clearly defined roles with the aim of enhancing the teaching practice experience of student teachers and making it a fruitful and enjoyable one that leads to qualification and success as a teacher. According to the researcher, college supervisors should help students find links and relationships between what they have studied at university and the real classroom situations in schools. As for

school supervisors, they should empower student teachers with the practicalities and the technicalities that derive from their own real teaching and supervision experiences.

However, what happens in practice is inevitably linked with the model(s) of supervision being followed. A traditional classification of models of supervision is set out in the following section.

### **2.5.3 Models of Teacher Supervision**

Gebhard (1984) identified five models of teacher supervision, each of which had evolved in response to the weaknesses of the one preceding it. Other taxonomies of supervision models have been developed as set out in Tang and Chow (2007) and incorporate a range of models such as inquiry-based supervision (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2002) the direct informational category used by Sullivan and Glanz (2005) and the integrative supervision and contextual supervision models described by Wong (2004). However, for the purposes of the current study, Gebhard's taxonomy captures the essential elements of the situation in Saudi Arabia and provides a framework to which college supervisors and other participants in the supervisory process can readily relate. The terms used by Gebhard to describe the types of supervision are; directive, alternative, collaborative, non-directive and creative. Each of these is briefly described and critiqued in the following paragraphs.

#### **Directive Supervision**

This model of supervision is the one which predominated for many years and which many teachers and many teacher educators still recognize and even adopt. In directive

supervision, “the role of the supervisor is to direct and inform the teacher, model teaching behaviours, and evaluate the teacher's mastery of defined behaviours” (Gebhard, 1984, p.502). Three problems are directly related to directive supervision: the supervisor’s definition of “good” teaching determines the outcome, negative humanistic consequences may arise from using this model, and it is unclear who is ultimately responsible for what goes on in the classroom, the teacher or the supervisor.

### **Alternative Supervision**

As the title suggests, in this model the supervisor suggests a variety of alternatives to what has been done in the classroom. For some student teachers, this can be beneficial in terms of reducing confusion about too many options and also reducing anxiety over not knowing what to do next. However, for others it will limit the range of options, although in all cases, responsibility for decision making rests with the teacher.

### **Collaborative Supervision**

Within a collaborative model, the supervisor aims to work with individual teachers but not to lead them. The supervisor is actively involved in the decisions that are made in an attempt to establish a sharing relationship. Typically, the teacher and supervisor work together in addressing a problem in the teacher's classroom teaching. They pose a hypothesis, experiment, and implement strategies which appear to provide a reasonable solution to the problem under consideration. For a student teacher who seeks clear direction and instructions on what to do, this may be uncomfortable.

## **Non-Directive Supervision**

A non-directive approach tries to derive solutions to teaching problems from the teachers themselves. While teachers are talking, the supervisor demonstrates interest by listening attentively to what teachers say, showing them consistent understanding of what they want to say, checking for understanding and providing clarification by repeating the teacher's own ideas using the same words, or rephrasing if necessary. For a student teacher who seeks clear direction and instructions on what to do, this can be extremely uncomfortable.

## **Creative Supervision**

The creative model allows the freedom to become creative not only in the use of the models presented, but also in other behaviours that supervisors may care to generate and test out. There are at least three ways in which the creative model can be used. "It can allow for 1) a combination of models or a combination of supervisory behaviours from different models, 2) a shifting of supervisory responsibilities from the supervisor to other sources, and 3) an application of insights from other fields which are not found in any of the models" (Gebhard, 1984, p.508). The main disadvantages of creative supervision are a lack of structure and unpredictability for supervisor and supervised, resulting in a high risk approach which may be highly effective for some people some of the time but can equally well be disastrous for others.

## **Clinical supervision**

In addition to this general classification of supervision, there is a model deserving of serious attention due to its acceptance in a wide range of professions in Europe, the USA and further afield, clinical supervision. Although the term clinical supervision was taken from the medical field where direct observation and direct feedback remain important, its meaning and use in teacher training are more complex, leaving the supervisor with a choice of approaches and behaviours, perhaps varying their choices between observations over time and according to the individual student teacher. Clinical supervision may offer possibilities for the formative development of student teachers. As described by Goldhammer et al. (1980) clinical supervision is based on a cooperative relationship between the supervising teacher and the student teacher and involves discussion about lesson planning, observations of teaching and assessments of learning. Early models of clinical supervision were proposed with four or five stages. The five-stage version was described in terms likely to deter many potential users; pre-observation conference, observation, analysis and strategy, supervision conference, post-conference analysis. The proposed four-stage model was more user-friendly, or at least more immediately relevant to student teacher supervision. The initial step was establishing the relationship and planning, the second step was classroom observation, the third was reviewing the observation and how the plan related to the classroom experience in a debriefing session and the fourth and final step was planning the following teaching and any specific observation. Although such an approach has the capacity to become overly repetitive, it has a number of potential advantages. One advantage is the shared and clear focus for the supervision that results from goal-setting in the planning of lessons and observations. Another is the relatively non-threatening assessment against developmental goals which allows both the supervisor and student teacher to measure progress. The third major advantage is that it facilitates structure

and sequence in development. These factors also make it easier to give and receive feedback, which is widely recognized as an essential tool in student teacher development.

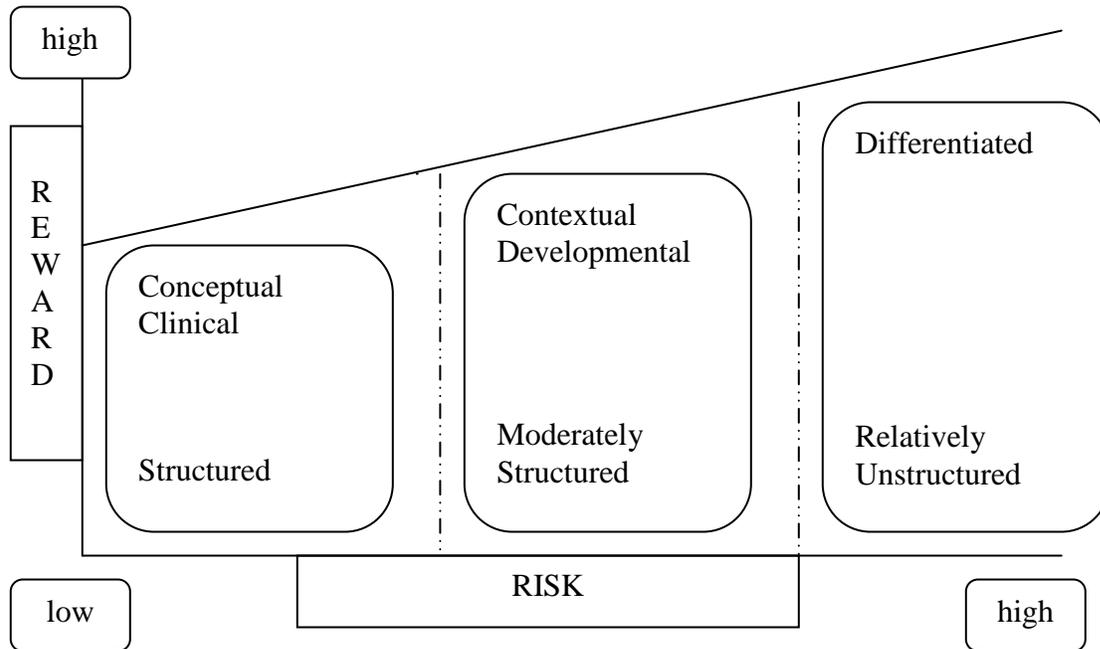
Clark (1990) highlights clinical supervision as the approach to supervision that can be related to all stages of teacher growth from the student teacher through novice and experienced teacher. Clinical supervision aims to actively involve teachers in expressing and developing their abilities to help them better devote themselves to their students and find links between their students and with the subject that they teach.

“Dialogue with individual teachers or groups - centred on practical, theoretical, moral, and ethical interpretations of behavioural data for the purpose of solving classroom problems - has been the primary means by which clinical supervisors have sought to bring about change” (Pajak, 2000).

Supervision has been classified in a variety of ways, such as the three categories of directive, collaborative and non-directive identified by Gebhard (1984) and the categorization of Hopkins and Moore (1993) into clinical, developmental, scientific, accountable, artistic and self-assessment. These alternative ways of categorizing supervision can all be seen to lie on a continuum from directive and expert-centred to non-directive and learner centred (McLeskey, 2011). A framework of types of supervision based on how structured and context-related they were and also on the degree of risk and reward involved for participants has been proposed by Fritz and Miller (2004), as shown in figure 2.1. In this Supervisory Options for Instructional Leaders (SOIL) Framework, the conceptual/clinical and structured model is more supervisor-driven and perhaps subject-

driven, whereas the differentiated and relatively unstructured model is more student teacher-driven.

Figure 2.1 Supervisory Options for Instructional Leaders (SOIL) Framework



Source: Fritz and Miller (2004)

The SOIL framework presupposes a relationship between risk and reward on the part of the supervisor in which higher risk is positively correlated with higher reward. For example, a supervisor adopting a relatively unstructured approach could benefit from greater flexibility, collaboration and job satisfaction, while the student teacher could gain from directing and judging their own progress. However, risks in this situation could be non-fulfilment of supervisory responsibilities and criticism from colleagues (Fritz and Miller, 2004). Two studies based on the SOIL framework found that almost all student teacher supervisors in an agricultural education setting were unwilling to adopt a relatively unstructured approach because they considered this an avoidance of their responsibilities (Stephens and Little, 2010). Another reason could be a reluctance to relinquish any power

as a supervisor. It can be argued that using a relatively unstructured approach effectively requires not only experience but a strong framework and foundation for supervision sessions in order for the supervisor to gauge the extent to which flexibility is both desirable and helpful. It can also be argued that this is consistent with ensuring that student teachers all have the same opportunity to meet the summative assessment criteria. However, the SOIL framework does not clearly indicate the possibility of progression in supervisory relationships from a starting point of clinical supervision through contextual supervision to a differentiated approach for teachers as they undergo a process of professional development.

#### **2.5.4 The contribution of feedback to supervision**

Giving feedback is an important factor in the development of any learner in any profession. It helps the learner to know his/her points of weakness and try to improve them as well as identifying his/her points of strength in order to enhance them. Field and Field (1994, p.47) highlighted what student teachers said they wanted - honest feedback on their shortcomings. Lewis (1998, p.69) argued that a supervisor's feedback serves at least five purposes:

1. Feedback can establish a bridge between theory and practice, but this link needs to be made explicit in the observer's written comments.
2. The lecturer's [college supervisor's] comments can reinforce the teacher's developing professional language which will establish their membership of their community.

3. Feedback can provide formative evaluation in that it offers advice which can make a difference at the time it is given, rather than simply establishing a final grade.
4. The follow up session in which the observer and the teacher discuss the evaluative comments establishes a process of collaborative reflection which is important during a practicum.
5. The evaluation of teaching practice can make a difference to teaching by turning input into uptake or intake.

### **Approaches to providing feedback**

Approaches to providing feedback to teachers tend to vary in line with the models of supervision. In the directive control approach, the supervisor makes the decision and tells the individual or the group how to proceed. The supervisor who uses the directive informational approach frames the choices for the group or individual and then may – or may not - ask for input. In the collaborative approach, the supervisor and the individual or group share the information and possible solutions as equals in order to arrive at a mutually agreed plan. In the fourth approach, the supervisor facilitates the individual or the group in developing a self development plan or making decisions (Glickman et al., 2004).

The researcher's initial informal discussions with university-based supervisors strongly indicated that the approach adopted in giving feedback to Saudi student teachers was the directive control approach. This confirmed the researcher's own experience when a student teacher and that of his contemporaries; the absence of opportunities to discuss or negotiate the feedback given, seriously limited the benefit to some student teachers.

### **2.5.5 Problems in giving feedback to student teachers**

Supervisors can be particularly sensitive about giving feedback to student teachers because it potentially involves some degree of confrontation which might be hard for student teachers in their first teaching practice who are in general not used to receiving and dealing with constructive criticism. For instance, one study summarized the research findings on feedback to student and beginning teachers in general education in the United States as "most supervisors of student teachers receive very little preparation or training, and many don't have the expertise to supervise beginning teachers effectively" (Freiburg and Waxman, 1990, p.8). These authors contended that co-operating teachers were often aware of problems but did not feel comfortable giving critical feedback to student teachers. Confirmation of this came from a study into the training of co-operating teachers; Lemma (1993) reported that the co-operating teacher was more concerned with supporting student teachers than with giving them input about their teaching. On the other hand, a study by Jyrhama (2001) found that about sixty percent of student teachers felt their supervisor's advice was useful, although a small percentage thought their advice was not at all useful. Jyrhama concluded that the 'Why' questions that supervisors asked student teachers helped them consider the elements of successful teaching. The supervisors in Jyrhama's study clearly understood that negotiation and discussion of views would add to the success of teaching as student teachers benefit from the different views and the rationales behind these views.

Although there is a long list of assessment points in the summative assessment form in use by college supervisors of special education needs student teachers at King Saud University,

there are no clear standards, definitions of standards or ranges associated with the points, therefore judgments are subjective (Appendix 2 contains the assessment form).

Directive supervision has been identified as the model most likely to be found in Saudi Arabia, highlighting the possibility that feedback may not be used to the greatest benefit. Furthermore, it is proposed possible reluctance on the part of both supervisor and student teacher to make effective use of feedback may exacerbate the problem. Against this backdrop, the next section considers the way in which supervision of student teachers, in particular student teachers specializing in SEN, operates in Saudi Arabia.

### **2.5.6 Supervision of Student Teachers in Saudi Arabia**

This section looks at the roles of the partners in supervision and then at some of the most important procedures, leading towards consideration of the distinctive aspects of supervision of special educational needs specialists in the following section.

Referring back to the beginning of this chapter which looked at cultures of learning and learning cultures, Bailey (2006) highlights that the role of the supervisor in the teaching arena is in part culturally defined and conceptually located in the educational and political history of a particular region. As this applies to any place in the world, it applies to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The role of the student teacher supervisor is defined not only culturally in terms of gender but also socially through the guidelines governing the supervisor's role which limit the mentoring role and expand the clerical supervision role. Supervisors are not given training in supervision in order to be able to guide student

teachers. Saudi teacher supervisors rarely get any training to empower them in their roles, and perhaps for this reason, "the major concept of current supervisory behaviour is its undue emphasis on reactive performance - doing things as a result of crisis orientation - rather than through careful, logical planning and preparation" (Daresh, 2001, p.25). The various roles that they are or may be expected to fulfil, with or without training, are now considered.

## **Roles**

This section considers supervisor roles in general, then examines the roles of the college supervisor and other partners as they occur in practice. Starting with general supervision roles, Clark (1990) describes six roles that supervisors of student teachers perform in general education and which can be equally applied to special educational needs specialist education. The first role is termed administrative or judgmental supervision in which supervisors mainly focus on the summative assessment of student teachers, as developing student teachers professionally is not a particular goal of this approach. The second role is to some extent contradictory to this first-mentioned role inasmuch as it concerns follow-up after casual or informal supervision in which supervisors non-judgmentally accept the teaching or the learning behaviours. The third role is referred to as clerical supervision which stresses the aims, objectives, programmes, student records and assessment results. In this respect, clerical supervision can be seen as focusing on school management records rather than effective teaching in the classroom. The fourth role is called co-operative supervision in which student teachers supervise themselves, with support and facilitation provided by the supervisor if required. In this role, each group of students encourages and

supports skill development. As for the fifth role, this is individualized or responsive supervision in which teaching and professional development are directly related to the personal psychological or social needs of the individual in the classroom rather than to the teaching process. In a study in the USA, a teacher defined her supervisory role in terms of “emotional support and practical suggestions. Her job [was] to be there, ready to listen and give counsel” (Feiman-Nemser and Parker, 1992, p.2), and again, “The support teachers bring resources and materials to new teachers. They offer instructional assistance related to content and methodology. They give a lot of emotional support through empathetic listening and sharing experiences...” (Feiman-Nemser and Parker, 1992, p.5).

More recently, Western scholars have increasingly emphasized the mentoring role, in particular for experienced teachers in schools to assist student teachers in developing their professional standards and practice (Hamlin, 1997; Wilson, 2006). Wilson’s study involved what are termed Clinical Master Teachers (CMTs), who are selected for their academic qualifications and strength of experience and who work together as a team to supervise a team of student teachers, with the university-based members of the team acting as coordinators who provide advice, mentoring and observations as required (Wilson, 2006). However, the Saudi Arabian model is somewhat different, as illustrated later.

Scherer (1999) underlined the potential challenges of some of the roles involved in supporting student teachers in the practicum and afterwards in supporting beginning teachers. The student teacher educators’ role is to “encourage beginning teachers to adopt reform-based thinking and practices, they must help their students develop the tools and dispositions that will lead to a successful student teaching experience” (Scherer, 1999, p.147). The college supervisor has a major challenge. “In any case, the role of the

supervisor is a difficult one... Supervisors are asked to represent the university and to advocate the goals and vision promoted in the methods courses, but they must do so within the context of the school setting and in the classroom of an experienced teacher” which means that “to all intents and purposes, they are guests when they are in a school, they may need to negotiate” (ibid.). Using the term ‘mentor teacher’ in preference to any other, Scherer (1999, p.148) observes that “Mentor teachers play a pivotal role... oversee the gradual process in which student teachers assume control of the classroom” in addition to meeting the need to “reconcile own craft knowledge and practices” with the faculty programme, although “Student teachers, perhaps, play the hardest role among the participants in the preparation process. They are at critical transition point in their lives.”

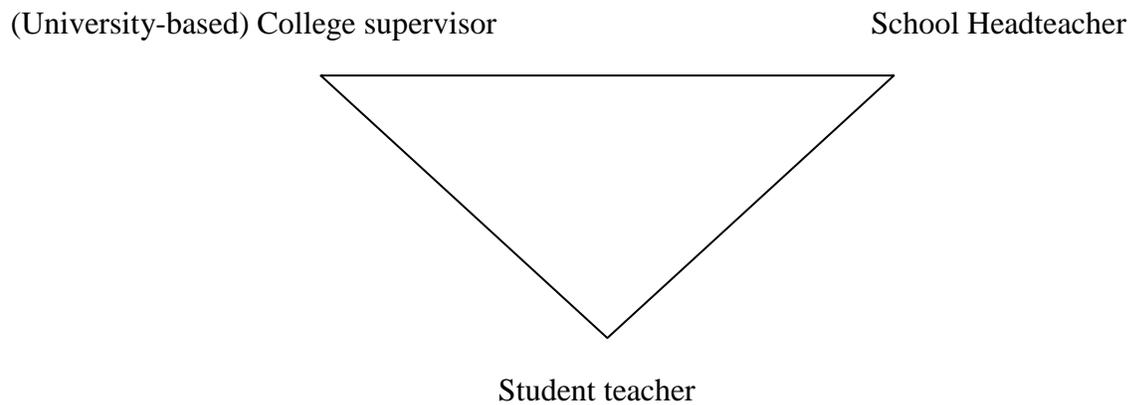
Nolan and Hoover (2008, p.201) pinpoint that the role of university supervisors and co-operating teachers is to “guide the preservice teacher’s formal entry into these real-world classroom experiences by modelling effective teaching, providing scaffolding or developmentally appropriate feedback and support when necessary, fostering a climate conducive to inquiry and reflection, and challenging each preservice teacher to grow as a professional”. Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1998) had also underlined the aim of preservice teacher supervision as to help students apply the concepts that they have already learnt during their courses at university to the school setting. Some of these concepts are those which they have been taught in the methodology courses in which student teachers learn how to teach, how to prepare lesson plans, how to test students and evaluate them. Other concepts will relate to the knowledge and understanding of special educational needs students. The following section discusses procedures for supervision of general student

teachers in Saudi Arabia, before comparing these with the way in which it applied with special educational needs specialist teachers.

### **2.5.7 Supervision Procedures**

Student teachers in Saudi Arabia have different supervision arrangements depending on whether they are on a programme for general or special educational needs specialist teachers. This impacts the roles played by participants as well as the dynamics of the processes. Figure 2.2 gives a schematic representation of the supervision arrangements for general student teachers.

Figure 2.2 General student teacher supervision in Saudi Arabia



In this arrangement, one of the main dimensions of the role of the college supervisor is to represent the university's training programme and to be the envoy of and ambassador for that programme to the schools where student teachers practise their teaching. The role of college supervisor also includes both academic and administrative aspects. According to Wallace (1991), one of the key duties of the college supervisor is helping student teachers to link the theoretical materials with the classroom context because they need to build bridges between the research and the theories they have studied and the realities of classroom teaching. A further key role is the administrative one which entails assigning student teachers to schools for their practicum, dividing student teachers in a certain academic year into groups of a maximum of eight and allocating each group to a specific school. This involves listing student teachers' names in a formal letter and authorizing it with the university stamp, contacting the schools in a particular catchment area to inform them which student teachers they will be receiving. After that, the college supervisor accompanies with each group of student teachers to their school to introduce them to the school administration and assist in familiarizing them with the new school environment.

More crucially from the student teachers' perspective, the college supervisor completes the documentation that determines whether individual teachers pass their field placement and therefore their teaching qualification, especially the summative evaluation. However, among the duties for which these supervisors receive no training are supervision of their pedagogic and academic progress during the field placement, such as checking lesson plans, giving academic and pedagogic guidance and resolving any problems or issues they face. Having said that, many university-based supervisors visit each school and student teacher at least twice during the field placement. Their role in directly observing and supervising teachers, together with the role of the Headteacher, is discussed below.

Unfortunately, the college supervisor may have little time to devote to individual student teachers. Freiburg and Waxman (1990) point out that each supervisor may work with 10-12 student teachers and may only observe each one three or four times during the practicum. In addition, "much of the supervisor's time is consumed in travelling to and from the various sites, with little time remaining for quality feedback" (Freiburg and Waxman, 1990, p.8).

Involvement of college supervisors in supervising student teachers in the practicum does not receive much attention for two reasons. Firstly, teaching practice supervision is conducted by specially appointed supervisory staff, typically doctoral students, retired teachers, teachers on leave from their school board, or retired education professors. Secondly, supervisory staff often make just the minimum number of school visits needed to assign a practice teaching grade (Borko and Mayfield, 1995; Goodlad, 1990a, 1994; Slick, 1998). College supervisors, who traditionally struggle to balance supervisory

responsibilities with teaching and research, have for many years expressed their disappointment with the allocation of insufficient time to exercise the necessary supervision (Koehler, 1984).

There are a number of reasons for the limited availability of university-based supervision. Times pressures are among the most frequently cited: these result from graduate teaching, thesis supervision, research, publishing, administration, and committee work and often constitute a serious time management problem for college supervisors. Secondly, work with student teachers is not as highly regarded or rewarded as graduate work, research, and publishing, and this attaches a lower priority to student teacher supervision. Finally, many education professors believe they can make a greater contribution to education through research and theorizing (Beck and Kosnik, 2002, p.6).

In supervision of general student teachers, the role of the Headteacher is firstly to welcome each group of student teachers to the school and make the school accessible to the student teachers. Essentially, the Headteacher's role is a clerical and administrative one with relatively less attention given to the effective pedagogical and academic practices that student teachers should master during their teaching practice. At the beginning of the field placement, the Headteacher allocates each student teacher to a certain class, introduces them to their regular classroom teachers and for the most part leaves them until the end of the practicum. The Headteacher is responsible for recording students' attendance, timetables, any additional classes, teaching practice hours, student teachers' administrative problems in school and any other information relevant to the final grade to be awarded.

In some cases, Headteacher supervisors rely on the regular classroom teacher for assessment of the student teachers, although what is most important for the Headteacher is the summative assessment of student teacher performance. Formative assessment of student teachers' performance exists only marginally in the student teacher–supervisor relationship.

The college supervisor observes at least one session only with each student teacher and at the end of the practicum semester gives him a final mark, worth 80% of the total mark. The other 20% of the total mark is given by the Headteacher in the light of student teachers' attendance, and collaboration with the school administration. This constitutes the summative assessment of the teaching practice.

In relation to summative assessment of general student teachers, there is a checklist of assessment criteria in the light of which each student teacher is evaluated and which differ according to the category of disability or learning difficult (Appendix 2 contains a copy of the assessment criteria for pupils with learning difficulties). In the researcher's experience, this can at times be somewhat unrealistic, as the college supervisor decides the mark to be given and then automatically ticks each item in the assessment form to generate the mark that has been decided in advance. The main components of the supervision process do not necessarily come together to arrive at a mark determined against objective or at least consistent criteria for each student.

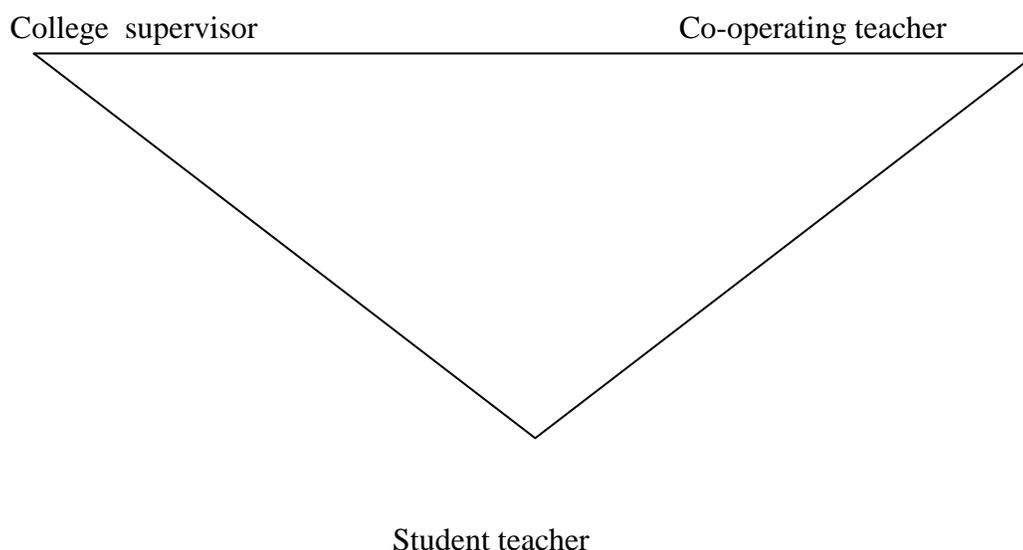
From the foregoing information, it can be seen that the first three roles described by Clark (1990) apply, namely the administrative, informal and clerical approaches. Routine bureaucratic procedures and school management records take precedence over professional

development for preservice teachers. It appears that preservice teacher supervision in Saudi Arabia is lacking the last three approaches to supervision mentioned by Clark (1990); cooperative, responsive and clinical supervision. This study will help to reveal whether these other approaches could be successfully applied in order to promote the professional development of Saudi student teachers.

### **2.5.8 Supervision of Special Educational Needs Specialist Student Teachers in Saudi Arabia**

The supervision arrangements for special educational needs specialist student teachers are rather different as a result of the specialism. The rationale is that specialists should be supervised by someone who understands and has relevant experience of the specialism. The Headteacher plays no role as most Headteachers have no qualification or experience relevant to teaching pupils with special needs. The college supervisor is a specialist, as is the co-operating teacher who is also involved in supervising the student teacher.

Figure 2.3: Special educational needs specialist student teacher supervision in Saudi Arabia



The role of the college supervisor remains unchanged, although the proportion of total marks awarded is different. Again, checklists of assessment criteria are used in the summative assessment. The co-operating teacher gives a mark out of 50 and the college supervisor also gives a mark out of 50. In practice, the apportionment of marks may vary among the members of the supervisory team. However, the college supervisor has the final say, taking into account other contributions to the summative assessment.

The student teacher on the receiving end of the process is awarded a final mark in accordance with the marking scheme common to all ITE courses in Saudi Arabia, There are five main categories of mark, namely; (0-49) = Fail, (50-64) = Acceptable, (65-74) = Good, (75-89) = Very Good and (90-100) = Excellent. If a student fails the practicum, he has to wait another year before he can try again, a situation that leads to very few student teachers failing the practicum. Clearly, the role of the co-operating teacher is an important one, which will now be examined in more detail and depth.

### **The co-operating teacher**

In the practicum context, special educational needs specialist student teachers are paired with co-operating teachers who are intended to be knowledgeable, skilled and experienced. Their role is to provide the assessment of specialist teaching knowledge and techniques that Headteachers are unable to provide unless they themselves happen to be specialists. They are also one of the key sources of expertise for student teachers to learn from and therefore

have a significant contribution to make to the summative assessment. Unfortunately, co-operating teachers are seldom specifically prepared to supervise the formative professional development of student teachers, although they benefit from a reduction in class contact hours in order to undertake their supervisory responsibilities. The situation described twenty years ago by Goldsberry (1988, p.4-5) still broadly holds true; "The assumption, apparently, is that anyone who can teach can also supervise". Furthermore, coordinating the supervision by two people (the co-operating teacher and the university-based supervisor) is "more of a challenge than it may seem" (ibid., p.5). The fact remains that good communication between the two supervisors is important for the trainee and the classroom learners.

Student teachers have long been aware that their co-operating teachers play a significant role in their supervision (Copeland, 1982), and studies and research summaries suggest that training promotes more effective supervision of the student teachers (Grimmett and Ratzlaff, 1986; Zeichner and Liston, 1987; Guyton and McIntyre, 1990; Watson and Fullan, 1991; Howey, 1996; Knowles and Cole, 1996; and McIntyre et al., 1996).

Co-operating teachers, like college supervisors, can have both positive and negative effects on student teachers. Some researchers defend the importance of the supervisor in the triad, in opposition to Bowman's (1979) provocative early stance advocating the eradication of the supervisor position. Griffin et al. (1983), Koehler (1984), and Zimpher et al. (1980) suggest supervisors are essential contributors to teacher education. Emans (1983) and Zeichner and Teitlebaum (1982) advocate changes to, or clearer definition of, expectations of supervisory roles.

Examination of the current situation of supervision of Saudi student-teachers led the researcher to a consideration of activity theory as a framework for the study. As will be shown in chapter three, the supervision process is an activity system involving the university inputs in the form of academic learning and teaching and the schools in which student teachers practice their teaching, which suggests that the notion of boundary crossing (Engeström et al., 1999) is most probably important here. It draws attention to the different ways in which student teachers feel and act when they face some these contradictions between teacher education experience at university and at schools where they experience practical training as teachers. As a precursor to investigating the perceptions of participants in the study, it is useful to record what previous studies have discovered about perceptions of supervision.

### **2.5.9 Perceptions of supervision**

This section highlights the findings from a number of empirical studies, mainly from the perspective of preservice teachers. When Boydell (1986) researched issues in teaching practice supervision, he found that university-based supervisors were perceived as being ineffective in a variety of ways many areas, for instance because they produced inaccurate evaluations, perhaps in part associated with a lack of time. Almost a decade later, Field and Field (1994, p.56) researched student teachers' views of helpful and unhelpful supervisory practices and they came up with the following findings. When asked about the most helpful supervisory practices at schools, student teachers cited:

- visiting the school before the practicum begins for briefing;

- being allowed to observe classes before teaching;
- being given immediate feedback on lessons;
- being given both written and spoken feedback;
- being left to manage the class by yourself sometimes;
- suggesting and providing resources;
- being treated like a colleague/member of staff/feeling welcome;
- being given advice on alternative strategies;
- observing other teachers in school;
- being given some responsibility in the school;
- having a desk set up ready;
- having name tags for pupils.

When asked about the most unhelpful supervisory practices at schools, student teachers reported:

- teacher intervening in discipline matters
- being corrected in front of the class;
- not being (or not feeling) trusted;
- being given the lessons to do that the teacher does not like;
- teachers being too set in their ways;
- feeling segregated (not part of staff);
- having problems with clerical staff;
- teachers thinking they are on holiday during the practicum;
- being introduced to class as a 'trainee teacher';
- being used as casual relief;
- being held to unrealistic expectations. ('I'm only in First Year!')

Yet another decade later, findings of Wilson's 2006 study echoed those of Boydell (1986) concerning how student teachers perceived the university-based supervisor. "For the student teachers, the college supervisor was seen as an outsider, who did not see the day-to-day activities, yet "gave the final grade'" (Wilson, 2006, p.27). Wilson's research is interesting for two additional reasons. Firstly, it investigated the perceptions of supervision of all participants, in Wilson's terminology "student teachers, classroom teachers, university-based personnel" (2006, p.24). Secondly, as a result of investigating perceptions in a pilot study of the Clinical Master Teacher (CMT) model, the research found that two of the three groups of participants perceived the model used in the pilot as preferable to the traditional triad model of supervision. "Overall the CMTs interviewed preferred the team approach to supervision versus the university or college supervisor in the triad model." (ibid., p.26) and student teachers considered their teaching practice to be enhanced by the use of the more collaborative model (ibid., p.27).

On one level, if the most helpful supervisory practices mentioned in Field and Field's 1994 study are widely adopted, and the least helpful supervisory practices are avoided, the outcome will be a considerably improved supervisory process that is more beneficial for supervisors and student-teachers alike. However, in addition to the perceptions of supervision reported in existing literature, it is important to hear the voices of college supervisors, co-operating teachers and SEN specialist student teachers in Saudi Arabia in order to take account of the prevailing learning culture and also to understand in detail both the interactions of institutions and individuals and the dynamics of supervision meetings. It

is also important to recognize factors that may hinder the implementation and practice of effective supervision so that these can be reduced, minimized or, ideally, avoided.

#### **2.5.10 Barriers to effective supervision**

Boydell (1986) supported the view that effective supervision is a debatable area and is not easily defined. In this respect, three main barriers can be identified as impeding effective supervision. Firstly, the roles of co-operating teachers and college supervisors are incongruent and not always clearly defined (Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Grimmatt and Ratzlaff, 1986). This is likely to lead to misunderstanding in interactions with each other, particularly, if the college supervisor and the co-operating teacher assume different roles (Wood, 1989).

Secondly, the lack of substantive communication and collaboration between the college supervisor and the co-operating teacher (Bhagat et al., 1989) complicates the supervisory process. As a result, they often misunderstand each other, lack unity in the presence of the student teacher, and continue to teach and supervise in the way they always have instead of working as a supervisory team (Moon et al., 1988).

Finally, teacher supervisors seldom receive training to perform their roles, a factor that may be partly responsible for the tendency of supervisors to be reactive rather than proactive in the processes of supervision.

To overcome these barriers, greater partnership working and collaborative efforts are required between co-operating teachers and college supervisors in order to produce a strong relationship that offers the best possible benefits for student teachers (Kauffman, 1992; Wilson, 2006). In addition to options for developing strong partnership working, further initiatives may be required to remove or at least reduce some of the barriers. For example, consideration could be given to providing effective training sessions for supervisors, if the appropriate training need was clearly identified. It is not only student teachers who need professional development and support. Supervisors, whether based at a university or a school, need to be encouraged and supported so that they can perform their roles in the best possible way in order to enhance the performance of student teachers.

#### **2.5.11 Challenges of supervising student teachers**

Supervising student teachers is not an easy task, especially special educational needs specialist student teachers. There are some evident challenges that supervisors should take into account while supervising student teachers, as identified by several scholars such as Nolan and Hoover (2008). First, student teachers have gained formal, academic knowledge through their teacher training programmes, but they need to develop ‘practical knowledge’ - learning that is grounded in actual teaching experience. Such learning can be attained by assuming responsibility for being a classroom teacher and making professional judgments (Cochran-Smith, 2000).

The second challenge in supervising student teachers lies in the unique transition that they are making from university students to classroom teachers. During this transition, the

student teacher goes through three developmental phases of survival, task and impact (Fuller, 1969). The survival stage is marked by student teachers' concerns about their own competence and well-being in the face of the numerous demands of the job. In the task stage, student teachers focus more on gaining increasing command of the content to be taught and on refining their teaching skills. The third stage of 'impact' only takes place after the student teachers have achieved sufficient competence and confidence to focus on their students and to reflect on ways to improve teaching strategies that will have a positive effect on students' learning.

The third factor is represented in the need to work closely as part of a triad. This requires collaboration and continuous communication between the school-based supervisor and the university-based supervisor. This in turn requires what Nolan and Hoover (2008) call "partnership that is marked by shared knowledge and goals, respect for one another's expertise, and equity in decision making" (p. 203).

To surmount these challenges the participants in supervision need to work together to develop the practical knowledge required for their gaining an effective teaching experience, make a smooth transition from being a university student to a classroom teacher and at the end be part of the collaborative team work between the school supervisor and the university supervisor.

## ***2.6 Conclusion***

This chapter has examined relevant literature from seven key strands that impact on supervisory practices in the teaching practicum for special needs specialist teachers, namely the culture of learning and learning cultures, inclusion, Special Educational Needs, Initial Teacher Education (ITE), ITE for special needs specialist teachers, the role, purpose and models of supervision and, finally, supervision of special needs student teachers, each with reference to the Saudi Arabian context. The first section explored the concept of the culture of learning and learning cultures in relation to Saudi Arabia, identifying Islam as the very strong doxa that influences every aspect of life in the country, but particularly education as it the means by which Islam itself is spread.

The second section explored special educational needs in Saudi Arabia, identifying the medical or deficit models of disability and intervention as the most prevalent. This approach is linked with the prevailing model of initial teacher education which, after each of the main models had been outlined in brief, was pinpointed to be a knowledge transmission model following by an apprenticeship model during the practicum.

The fourth section then considered the role and nature of supervision in the context of ITE for special educational needs student teachers in Saudi Arabia, noting that directive supervision approach is adopted within an overall procedural framework that makes use of checklists and forms, and questioning whether the roles of college supervisor, co-operating teacher and Headteacher are sufficiently clearly defined. The potential contribution of constructive feedback and two-way discussion to supervision is also highlighted, together with the responsibilities of the different participants in the supervision process and the key elements in the process in order to set the scene for the fieldwork.

Section five contained a summary of the findings of three empirical studies of perceptions of supervision, identifying some of the factors that help and hinder supervision and illustrating how there can be multiple perceptions of a single process or event. The complexity of the context of supervision and the lack of detail about the interaction that happens inside the process or meeting points towards the use of activity theory as a possible framework for the research. This is discussed in the next chapter.

### **Chapter 3 Framework for the research**

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework of activity theory that underpins the study of perceptions of supervisory practice. It should be noted that Activity Theory is not a "theory" in the strict interpretation of the term. Rather, it comprises a set of basic principles which form a general conceptual system that can be used as the basis for more specific theories. These basic principles include object-orientedness: this states that human beings live in a reality which is objective in the sense that things have both properties which are 'objective' according to the natural sciences and properties that are socially and culturally defined. Arising from the work of Vygotsky, himself a constructionist in his approach to education, activity theory is based on the principle that cognitive development must have originated from certain cultural and social dimensions (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). This has led to some scholars employing activity theory to explore professional development (Cook et al., 2002; Roth and Tobin, 2002). Dayton (2006) argues that activity theory offers a useful and flexible framework for professional development research: activity theory requires interactions of people and realities to be examined in a context of development. This implies that the associated research method will involve both active participation and recording of any developmental changes on the part of the participants, an approach that lies within a socio-cultural research perspective. In other words, activity theory is a framework that is used to analyze activity structures naturally recognized through a perspective of socio-cultural research (Jonassen, 2000) and one that pays due attention to the historical scope of the phenomena (Nardi, 1996).

Supervision is one of the main means of achieving professional development (Tang and Chow, 2007, p.1066-1068), mainly for student teachers but potentially also for the co-operating teachers and college supervisors, and therefore is well suited to the activity theory framework. This study aimed to explore the experiences and perceptions of participants in the supervision process of special educational needs specialist student teachers. Supervision, as discussed in chapter two, gives rise to issues and tensions among the competing purposes of supervision and the different contexts of school and university. This generates multiple perspectives throughout the process of supervising student teachers. In order to investigate and report different dimensions and aspects of different professional experiences during supervision meetings, it is necessary to adopt an appropriate theoretical framework that is capable of dealing with them, such as activity theory.

The core idea behind activity theory is that activities do not take place in a vacuum but are events that take place within a system of collective activity (Engeström, 1999), based on the idea that “human activity is ... rich in variation of content and form” (Engeström, 1999, p.20). Although this links with case studies which have also been described as “rich, thick description” as noted by Merriam (2009, p.166) and “in-depth description and analysis” (ibid., p.40), one of the key differences lies in the idea that the activity can be the unit of analysis. “One of the most fundamental questions of research is the selection of the basic unit of analysis” (Kuutti, 1991, p.249) and activity theory allows the activity or the activity system to be selected as the unit of analysis. This enables the research methodology to deal with perceptions in the sense in which Nardi (1996, p.7) underscores that “consciousness is located in everyday practice: you are what you do. And what you do is firmly and inextricably embedded in the socio-cultural

matrix of which every person is an organic part”. Activity theory allows the interrelationship between the structure and agency to be dissected into smaller subcategories which reflect what is termed by Nardi the “socio-cultural matrix” that could trace the developmental path of that relationship. Nardi (1996, p.7) pinpoints that the challenge activity theory has set for itself is to understand “the interpenetration of the individual, other people and artifacts in everyday activity”.

Turning to the unit of analysis, scholars have argued that certain conditions need to be present for the analysis to be successful. Bannon and Schmidt (1991) emphasize that the basic unit should be mediated by artifacts, that it should incorporate socially constructed meanings and cultural aspects, and that it should be suitable for studying transformation and development because the activity (or activity system) is being continuously remade. It has also been argued that there should be detailed internal structure to facilitate analysis (Lyytinen, 1990) and indeed the roles, purposes and procedures of supervision meet this condition. Finally, analysis using activity theory is facilitated by the existence of conflicts, tensions and issues of control (Kling, 1991) and it has been shown in chapter two that such issues exist in the supervision process between co-operating teachers and college supervisors. The activity is most appropriately investigated where and when it actually happens, in order for all the necessary detail to be captured. In the current study, the main focus was therefore supervision meetings held in the schools where the student-teachers are on placement.

At this point, it is useful to give some definitions of essential terminology. According to Engeström (1987), an activity is carried out by a person (*subject*) who has a particular purpose in mind (*object*). Parameters of the activity may be set by social roles (*division*

of tasks) and by cultural conventions and related factors (*rules*). In addition, an activity is mediated by tools or *artifacts* in collaborative efforts with other people (*community*). Engeström (1987) highlights the roles of the community, social structures and conventions in mediating the activity. Engeström highlights the importance of the *object* because it is the link between the individual actions of the person and the activity. The influence of environment and social factors on the person carrying out the activity is stressed by the importance attached to mediation.

The use of activity theory in research provides a systematic approach to incorporating into the analysis a consideration of how the community, division of tasks, tools (artifacts) and rules interact, an approach that is well suited to a sociocultural framework. Scholars who have identified the need to consider development in a sociocultural context include Wood and Bandura (1989), Forman et al., (1993), Eraut (1994) and Bronfenbrenner (2000). Bronfenbrenner (2000) argued that all human development must be considered as occurring within nested systems. He defined these systems as the microsystem (such as the classroom), the mesosystem (which is two microsystems in interaction such as the classroom and teaching staff), the exosystem (which is a system influencing development, such as a university), and the macrosystem (the larger cultural context). Each of these has its own roles, rules and norms that can exert a strong influence on development. As Wood and Bandura (1989, p.362) expressed it, “Individuals are both producers and products of their environment”. Studies using activity theory can address different types of development and change, which Russell (2002) classifies under the headings of historical change, individual development and moment-to-moment change, all of which he asserts can be the product of tensions or contradictions.

Activity theory also introduces the concept of an activity system model in which each element previously described makes a particular contribution to the activity. The setting for the activity system will also impact on the outcome. In the example of supervision, there may be several activity systems in play. Whilst supervision is itself an activity system, the activity system of student teachers can also be modelled and will be influenced by other activity systems. These include the school where the student teacher is on field placement, the university where the college supervisors work, the activity system of co-operating teachers in a particular school and so forth.

Studies that focus on settings for professional development can uncover the types of social structures that lead to the use of particular tools which can themselves then lead to particular styles, methods and pedagogies. In this way, an activity theory perspective facilitates investigative analysis of the end results of different approaches to professional development, which include formal initial teacher education courses, in-school and in-service programmes, school-based activities, and peer observations. This highlights the applicability of activity theory to the current exploration of ways in which supervision and other contextual elements of teaching practice contribute to the professional development of student teachers (Edwards, 2010).

Activity theory is also more useful for understanding historically what was wrong, rather than for predicting what will go wrong (Nardi, 1996). It "rejects cause and effect, stimulus response, explanatory science in favor of a science that emphasizes the emergent nature of mind in activity and that acknowledges a central role for interpretation in its explanatory framework" (Cole, 1996, p.104). A deep understanding of the way in which a tool is used requires careful examination of how it has been used

and how it has developed in order to inform future practice so that usage can develop (Kaptelinin and Nardi, 1997). In this regard, case studies that track the naturally occurring history and development of practice are in harmony with the overall aims of activity theory.

In order for student teachers to learn to teach, they have to undertake practical teaching in real-school settings. They also have to be observed and supervised in the process of teaching. Some would argue that socialization into the whole school and education system including activities such as assessment, marking work and associated administrative procedures is equally important. For these elements to be incorporated into initial teacher education, it is imperative for the time spent on school placements to be well planned and for the components of the practicum to be effective as individual components and to work together to ensure that the student teacher will be a competent and confident teacher. Activity theory provides a structured approach for education researchers to look at the ways in which student teachers interact with and learn from the systems of their university or college and their placement schools in the context of the activity system of supervision. This is important in the current study because it enables the researcher to reach a deep understanding of the interplay and relationships between college and placement schools during the only teaching practice, in the final semester, and evaluating the roles of schools, colleges and specific actors (college supervisor, headteacher, co-operating teacher and student teacher).

The practicum is perceived to be a learning activity on which the situation and key players exert a fundamental influence. Lave and Wenger (1991) noted that in order to reach the necessary mastery levels of knowledge and skill, student teachers have to

become full members of the community of practice through progressive involvement and move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practices of the school community. Supervision is a key activity in helping student teachers to do this, allowing reflection on and improvement of practical experience. The process of student teachers' integration into the socio-cultural practices of a school system is termed legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

The concept of contradictions in activity theory is also useful in understanding why activity systems do not always achieve the desired outcome. Within a single activity system, four types of contradiction have been proposed (Engestrom, 1987): primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary. A primary contradiction is one which results from activity participants finding that more than one value system is attached to an element of the activity system, while a secondary contradiction occurs when tension arises as a new element is incorporated into the system. A tertiary contradiction results from attempting to adopt a new method, such as new supervision arrangements, which produces conflict between the previous and new situation. Finally, quaternary contradictions are those which result from a change to the activity that leads to conflict with surrounding activities (Engestrom, 1987). Beyond these four levels of contradiction, it is possible to identify contradictions between activity systems which are interrelated in a network of activity systems, as in Engeström's proposed third generation of activity theory (Engeström, 1999). All these contradictions can be regarded as a source of creative tension that can lead to new and better ways of working.

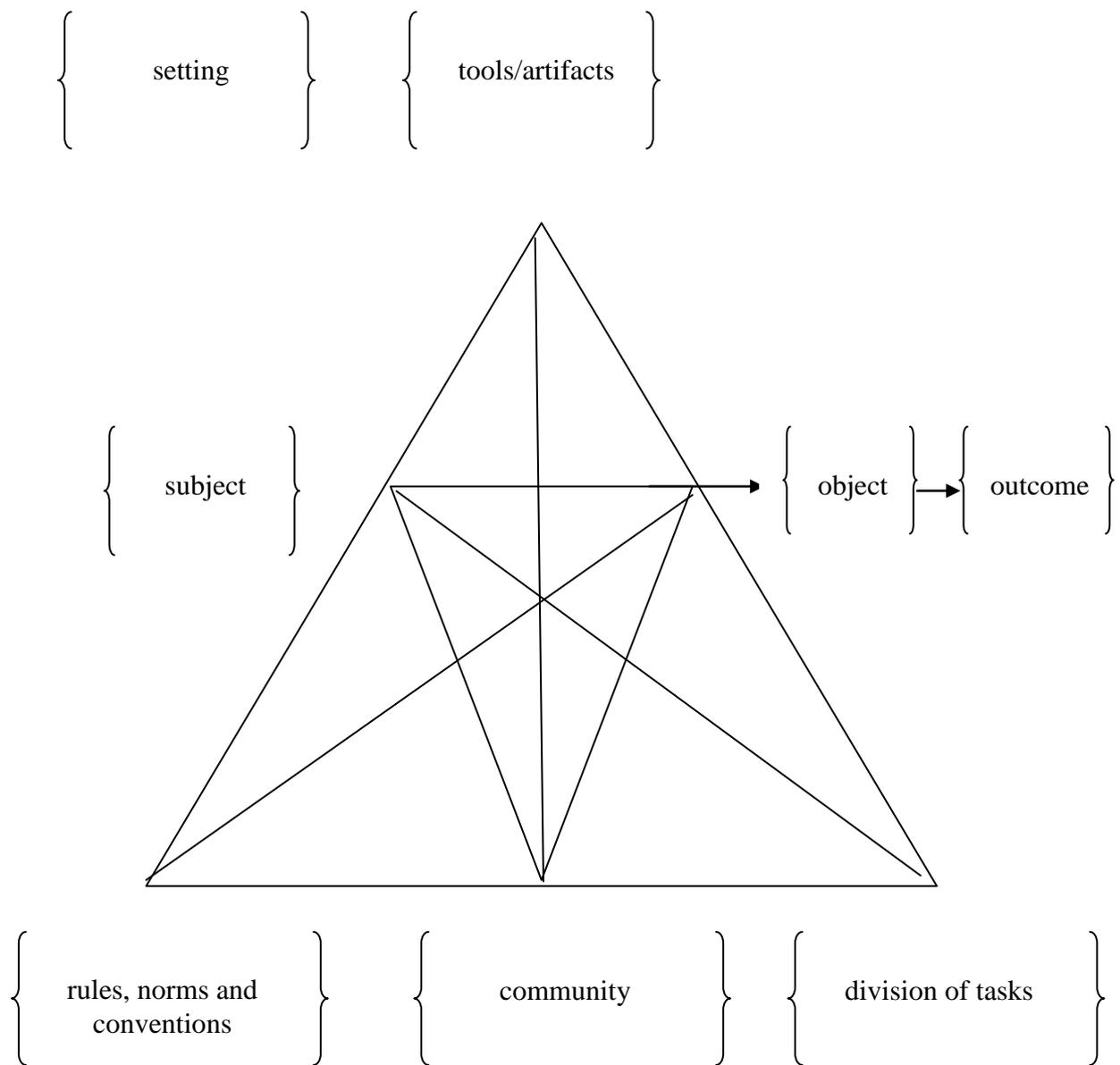
### **3.1 Activity theory applied to the current study**

The activity system is the unit of analysis and consists of the supervision of special educational needs specialists student teachers. The subjects, in other words, the identified individuals in the activity system being explored, are the college supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers participating in the process. The object is the immediate goal that subjects aim to achieve, such as, in the current study, professional development of student teachers, mediated by the surrounding social environment. The outcome is the end result, the ultimate purposes of the actions together with those of the community (Waite, 2003). In the current study of supervision of special education needs student teachers in primary schools in Saudi Arabia the subjects could be the student teachers, the object could be professional development, with the outcome of being effective teachers following completion of their initial teacher education. The perceived gap between theory and practice of teaching and between current and desired teaching capability creates the motivation for achievement of the outcome. The activity consists of the subject and object together with actions and operations, where actions are conscious goal-directed processes that are necessary to achieving the object and operations are the small tasks that make up the actions (Nardi, 1996). In the current study, the object of supervision could also be personal goals of a student teacher such as wanting to serve the community or secure stable employment, and could vary according to the subject of the activity. For example, a co-operating teacher will already have stable employment but could have job satisfaction as a goal.

In the context of supervision during field placement, the subject could be the student teacher, the object could be meeting required supervision standards (or learning to teach

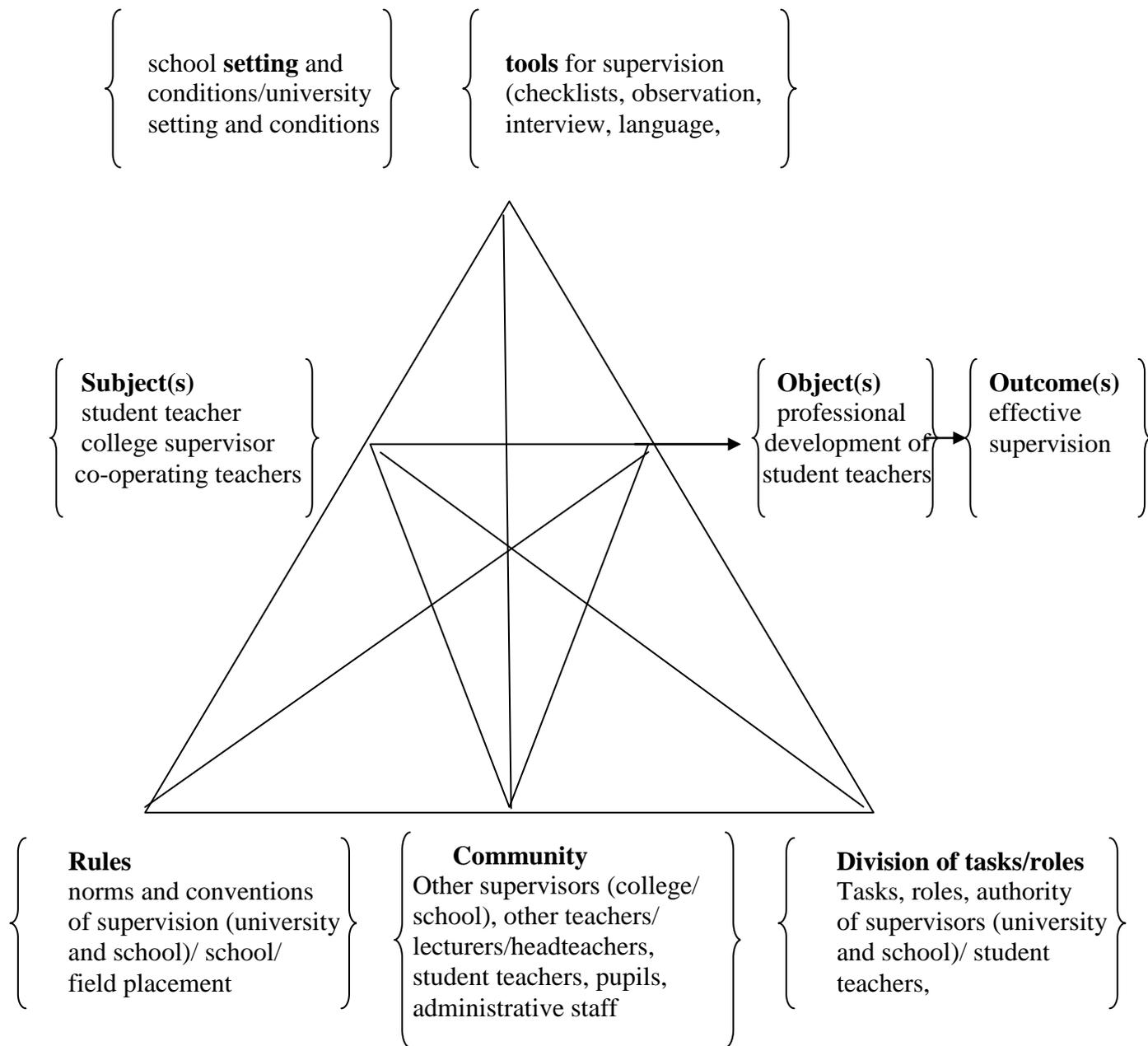
or learning how to teach a child classified as having a particular kind of special educational need) and the outcome could be obtaining a post (or a post at the school where they undertook their field placement) at the end of their initial teacher education. Equally well, the subjects could be the college supervisors, the object could be compliance with university guidelines on supervision and the outcome could be additional qualified specialist teachers (or obtaining additional funding for future university courses for specialist teachers or securing their own position). For co-operating teachers as subjects, the object could be meeting required supervision standards (or minimizing disruption to the school's administration systems, or answering specific questions asked by a student teacher) and the outcome could be personal development such as enhanced supervision skills or using ICT in teaching by the end of the education year. This study uses the activity system as a whole as the unit of analysis, incorporating the worldviews of different participants as relevant to the analysis. A diagram explaining the subjects, objects, outcomes, tools, community and division of task is shown in figure 3.1 and followed by a diagram showing the activity system of student teacher supervision in figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.1: Activity system model**



Source: Engeström (1987)

**Figure 3.2: Activity system model of student teacher supervision**



Source : Drawn by the researcher for the current study

This chapter has outlined activity theory as a flexible theoretical framework appropriate to studies concerning professional development. It allows the multiple aspects and perspectives involved in supervision to be identified and analyzed. Activity theory has also influenced the selection of data collection and data analysis methods, and the discussion of findings, as presented in the next chapter on methodology which focuses on the elements of the research design for this study.



## **Chapter 4 Methodology**

Hung et al. (2006) highlight that the use of activity theory as a framework for analyzing teaching and learning activities within a constructivist epistemology helps scrutinize the activities in which teachers and students are involved, the varieties of physical tools/mental models which they employ, as well as the goals, objectives and learning outcomes of the activities. They add that such an analysis facilitates understanding of the artifacts created in the overall socio-cultural contexts surrounding the work. However, this overall framework still needs to work coherently together with other elements of the research design and this chapter demonstrates the way in which this happens.

### **4.1 Research paradigm**

According to Denzin (1994), a research paradigm is a set of basic beliefs that deals with first principles, where 'basic' is used to mean that their ultimate truthfulness cannot be proved or disproved but simply has to be accepted. It represents a viewpoint that defines the underlying perspective of the research in terms of the researcher's understanding of "the nature of the "world," the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts". (Denzin 1994, p.107). A more simple definition of a research paradigm was offered by Bassey (1995) who explained it as a network of coherent ideas. However, that coherence itself is not necessarily simple, requiring analysis of the researcher's opinions and beliefs and identifying an appropriate fit between the research topic and the paradigm. It has been widely argued that the research methodology needs to be consistent with the ontology and epistemology in order to form a coherent study, although differences of opinion concerning this were

noted by Guba and Lincoln (1994). Different specialist fields, such as education, have tended to develop particular preferences over time for the epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies and methods employed in research, all of which continue to evolve to a certain extent.

The current study is informed by the interpretive paradigm which seeks culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world in which we live (Crotty, 1998). Interpretivism has been defined as “an approach that assumes that the meaning of human action is inherent in that action, and the task of the inquirer is to unearth that meaning” (Schwandt, 2007, p.160).

In view of the exploratory nature of this study, and its context-specificity, the naturalistic orientation of interpretive, qualitative research is an appropriate choice. The interpretative approach aims at understanding the context within which participants act, and understanding the process by which events and actions take place telling us from the ‘emic’s’ view why things have happened (Maxwell, 1996; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). This includes developing a description of an individual or setting by looking at the issue from different perspectives, analyzing data for themes or categories, and finally making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about the meaning personally and theoretically (Wolcott, 1994). In other words, the interpretive approach helps the researcher explore and understand the context within which supervision of special educational needs specialist student teachers on field placement is conducted in a Saudi Arabian sample. Accordingly, this also helps the researcher explore supervisory practices from the different perspectives of special educational needs specialist student teachers, co-operating teachers and college supervisors.

## **4.2 Research design**

According to De Vaus (2001, p.9), the aim of a research design is “to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible”. Robson (2002) also stresses the need for a clear focus of the research, leading to development of the research questions and what he terms the research strategy or high-level design. In addition, importance is attached to the selection of research methods, the logistics or practical planning of fieldwork and data collection and analysis together with report writing (Robson, 2002).

Crotty (2003, p.2) argues that there are four main stages in research design whatever the actual research. These are ontology (theoretical perspective on the nature of knowledge), epistemology (how that knowledge can be discovered), methodology (overall approach or plan) and method (the instrument or instruments used in data collection).

From an ontological perspective, this study assumes an interpretivist approach to the nature of knowledge: knowledge is created during the interactions that comprise supervision, for example observations, one-to-ones with co-operating teachers and formal supervision meetings, by the combined efforts of the participants. Moreover, this research is conducted within the interpretive paradigm because it is concerned with exploring perceptions from a range of different perspectives, those of student teachers, college supervisors and co-operating teachers. In order to uncover and explore these varying perceptions, the research methods employed were questionnaires, follow up in-depth interviews with respondents who agree to this and whose views represent a cross-section of the replies to the questionnaires, observations of teaching practice and

crucially observations of supervision meetings during student teachers' field placements. The use of these different realities and the researcher's need to understand also involves the researcher's own experience of teaching pre-service teachers in Saudi Arabia. The researcher's own experience is relevant to this study and brings with it the possibility of adding extra layers to the rich information gathered, therefore the findings are a reality created by the interaction of researcher and researched: although the interview findings were orally summarized and checked by the researcher at the end of the interview and participants were later given an opportunity to see and comment on a written summary, it was the interaction of these elements and hence of the researcher and researched that created the end results. The researcher was a student teacher, then a primary school teacher and subsequently a teacher in a secondary school before becoming a college supervisor for four years. This is consistent with the position of both Bryman (2001) and Denscombe (2003) who argue that research inevitably involves values and the researcher's self.

Three of the epistemological positions that can be taken by a researcher are; objectivist, which presupposes that meaning exists outside the researcher and the subjects, subjectivist, which assumes that the researcher imposes meaning on the topic and information gathered during the research, and finally there is the constructivist position which assumes that meaning is created through the process of engagement with the information gathered and multiple realities, however those realities are defined. In this study the researcher will engage with the pre-service teachers, teacher mentors, supervisors and educational administrators. In addition, the researcher's own experience includes spells of teaching in primary and secondary schools before moving on to teach pre-service teachers in an Arabic language and human sciences college (now a College

of Education) and it would be impossible to detach that experience even if it was desirable to do so. The end position lies somewhere between constructivist and interpretive, therefore a written record of the processes carried out by the researcher in gathering and analyzing data is included so that the interpretive aspects can be distinguished by the reader.

Al Zeera (2001) distinguishes between the positivist view that a researcher can remain detached from the reality being studied and the naturalistic view that the researcher and what is being researched are interlocked in such a way that the findings of the research are the creation of the enquiry process itself (Al Zeera, 2001). The constructivist stance argues that the knower and the known are created together during the process. Al Zeera goes further and recommends an Islamic research paradigm which brings self and situation together by understanding from an internal and spiritual perspective how the individual's internal understanding interrelates with the external world, a relationship between the One and the Many.

Methodology is "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods linking the choice and use of the methods to the desired outcomes" (Crotty, 2003, p.3). Within an overall qualitative methodology, the research design adopts a case study approach. Certain disadvantages of qualitative research have been identified, such as the time and effort needed for data collection, the risk of data overload, extensive data manipulation and coding, reliability of sampling methods, generalisability of findings, credibility of conclusions and the lack of methods of analysis, in addition to the possibility of researcher bias (Johnson and Harris, 2002; Nisbet and Watt (1984) in Cohen, et al., 2000, p.184).

This study attempted to reduce these shortcomings by ensuring that the sample of pre-service teachers was large enough to check that the problems identified for further investigation were representative of the whole target population, and interviews with a range of participants provided a cross check. The number of observations and in-depth interviews was limited in order to ensure that the data collection was managed within the planned timescale. Issues of sampling, data manipulation and analysis, together with the possibility of researcher bias, are discussed later in this chapter.

Within the overall qualitative methodology, the research design adopted a case study approach that employed several methods and techniques for gathering and analyzing data (Grix, 2004). A case study is defined by Adelman et al (1980) as the study of an instance in action and by Pring (2000, p.40) as “the study of the unique case or the particular instant”. Cohen (2000, p.181) states that case studies provide a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than if they are simply presented with abstract theories.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p.322) consider that a case study has several hallmarks:

- “It is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case.
- It provides a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case.
- It blends a description of events with the analysis of them.
- It focuses on individual actors or group of actors and seeks to understand their perceptions of events.
- It highlights specific events that are relevant to the case
- The researcher is integrally involved in the case.

- An attempt is made to portray the richness of the case in writing up the report.”

The use of a case study approach is supported by Denscombe (1998) who asserts that the case study is suitable for examination of a subject in its natural and complex context, which is pertinent in this case. The researcher would argue that this research also fits Denscombe’s example of a situation that is both unique and of special interest. In the proposed study, Saudi student-teachers practise their teaching in the light of the same contextual factors represented in their shared beliefs, backgrounds and perceptions of the Saudi community within which they live, learn what is socially acceptable, interact with each other and share different experiences

The main aim of employing a case study approach is to understand the chosen aspect of the situation or practice in depth through the uncovering, discovery and analysis of rich contextual information within which the particular aspect of practice can be understood. A case study typically involves a range of data collection methods in order to fully explore the case. For example, the current study required collection and understanding of data related to supervision practice guidelines in universities and colleges and the associated documentation, as well as data related to the supervision process in terms of both administrative procedures and actual interactions. It also required data about the interactions and processes themselves, information obtained from detailed observations of supervision meetings backed up by a smaller sample of lesson observations.

Using a range of data collection methods (documentation review, questionnaires, interviews, observations) can help to strengthen the validity of the evidence gathered by

checking that the evidence collected from different sources and in different ways agrees, otherwise known as triangulation (Mason, 1996). Areas where information does not agree can help to highlight and stimulate further investigation. Employing a range of methods can also shed light on multiple perspectives in a research situation, in keeping with a constructivist epistemology appropriate to “understanding, multiple participant meanings, social and historical construction, theory generation” (Creswell, 1994, p.6).

The use of mixed methods (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998), a questionnaire alongside observations and semi-structured interviews, was chosen because information from the questionnaire could be used to reinforce or challenge the findings from the in-depth interviews. De Vaus (2010) argues that research methods are common to all research designs and can be used in a way appropriate to answering the research questions. This also suited the context in which the field work was carried out: the distances in Saudi Arabia, combined with the short school day and intense periods of supervisory activity, would make it impossible to achieve such a sample in any other way. Postal and telephone responses are notoriously difficult to obtain, based on the experience of Saudi Arabian postgraduate students and there are difficulties associated with email contact, firstly of finding the email contacts and secondly of a lack of accessible ICT facilities outside of the university. Teaching placements and college supervisors are often allocated on a geographic basis and one of the difficulties supervisors experience in spending time with their student teachers is the distance between placement school and university, frequently in excess of 500Km. Travelling is not only time-consuming but is accompanied by complications of cultural conventions such as not leaving women in the family so far away and without a male family member to assist if transport is needed. There is also the time factor: spending hours travelling from one location to another contributes no useful data to the study, as it is possible to obtain a typical cross-

section of supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers without doing so, as evidenced by the actual data collected in the current study. These methods are “real-world practice oriented” (Cresswell, 1994, p.6).

### **4.3 Data collection**

As Wellington (2000) argues, the research questions determine the methods to be adopted. To answer the first research question “How are Saudi special education needs specialist student teachers supervised in their teaching practice?”, the researcher designed a questionnaire and administered it to study participants to explore the different supervisory practices exercised by supervisors with student teachers at schools. This helped to confirm the most important categories and themes of the semi-structured interview. Regarding the second question, “To what extent do the roles of different supervisors enhance pre-service teacher education?”, the semi-structured interviews as well as the observations helped the researcher pinpoint the supervisory practices as viewed by co-operating teachers and university supervisors. As for the question about perceptions, the semi-structured interviews as well as the observations helped the researcher crystallize how the supervisory practices are seen by Saudi student teachers, college supervisors and co-operating teachers.

The principal instruments were a structured questionnaire, observation protocols, and a series of semi-structured interview guides. The questionnaires were used to investigate whether perceptions gathered through observations and semi-structured interviews are more widely held. Observation protocols were designed used to ensure that observations

of participants in the supervision meetings were consistent across different people. Separate interview guides were used for the different groups of participants in the supervision meetings in order to highlight the range of issues appropriate to each group. Teaching observations were an important element inasmuch as they allowed the researcher to cross-check whether some of the problems reported by participants in the supervision meetings appeared to exist in practice or whether they were a product of external pressures and fears about what could go wrong in the classroom. Furthermore, they allowed for the possibility that non-verbal communication affected what was taking place, something that could only be assessed through observation.

#### **4.4. Participants and sample**

The sample was a purposive one, appropriate to the study where a specific target group formed the subject of the research and a biased sample of lecturers and teachers was required (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). Supervisors and student teachers were selected according to two criteria, purposiveness and accessibility (Silverman, 2001). That is to say, the student teachers were participating in a B.A. Degree in Special Educational Needs Specialist Education at the time the study was conducted. They shared some common characteristics – all men, all in their early twenties and from the same Saudi culture - but had varied background knowledge.

For the questionnaire, a 100% sample of male SEN specialist student teachers in the final semester of their four-year course and of college supervisors at the Department of Special Education at King Saud University was chosen together with 15 co-operating teachers drawn from 15 schools in Riyadh. There were 160 student teachers, and 15 college supervisors, hence the selection of 15 co-operating teachers to achieve a balance

of numbers among the groups of supervisory team members in order to facilitate comparison of results from the questionnaires.

For the detailed in-depth investigation of the supervision process and perceptions of supervision meetings, a sample of ten student teachers was drawn from the 160 who received questionnaires with their ten cooperating teachers and between one and three college supervisors according to practicalities. Observation and recording of the supervision meetings required two observations of each of the ten student teachers in their formative and summative meetings with their college supervisors, and because of university timetabling these meetings occurred in the space of 2-3 weeks for the formative supervision meetings and then again in another spell of 2-3 weeks for the summative meetings. In order to fully understand the supervision activity system, it was necessary to observe and record a minimum of two teaching observations conducted with different student teachers by different college supervisors and to observe and record a minimum of two less formal meetings between student teachers and their cooperating teachers. The intention was to observe five or six of each but this was dependent on several factors; the location of schools, ease of travel to, from and between schools, and circumstances on the day of the planned observation. It was also necessary to observe at least one induction to a school to gather an example first-hand and then to check during interviews at other schools whether the induction procedures and process differed between schools.

At the start of the fieldwork, it was essential to plan with the college supervisor who allocated student teachers to schools in a particular locality exactly how the data collection would work, agreeing the schools and supervisory team members to be

approached and identifying additional possible participants in case any individuals express a wish not to be involved in the research. Taking the school where the induction visit observation was carried out, the sequence of interviews and observations needed to be followed through and planned for. This meant first interviewing the college supervisor, then the Headteacher, followed by the co-operating teacher, observing whichever came first of the discussion between a college supervisor and headteacher or the co-operating teacher observing a student teacher. The fixed points in the fieldwork timetable were the initial induction and the dates of college supervisor visits for the formative and summative assessments. Every other aspect of the fieldwork required meticulous planning and a willingness to be flexible and accommodate any last-minute changes by the university, the school, the student teacher or all three.

Subject to obtaining the required permissions from the university, schools, student teachers, inspectors and the Ministry of Education, interviews and other interactions were recorded so that transcripts could be checked later for accuracy.

#### **4.5. Procedures**

Data was collected in two stages between December 2009 and June 2010, particularly during the final semester of the student teachers' four-year course which was their first opportunity to practise their teaching while on a field placement. The procedures for this study were as follows. First, all potential participants were sent letters explaining the study and inviting them to participate, together with a consent form they needed to sign if they were willing to take part. They were made aware of their right to not participate or to withdraw from the study if they felt at any point that they did not wish to continue. Student teachers were asked to fill in the questionnaire, which was quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed soon afterwards. The 15 college supervisors and 15 co-operating

teachers were approached in the same way. Every individual in the sampling frame who returned a consent form was sent a questionnaire.

The individuals in the sample selected for semi-structured interviews were invited to participate outside of their teaching commitment hours in order not to distract them or their school from their main purpose in being there. In effect they were given a free choice about when to meet the researcher. Interviews were based on interview guides for each of the target groups of interviewees. Most of the questions were common to all the target groups but there were some questions specific to each group. Copies of the interview guides are contained in Appendix 3. All the interviews were conducted in Arabic to give the research authenticity and trustworthiness, then audiotaped, transcribed and translated.

For the observations, observation protocols were drawn up to ensure consistency between the observations and also to ensure that information about the activity system was captured in a form that made it easier to analyze. Interview guides were based on activity theory, with questions or sections targeted on the subject, object, outcome, setting, community, rules and norms, artifacts and division of tasks. In contrast, the observation protocols were based on recording in full the events being observed and then classifying the data gathered into the appropriate aspect of activity theory.

#### **4.6. Justification of Research Instruments**

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered

without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse (Wilson and McLean, 1994). There are many advantages of the questionnaire, for instance it tends to be more reliable because it is anonymous, it encourages greater honesty, it is more economical than the interview in terms of money and time and there is the possibility that it may be mailed. In the current study, it was easy to administer and collect the questionnaire through the Department of Special Education at King Saud University, because student teachers and college supervisors were all based at the university at the time the fieldwork commenced so that questionnaires could be given out at a central point for the majority of research participants and then collected from them at the end of their teaching practice placement.

As for the interview, it is a flexible tool, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard (Cohen et al., 2007). Interviews are significant in data collection because they enable participants - be they interviewers or interviewees - to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and express how they regard situations from their own viewpoint.

As Robson (2006, p.270) explains, “there are three main types of interviews; the fully structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview”. The proposed study used the semi-structured interview because whilst sharing some of the advantages of the structured interview in terms of systematic exploration and data collection specific to certain clearly defined areas, it is more flexible. For example, the order of questions can be modified according to what the interviewer perceives to be most appropriate as the interview develops, the wording of questions can be altered, questions can be paraphrased and explained, supplementary questions can be introduced

if a particular aspect of the interview merits further exploration and specific questions omitted if they do not seem inappropriate to a particular interviewee. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews makes them more suitable to the objectives of the current study. In other words, the research methods employed in this study have predetermined questions and are well-structured, but allow space for modifications, omission and inclusion of certain questions and issues.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) highlight the importance of observation as the fundamental base of all research methods in the social sciences, stating that researchers use observational methods besides interviews to “note body language and other gestural cues to lend meaning to the words of the persons being interviewed” (p.729). Observation as Cohen et al. (2007) illustrate has a unique strength which distinguishes it from the other data collection tools: the use of immediate awareness, or direct cognition, as a principal mode of research. It has the potential to yield more valid and authentic data than would otherwise be the case with mediated or inferential methods.

Observational data are attractive as they afford the researcher to the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from ‘live’ situations. The researcher can see what is actually happening in situ rather than gather data at second hand (Patton, 1990). The semi-structured observation chosen for the study enabled the researcher to explore how supervision is practised in class from both the researcher’s perspectives. In other words, the semi-structured observation is used to review observational data before suggesting an explanation for the phenomena being observed (Cohen et al., 2002).

## **Observation protocols**

It is important to ensure that all observations are, as far as possible, conducted in a consistent way in order to avoid undue bias on the part of the researcher. The observation protocols therefore addressed the elements of helpful and unhelpful contributions and behaviours together with elements of activity theory (subjects, tools, rules, community, division of tasks, objects and the actions involved).

The mixed methods of data collection mentioned above (i.e. questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observation) were used to explore the participants' views and perspectives of supervisory practices. The strengths of each of these methods have helped to compensate for the weaknesses and the methods complement each other, contributing through triangulation to the trustworthiness of the study. The combination of methods gave more depth and added vivid layers of description to the participants' views of what is being investigated.

The data collection instruments used in the current study to answer the research questions were designed specifically around elements of the activity theory framework and themes arising from the literature review, as illustrated by the examples in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Relationship between activity theory, literature review themes and design of data collection instruments

RESEARCH QUESTION	Questionnaire (structured around literature review themes/activity theory)	Interview (structured around activity theory (AT) elements)	Observation (AT-based structure)	Other
1) How are Saudi special education needs specialist student teachers supervised in their teaching practice?	<p>For supervision with college supervisors and co-operating teachers separately:</p> <p>How often and for how long</p> <p>Aspects of supervision (Section III tools and rules focused on student teacher professional development)</p> <p>Topics discussed and who decides (Section V tools and rules)</p> <p>Differences between SEN and mainstream teachers</p>	<p>Ratio of supervisor to supervised</p> <p>What happens in a typical meeting (the activity)</p> <p>Division of labour (college supervisor/co-operating teacher)</p> <p>Purpose of supervision</p>	<p>Supervision meetings (Tools, rules, objects and outcomes)</p> <p>Triangulation with data collected using other methods</p>	<p>King Saud University policies and procedures: assessment form(s)</p>
2) To what extent do the roles of different supervisors enhance pre-service teacher education?	<p>Section IV on roles and responsibilities; comparison of perceived importance and usefulness by participant groups</p>	<p>Professional development (subject and object)</p> <p>How do student teachers feel they are progressing</p> <p>What do college supervisors and co-operating teachers do to help</p>		

		them progress		
3) To what extent do supervision approaches contribute to professional development of all those involved?	Professional development of student teachers and supervisors (subject) What skills seeking to develop in current role (subject)	What do college supervisors and co-operating teachers do to help them progress Comparison with lectures and practical teaching		
4) What are the perceptions of supervision held by the participants in the supervisory process?	Most helpful practices in supervision Supervision compared with university lectures and practical teaching Information about supervision meetings and what supervisors do collected separately from college supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers	Information about supervision meetings and what supervisors do collected separately from college supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers	Observations of difference between regulations/ procedures and practice	
5) How do these perceptions influence the practice of supervision?	Planned development of supervision by supervisors Types of communication	Planned development of supervision by supervisors Types of communication	What supervisors do in teaching observations and meetings Reactions of student teachers	

6) How can the existing model or models of supervision be improved?	Purpose of supervision (object/outcome) Suggestions for improvement	Importance of supervisors being trained in supervision Suggestions for improvement		

Questionnaires were designed not only to address the research questions, but also with the need for variety in mind in order to ensure participants remained interested and engaged in completion of the questionnaire. Questions were grouped into clusters: supervision, participant’s professional development (as co-operating teacher or supervisor), professional development of student teachers, roles and responsibilities, supervisory tools and techniques.

Two examples of Likert scale questions are shown, the first from section one on supervision and the second from section three on professional development.

Q1. How important are the following aspects of supervision?

Very Important (5) Important (4) Unsure (3) Not important (2) Not at all important (1)

- 1- Formative assessment.....5 4 3 2 1
- 2- Summative evaluation.....5 4 3 2 1
- 3- Giving immediate feedback to a student teacher after observation....5 4 3 2 1
- 4- Giving both written and oral feedback.....5 4 3 2 1
- 5- Completing required documentation .....5 4 3 2 1
- 6- Suggesting resources for student teachers .....5 4 3 2 1
- 7- Giving advice on alternative teaching strategies.....5 4 3 2 1
- 8- Setting clear goals for student teachers.....5 4 3 2 1
- 9- Setting clear expectations for student teachers (of college,..... 5 4 3 2 1  
school etc.)
- 10- Completing the supervision meeting checklist.....5 4 3 2 1
- 11- Liaising with the university.....5 4 3 2 1
- 12- Discussing the relationship between special educational needs and

mainstream teaching .....5 4 3 2 1

Q13. Which of the following do you do in supervision meetings? (please tick all that apply)

- 1- Decide the topics and issues to be discussed
- 2- Encourage student teachers to choose topics/issues to discuss
- 3- Spend most of the meeting giving information and advice
- 4- Spend most of the meeting listening to the student teacher
- 5- Explain the core standards
- 6- Explain expectations of school and headteacher
- 7- Follow the checklist
- 8- Help students to become independent in their own professional development
- 9- Help them to make links between mainstream and special education needs teaching

14. How long does a typical supervision meeting last? (please state the length of time)

Other types of questions are illustrated by the two following examples regarding the professional development of supervisors.



<p>Effects on professional development of:</p> <p>Community ('other influences')</p> <p>Tools</p> <p>Division of labour ('roles and responsibilities')</p> <p>Rules</p>	<p>What ideas for supervision are you developing at present?</p> <p>How are you trying to do this?</p> <p>What helps you to do this?</p> <p>What hinders you?</p> <p>What ideas have you had that you thought could be useful?</p>	<p>Professional development/training</p> <p>Colleagues/work experience/life experience</p> <p>Reading/theory</p> <p>Experimentation</p> <p><b>Division of labour</b> (power, conflicting roles of supervisor/lecturer, others involved in supervision process)</p> <p><b>Tools</b> Reading/theory, hints and tips</p> <p><b>Rules</b> Core standards</p> <p><b>Other influences</b> Expectations of university colleagues, schools, policies and procedures</p> <p>University/college philosophy and atmosphere, expectations of inspectors/student teachers</p>
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#### 4.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis of the study employed quantitative and qualitative techniques in accordance with the data instruments that were used and then in order to pull together the different analyses. For the quantitative data analysis, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to generate both descriptive and inferential statistics to compare findings from the three groups of supervisory team members (college supervisor, headteacher and co-operating teacher), and to assess the overall picture emerging from responses provided by the student teachers. A Likert scale was used to rate perceptions (scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents completely disagree and 5 represents completely agree) and also to rate frequency of use of particular supervisory models and techniques.

With regard to the qualitative data analysis, the semi-structured interviews were audiotaped (in every instance where permission was given by the participants) and then transcribed and translated, also coded and then analyzed. A full description of the data analysis process is contained in Appendix 4. As Holliday (2002, p.110) states “the data, commentary and argument are the building blocks of thick description”. The analyses will give thick layers of description and insightful views about the participants and hence lead to the implications of the study.

In this particular study, it was essential to develop a coding system that could assist the researcher in manipulating not only data pertaining to both facts and perceptions but also to the elements of activity theory.

#### **4.8 Translation Issues**

The quality of translation, which can affect the data analysis, is influenced by the linguistic skills and interests of the translator, as well as by further factors such as understanding of the cultural context (Temple, 1997). A technique often used to check accuracy of translation is back translation, a process of translating first into the target language, in this study into Arabic for the data collection instruments and into English for the data analysis. The translated version alone is then independently translated back into the original language (English for the data collection instruments and Arabic for the data analysis). Finally, according to Ercikan (1998) the two versions are compared and any lack of clarity or inaccurate translation is addressed. However, it should be noted that back translation is not free from problems because the final version agreed upon may be a compromise between what was said in the original and the translation. In this study, the researcher carried out the initial translations which were back translated by two friends who held PhDs

in education from English universities. Differences and unclear meanings were resolved in conversations and emails by the researcher, translators and proofreaders.

#### **4.9 Ethical Issues**

The importance of ethical issues was highlighted by Robson (2006, p.66) who argues that “Control over what people do obviously has a moral dimension. Ethical dilemmas lurk in any research involving people.” The data collection phase involved a number of ethical issues that should be taken into consideration. In line with BERA ethical guidelines (2004) and University of Exeter Ethics Committee regulations and procedures, educational research carried with it ethical concerns and every effort should be made to avoid causing any harm, loss or detriment to participants. Firstly, permission was sought from the Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct the research at different schools, and then from a leading faculty of education in Saudi Arabia that was involved and also from all participants individually to ensure they were willing to take part in the research. Each participant was given a consent form to read and sign to confirm their voluntary participation in this study (Appendix 5 refers). In addition, participants were informed that it was their right to withdraw from participation in the study at any time if they wished to do so. Moreover, they were told at the outset the purpose of the research, how the findings would be used and who would make use of them.

There were important issues of privacy and confidentiality in this study. Whilst the researcher assured participants that their answers would be coded so that they could not be identified as individuals in the final thesis, they were made aware that the thesis supervisor

might wish to access details of the raw data and participants in order to be confident of the authenticity of the findings. However, participants' real concerns were likely to arise from their situation. Student teachers could have been unwilling to make statements that they believed could endanger their field placement marks or future employment. College supervisors and co-operating teachers would also have their own agendas and objectives and could have been either unwilling or too willing to upset or blame each other. Even though participants' names were altered to maintain their confidentiality (Pring, 2000), there was always some risk that the small numbers involved in the study could be identified by someone familiar with the location of the study. Considerable sensitivity was required by the researcher to uncover opinions that lie below the surface of conversations and, in Arab cultures, this depends to a considerable degree on the relationship between participant and researcher that the researcher is able to establish. Finally, participants were asked for permission to use quotations from their interviews.

#### **4.10 Challenges faced by the researcher**

Some difficulties were expected to be encountered in this study and occurred in practice. Firstly, getting the permission of the Saudi Ministry of Education and the relevant Faculty of Education included prolonged administrative and bureaucratic procedures which required two to three months to complete, although the procedures were completed more quickly than they might have been because the researcher had obtained, with the help of the thesis supervisor, a letter of support and permission from the Ministry of Higher Education that facilitated matters.

Secondly, all college supervisors were extremely busy, and some 10 of the 20 supervisors at King Saud University were involved with special schools rather than inclusive schools which ruled them out of the sampling frame. Finally, 6 college supervisors were found who were willing to participate in the study. However, the scheduling of observations and interviews had to be revised almost constantly as there was no fixed timetable for college supervisors to meet student teachers in any of the schools. It took a number of visits to the university as well as telephone calls to arrange data collection opportunities with some of the college supervisors. Arranging opportunities to interview and observe co-operating teachers in action also took several attempts because of their busy schedules. These challenges were reflected in the response rates; 59% for student teachers, 80% for co-operating teachers and 40% for college supervisors. However, the response rates and sample sizes were sufficient to collect the quality and quantity of data needed for analysis.

Travelling proved to be problematic because of the distances and time involved, and the logistics of fitting this in with finding schools for my children and driving them to and from their schools as well as the schools in the current study. More than 40 schools were visited, although observations and interviews were primarily concentrated in five schools.

Data analysis also proved challenging because the volume of data collected was high and so manipulation of the data took longer than anticipated. For each semi-structured interview lasting one hour, a further four hours were allowed for transcription because the researcher had little previous experience of doing this, and an additional two hours or more for translation, meaning that, in total, time spent on the semi-structured interviews was considerable even before the data was analyzed.

During the field placement, the availability of literature and information technology resources in Saudi Arabia, in libraries or elsewhere, could also have proved a limiting factor, therefore with the exception of literature in Arabic, as much of the literature review as possible was conducted during the researcher's time in the UK.

There is almost no relevant research in Saudi Arabia in the area of supervisory practices that are carried out to support Saudi student-teachers and none directly relevant to SEN specialist student-teachers and so the study was in some respects a challenge in itself. It was an additional challenge to conduct the research in a way that did not give offence to any of the participants who themselves were facing considerable challenges and stress at a time of significant changes in the country's education system; expansion of the whole education system and of education for children with special educational needs in particular, and a rapid increase in the number of specialist education programmes for those children, in accordance with a strong movement towards inclusion. In addition, the fieldwork was conducted towards the end of an academic year when the pressure was on mainstream teachers and school Headteachers to achieve results.

Quite apart from the logistical challenges, the financial resources and time available to the researcher were limited: time was limited by the period when teaching practice takes place. However, the importance and relevance of ITE to the changes taking place in education in Saudi Arabia meant that it was highly appropriate to focus on the perceptions and development of student-teachers who would be new to the profession, potentially more

open to new possibilities and critical to the success of future progress with inclusion, in spite of the difficulties.

## **Chapter 5      Analysis of findings**

### ***5.1 Introduction***

This chapter analyses the data and presents the findings from the questionnaires, interviews and observations. The qualitative data generated to answer the research questions were gathered through open-ended questions in the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and observations. Research questions were defined as: how are Saudi special education needs specialist student teachers supervised in their teaching practice? To what extent do the roles of university supervisors and cooperating teachers enhance pre-service teacher education? How do the supervision approaches contribute to professional development? What are the perceptions of participants in the supervisory process? How can the existing model or models of supervision can be improved?

Qualitative data are presented following coding and interpretation to illuminate the themes emerging from the analysis process and are supported with quantitative data from the questionnaires which are presented in the form of tables of descriptive statistics. (A more detailed description of the analysis process is contained in Appendix 4).

### ***5.2 Data analysis process***

This section sets out the overall approach to the data analysis before providing sufficient detail of the processes adopted in analyzing the questionnaires and interviews, including the rationale underpinning key choices of code, to enable the reader to understand the interpretation of the data in the remainder of the chapter. The purpose of the data analysis stage is to systematically prepare data and then organise it into key themes to facilitate

interpretation and discussion of results and findings, typically with the aid of coding schemes (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) argues that the data analysis and interpretation are iterative processes rather than stages and work together in what he calls the “Data Analysis Spiral” (ibid., p.150-151) and are also interlinked with data collection processes in a non-linear way. In the current study, the transcribed material was read a number of times, looking for alternative and new connections between data items and amending the organization and coding of the data as the researcher’s understanding of the data deepened, in accordance with Miles and Huberman (1994). Data analysis in qualitative research uses both inductive and deductive processes, starting with inductive analysis as the researcher remains as open to the data as possible, seeking to identify key words and ideas, patterns and themes that emerge from the data as given by participants (Patton, 2002). During the inductive stage, the researcher experiences an intensive process of familiarization with the data, finding new meanings and insights and reconsidering existing meanings and insights, and re-examining thematic codings as a consequence. One of the more difficult aspects of qualitative data analysis in a study that uses activity theory as a framework is that there are no clear procedures for carrying out any particular stage of the study (Bannon, 1997).

The data in this study were collected from questionnaires which included Likert scale questions and open questions, from semi-structured interviews and from observations. Each set of data was prepared and analysed separately before compiling the findings. The data analysis process had to be carried out in a way that would enable emerging findings to be read across the different sources. This section reports how each was treated, starting with the questionnaires, then discussing analysis of interview data and finally observation data. However, all the data except for the Likert scale questions shared a common feature, the need for translation, and the interviews also required transcription. The first step, which

was applied to all three sources of data, was to read or listen to the responses several times to gain familiarity with and a broad understanding of the data collected. The rest of this introductory section reports and reflects on the actual processes of data analysis that were used, firstly for the questionnaires then for the interviews, next for the observations and finally for other sources.

### **5.2.1 Data analysis of questionnaires**

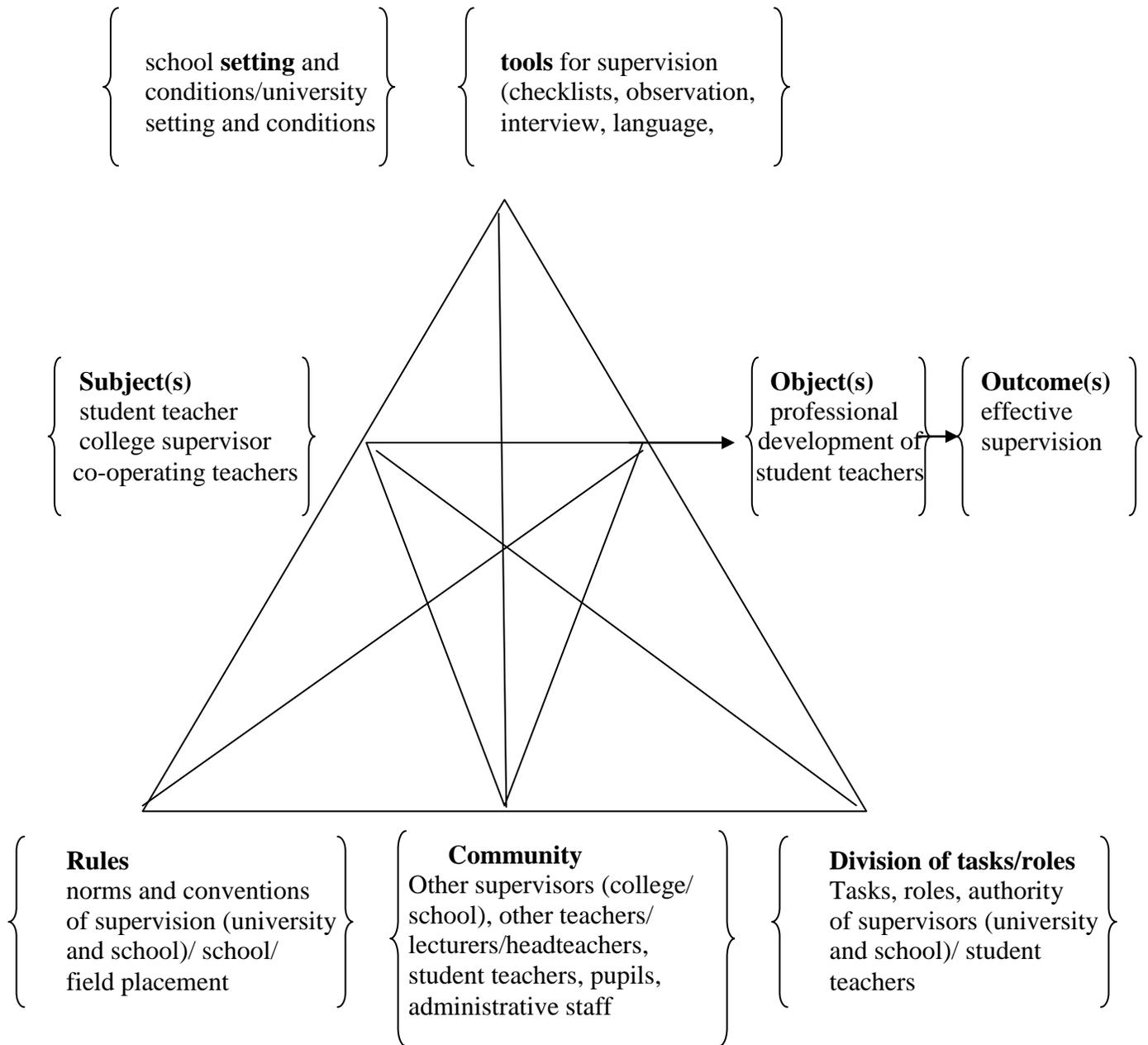
The first step was to tackle the responses to open questions, which involved translating the responses into English as literally as possible in order to keep as close as possible to the words used by the research participants. There were times when this was not always feasible, as the very literal translation sometimes changed the meaning or lacked meaning altogether and so in a small minority of cases, the meaning was translated rather than the words where the meaning was clear from other responses in the same questionnaire or from the researcher's own knowledge of the culture and context. The next task was to begin the process of organizing the data by breaking it down into manageable chunks, the size of chunk dependent on how participants answered open questions in the questionnaires and responded to interview questions. For the questionnaire responses, the chunks were quite small, mostly consisting of a single idea with one or two key words, a main idea and a subcategory when appropriate. Coding is a process, a way of labelling aspects of the data that allows information to be sorted into distinct categories: "Coding is an essential procedure. Any researcher who wishes to become proficient at doing qualitative analysis must learn to code well and easily. The excellence of the research results in large part on the excellence of the coding" (Strauss, 1987, p.27). However, what constitutes excellence

in a code is not obvious: according to Boyatzis (1998, p. 1), a “good code” is a code that encapsulates the rich nature of the data and the phenomenon itself.

The coding scheme in this study was developed with three frameworks in mind; the themes emerging from the words in the collected data, the themes that had emerged from the literature review and the activity theory elements. Translations and meanings were reviewed during both the second and third steps which involved setting up spreadsheets to enter the responses to each of the open-ended questions, identifying each respondent by a number. This first step was essential to understanding what respondents were saying in relation to the themes that emerged from the literature review: “All too often qualitative researchers advance to the comparison or the relationship analysis without first understanding their core concept or idea” (Cresswell, 2007, p.46). Following repeated reading of transcripts and entering chunks of text into spreadsheets, key words from the responses were identified, a main and a secondary word or phrase, before re-reading responses and key words in order to group ideas into more abstract categories.

In the first two to three passes through the data, particular attention was paid to the elements in the activity theory framework described in chapter 3 and reproduced in figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Activity system model of student teacher supervision



Source: Drawn by the researcher for the current study

Division of tasks and roles, rules, community, objects and outcomes all emerged strongly in the early readings of the data. Since the activity system under study was supervision of student teachers, the subjects were mainly the student teachers whose teaching practice was being evaluated. The tools of language as used by college supervisors and co-operating teachers also emerged strongly, as did teaching and learning aids and materials, also

pedagogical methods, that constitute vital elements of teaching practice. The division of tasks referred to the role played by each of the participants in the supervision process; the student teacher, the co-operating teacher and the college supervisor. Whereas as the objects referred to the immediate purposes of and motivation for the activity in which the subjects were engaged, such as learning from the college supervisor, the outcomes referred to the wider and longer term purposes such as successfully gaining the teaching qualification or obtaining secure employment. Purposes were also considered from the viewpoints of different stakeholders (Bannon, 1997). The community in the context of this study consisted of the people involved in the practicum in the school; the headteacher, regular and special educational needs specialist teachers, the co-operating teacher(s), the college supervisor, the pupils, other student teachers, administrative and other staff. However, there were a number of distinct communities of practice within the overall 'community': for example, college supervisors were not only distinguished by the set of multiple tasks they delivered as university staff but also by their membership of the university community with a different set of objects, outcomes and rules from those of the school. Further examples lay in the clear distinction between main and student special needs teachers in many of the schools and in the special education services staff in schools who were for the most part a separate community of practice from the general teachers. To illustrate this point through a difference in rules, special needs teachers and student teachers work largely from individual educational plans (IEPs) which may be combined into a group plan if appropriate, whereas general teachers work from more standardized lesson plans geared to delivery of the national curriculum. Then again, there is a much wider sense of community which includes the influence of wider society on the education system, in universities and on individual schools.

The rules related to the explicit policies and regulations that determined actions, interactions and customs and practice, as well the implicit and tacit rules that were often apparent only in behaviours. During the coding and data reduction stages, it was certainly possible to identify tensions and contradictions (Kuutti, 1996; Engeström, 1999).

### **5.2.2 Data analysis of interviews**

The first step was to create interview transcripts from the audio recordings of interviews. The second step was to translate the transcripts into English: both these steps were more time consuming than had been anticipated. However, the transcription and translation offered opportunities to get to know and understand the data more deeply which is an essential stage in data analysis. Organizing the interview data into manageable chunks was done using larger chunks of text as the answers tended to be longer and also include more elements of repetition and rephrasing. All interview transcription was completed once all the interviews had been carried out in order to reduce the risk of responses in earlier interviews affecting those in later interviews. Summarizing was avoided as it was considered important to keep as close to respondents' actual words as possible, provided there was no loss of meaning and clarity, and paraphrase was resisted on the same basis. Although Boyzatis (1998, p.45) stated that the processes of summary and paraphrase could help researchers by entering information into their “unconscious, as well as consciously processing” the data, these processes carry a risk of researcher bias in interpretation at an early stage of data analysis. The first phases of the data analysis in the current study were therefore time consuming, but not as time consuming as the steps that followed. The first task of data analysis was to set out the data in a format that could be viewed and used to facilitate coding and later data reduction. In fact, many hours were spent looking at the data

and deciding on key words for coding in order to do this because several key themes were often contained in a single sentence, so there were two processes at work at the same time, reduction and expansion. To achieve this, individual responses to questions were entered into a spreadsheet, one small chunk at a time. As with the open questions in the questionnaire, the key words were then entered in the two columns to the right of the responses, a main word and a secondary word if appropriate. However, it became evident at an early stage that some of the responses were falling into the same categories as those in the questionnaires. Therefore, where these categories were clearly appropriate, they were used rather than the key word approach. Nonetheless, individual chunks of text continued to be analysed based on actual wording: for example, near the end of one interview, key words such as 'communication with parents' were identified which had not previously emerged from the data, and which could indicate a need for further categories to be added.

Following the analysis of student teacher open questions from the questionnaire and interviews, a similar process was undertaken with the data obtained from co-operating teachers in order to establish whether more codes needed to be created. In practice, some four to five new codes were required, but the majority of the data could be appropriately coded using the codes that had emerged from the student teacher data.

At this point, the decision was taken to draw up a coding template (see Table 5.1) that could be used to analyse the remaining data from supervisor interviews, observation of cooperating teachers' supervision meetings with student teachers and teaching practice.

In developing the version of the coding template to be used for all data analysis, there were difficult choices to be made, for example between coding on the basis of activity theory

elements and adding to them, on themes emerging from the literature and adding to them, or on collected data with additions from the literature. Several attempts were made using the different possible approaches: although initially the most satisfactory of these appeared to be a template based on the collected data, in fact it was found that a template based on the elements of activity theory enabled all the data to be captured under relevant categories and therefore activity theory was the chosen basis of the template, supported by themes from the literature review such as ‘culture of learning’ which could not be adequately covered elsewhere.

### **5.2.3 Reflection on the process**

A researcher’s own experiences and assumptions can be a possible cause of bias or misinterpretation. The language itself caused difficulty at times. One particular example is that different participants have used ‘direction’ in different senses. Some have used it to mean guidance and advice from supervisors: others have used it to mean ‘tell me what to do and I will do it’. The differences became evident in the crosschecking of particular responses with other responses from the same participant and it was important in recording the findings and discussion to note where such differences existed.

On occasion, re-reading of transcripts and questionnaire responses resulted in reinterpretation and several readings of statements were sometimes necessary before a decision could be taken about which key words to assign to them or where to start and end a chunk of text. Some statements in the interview transcripts could only be clarified by

listening again to the audio recordings to try to understand exactly what was meant, because in a number of cases the intonation and inflection carried an important part of the meaning and although the Arabic words and the surface level meaning were clearly understood, the full meaning was only revealed upon fully attentive listening.

It was difficult to carry out the thematic analysis and at the same time pay sufficient attention to the activity theory framework which underpins the overall methodology because working as far as possible from the participants' own words required preconceived frameworks to be set aside. Developing categories and codes from the actual words used by research participants, in particular when they had a great deal to say on diverse aspects of teaching practice, meant that the researcher was immersed in their experiences during this stage of the data analysis. A more detached analytical position was taken after the initial thematic analysis had been completed and a second stage of in-depth analysis was carried out to focus on the activity theory framework, followed by a third stage specifically examining the data in the light of themes emerging from the literature review to ensure that all relevant dimensions of the data had been captured..

#### **5.2.4 Analysis based on the activity system**

In analyzing the data with the aim of clarifying the activity system, some of the nodes of the activity system were more clearly evident than others. This was partly due to the fact that the college supervisor and co-operating teacher had roles that differed in practice from those suggested by the theoretical activity system and that, associated with this, different communities of practice and therefore slightly different patterns of 'rules and tools' were

apparent. The extent to which the different nodes influenced individual student teachers and the amount of activity targeted on the different elements of the activity system also differed among the student teachers. The results of the analysis are presented, together with an exploration of the differences, using Engeström's model as a basis. An overview of the dimensions of analysis with literature references as appropriate is given in Table 5.1 (on 3 pages). A more detailed table is provided at the start of each dimension which illustrates with quotes from participants how the main codes were derived.

**Table 5.1 The coding framework for the qualitative data analysis**

<b>Dimension (of activity theory or theme)</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Sub-dimensions</b>
<b>1. Culture of learning</b>	<b>Cul</b>	<b>1. Expectations of learning</b> <b>2. Expectations of supervision</b> <b>2.1. Positive views about supervision</b> <b>2.2 Negative views about supervision</b> <b>3. Inter-relationships</b>
<b>2. ITE</b>	<b>ITE</b>	<b>1. Model of ITE</b> <b>1.1 Theory into practice</b> <b>1.2 Apprenticeship</b> <b>1.3 Reflective practice</b> <b>2. Knowledge and skills</b>
<b>3. Models of supervision</b>	<b>Sup</b>	<b>1. Contribution to ITE</b> <b>2. Directive</b> <b>3. Collaborative</b> <b>4. Creative</b> <b>5. Clinical</b>
<b>4. Subject</b>	<b>Sub</b>	<b>1. Motivation</b> <b>1.1 Religious belief</b> <b>1.2 Personal interest</b> <b>1.3 Personal experience</b> <b>1.4 Personal ability</b> <b>1.5 Helping children with SEN</b> <b>1.6 Society's needs</b> <b>1.7 Job security</b> <b>1.8 Other reasons</b>
<b>5. Outcome</b>	<b>Out</b>	<b>1. Summative assessment</b> <b>2. Making transition</b> <b>3. Recommendations from participants</b>

<b>Dimension (of activity theory or theme)</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Sub-dimensions</b>
<b>6. Object</b>	<b>Obj</b>	<b>1. Objects shared by all participants</b> <b>1.1 Developing skills</b> <b>1.2 Resolve problems</b> <b>1.3 Learn from other people</b> <b>1.4 Guidance</b> <b>1.5 Feedback</b> <b>1.6 The whole school system</b> <b>2. Student teachers' objects</b> <b>2.1 General</b> <b>2.2 Specifics</b> <b>3. Co-operating teachers' objects</b> <b>4. College supervisors' objects</b> <b>5. Recommendations from participants</b>
<b>7. Tools</b>	<b>Tls</b>	<b>1. Student teachers' tools</b> <b>2. Co-operating teachers' tools</b> <b>3. College supervisors' tools</b>
<b>8. Relationships</b>	<b>Rel</b>	<b>1. Community</b> <b>1.1 University</b> <b>1.2 School</b> <b>1.3 Student teachers</b> <b>1.4 Communities of practice</b> <b>2. Recommendations from participants</b>
<b>9. Professional development</b>	<b>Prf</b>	<b>1. Student teachers' professional development</b> <b>2. Co-operating teachers' professional development</b> <b>3. College supervisors' teachers' professional development</b> <b>4. Recommendations from participants</b>
<b>10. Assessment</b>	<b>Ast</b>	<b>1. Conduct of assessment</b> <b>2. Assessment criteria</b> <b>3. Recommendations from participants</b>

<b>Dimension (of activity theory or theme)</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Sub-dimensions</b>
<b>11. Communication</b>	<b>Com</b>	<b>1. Within school team</b> <b>2. School-university</b> <b>3. Recommendations from participants</b>
<b>12. Rules</b>	<b>Rul</b>	<b>1. Policy</b> <b>2. Recommendations from participants</b>
<b>13. Roles division of roles, tasks and responsibilities</b>	<b>Div</b>	<b>1. College supervisors' role</b> <b>2. Co-operating teachers' role</b> <b>3. Student teachers' role</b> <b>4. Recommendations from participants</b>

### **5.2.5 Notes on analysis based on the activity system**

This section highlights points that affect the interpretation of the codes used in the analysis, starting with an example of the complexity involved before indicating the boundaries of the activity system and individual codes used to report the findings.

#### **5.2.5.1. Complexity**

In practice, there are many layers of complexity involved in activity theory, such as the object of one activity serving as a tool/artefact in another. For instance, a supervision session may have 'production of a visual aid' as an object, the visual aid being used as a tool for teaching in the observation which forms the core of feedback in the supervision session itself. Whether that feedback is classified as object or artefact will depend on its use in that particular session. A different kind of complexity is evident where there exist

competing objects in an activity system. To take one example, the theoretical framework for the supervision process had assumed a common object of professional development for all subjects (student teachers, college supervisors and co-operating teachers). The data analysis showed the picture to be more complex than that as an initial look at the subject/object/outcome relationships shows.

The following example in Table 5.2 shows that professional development was not shared by all the subjects: summative assessment of student teachers (giving them a final mark) was mentioned by some college supervisors and 'to reach the standard' by some of the student teachers, who were often not aware of what the standard was. It was noticeable that whilst the majority of student teachers mentioned 'reward from Allah' as an outcome, this did not feature in the cooperating teachers' or college supervisors' responses.

Table 5.2 Differing objects

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Object</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<i>Student teachers</i>	to reach standard	job security
		reward from Allah
	to learn how to teach	effective teacher
		reward from Allah
	to apply theory in practice	
<i>College supervisors</i>	to evaluate student teachers	job retention
	professional development of student teachers	effective supervision
<i>Co-operating teachers</i>	professional development of student teachers	effective supervision

Whilst the co-operating teachers as subjects typically had the objects and outcomes of the theoretical model, as shown in the table above, this was less clear in the case of the college supervisors and student teachers. In the context of activity theory, many of the objects articulated by student teachers were consistent with the theoretical model, although the outcomes took the form of expectations such as ‘reward from Allah’ or ‘job security’, while some are goals or targets, such as the outcome ‘effective teacher’. These expectations mainly emerged in response to the question about what made student teachers want to become specialist SEN teachers, consistent with Vroom’s expectancy theory of motivation (Vroom, 1964), indicating that for around 10% of student teachers in the sample, satisfaction of personal motivation is initially the outcome they seek, with more profession-focused outcomes perhaps following later, indicating a tension between personal and professional objects. College supervisors and co-operating teachers are more obviously focused on profession-related objects and outcomes, although job retention remained a personal motivation and outcome for at least one of the college supervisors in the sample. Furthermore, each activity may have a specific object which contributes to another activity within the overall supervision process, such as a student teacher having the object of ‘learning how to do an individual educational plan’, which may or may not be shared by the co-operating teacher or college supervisor involved in that particular activity.

The subjects themselves provide further evidence of the complexity inherent in activity theory. They bring with them a set of individual motivations, needs, life experiences, knowledge and skills gained from their university study, differing attributes and qualities. Furthermore, although they are all Saudi men and Muslims, their cultural background and experience varies according to where they lived in Saudi Arabia, their family circumstances

and to their particular experiences of their own schooldays and the school in which they undertake their teaching practice.

Turning to the community, student teachers did not relate to a single community of practice: while some respondents clearly saw the whole school as the community of practice, others felt there should be a community of practice involving student teachers in different schools, and a number of them perceived other teaching staff in the school together with the co-operating teacher to be their community of practice. Perceptions of the community of practice influenced perceptions of rules and roles, with some participants aware of conflicts between their roles in terms of time commitments and relative importance accorded to them by a particular community of practice.

The coding framework could not reflect the full complexity of the situation but was developed as far as possible from the major dimensions of the activity theory framework (subject, outcome, object, tools, setting, community, rules, division of tasks), together with themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis and the literature review and which were not captured by the activity theory dimensions alone. From the literature review, culture of learning, ITE and models of supervision were used, while relationships and communication emerged from the analysis of interview transcripts as subsets of 'community' which were stronger themes in their own right. In total this resulted in 13 main dimensions of analysis, all of which related to the activity theory outcomes in different ways. Grouping of themes within dimensions was mainly determined by use of filters in Excel, firstly to eliminate duplication and ensure consistency and secondly to identify and remove overlaps between groups and dimensions. Coding was applied to data

from all three groups of participants and findings are reported separately and, where appropriate, comparatively for the different groups.

#### 5.2.5.2. Boundaries

The boundaries of the overall activity system were drawn by defining the difference in scope between the practicum and supervision. During the full period of the student teacher's field placement, there will be many events and interactions that occur on a daily basis but are not covered by the supervision activity system. For example, student teachers may take part in extra-curricular activities or supervise children in the dinner break but these activities may not be supervised or count towards their assessment. In contrast, the detailed planning of the vast majority of individual lessons will be reviewed and assessed by the college supervisor reviewing the lesson preparation book, even though most of the actual lesson delivery will not be observed or assessed. Within the overall supervision activity system, the meetings and observations involving the student teacher and one or both of the co-operating teacher and college supervisor form distinct and important contributory activity systems. Each meeting or observation has an identifiable object, outcome, setting and division of tasks, and may involve multiple tools, rules, and communities.

#### 5.2.5.3. Subject, object, outcome

The subject(s) in the supervision activity system is variously student teachers, co-operating teachers and college supervisors involved in the supervision process during the field placement or practicum. The proposed shared outcome is effective supervision, defined in

terms of student teachers supported to reach required standards of fully qualified teachers and assessed as attaining those standards. The proposed shared object is professional development.

The subject dimension examined motivation to carry out the role of student teacher, co-operating teacher and college supervisor. Motivation covered religious belief, interest, experience, ability, helping children with SEN and society's needs, together with job security. Under the outcome dimension, two main sub-themes emerged, namely summative assessment and making the transition from student teachers to in-service teachers. Some participants placed more emphasis on the personal journey undertaken by student teachers (making the transition) rather than the formal institutional process of assessment.

The dimension of object was more complicated, since some objects were shared by all groups of participants, while others were specific to a particular group. Six objects were common to all three groups of participants; 'theory into practice', 'resolve problems', 'learn from other people', 'guidance', 'developing skills', 'feedback' and 'the whole school system'. Theory into practice was a major theme relating to the models of ITE in the literature and a key component of the context in which the whole study was situated, therefore was included under the dimension of ITE. Feedback was further subdivided into 'feedback on level', 'feedback on ability', 'feedback on lesson preparation book', 'feedback on practical teaching', 'feedback on performance' (used for overall lesson planning and delivery) and 'feedback on teaching practice' (for everything related to the practicum). 'Feedback' was used where unspecified or where covering all of the preceding categories.

A further set of themes and sub-themes emerged which were specific to one or two of the three groups of participants. For student teachers and co-operating teachers, there were frequently mentioned objects of 'learn to do IEP' and 'learn to do BIP' and less frequently mentioned objects of 'researching new developments', 'discussing teaching practice issues', 'discussing feedback' and 'learn to do pupil assessment'.

For co-operating teachers and college supervisor, there were 'modelling teaching', 'formative assessment' and 'planning teaching practice'.

'Feedback on performance' was common to student teachers and co-operating teachers, as was 'developing teaching'.

For student teachers and college supervisors, 'adapting curriculum' and 'managing the classroom' were clearly identified, and a category of 'interacting with SEN pupils' was identified that included 'motivating pupils' for student teachers and 'support to SEN pupils' for college supervisors.

For college supervisors only, 'mentoring' emerged as a discrete category, along with 'teaching practice', 'teaching strategies' and 'teaching methods'.

For co-operating teachers, a theme of 'teach how to teach' emerged, as did 'communicating with supervisor'. 'Developing a team' was a clear object for one particular co-operating teacher which did not fit easily into a broader group. Similarly, [encouraging student teachers in] 'taking responsibility' emerged as a distinct object.

For student teachers only, 'learn to teach', 'managing time', 'developing individual programmes', 'practical teaching', 'improving communication skills', 'improving performance' and 'using modern methods' were identified. At an even more detailed level, student teachers expressed specific objects of 'creating education aids', 'using education aids, 'using modern education aids' A set of codes relating to the use of ICT in teaching was identified, comprising 'using ICT in teaching' and 'researching using ICT'. Under a broad heading of relationships between student teachers and pupils, two categories were established, 'interacting with SEN pupils' and 'motivating pupils'. Student teachers' responses also led to the emergence of two codes related to 'the whole school system', namely 'know school system' (for aspects related to the specific school such as expected duties) and to 'experience', namely 'know real situation in school'.

#### 5.2.5.4. Tools/artifacts

The range of tools employed to achieve professional development and effective supervision are; personal (knowledge and skill in ICT, research, motivational techniques, experience), those shared by the wider community of teachers (teaching methods, education aids in general and some specifics) and some which are critically important to achieving objects and outcomes such as communication skills. They may include student teachers' observations of main teachers, checklists and guidance used by college supervisors and co-operating teachers.

#### 5.2.5.5. Community and setting

The meaning attached to 'community' is quite complex, as depending on the particular activity it can refer to, for example, everyone involved in the school including pupils, other

SEN student teachers, main SEN teachers in the school, the whole teaching staff of the school, all school personnel, everyone involved in supervision of SEN student teachers and the school-university combination providing the practical teaching placement. The setting is mainly the particular school in which the field placement takes place but at times refers to the university, especially with regard to college supervisors. Resources are included under setting because they form part of the physical setting and impact directly on lesson planning and delivery, although it is acknowledged that resources could also be included under community or rules.

#### 5.2.5.7. Division of tasks and roles

Division of tasks and roles is subdivided into the student teachers, the co-operating teacher role, the college supervisor role, the headteacher role and one category of 'roles of supervision team' where responses referred to a complete review of people involved in the supervision as well as their roles and tasks.

#### 5.2.5.8. Rules

The rules are the norms and conventions of supervision that apply to supervision at university and the school. They include shared rules such as attendance and punctuality, policies and procedures governing ITE, the practicum and supervision, including those which can affect roles, division of tasks, roles and responsibilities, allocation of resources and selection of personnel.

Having briefly discussed the content of individual codes in order to lay the foundations for the analysis (with a detailed explanation of their derivation provided in Appendix 4), the rest of this chapter sets out the findings in readiness for the discussion in chapter seven.

### ***5.3. Analysis of findings***

Two main types of activity system are considered in this thesis; supervision as a whole, comprising all supervised components of the practicum, and supervision meetings between student teacher and college supervisor and/or co-operating teacher. Also considered are the effects on the analysis of these activity systems according to whether the subject is the student teacher, co-operating teacher or college supervisor. Contradictions between activity systems that result from different objects, communities, rules and tools are also explored.

#### **5.3.1. Culture of learning**

This dimension contained three categories, expectations of learning, expectations of supervision and inter-relationships (the latter following James and Biesta, 2007). The second category, expectations of supervision, was further subdivided into positive and negative views about supervision. Table 5.3 sets the subdimensions of the culture of learning, giving a note of the data sources and illustrating with quotes from participants how the main codes were derived. Relevant literature references are included.

Table 5.3 Dimension 1 Culture of Learning

Dimension (element of activity theory/ theme)	Code	Data sources and quotes illustrating how code was developed KEY: CS = college supervisors, CT = co-operating teachers, ST = student teacher, S = school, S1ST3 = school 1 student teacher 3) Q = questionnaire, I = interview, O = researcher's observation	Literature references
1. Culture of learning	Cul	<p><b>1. Expectations of learning</b></p> <p><b>2. Expectations of supervision</b> Teachers primarily as transmitter of knowledge: "Sometimes I intervene during the lesson to correct the student teacher, for example I explain instead of him and do so more clearly, to show him how to teach professionally" (Interview CT11) Also from observations where no opportunity for questions was given by college supervisor (Obs3)</p> <p><b>2.1. Positive views about supervision</b> "The most important thing is that I am to be provided with experiences and skills that are wanted to help me in the school placement" (questionnaire ST1S3) "Discovering our skills and abilities through practical teaching" (questionnaire ST12S2) "I think the purpose of the whole supervision process is for student teachers to gain the information and skills they need to practice teaching and deal with special needs pupils in a professional way" (questionnaire CS1) Observations</p> <p><b>2.2 Negative views about supervision</b> "schools don't care about the professional development of student teachers" (Interview CS2) "Nothing helps me in these meetings" (Interview ST2S1) Observations</p> <p><b>3. Inter-relationships</b> "concern with cooperative teaching by working with SEN and general teachers in school and concern with cooperative learning by working with SEN pupils" (Questionnaire CS4) "Supervision is very important because it links the college supervisor and the school" (Interview CT1)</p>	James and Biesta (2007) Roles of teacher (White, 2005)

#### 5.3.1.1. Expectations of learning

There was evidence mainly from observations, which was supplemented by interview transcripts and open-ended questions from the questionnaires, to support the concept of a teacher as transmitter of knowledge. One example from an initial meeting between college supervisor and student teachers at a placement is given in full below because it encapsulates the approach. Giving student teachers the rules of working in the school, one of 12 points in a list given by the college supervisor said:

“Develop teaching competence through: preparing plans, learning aids, elements of content, practical procedures, additional tools, educational toys, objects that come apart and can be put back together, detailed explanation of lessons – in simple and easy terms, evaluation of how well the lesson plan has been achieved, managing individuals and group activities, active learning that involves dividing pupils for activities”.

After delivering his speech setting out rules and urging teachers to do well, he left without giving an opportunity for questions.

Another co-operating teacher at a different school focused on the history and importance of addressing the needs of pupils with various categories of SEN (“but learning difficulties are the main problem threatening the stability of our society”), also telling students their co-operating teacher was “considered one of the best teachers in Riyadh” and to learn from him. Again, there was no opportunity for questions. These two examples illustrate the concept of teachers as transmitters of knowledge in a learning culture of listen and recall.

The model of teachers as knowledge transmitters was reinforced by many examples. One college supervisor reported “I observe the student teacher in the classroom then I demonstrate the lesson instead of him, to show him and teach him how to teach pupils in practice” (CS1) and another gave “an example lesson in the classroom for the student teacher to learn how to teach” (CS4). Modelling teaching in this way was clearly one way of transmitting knowledge from teacher to student teacher (CT9), with strong emphasis on the importance of transmitting information in the easiest way possible. Some student teachers confirmed this, one saying the purpose of supervision is to “Develop my abilities to transfer information to pupils in easy ways” (S1ST1) and another describing his own development as “I am doing my best to introduce the information in an accurate and easy way” (S24ST1). A third gave his main motivation as “I would like to give pupils the knowledge and information I have to my pupils who can then pass it on to the next generation” (S1ST1).

In some cases, transmission of knowledge to student teachers was seen as necessitating intervention during the lesson itself, as in the example given in Table 4.1: “Sometimes I intervene during the lesson to correct the student teacher, for example I explain instead of him and do so more clearly, to show him how to teach professionally” (CT11). Formal qualifications evidencing knowledge are highly valued, as in the case of the co-operating teacher (CT6) who had a Master’s degree in addition to experience. A Master’s degree carries considerable weight because it is regarded as proof of knowledge, with an underlying assumption that the more knowledge a teacher has, the more he can transmit. Although there were many examples of different individual styles and approaches, there was evidence to suggest that the practical day to day business of supervision was also primarily about transmitting knowledge.

One such example is afforded by a college supervisor who had stressed respect for supervisors, colleagues and pupils in his first talk to student teachers (Obs3), but later gave critical feedback to one student teacher in front of a second student teacher, the researcher and the class. Feedback was given to one student teacher while the second was explaining his own lesson. The second student teacher was then asked to start his lesson again. Transmitting the college supervisor's own knowledge to the particular recipient was most important factor. This kind of message about the learning culture is potentially confusing for special educational needs student teachers because it sends conflicting messages not only about respect but also about the extent to which teaching and learning should be person-centred rather than knowledge- or –subject-centred. One of the essential wider messages in Saudi society is that, as noted in chapter two, transmission of knowledge through repetition and memorizing is the principal method of learning how to be a good Muslim through remembering and repeating prayers and parts of the Qur'an in the early years.

#### 5.3.1.2. Expectations of supervision

In the current study, the role of supervision in equipping pre-service teachers to teach in the classroom is absolutely vital. It is suggested that good supervision supports and promotes quality teaching and professional development (Holland and Adams, 2002), therefore expectations are likely to be high. In terms of helping their professional development, supervision was rated as more or much more important than practical classroom experience by 77% of student teachers in the sample, and as more or much more important than their

university learning by 94% (see figure 5.2). This may reflect the importance of the ‘teacher as transmitter of knowledge’ model, as in supervision, knowledge of how to teach is passed directly to the student teachers almost for the first and only time. Apart from supervision, there is a one week module in the first year of their 4-year degree course where they are taught to teach, so the importance attached to supervision is very understandable.

Figure 5.2 Student teachers’ perception of the importance of supervision

<b>Student teachers</b>	<i>Much more important</i>	<i>More important</i>	<i>Similar</i>	<i>Less important</i>	<i>Much less important</i>
Importance of supervision in helping your professional development in comparison with practical experience in the classroom	34% (32)	43% (41)	4% (4)	15% (14)	2% (2)
Importance of supervision in helping your professional development in comparison with what you have learned at university	49% (46)	45% (42)	4% (4)	1% (1)	0% (0)

Among co-operating teachers and college supervisors, there was less clarity about the relative importance of supervision in comparison with their other roles and responsibilities. 4 of the 6 college supervisors said supervision was more or much more important than lecturing, although 1 said it was less important. 7 out of 12 co-operating teachers considered its importance to be higher than their other roles and responsibilities, while 5 thought all aspects to be similarly important (see figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 College supervisors' and co-operating teachers' perception of the importance of supervision in comparison with their other main roles and responsibilities

	<i>Much more important</i>	<i>More important</i>	<i>Similar</i>	<i>Less important</i>	<i>Much less important</i>
<b>College supervisors</b>					
Importance of role in supervising student teachers in comparison with teaching and lecturing	2	2	1	1	0
Importance of role in supervising student teachers in comparison with research role	0	2	3	1	0
Importance of role in supervising student teachers in comparison with administrative role	1	2	2	1	0
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>					
Importance of supervision of teachers in comparison with other roles and responsibilities	3	4	5	0	0

Research in particular was a competing priority for college supervisors. Differences in perceived importance point to the likelihood of conflicting expectations and potential disappointment on the part of student teachers.

Positive expectations of supervision were indeed high among many of the student teachers and were clearly articulated. As one student teacher said, “It is very important because teaching practice is new” (S3ST1). “The most important thing is that I am to be provided with experiences and skills that are wanted to help me in the school placement” (S1ST3). Supervision was perceived as providing guidance in every aspect of teaching, guidance which was welcomed and valued by almost all the student teachers in the sample, “To put us on the right track” (S15ST2) and assistance “in overcoming all types of problems encountered at the school” (S3ST1). Supervision was also seen as “providing us with the necessary experience and information to become teachers” (S4ST2). For some, the positive expectations related to learning about themselves as teachers, as in “Discovering our skills and abilities through practical teaching” (S12ST2). At least one student teacher saw the benefits of correction: supervision “has a positive side of explaining my mistakes and having them clarified by supervisors” (S40ST1).

Co-operating teachers saw the positive aspects as “to make sure that student teachers' training is delivered effectively, and put them in the real learning situation in order to learn how teach through teaching practice”, giving them the opportunity to “face teaching problems and overcome them on their own and through the advice of college supervisor and co-operating teacher” (CT2). In other words, there was a positive expectation of a successful outcome directly resulting from supervision processes.

College supervisors emphasized the benefits of learning from other people, from themselves, from co-operating teachers and from observations of main teachers. “I think the purpose of the whole supervision process is for student teachers to gain the information

and skills they need to practice teaching and deal with special needs pupils in a professional way” (CS1).

Whilst the majority of responses indicated positive expectations and perceptions of supervision, a minority clearly disagreed. There was recognition by all parties that there were problems with the supervision process. Four of the six college supervisors identified shortages of resources, human resources and also space and time. Supervisors’ other work did not necessarily allow time or focus for effective supervision: a college supervisor “has lots of responsibilities which could impact negatively on supervision of student teachers” (CS1). “I wish to be involved in working with student teachers in school to achieve professional development goals but we couldn't because college supervisors have many jobs at the same time such as giving lectures, examinations many times a year, research and going to schools to supervise student teachers, the consequence is less focus on supervision” (CS5). College supervisors also perceived a shortage of co-operating teachers to reduce the effectiveness of supervision and indeed of ITE. “There are some schools without cooperating teachers, so we are struggling to compensate for the shortage” (CS2). The potential negative impact on quality was noted by CS6: “I wish there were more co-operating teachers to work with student teachers, some co-operating teachers have more than 4 student teachers which potentially reduces the quality of student teachers' training”. The third point concerning college supervisors’ negative expectations of supervision, in addition to workloads and a lack of co-operating teachers, was the school environment. “Some schools don't work with supervision practice because there are not enough rooms to have meetings, as well as having classrooms which are very small and high numbers of pupils in the school, which causes confusion for us” (CS5) and in one case, “schools don't care about the professional development of student teachers” (CS2).

Co-operating teachers freely gave their time and attention to student teachers although the potential impact on their other work and on supervision was recognized: “Student teachers' attendance everyday puts me under pressure because I have classes and I supervise and assess main teachers at school” (CT2). The shortage of co-operating teachers was highlighted and one particular co-operating teacher said he “noticed that some student teachers are not serious during teaching practice because they expect to graduate and they think that they don't need to work hard at school” (CT1).

Some student teachers voiced a range of negative opinions about supervision; not enough teaching practice, formative assessment too early and too few visits from the college supervisor. Further points raised were a lack of clarity, regarding the expectations of the school and college supervisors, also concerning the goals, duties and responsibilities of student teachers. “One semester is not enough for us to learn how to teach as expected” (S15ST2). One individual considered the whole purpose of supervision was “often just to look for mistakes” (S31ST1). Some student teachers found that supervision experience led to their having particularly negative views, one saying “My college supervisor preferred to talk a lot but didn't listen to us and didn't give us time to exchange views or discuss with him” (S20ST2). Another, even more negative, commented “Nothing helps me in these meetings” (S2ST1).

It is evident from this that although the majority of participants viewed it in a positive light, supervision could be experienced very differently depending on the individuals involved and the school environment.

### 5.3.1.3. Inter-relationships

The diverse experiences of supervision are located within a web of interrelationships of teaching, teachers, teaching, learning and learners. Judging by the relative infrequency of responses making reference to interrelationships, awareness of interrelationships and their importance was low or subconscious or deemed relatively unimportant. Among respondents who were aware of interrelationships, the greatest understanding was shown by college supervisor CS4 and co-operating teacher CT1. This supervisor associated co-operative teaching and co-operative learning, saying his current interest was “concern with cooperative teaching by working with SEN and general teachers in school and concern with cooperative learning by working with SEN pupils” (CS4). He articulated the links between teaching goals, pupil needs and the whole school system, by associating in his response to the question about the purpose of supervision “to let student teachers know about general and specific goals of teaching SEN pupils, for student teachers to know the needs of SEN pupils and to know school system and administration work in school... also to practise the occupation of teaching and work with all staff in school” (CS4). The same college supervisor highlighted the need to support the linkages with appropriate resources by “developing resources room in schools to include all learning and teaching aids that can help pupils’ learning and student teachers’ teaching” in addition to “implementation of specialist support services” such as the “appointment of psychologists and sociologists in schools” (CS4). His understanding of interrelationships extended to parents, stating “I am trying to work to involve parents - I am working with the school administration to collaborate with parents in dealing with pupils” (CS4). He further identified the key role played by the university in facilitating the interrelationships through profession development of co-operating teachers, observing “There should be a good relationship

between school and university by delivering courses and training in supervision for co-operating teachers to enable and qualify them to supervise student teachers in school”.

One co-operating teacher saw supervision as creating and maintaining vital links between schools and universities: “Supervision is very important because it links the college supervisor and the school” (CT1). Another perceived interrelationships in terms of the student teacher having a role in a team that linked directly to the teaching and learning of individual pupils, describing the purpose of supervision as “to prepare the student teacher to be a distinct member in team diagnosis and evaluation, and in the individual educational plan programme” (CS2). A further perspective on the relationship between schools and universities is examined under the dimension of ITE which follows this section. As perhaps might be expected, student teachers tended to focus on the relationships between themselves and their SEN pupils at the expense of other interrelationships, although a number highlighted the importance of professional relationships between student teachers and main teachers.

### **5.3.2. ITE (Initial Teacher Education)**

Findings under initial teacher education are categorized according to three basic models of ITE (Amos and Postlethwaite, 1996) as theory into practice (a theme which also emerged strongly from participant responses), apprenticeship and reflective practice, together with knowledge and skills. This dimension is summarized in Table 5.4, with information about the data sources and illustrative quotes used to derive the codes.

Table 5.4 Dimension 2 ITE

<b>Dimension (element of activity theory/ theme )</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Data sources and quotes illustrating how code was developed</b> KEY: CS = college supervisors, CT = co-operating teachers, ST = student teacher, S = school, S1ST3 = school 1 student teacher 3) Q = questionnaire, I = interview, O = researcher's observation	<b>Literature references</b>
<b>2. ITE</b>	<b>ITE</b>	<p><b>1. Model of ITE</b> ITE centred on putting “student teachers in the position of teacher to translate theoretical knowledge into practice” (Questionnaire CT10)</p> <p><b>1.1 Theory into practice</b> “I was shocked by the differences between theory and practice” (Questionnaire ST2) Making sure “we apply what we have studied in the right way” (Questionnaire S1ST1) Observations</p> <p><b>1.2 Apprenticeship</b> I asked [my co-operating teacher] “to prepare and teach an ideal lesson as an example to copy” (Questionnaire S4ST1) “He gives me more freedom to discuss anything I want, such as how to prepare lessons in my lesson preparation notebook” (Q S2ST1) Observations</p> <p><b>1.3 Reflective practice</b> “I think that the supervision is the most important factor in helping student teachers with reflection in action” (I CS2)</p> <p><b>2. Knowledge and skills</b> “I think that supervision is to teach student teachers how to teach” (Interview CT5) “Direct us to the right teaching methods” (Questionnaire S2ST1 and S2ST3) Observations “I try to create a curriculum for SEN pupils that could be easier than what exists now” (Questionnaire S38ST1) “review of the curricula of special education needs and its implementation” (Interview CS3), with an emphasis on more life skills</p>	<p>(Amos and Postlethwaite, 1996) Consecutive model/ apprenticeship model (Tang, 2004) (White, 2005) Different types (Stuart and Tatto, 2000)</p> <p>Reflective practice (Bolton, 2005) Knowledge and skills Karasneh (2001)</p>

Overall, student teachers considered that the main method of developing their ideas and skills as a teacher was the teaching placement (89%) followed by observation of other teachers (71%), discussion with colleagues (67%), supervision (66%) and university course (44%) (summarized in figure 5.4). Teaching placement involves more than classroom teaching and includes lesson preparation, understanding and managing pupils and exposure to the whole school environment.

Figure 5.4 Methods of developing ideas and skills as a student teacher

Development of ideas and skills as a student teacher	Yes	No
(i) University course	44% (41)	56% (52)
(ii) Teaching placement	89% (83)	11% (10)
(iii) Supervision	66% (61)	34% (32)
(iv) Discussion with colleagues	67% (63)	32% (30)
(v) Observation of other teachers	71% (66)	29% (27)
(vi) Other life experience	13% (12)	86% (80)

In addition, student teachers rated the co-operating teacher apprenticeship approach as more important than sessions with college supervisors, 96% rating it more important (52% as much more important and 44% as more important), as shown in figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5 Student teachers' perception of the relative importance of co-operating teachers and college supervisor supervision

<b>Student teachers</b>	<i>Much more important</i>	<i>More important</i>	<i>Similar</i>	<i>Less important</i>	<i>Much less important</i>
Importance of supervision from co-operating teacher in comparison with supervision from college supervisor	52% (49)	44% (41)	1% (1)	1% (1)	1% (1)

### 5.3.2.1. Theory into practice

There was some evidence that each of three models of ITE was in use, although the predominant model for Saudi Arabia as a whole is a consecutive one of theory into practice. Two of the college supervisors (CS2 and CS5) highlighted the importance of the supervisory role in translating theory into practice, CS2 specifically stating “what student teachers find most helpful in my supervision is my feedback about teaching processes, planning and implementing” (CS2). One of the co-operating teachers clearly stated that this model of ITE centred on putting “student teachers in the position of teacher to translate theoretical knowledge into practice” (CT10). In contrast with those who had already experienced the theory-into-practice model and had established teaching careers, student teachers' experience did not always match the concept. In some instances, this related to skills and knowledge, as in “We had lots of courses, not always useful - and different from what happens in school, For example, we studied physical education for SEN pupils but I don't use it in school at all. Also we learned Braille for blind pupils but we don't use it at all at school” (ST1). “We were told that we would find in the school pupils separated according to

SEN category into different classrooms, such as pupils with learning difficulties, but we found some classes included pupils with learning difficulties and pupils with behaviour disorder and pupils with hearing difficulties” (ST1). Another student teacher gave a specific example of why theory into practice may not work, when the difference between them is too great to overcome in the short period of the practicum and a particular environment. “I was shocked by the differences between theory and practice”, said ST2, giving the following specific illustration of his point:

“There were ideas I gained from my course that were different from what happens in school. For example, I learned how to modify pupils’ behaviour but I found in the school that it depends on the school environment. Pupils at the school used to be beaten by their teachers, and when I wanted to apply behaviour modification theories I couldn’t, because it didn’t work with them, I also found reward and punishment are different in the school from what I had studied and much of the thinking around reward and punishment was not in use” (ST2).

On the other hand, some student teachers made positive comments about the theory into practice model. In general it was perceived to concern “Implementation of the right way in field training” (S6ST1) by making sure “we apply what we have studied in the right way” (S1ST1). This was seen as personal development as well as a goal of ITE, as in enabling a student teacher “to apply the scientific experience that I have gained from university” (S3ST1). Some cited specific points such as clarification of “the importance of plans [...] as well as how to apply these plans in the classroom” (S23ST2). Whilst the value of “The application of concepts, principles and educational theories into practice” (S14ST2) was recognized, the balance between theory and practice was criticized. “Teaching practice and

observing teachers to learn how to teach should happen every year, not once, to be able to apply theory in practice at the appropriate time” (ST4 in interview). This view was supported by two of the co-operating teachers, one of whom considered that “teaching practice should be divided into two or three courses or more to give student teachers the opportunity to learn and teach at the same time” and the other recommended that “teaching practice should start from the first year at University to be able to apply what they study at university at school immediately”.

#### 5.3.2.2. Apprenticeship

In fact, many of the student teachers were experiencing a very brief apprenticeship. Before starting to teach in the classroom, 71% learned from observing their co-operating teacher or other experienced teachers, consistent with findings concerning teaching apprenticeship reported by Smith and Levi-Ari (2005). Thereafter they were apprenticed to their co-operating teacher, as evidenced by what they said they learned from him, from lesson preparation through individual education plans and behaviour modification plans to how to interact with pupils and assess progress and achievement. A selection of quotes illustrates this perfectly. “He gives me more freedom to discuss anything I want, such as how to prepare lessons in my lesson preparation notebook” (S2ST1). Several student teachers “learned different teaching methods” (S22ST2) and many asked their co-operating teacher “to prepare and teach an ideal lesson as an example to copy” (S4ST1). They also asked for help “when I create teaching aids” (S6ST1) or “in choosing suitable education materials for a new lesson” (S8ST1). In addition they sought advice about relationships in the school and classroom, for example “advice about how to handle some pupils who are difficult to deal with” (S2ST1) and help “in professional relationships with the teachers to take advantage

of their expertise” (S17ST3). In short, they explored “all aspects of teaching” (S24ST1). However, for two student teachers, there was nothing useful to be gained from either the theory into practice or the brief apprenticeship.

Researcher’s observations suggested that for most student teachers the apprenticeship was closer to what Zeichner (1996) termed a ‘sink-or-swim’ approach in which “good teaching is caught and not taught” (Zeichner, 1996, p.218) than to a structured apprenticeship. Hence, the experience of individual student teachers may vary enormously from very poor to very good, depending on the school and the skills, knowledge, experience and commitment of their co-operating teacher and college supervisors. If a student teacher is allocated to a co-operating teacher and college supervisors who have the time, together with the communication and supervision skills to pass on their knowledge and expertise, and are able to form effective relationships with the individuals they supervise, the student teacher’s experience is likely to be positive. Such allocations at the present time are a matter of luck as there is no system in place for matching appropriately skilled and experienced co-operating teachers and college supervisors with student teachers. Indeed, members of the supervision team are unlikely to have had any training in supervision or to have sufficient time to plan the practicum experience in detail, as highlighted elsewhere. Luck rather than planning determines the quality of the practicum experience.

#### 5.3.2.3. Reflective practice

Finally, there were occasional suggestions that reflective practice was being adopted by a small number of individuals. Two of the college supervisors mentioned the value of reflection, notably CS2 who stated “I think that the supervision is the most important factor

in helping student teachers with reflection in action”. One college supervisor saw reflective practice as a group rather than an individual process, saying “There should be regular meetings or workshops in school for mainstream teachers and student teachers together to discuss and exchange their experience to learn from each other and reflect on their practice” (CS1).

#### 5.3.2.4. Knowledge and skills

This section briefly reports findings on coverage of the seven categories of teacher knowledge as recommended by Al-Karasneh (2001); pedagogy, subject matter, curriculum, learners and learning, educational contexts, pedagogical content and education philosophies. From the perspective of the practicum, knowledge of subject matter and education philosophy were assumed to have been completed at university. Knowledge of how to adapt the curriculum for SEN pupils was mentioned by a few student teachers and one college supervisor but not by any of the co-operating teachers, possibly because the curriculum is well known and accepted as given, set nationally and in general very closely followed, with limited adaptation for pupils with SEN, either individually or in groups. “I try to create a curriculum for SEN pupils that could be easier than what exists now” (S38ST1) and “group curriculum plans” (S3ST4). One supervisor was working on a “review of the curricula of special education needs and its implementation” (CS3), with an emphasis on more life skills. Knowledge of pedagogy was highlighted by all three groups of participants. “There is a lack of courses which are related to how to teach” (CS1), “I think that supervision is to teach student teachers how to teach” (CT5) and “I am developing my abilities and knowledge about teaching of pupils because I had not enough information and skills of teaching at university” (S3ST4). The practicum is the main source

of knowledge of pedagogy, apart from one module in the first year at university. The function of supervision thus becomes “to teach student teachers how to teach SEN pupils in the classroom and how to do pupils' assessments” (CS5). Whilst the college supervisor sets the framework through the initial meeting, formative and summative assessments, the co-operating teacher is unavoidably responsible for the day-by-day development of student teachers' knowledge of pedagogy. A similar picture emerged for learners and learning and educational contexts, clearly demonstrating that much of the knowledge and most of the skills required for effective teaching of SEN pupils are packed into the few weeks of the practicum and learned through supervision. However, neither researcher's observations nor participants' comments indicated the existence of a systematic approach to the acquisition of knowledge and skills during the practicum, nor of any real links between pedagogy as taught at university and as practiced in the classroom.

### 5.3.3. Models of supervision

There were five subheadings identified in this dimension as shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5. Dimension 3 Models of supervision

<b>Dimension (element of activity theory/ theme)</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Data sources and quotes illustrating how code was developed</b> KEY: CS = college supervisors, CT = co-operating teachers, ST = student teacher, S = school, S1ST3 = school 1 student teacher 3. Q = questionnaire, I = interview, O = researcher's observation	<b>Literature references</b>
<b>3. Models of supervision</b>	<b>Sup</b>	<p><b>1. Contribution to ITE</b></p> <p><b>2. Directive</b> “to be honest, supervision is to direct us to avoid doing things wrong” (Questionnaire S30ST1) Observations</p> <p><b>3. Collaborative</b> “When I find a solution to a problem, he advises me if it is a good solution or finds another to solve problems such as some pupils who don't respond to behaviour modification, so he helps me to look for suitable behaviour modification for a particular case” (Q S15ST3) “collaborates with us, especially in resolving problems, for example, the problem of creating friendships between students” (Q S13ST2)</p> <p><b>4. Creative</b> “He gives us more space of freedom” (Q S39ST1)</p> <p><b>5. Clinical</b> Very little evidence that college supervisors adapted their style of supervision to different learners or situations, other than varying between directive and collaborative for some of the problem solving situations (Observations)</p>	(Beach and Reinhartz, 2000) (Nolan and Hoover, 2010) (Zepeda, 2007) (Sidhu, 2010)

#### 5.3.3.1. Contribution to ITE

In this study, the overall contribution made by supervision to ITE encompassed the development of teaching skills, essentially the development of pedagogy, with varying levels and types of input from college supervisors and co-operating teachers. The contribution from college supervisors varied from a perfunctory appearance to a much

greater degree of involvement and appeared to be linked to the supervisor's preferred style as well as to practicalities of workload and geographical distances. Although college supervisors reported visiting their student teachers on average 4 to 6 times, with a mode of 5 visits and each visit lasting on average between 20 and 40 minutes depending on the supervisor, student teachers themselves reported they did not see their college supervisor often enough and researcher's observations also appeared to indicate fewer visits. Nonetheless, formative and summative assessment were both seen as making an important contribution to professional development, more so by college supervisors and co-operating teachers than by student teachers, as shown in figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6 Formative and summative assessment contribution to professional development

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>Not important</i>	<i>Not at all important</i>
<b><i>Formative assessment</i></b>					
<b>College supervisors</b>	6	0	0	0	0
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>	6	4	0	0	0
<b>Student teachers</b>	46% (43)	40% (37)	12% (11)	1% (1)	1% (1)
<b><i>Summative evaluation</i></b>					
<b>College supervisors</b>	5	1	0	0	0
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>	6	6	0	0	0
<b>Student teachers</b>	20% (19)	37% (34)	9% (8)	23% (21)	12% (11)

The models of supervision examined in the literature review were; directive (directing and informing the student teacher, modelling teaching behaviours, and evaluating mastery of defined behaviours), alternative (suggesting a range of alternative behaviours), collaborative (working with the supervised individual to resolve problems rather than leading them), non-directive (active listening and clarification to allow a student teacher to solve his own problems) and creative (freer exploration of teaching behaviours and learning

from a wider range of other people). Clinical supervision was also discussed as a possible alternative.

The directive model was clearly seen in some cases, for example when one student teacher said “to be honest, supervision is to direct us to avoid doing things wrong” (S30ST1). Directions were sometimes general (S40ST1) and sometimes specific, in particular regarding teaching methods. “Direct us to appropriate teaching methods” (S1ST1) and, even more clearly, “Direct us to the right teaching methods” (S2ST1 and S2ST3). In one particular observation, the college supervisor not only intervened during the lesson to demonstrate how it should be taught but also strongly and openly criticized the student teacher in front of the class. Some supervisors were less directive, offering recommendations (S9ST6) rather than instructions alone. Alternative supervision was also hinted at occasionally by some college supervisors and used by some co-operating teachers at least some of the time, as evidenced by discussion: “discussion and advice I give them during whole supervision term” (CS1) and “we discussed the lesson plan” (CS2). Alternative supervision was more obvious with some of the co-operating teachers, as in “We learned different teaching methods” (S22ST2) and “the co-operating teacher is teaching us the various approaches of teaching” and “I discussed with him the different educational tools that could be used in class” (S12ST2). One clear example of alternative supervision is “When I find a solution to a problem, he advises me if it is a good solution or finds another to solve problems such as some pupils who don't respond to behaviour modification, so he helps me to look for suitable behaviour modification for a particular case” (S15ST3). Further evidence of directive and alternative approaches to supervision came from questionnaire responses as shown in figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7 Supervisor actions to help student teachers develop

KEY: **Directive**, *Alternative*

Which of the following do you do to help student teachers develop?	Co-operating teachers		College supervisors	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Decide the topics and issues to be discussed at meetings with them	12	0	5	1
Encourage student teachers to choose topics/issues to discuss with you	10	2	4	2
Spend most of the meeting giving information and advice	4	8	4	2
Spend most of the meeting listening to the student teacher	2	10	2	4
Explain the core standards	1	11	4	2
Explain expectations of school and headteacher	0	12	3	3
Follow the supervision checklist	1	1	4	2
Help students to become independent in their own professional development	11	1	6	0
Encourage them to observe your teaching	7	5	Not asked	
Encourage them to observe others teaching	2	10		
Help them to make links between mainstream and special education needs teaching	2	10	4	2

In terms of the collaborative, joint problem solving approach, college supervisors and student teachers together focused on pupil behaviour, such as how teachers should deal with pupils with severe learning difficulties and classroom management more generally. With co-operating teachers, this approach extended to solving problems related to relationships with main teachers and other issues, probably because the relationship was continuous, with more informal contacts and a shared school situation. He helps us with "relationships with other teachers" (S14ST2) and "collaborates with us, especially in resolving problems, for example, the problem of creating friendships between students" (S13ST2). However, student teachers were less convinced of a collaborative approach, as shown in figure 5.8. Whereas all but one college supervisor and one co-operating teacher said they always worked with student teachers to address a problem, only 15% of student teachers agreed, with almost 1 in 5 saying this rarely happened.

Figure 5.8 Perceptions of collaborative supervision

Work with student teacher/ supervisor to address a problem	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b>College supervisors</b>	5	1	0	0	0
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>	11	1	0	0	0
<b>Student teachers</b>	15% (15)	30% (28)	27% (25)	19% (18)	6% (7)
Student teachers derive own solutions with supervisor help					
<b>College supervisors</b>	1	3	2	0	0
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>	11	1	0	0	0
Freedom allowed to be creative in teaching					
<b>College supervisors</b>	2	3	1	0	0
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>	4	8	0	0	0
<b>Student teachers</b>	23% (22)	23% (22)	23% (22)	26% (24)	4% (4)
Student teachers actively involved in expressing own development needs					
<b>College supervisors</b>	3	3	0	0	2
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>	9	3	0	0	0
<b>Student teachers</b>	42% (41)	28% (26)	9% (8)	12% (11)	10% (9)

No evidence of non-directive supervision emerged from the data in this study, although one co-operating teacher identified the importance of self-reliance and recommended that student teachers should be able to get away from the pressure of summative assessment “to exchange experiences and information at relaxation times [breaks, free periods]” (CT1). There was limited evidence of creative supervision, where co-operating teachers saw the benefits of learning new ideas and methods from student teachers, as in “He gives us more space of freedom” (S39ST1), where student teachers were invited to produce a visual aid before discussing it and where learning from main teachers and professionals from the wider community of SEN teachers and supervisors was perceived to be useful. In general, there seemed to be little or no evidence from questionnaires, interviews or observations that most of the college supervisors adapted their style of supervision to different learners or situations, other than varying between directive and collaborative for some of the problem solving situations. Co-operating teachers seemed more willing to adapt and move between models of supervision, using an approach closer to that of clinical supervision but without the training, understanding or planning required to support a structured clinical supervision model as such. Against this background, it is appropriate to look more closely at findings concerning specific elements of the activity system, starting with the subjects and their motivation for their particular roles in the supervision system.

#### **5.3.4. Subjects**

This dimension deals with seven different themes that emerged under the broad heading of motivation as shown in table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Dimension 4 Subjects

As before, the table includes illustrative quotes and data sources to help the reader understand the selection of codes.

Dimension	Code	<b>Data sources and quotes illustrating how code was developed</b> KEY: CS = college supervisors, CT = co-operating teachers, ST = student teacher, S = school, S1ST3 = school 1 student teacher 3) Q = questionnaire, I = interview, O = researcher’s observation <i>NOTE: Literature reference Engeström (1999)</i>
4. Subject	Sub	<p><b>1. Motivation</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Religious belief</b>                      “I want reward from Allah because I serve SEN pupils” (11 of the 45 student teachers)</p> <p><b>1.2 Personal interest</b>                      “reading about special education is what led me to this choice of this specialism” (Q S13ST3), “my feelings that I would be creative in this field” (Q S1ST3), “to gain new experiences and make use of student teachers' new academic knowledge” (Q CT1)</p> <p><b>1.3 Personal experience</b>                      “Because I have experience of SEN” (Q S11ST2)                      “ I just want to help student teachers with their professional development because I feel that I have enough experience to supervise student teachers, also my colleagues avoided this job because there is no advantage in taking this responsibility” (I CT1) “experience in supervision” (Q CS3)</p> <p><b>1.4 Personal ability</b>                      “I have a strong feeling for my ability to become a very good teacher for SEN pupils” (Questionnaire S11ST1) “Because I gained a master's degree and have seven years’ experience of supervising student teachers” (Questionnaire CT4)</p> <p><b>1.5 Helping children with SEN</b>                      16 separate mentions from student teachers: “My desire to serve special needs classes”, “Help pupils with special needs”, “Because they need our help”</p> <p><b>1.6 Society’s needs</b>                      “The increasing numbers of pupils with SEN in SA”</p> <p><b>1.7 Job security</b>                      “There is a lack of teachers with SEN specialist subject” (21 of 45 student teachers) “not a lot of people went to special education needs specialisation” (Q CS4)</p> <p><b>1.8 Other reasons</b>                      Nominated by the “special needs department to be an educator and supervisor of student teachers” (Q CS5)</p>

The three most frequently mentioned reasons for wishing to become a special education needs teacher were job security (21), helping children with SEN (16) and reward from Allah (11).

Teaching efficacy has been associated with motivation to teach, based on the self-efficacy theoretical framework of Bandura (1977), which assumes belief in self-efficacy to be a cornerstone of action. Contributory factors in teaching were found to include motivation (Poulou, 2007).

Religious belief was the third most frequently mentioned motivation for student teachers wanting to teach children with SEN, similar to the idea of teaching as a vocation in the Western world that emerged in the Church Schools of the early 19th century. Many individuals in Islamic countries have a strong belief that service to their fellows will lead to paradise and service to those who are most in need of help will bring the greatest rewards. It is not surprising therefore that 11 of the 45 student teachers mentioned “reward from Allah”. Whilst two of the co-operating teachers in the sample also mentioned reward from Allah, no college supervisor gave this as a motivation.

Personal interest was mentioned by some participants in all three groups. Among student teachers, 8 reasons which fell clearly into the category of personal interest included unexplained and explained feelings and interest from reading, in addition to a sense of challenge and exploration of a new field. Examples include “I love the specialism” (S1ST1), “to be honest I have liked this field since I was a child” (S9ST4), “I always feel how families with special needs children are suffering so I want to ease their suffering by helping their children” (S15ST3), “reading about special education is what led me to this

choice of this specialism” (S13ST3), “my feelings that I would be creative in this field” (S1ST3) and “I chose this specialism to challenge myself” (S40T1).

Two co-operating teachers expressed personal interest in developing their knowledge: “to gain new experiences and make use of student teachers' new academic knowledge” (CT1) and “I wanted to share and exchange my experiences with student teachers” (CT1). Two college supervisors also cited personal interest. “I found not a lot of people went to special education needs specialisation - in addition it interests me” (CS4).

Another motivation was personal experience, although despite the incidence of special education needs in Saudi Arabia, only one student teacher gave as a reason “Because I have experience of SEN” (S11ST2). Unsurprisingly, past personal experience as a student teacher was cited by 3 of the 12 co-operating teachers, one drawing on his own experiences as a student teacher. “I felt my co-operating teacher was very careless when I was a student teacher. Therefore, I want to delete this image and replace it with a hardworking one. I just want to help student teachers with their professional development because I feel that I have enough experience to supervise student teachers, also my colleagues avoided this job because there is no advantage in taking this responsibility” (CT1). A second co-operating teacher explained “Because I gained a master's degree and have seven years' experience of supervising student teachers” (CT4) while a third mentioned he had been “supervising and guiding student teachers for a long time”. Two college supervisors also cited previous experience, one “of teaching when I was a teacher” (CS1) and another “experience in supervision” (CS3).

Personal ability was another source of motivation. There were three mentions of personal ability by student teachers, as in “I see myself able to teach SEN pupils” (S10ST1) and “I

have a strong feeling for my ability to become a very good teacher for SEN pupils” (S11ST1). No college supervisor explicitly mentioned personal ability and only one of the co-operating teachers did so, saying “Because I am perfect in my work” (CR4).

In contrast, helping children with SEN received 16 separate mentions from student teachers and was closely associated with the concept of receiving a reward from Allah, as indicated earlier. The focus of co-operating teachers and college supervisors was clearly upon helping student teachers, although, as discussed later under objects, links were made between helping the student teachers and their special education needs pupils, helping them to help the pupils.

In addition, three student teachers mentioned society’s needs, two of which specifically referred to the labour market. No co-operating teacher or college supervisor referred to society’s needs in this way, although the ‘threat’ posed by special education needs has been mentioned under the culture of learning and it is highly likely that society’s needs are understood to be important by all experienced teachers and college supervisors.

The most frequently mentioned reason why student teachers had entered this particular branch of the teaching profession was job security, receiving a total of 21 separate mentions. Individual responses emphasized one or more of job opportunities, job security and the financial reward attached to being an SEN specialist teacher.

Co-operating teachers did not refer to job security, possibly because they had already achieved it, although one college supervisor did so, “because I found not a lot of people went to special education needs specialisation” (CS4).

Finally, four of the co-operating teachers had been selected or nominated by the headteacher, and one college supervisor stated he had been nominated by the “special needs department to be an educator and supervisor of student teachers” (CS5).

Several patterns arise from these findings, one of which is the changes in motivation once job security has been achieved and the desire to help and serve SEN pupils has been satisfied. A second noticeable pattern is the nomination of co-operating teachers as distinct from a process of recruitment, whereas no particular pattern is evident in college supervisor’s motivation. A third pattern is the differences in motivation which subjects bring to the activity system of supervision and to formal supervision meetings in particular.

Student teachers’ motivation supported their engagement in the main methods they employed to develop their ideas and skills; the teaching placement, observation of other teachers, discussion with colleagues and supervision. Co-operating teachers and college supervisors, as to be expected of experienced staff seeking additional specialist skills, preferred professional development short courses (10 out of 12 co-operating teachers), discussion with colleagues (5 of 6 college supervisors and 7 of 12 co-operating teachers) and observation (4 college supervisors and 6 co-operating teachers) as shown in figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9 Methods of developing skills and ideas for supervision role

Development of skills and ideas in own role in supervision practice	Co-operating teachers		College supervisors	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
(i) Professional development short course	10	2	1	5
(i) Other course	3	9	2	4
(iii) Postgraduate course (Master's)	1	11	2	4
(iv) Discussion with colleagues	7	5	5	1
(v) Observation of others (co-operating teachers and supervisors respectively)	6	6	4	2
(vi) Other life experience	0	12	1	5

These methods of development theoretically contribute to the achievement of the outcome, so it is to the outcome that attention now turns.

### 5.3.5. Outcome

Turning next to dimension five of the analysis, the outcome of the activity system, three key themes emerged from the data, summative assessment and making the transition, together with recommendations from participants. The theme of summative assessment emerged from responses from student teachers such as “to achieve the required standards” (S19ST2) “to evaluate us” (S2ST1) and responses of co-ordinating teachers such as “They [student teachers] talked a lot about standards of their assessment” (CT1, CT5 and CT6). The second theme of making transition came from some student teachers’ perception of purpose, to “Prepare us to be teachers in future” (S1ST1, S1ST2, S5ST1, S9ST5 and S13ST4). Recommendations for improvement from participants included “clear standards for assessment with college supervisor and co-operating teacher” (S23ST1).

Although there was recognition that “the purpose of the whole supervision process is for student teachers to gain the information and skills they need to practice teaching and deal with special needs pupils in professional way” (CS1), there was a strong emphasis by everyone on specifics and objects rather than on outcomes, although some of the student teachers were focused on becoming teachers. In the Saudi Arabian education system, there is no expectation that teachers undertake CPD after qualification, which increases the importance of passing the practicum rather than acquiring skills of ongoing professional development. In addition, as summarized by one college supervisor, “the goals of supervision and teaching practice should be clear for supervisor and student teacher” (CS3). One theme under outcomes has therefore been defined for the purposes of this data analysis as ‘summative assessment’.

#### 5.3.5.1. Summative assessment

A number of student teachers emphasized the importance of avoiding or correcting mistakes in order to pass the summative assessment. This involved relationships with college supervisors, variously “Listening to the supervisor and writing the important points which might help me in teaching and in the summative assessment visit” (S4ST2), and “Asking him about how we can prepare for lessons in an excellent way to get a good mark in the summative assessment” (S11ST1). The practicum “completes the teaching practice aims” (S2ST2) by enabling student teachers to achieve the “required standards” (S19ST2). College supervisors “encouraged student teachers to pay attention to written notes”, urging “them to consider my feedback to avoid all mistakes in summative assessment” (CS2). The

comments of 3 of the 6 co-operating teachers illustrate student teachers' concerns: they "talked a lot about standards of their assessment" (CT1, CT5 and CT6).

#### 5.3.5.2. Making transition

In contrast to other participants in supervision, some student teachers were strongly focused on the goal of becoming teachers and making the transition, hence this theme was considered separately, taking the name of the theme from the words of one student teacher, "Helping us to make the transition from student to teacher" (S1ST1). Five individuals specifically mentioned "Prepare us to be teachers in future" (S1ST1, S1ST2, S5ST1, S9ST5 and S13ST4) while seven referred to "Qualifying us to become successful teachers" (S1ST4) and others mentioned "professional growth in teaching" (S21ST1) without identifying boundaries between pre-service and in-service teaching.

#### 5.3.5.3. Recommendations from participants

Recommendations from participants are included under the relevant themes in this analysis chapter because the data are drawn directly from the questionnaires and interviews. The researcher's recommendations are contained in the discussion chapter and take into account wider theoretical and organisational issues in addition to the recommendations made by participants.

A number of participants in each group called for greater clarity and agreement regarding assessment criteria and for greater transparency in communicating them to student teachers. Student teachers stressed the need for "instructions that talk about our roles and our exact

duties in schools and what criteria of assessment we should meet for summative assessment” (S11ST1), underlining the responsibility of college supervisors in clarifying and transmitting the goals of teaching practice (S17ST1) and “the principles of summative assessment” (S23ST1). Not only should there be “clear standards for assessment with college supervisor and co-operating teacher” (S23ST1) but “college supervisors should show how they are applied” (CT4).

In the sense that very few, if any, student teachers fail the practicum, it could be said that the outcomes are achieved. However, whether student teachers who wanted to learn to teach in fact achieved the outcome they desired is questionable, as this depended on the school, co-operating teacher and college supervisor involved as well as on their own efforts. It seemed likely that not all student teachers in the sample would be effective teachers following qualification, simply because of the limited opportunities afforded by the practicum. In contrast with the expressed relative uncertainty surrounding the outcome, there was considerable certainty about many of the objects of the supervision activity system. Themes identified under the dimension of objects that were common to all groups of participants were; developing skills, resolve problems, learn from other people, guidance, feedback and the whole school system.

### **5.3.6. Objects**

The complete list of themes identified under objects is shown for ease of reference in Table 5.7 (covering two pages). Many of these objects applied to individual sessions within the overall heading of supervision sessions, while some were relevant to the overall activity system of supervision. Objects shared by all participants are presented before the objects

attributable to each group, student teachers, followed by co-operating teachers and then college supervisors. The section on objects concludes with participants' recommendations for improvement.

Table 5.7 Dimension 6 Objects

Dimension (element of activity theory/ theme)	Code	Data sources and quotes illustrating how code was developed KEY: CS = college supervisors, CT = co-operating teachers, ST = student teacher, S = school, S1ST3 = school 1 student teacher 3) Q = questionnaire, I = interview, O = researcher's observation <i>Literature reference Engeström (1999)</i>
6. Object	Obj	<p><b>1. Objects shared by all participants</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Developing skills</b>                      “I am developing my classroom management skills because we don't have this kind of skill, we don't study it at the university” (Q S31ST1) “competencies and skills that are essential for teaching” (Q CT3) (O)</p> <p><b>1.2 Resolve problems</b>                      “I think that the purpose of supervision is to resolve problems the student teacher may face” (Q S3ST4) “helping student teachers resolve their problems” (Q CT6)</p> <p><b>1.3 Learn from other people</b>                      “Everyday I learn from older teachers in school, so I develop my teaching skills by consulting by them about different approaches of teaching” (I S8ST4).                      “Learned from co-operating teacher friends and visiting them in their schools” (Q CT6)</p> <p><b>1.4 Guidance</b>                      "Its purposes are to benefit the student teacher and provide him with experiences as foundations to build on, in the teaching practice also direction and guidance” (Q CT2)</p> <p><b>1.5 Feedback</b>                      “Knowing our level in practical teaching” (6 student teachers)</p> <p><b>1.6 The whole school system</b>                      “Know what life and working conditions are really like in schools” (Q S26ST1)</p> <p><b>2. Student teachers' objects</b></p> <p><b>2.1 General</b>                      “Use of modern educational methods” (Q S5ST1) “Link the lesson with daily life of pupils” (Q S23 ST1)</p> <p><b>2.2 Specifics</b></p>

Dimension (element of activity theory/ theme)	Code	<b>Data sources and quotes illustrating how code was developed</b> KEY: CS = college supervisors, CT = co-operating teachers, ST = student teacher, S = school, S1ST3 = school 1 student teacher 3) Q = questionnaire, I = interview, O = researcher's observation <i>Literature reference Engeström (1999)</i>
		<p>“Showing how to do the individual educational plans for pupils” (Q S36ST1)            “We understand how to use visual aids and other equipment” (Q S28ST1)            (O)</p> <p><b>3. Co-operating teachers' objects</b>            “to allocate pupils of similar abilities into classes and ensure appropriate facilities” (Q CS3)</p> <p><b>4. College supervisors' objects</b>            “teach how to teach” ( I CS1, CS4)</p> <p><b>5. Recommendations from participants</b>            “the tasks of supervision of college supervisors should be the same for all of them” (Q S1ST1)            “there should be clear standards for assessment with college supervisor and co-operating teacher” (Q S23ST2)            “It is important for co-operating teachers to work with student teachers full-time” (Q CT2)            “the college supervisor should visit the placement school once a week” (Q CS5)</p>

#### 5.3.6.1. Developing skills

Developing skills was an important theme covering a number of specific areas as well as skills in general. Student teachers reported “Gaining the educational skills to become a teacher in future” (S11ST1I) and “my skills are developing day after day” (ST4Int). Some were general teaching skills while specifics included “communication and interpersonal skills” (ST3Int), pupil motivation and classroom management. “I am developing my classroom management skills because we don't have this kind of skill, we don't study it at the university” (S31ST1). College supervisors referred to general teaching skills as did some of the co-operating teachers, one citing “competencies and skills that are essential for teaching” (CT3). Specific skills such as using individual educational plans and producing and evaluating term plans were also mentioned by co-operating teachers and the researcher observed a college supervisor telling a student teacher how to complete an individual plan, providing him with a model to follow.

There was a general desire among co-operating teachers and supervisors to develop their supervisory skills through various forms of training, such as courses, workshops and conferences. One co-operating teacher and one college supervisor were seeking to develop written guidelines for teaching practice and a second co-operating teacher was focusing on developing skills of teamworking.

Although many more participants talked about developing skills compared with those who mentioned professional development, it is the researcher's view that this does provide evidence of such development in terms of the ‘teaching self’ (Tang et al., 2004).

### 5.3.6.2. Resolve problems

Resolving problems was a major theme: “I think that the purpose of supervision is to resolve problems the student teacher may face” (S3ST4). Problems could be related to teaching in the classroom, “to direct us to avoid doing things wrong” (S30ST1) or to other factors such as “tension with other teachers at school” (S24ST1). Co-operating teachers were considered very helpful, making “problems that student teachers usually face seem easy” (S3ST4) “by telling us his strategies for problem solving” (S45ST2). Problems discussed with college supervisors often concerned dealing with pupils in the classroom situation (CS1) such as “poor response from pupils with severe learning difficulties” (CS2). This emphasis on resolving problems suggests that a major shift is underway, from a situation where the college supervisor and co-operating teacher set the goals and solve the problems to a more collaborative approach, and that changes to the supervision system are lagging behind. However, it may also indicate that problems arise because there is insufficient preparation for the practicum and that the practicum itself is unstructured at the day-to-day level.

### 5.3.6.3. Learn from other people

A feature of the supervision system was learning from other people, student teachers learning during the practicum from other teachers as well as the college supervisor and co-operating teacher. Learning to teach is a complex process, not least because of the interactions between individual student teacher’s learning habits and preferences and the content and style of supervision they experience. “Everyday I learn from older teachers in school, so I develop my teaching skills by consulting by them about different approaches of

teaching” (S8ST4). Co-operating teachers variously learned from “co-operating teacher friends and visiting them in their schools” (CT6), meetings with college supervisors (CT1) and from student teachers who brought up to date knowledge from the university (CT6). College supervisors did not refer to learning from others in the same way, possibly because pressures of work do not allow them time to learn even from each other. Student teachers’ learning from others was, however, largely haphazard and lacking in guidelines such as worksheets or evaluation forms, so that bad habits as well as good ones could be acquired, as evidenced by at least one researcher observation. The onus for giving guidance therefore fell more heavily on the individual co-operating teacher or college supervisor. This burden is all the more heavy on co-operating teachers because of the association between the quality of supervision and the positive experience of student teachers identified by Beck and Kosnik (2002).

#### 5.3.6.4. Guidance

The importance of guidance in the practicum is highlighted by Hagger and McIntyre (2006) who stress that the school situation is where student teachers need to learn the essentials for their future teaching. The current study found that guidance was sought and given on a wide range of topics, with the nature of guidance ranging from suggestions through fairly firm advice to very directive instructions to be followed. Examples of giving suggestions include how to deal with pupil records (S3ST1) and create teaching aids (S6ST1) and, more generally, “When I find a solution to a problem, he advises me if it is a good solution” (S15ST3). At the other end of the spectrum, evidence from observations showed that in some case at least there was a strong element of ‘do this’ or ‘do it like this’, without

necessarily offering an accompanying explanation. It was clear from the data overall that much of the guidance was given in the form of feedback.

#### 5.3.6.5. Feedback

Feedback, as already noted, was further subdivided into sub-themes because there were varying levels of complexity. Some student teachers were anxious to know how well they were doing, stating “Supervision should be designed to give us feedback on our level” (S19ST4) and seeking knowledge of their “capabilities in practical teaching” (S20ST1). As expected, there was concern on the part of many student teachers about whether they would pass: they wanted adequate explanation for their mistakes and assistance with their “professional development through observation and feedback from supervisors” (S17ST3).

The quality, quantity and style of feedback varied from individual to individual. One student teacher compared feedback received from his co-operating teacher and college supervisor. Whereas “the co-operating teacher observes me in the classroom then gives me feedback and corrects my mistakes, so I really benefit greatly from the co-operating teacher”, the college supervisor “asked me for my lesson preparation book and the individual plan, then gave me some points and advice, the college supervisor is involved in a quality project at university so he left the school quickly to attend lectures related to that project, he spent little time with us in the school” (ST1Int). Some college supervisors looked at “all written work and tools before discussion” (S15ST3), some encouraged discussion of any issues of concern. In other cases, student teachers simply listened and recorded “what the college supervisor was saying because we did not meet him for

sufficient time as he is always in a hurry” (S8ST1). Summative meetings could last as little as ten minutes.

One of the researcher’s observations illustrates how lack of college supervisor time at formative assessment can increase stress and lead to a less productive meeting:

CS: There are 3 goals; knowledge, cognitive and behaviour, write them to keep in mind the purpose of the lesson, in this case a verse from the Qura'an, before the pupil reads it...

so you have to start writing goals 'read...' before any other goals, you should write goals progressively

ST: I use these goals for two weeks, not just one day

CS: So you should write 'to review'...also here is a goal which is 'pupil to know all animals' but it is wrong because it is a general goal...also you wrote 'pupil to know', that is a general goal

ST: I took an example from one of the main teachers in the school, so my lesson preparation was in the light of the main teacher's example

CS: Show me this example

CS: You have to read about behaviour modification plans, you have to ask the psychologist in the school to help you

ST: The psychologist is not helpful and expects us to do the whole behaviour modification plan

CS: 75% of the modules you studied at university should qualify you to do the work of a psychologist.

CS: You wrote in your lesson preparation book under the topic of 'road dangers' that a pupil should know these dangers but you didn't write 'should know how

to avoid these dangers'...also you didn't write about any aids you intended to use in your lesson, and you should divide activities in your classroom. You should not buy all the education aids, you should create them.

There were however plenty of examples of balanced feedback, with positive and useful comments as well as criticism. One student teacher was praised by his college supervisor for classroom management, teaching aids and participation by individuals and groups, but criticized for leaving his lesson preparation book in the staff room. The same college supervisor told another teacher that his teaching was good, but gave more suggestions regarding classroom management and teaching aids, suggesting specific aids and ways of using them. The student teacher had not brought the individual plan because he had not expected the college supervisor's visit. This contrasts with recommended best practice in literature which asserts that, in order to maximize learning, feedback should be timely but also based on objectives with clear planning of both the activity and feedback

#### 5.3.6.6. The whole school system

All types of participant highlighted the importance of knowing how teaching and learning worked in the real life school environment, including administrative tasks and documentation teachers are required to complete, and “the school rules which can help me to deal with teachers, pupils and teaching practice at school” (S11ST3). In short, this shared object is to “know what life and working conditions are really like in schools” (S16ST1). One co-operating teacher recognized that this was not always adequately covered, stating he observed student teachers “inside and outside the classroom [...] outside the classroom to tell them how to deal with the school environment” (CT5). From the college supervisors’

viewpoint, interest in the whole school system was focused more on improving resources for the whole school.

#### 5.3.6.7. Student teachers' objects

Many of the objects specific to student teachers were related to detailed objects of individual supervision contacts, informal as well as formal meetings. These included using modern methods, creating and using education aids, using modern education aids, using ICT in teaching and feedback on specific items such as the IEP and curriculum plans they had done. Some also referred to personal development such as discovering skills, researching using ICT and time management. General objects were gaining experience and information and practical teaching. However, the reasons for choosing specific objects at particular points in the practicum were unclear and there was no obvious logical progression, relying largely on untrained co-operating teachers and student teachers uninformed and unskilled in reflective practice to work out for themselves how the objects of individual activities combined to achieve the overall object and outcome of supervision.

#### 5.3.6.8. Co-operating teachers' objects

The four objects mentioned only by co-operating teachers were; communicating with the college supervisor, encouraging student teachers to take responsibility and become self-reliant, and teach how to teach. Personal objects were developing resources for all teachers to use and development of their own skills as a co-operating teacher, through training or networking. It is particularly interesting that 'teach how to teach' was mentioned only by

co-operating teachers, reinforcing their extensive involvement and the importance of their role in the apprenticeship element of ITE.

#### 5.3.6.9. College supervisors' objects

There was an overall sense of giving the final mark as the main object of college supervisors, although there was recognition of the difficulties faced by student teachers and an acknowledgement by one college supervisor that an appropriate object could be “to allocate pupils of similar abilities into classes and ensure appropriate facilities” (CS3) in order to improve teaching and learning. Their potential role as facilitators of the whole supervision and ITE process was however significantly weighed down by the pressures of other tasks and responsibilities at the university.

#### 5.3.6.10. Recommendations from participants

Student teachers made plenty of suggestions for improving the workings of supervision. Specifically concerning the objects, these included the introduction of greater consistency: “the tasks of supervision of college supervisors should be the same for all of them” (S1ST1), “explanation of the college supervisor's requests which should be the same for all college supervisors”. In addition, there should be greater clarity: “the responsibilities of a student teacher should be clear and in writing” (S13ST4), “there should be clear guidelines for supervision which is not clear for us as student teachers” (S6ST1) and “there should be clear standards for assessment with college supervisor and co-operating teacher” (S23ST2). There was also a general view that the practicum should be understood as a learning experience, as expressed in the many objects beginning ‘to learn to’. “Some co-operating teachers believe that student teachers should understand teaching practice straightaway, not seeing it as training in which mistakes may be made” (S38ST1). If all the objects are to be achieved, more time should be allowed for teaching practice and for contact with college supervisors and co-operating teachers.

Co-operating teachers agreed. “It is important for co-operating teachers to work with student teachers full-time” (CT2), “Teaching practice should be divided into two or three courses or more to give student teachers the opportunity to learn and teach at the same time” (CT3) and “the college supervisor should visit the placement school once a week” (CS5).

College supervisors also concurred that “the goals of supervision and teaching practice should be clear for supervisor and student teacher” (CS3). Problems faced by student teachers were acknowledged: “I think the role of student teachers is difficult because they have to teach and assess pupils without any experience, and there is lack of courses which are related to how to teach, so they should do microteaching at university before they go to school to do full teaching” (CS5).

All the recommendations proposed by participants are useful, but will need to be accompanied by a fundamental overhaul of how the practicum is planned, structured and delivered.

### **5.3.7. Tools**

The seventh dimension, tools, has three straightforward themes; student teachers’ tools, co-operating teachers’ tools and college supervisors’ tools. Examples of responses contributing to the theme of student teachers’ tools were “Components that can motivate pupils” (S19ST1) and “All learning means, forms of motivation, projector, video and resources room” (S25ST1). An instance of responses contributing to both co-operating teachers’ and college supervisors’ tools was “my experience” (CT5 and CS1). The researchers’ observations also contributed to the development of these themes.

A range of tools, both material and psychological, were identified as mediating artefacts used by student teachers, co-operating teachers and college supervisors to assist them in their object-oriented activity. Psychological tools include language and education aids, but development of the tools by student teachers can also be objects of their activities, hence

the output from various small activity systems can provide tools for use at later stages in the practicum including meetings with co-operating teachers and college supervisors. During the supervised elements of the practicum, academic tools employed include formal and informal meetings and discussions as well as observation.

#### 5.3.7.1. Student teachers' tools

Most of the student teachers' tools were described in terms of what they brought to practical teaching such as ICT, in particular Powerpoint and smart board, stories, creativity, role play, educational play and games and research. Many felt they brought real life examples and experience to the classroom and had the ability to motivate pupils as well as to communicate with them. Some also said they brought up to date knowledge from their university course. There was almost no evidence that they felt they brought anything to supervision as distinct from practical teaching, with the exception of questioning, listening and note-taking ability. However, although they were not explicit about using co-operating teachers' and college supervisors' experience as a tool, they clearly did so, many saying they listened very closely and followed advice and instructions to get a good mark. Questioning was used with co-operating teachers to pursue specific objects as well as the object of the overall supervision activity system, although it was employed by only one-third of student teachers in meetings with their college supervisor. In contrast, almost two-thirds employed listening as a tool with college supervisors. A summary of the psychological tools used by student teachers is shown in figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10 Psychological tools employed by student teachers

Student teacher actions in supervision meetings with college supervisor	Yes	No
1- I decide some of the topics and issues to be discussed	19% (18)	81% (75)
2- I spend most of the meeting listening to the supervisor	62% (58)	38% (35)
3- I ask for help or suggestions about my teaching	33% (31)	67% (62)
4- I ask for suggestions about how I can develop my skills independently	14% (13)	86% (80)

During supervision sessions, they would bring tools such as visual aids, their lesson preparation book, individual educational plans. Whilst these were discussed by student teachers in interactions with co-operating teachers, in sessions with the college supervisor, it was the supervisor rather than student teacher who used them as tools for directive supervision.

### 5.3.7.2. Co-operating teachers' tools

Both co-operating teachers and college supervisors cited experience as the main tool used in supervision activity, although supervision skills were evidenced to varying degrees in the observed supervision meetings. The researcher's observations also found instances of praise and encouragement, the use of specific examples drawn from student teachers' work to illustrate points, and telling students to think about how they do or approach certain

situations. There was no example of student teachers being asked to reflect on their teaching in the form of *how do you think that went?*, perhaps because the supervisor conducts the assessment rather than attempting to develop self-assessment skills in student teachers.

### 5.3.7.3. College supervisors' tools

Although to a large extent, college supervisors shared the same tools in supervision as co-operating teachers, the extent to which they used them differed as shown in the examples of careful choice of language and following the supervision checklist (figure 5.11). Interestingly, they did not see the lesson preparation book or visual aids brought by student teachers to supervision sessions as tools, although they used them in this way as seen in the researcher's observations. Instead, they were seen as similar to assignments, as a summative assessment tool, but in a practicum context.

Figure 5.11 Use of tools: language and supervision checklist

How frequently do you do each of the following?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Choose what I say and how I say it carefully					
<b>College supervisors</b>	4	2	0	0	0
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>	2	8	2	0	0
<b>Student teachers</b>	21% (20)	26% (24)	10% (10)	30% (28)	21% (11)
Follow the supervision checklist					
<b>College supervisors</b>	3	1	2	0	0
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>	3	5	3	1	0
<b>Student teachers</b>	17% (16)	10% (19)	25% (23)	25% (23)	13% (12)

It makes sense for the more formal interactions of college supervisors to involve a more circumspect use of language, compared with the less formal and frequent contacts between

co-operating teachers and student teachers. However, researcher's observations suggest that college supervisors did not choose the language as carefully as they claimed. The supervision checklist could provide a consistent list for all supervisors to work towards, but was used with varying frequency, more than one-third of student teachers not aware it was used at all.

Observations, supported by a number of student teacher comments, indicated that in practice the most commonly used tool was the lesson preparation book, which was reviewed by co-operating teachers and college supervisors alike and used in many respects as a more practical and detailed substitute for the supervision checklist. One supervisor "corrected mistakes after he observed me in classroom and after he reviewed my lesson preparation book" (S9ST4). In a session with another supervisor, "I showed him my lesson preparation book and what I did so far then he gave me short oral feedback on some pages of my lesson preparation book" (S13ST1). Some student teachers also used it as a focus for discussions with co-operating teachers. "I showed him my lesson preparation book to receive his feedback to develop my lesson planning skills" (S19ST2). "He gives me more freedom to discuss anything I want, such as how to prepare lessons in my lesson preparation notebook" (S1ST2). The lesson preparation book typically fulfilled the role of a central point where various aspects of teacher development were brought together, thus serving as a useful reference point for all participants in the supervisory triad.

In addition to failure to maximize the benefit of the lesson preparation book as a tool, one problem area is that certain useful tools were missing; time, and, with it, the kind of carefully planned timetables that can make supervision during the practicum proceed much

more smoothly. Another potentially useful tool, information and communication technology, was used very little.

### 5.3.8. Relationships

The relationships dimension contains two main subheadings, community and recommendations from participants, as shown in Table 5.8

Table 5.8 Dimension 8: Relationships

<b>Dimension (element of activity theory/ theme)</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Data sources and quotes illustrating how code was developed</b> KEY: CS = college supervisors, CT = co-operating teachers, ST = student teacher, S = school, S1ST3 = school 1 student teacher 3) Q = questionnaire, I = interview, O = researcher's observation	<b>Literature references</b>
<b>8. Relationships</b>	<b>Rel</b>	<p><b>1. Community</b></p> <p><b>1.1 University</b>            "There is no collaboration between school and university" (Q CS5) "There should be a good relationship between school and university by designing courses and delivering training in supervision for co-operating teachers to enable and qualify them to supervise student teachers in school" (Q CS5)            (O)</p> <p><b>1.2 School</b>            "I didn't find any collaboration from teachers of special education" (Q S18ST1).</p> <p><b>1.3 Student teachers</b>            No links between most special needs teachers and student teachers (O)</p> <p><b>1.4 Communities of practice</b>            Mainly from observations</p> <p><b>2. Recommendations from participants</b>            "There should be regular meetings or workshops in school for mainstream teachers and student teachers together to discuss and exchange their experience to learn from each other and make reflection" (I CS4)</p>	(Lave and Wenger, 1991)

The importance of relationships in the practicum has been highlighted by many scholars (Pinder, 2003; Rajuan et al., 2008). Relationships (and the absence of relationships) occur within and between communities as well as between individuals. In the current study, a number of different communities and the ways in which they interacted were identified. In addition to the overarching communities of school and university, by history, background and occupations, it was clear that there were differences between communities of student teachers, co-operating teachers and college supervisors. Furthermore, there was some evidence that specialist SEN teachers and general teachers were also seen as distinct smaller communities. As well as the requirement for participants in the supervision triad to work well together, the need for all partners to work together to make supervision effective was highlighted by one of the college supervisors who commented “There should be a good relationship between school and university by designing courses and delivering training in supervision for co-operating teachers to enable and qualify them to supervise student teachers in school” (CS5). This also acknowledged the influence of a community or communities on individuals.

#### 5.3.8.1. Community

Community is an important construct in activity theory because it represents the history and much of the influence that is brought to bear on the activity system itself. Theory holds that members of professions such as teachers or nurses not only share goals and skills but also values and a history which influence how they act. Engeström, (1999) argued that even within a community of practice, there may be conflicting goals, as in the teaching/research/supervision/special projects demands placed on college supervisors, and

in the current study, there may be additional layers of complexity and associated tensions arising from the interaction of the differing communities.

The presence of the university community was strong, the college supervisor holding the power of the final mark of summative assessment. If a student teacher did not have documents available, he should take them to his college supervisor in his university office (Observations) and most supervisors made it clear on most occasions that they had come from a busy university life to which they had to quickly return, generally by adopting a very brief, businesslike approach. Relationships between school and university were at best tenuous, with insufficient partnership working to produce a planned and systematic approach to the practicum in too many cases. Literature proposes that the university and school work together to design and deliver the practicum as responsibility for student teacher professional development is in practice shared.

The composition of the school community as experienced by student teachers was not always the same. They tended to work within the 'SEN' school community, consisting of main specialist teachers, co-operating teachers and pupils with special needs. Apart from observing main specialist teachers, many student teachers seemed to have little contact with them, "I didn't find any collaboration from teachers of special education" (S18ST1). The headteacher and general teachers were almost invisible. This divergence partly reflects division at the Ministry level in terms of responsibility for initial teacher education and schools and also geographical and academic separation of responsibility for general and special education services. It further reflects the absence of a shared purpose that links pupil achievement with student teacher achievement.

This separation of responsibilities between Ministries and the associated separation between schools and universities in supervision related to the concepts of boundary-crossing and boundary objects within the third generation of activity theory (Engeström, 2001). Boundary crossing attempts to conceptualise the ways in which activity systems and the people involved in them could create new boundary objects and hence new learning and knowledge. Boundary objects are created where different knowledge domains such as the university and school interact, as in the earlier example of a college supervisor working with teachers to help them collaborate with parents. It is argued that they can function as a mechanism for integrating the two spheres of knowledge and lead to collective learning in both domains (Carlile, 2004).

In the absence of any strong links other than those between individual student teachers and co-operating teachers, there was a sense that student teachers were quite isolated in their experience of learning to be a teacher during the practicum, belonging for a short period to a community of between one and four student teachers plus the co-operating teacher. College supervisors and co-operating teachers generally recognized this and one supervisor made a point of treating “student teachers like main teachers in the school” (S23ST2), which might have helped them feel included but could also have increased pressure of expectation on them.

Rather than communities simply being institutions, there was a sense that college supervisors viewed themselves as a community of practice, as did more loosely co-operating teachers. College supervisors referred to lectures, research and projects as elements of their busy working lives. Co-operating teachers referred to their busy working lives in terms of teaching SEN pupils and supervising main teachers.

The relationships between student teachers and co-operating teachers in most cases contrasted sharply with those between student teachers and college supervisors. Almost all student teachers formed close professional relationships with their co-operating teacher and most of those relationships had an informal, 'open door' nature. Co-operating teachers tended to "always meet student teachers and make informal conversation and sometimes talk about teaching practice and share how to resolve problems that arise". Student teachers considered their co-operating teacher "like a brother" (S9ST1), "always standing beside me" (S22ST1), a relationship which was made even closer by the lack of other well-structured relationships in the practicum. These relationships were almost all overwhelmingly successful in terms of supporting student teachers' professional development, a factor seen as key to an effective practicum (Foster et al., 2007).

All groups of participants had suggestions for improving relationships between university and school, a finding supported by Quick and Siebörger (2005). They also recommended improving relationships between student teachers and main teachers. The potential benefits of joint working and learning were acknowledged by co-operating teachers: "There should be meetings for student teachers with mainstream teachers to learn from each other". They were also acknowledged by college supervisors: "There should be regular meetings or workshops in school for mainstream teachers and student teachers together to discuss and exchange their experience to learn from each other and make reflection." One college supervisor suggested the school headteacher might be particularly well placed to develop this relationship, saying "the headteacher may be able to increase collaboration between special education needs student teachers and mainstream teachers because he knows all the teachers in school including the student teachers, but he doesn't play any such role because

there is no collaboration between school and university” (CS5). This indicates that the university has a key role to play in any future development and improvement of the supervision processes.

Confirming findings of Quick and Siebörger (2005), some student teachers said there should be more contact with schools before the start of teaching practice so that both schools and student teachers were better prepared for the practicum.

### **5.3.9. Professional development**

This dimension deals with the professional development of all parties in supervision. When the methodology for this study was originally drawn up, the expectation was that professional development might be a shared object or outcome among all participants. The analysis does not lend great support to this expectation, therefore it is useful to examine the findings concerning professional development as it relates to each of the participants groups. Data sources and illustrative quotes are shown in table 5.9. The illustrative quotes indicate that professional development is often interpreted in terms of skills and only occasionally as a matter of more personal development as in ‘*grow* our professional development’ (researcher’s italics) where the word ‘grow’ carries a meaning like that of plant growth and flowering.

Table 5.9. Dimension 9 Professional development

<b>Dimension (element of activity theory/ theme)</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Data sources and quotes illustrating how code was developed</b> KEY: CS = college supervisors, CT = co-operating teachers, ST = student teacher, S = school, S1ST3 = school 1 student teacher 3) Q = questionnaire, I = interview, O = researcher's observation	<b>Literature references</b>
<b>9. Professional development</b>	<b>Prf</b>	<p><b>1. Student teachers' professional development</b> "To raise our qualification in teaching practice" (Q S5ST1) "to help us to grow our professional development by observe us and getting feedback from supervisors" (Q S17ST1)</p> <p><b>2. Co-operating teachers' professional development</b> "I am looking for a course to help me fulfil my role" (Q CT2)</p> <p><b>3. College supervisors' teachers' professional development</b> "I am looking for supervisory courses to improve my supervisory skills" (Q CS5)</p> <p><b>4. Recommendations from participants</b> "There should be training courses for co-operating teachers at the university or run by the Ministry of Education to train us as co-operating teachers in how to supervise student teachers" (Q CT7)</p>	(Shulman, 1987) (Tang, 2004) (Avramidis, 2005)

#### 5.3.9.1. Student teachers' professional development

Student teachers on the whole tended to think about their learning and progress in small steps, although some specifically referred to professional development, typically in the context of additional workshops at the school and updates on new development in special education needs. One sought to be able to undertake his own ongoing professional development by gaining the skills "to develop our professional development in order to be able to take responsibility for teaching when we are teachers soon" (S19ST1). Observations indicated an overall lack of systematic approach to their professional development, a major concern given that all the smaller and larger activity systems under consideration in supervision should be directed towards this as the overarching activity leading to the endpoint of qualified and professional teachers.

### 5.3.9.2. Co-operating teachers' and college supervisors' professional development

Co-operating teachers were seeking professional development in a number of areas through taking courses relevant to teaching practice and supervision, exchanging ideas and experience and reading. There was recognition that this could also entail professional development for college supervisors in order to support the whole process.

For college supervisors, the focus was on developing student teachers rather than themselves. However, one supervisor said he was always seeking to improve his supervisory skills (CS1) while another stated “I am looking for supervisory courses to improve my supervisory skills for supervision of student teachers in teaching practice as I haven't taken any courses related to supervision” (CS5).

### 5.3.9.3. Recommendations from participants

In order to heighten the focus on professional development of all participants in the supervision processes, training is needed for co-operating teachers and college supervisors. “There should be training courses for co-operating teachers at the university or run by the Ministry of Education to train us as co-operating teachers in how to supervise student teachers”. One college supervisor saw that this could also improve relationships “between school and university by making courses and training in supervision for co-operating teachers to enable and qualify them to supervise student teachers in school” (CS5).

### **5.3.10. Assessment**

The findings for this dimension are reported under three headings; conduct of assessment, assessment criteria and recommendations from participants. Findings on the conduct of assessment were based on researcher's observations of group meetings and individual supervision sessions, together with attendance at lesson observations on which the sessions were based. The theme of assessment criteria was derived from comments such as "The most important point for me in the meeting with the college supervisor was to know the principles of summative assessment" (S23ST1) and [the most important thing is] "giving student teachers models for preparing lessons then evaluating them accordingly" (CS3). Formal supervision procedures as laid down in official instructions require two reports from the college supervisor, formative and summative assessment. The marks given at these assessments are ultimately determined by the college supervisor, although depending on the amount of contact between supervisor and student teacher and on the extent to which the supervisor knows and trusts the judgment of the co-operating teacher, the latter's comments and proposed mark may carry greater or less weight.

#### **5.3.10.1. Conduct of assessment**

The findings under this section are gathered mainly from responses to questions about what happens during supervision meetings and from the researcher's observations. It was clear that for most co-operating teachers, formative assessment of student teachers is an ongoing process for as long as they are on placement. With one exception, a co-operating teacher who had managed due to his other work commitments to observe his student teachers only once, this was done on an almost daily basis. The majority of college supervisors in this

sample, however, had between two and five contacts with the student teachers and many of these were unannounced, with the college supervisor arriving and asking for the teacher timetable before going straight in to observations (Obs). In some instances, the supervisor would only see the student teacher twice, the first time during a period of several weeks and the second time during a period of three weeks towards the end of the practicum. The formative and summative visits could come too close together to allow sufficient time for development. This sometimes meant that student teachers were not ready for summative assessment, leading to a potentially wasted journey from the college supervisor's point of view and a worrying experience for the student teacher (Obs). In two cases, this was compounded by the college supervisor having rushed through the formative assessment feedback because of pressures of time and university work. A typical comment was "I encouraged student teachers to pay attention to written notes I gave them, I urge them to consider my feedback to avoid all mistakes in summative assessment" (CS2), leaving the co-operating teacher and student teacher to use the notes to meet the required standards whenever the summative assessment might take place.

Co-operating teachers generally tried their best to fill the gap by "giving student teachers models for preparing lessons then evaluating them accordingly" and by making time for student teachers to discuss summative assessment. "Students teachers are concerned with the assessment standards, so they always talk to me about assessment standards" (CT1). Hope was expressed that "the supervisor continues contacting us and the co-operating teacher because the college supervisor sometimes comes at a not good time for us for assessment" (S23ST).

### 5.3.10.2. Assessment criteria

Considerable concern was expressed by student teachers regarding assessment criteria. They sought “instructions that talk about our roles and our exact duties in schools and what assessment criteria we should meet for summative assessment” (S11ST1). “The most important point for me in the meeting with the college supervisor was to know the principles of summative assessment” (S23ST1). Pupil motivation was a particular point of concern, with some student teachers using “sweets and chocolates to motivate pupils to participate and be active, as without these sweets I would lose their attention and have a low mark in summative assessment” (S19ST4). One asked his co-operating teacher about “the measures of quality” for plans and the IEP and BIP (S14ST2), while almost all student teachers spent the majority of time in meetings with their college supervisor “listening to the supervisor and writing the important points which might help me in teaching and in the summative assessment visit” (S4ST2).

### 5.3.10.3. Recommendations from participants

The inconsistencies and uncertainties surrounding assessment visits, their content and content and assessment criteria greatly increase stress in serious student teachers. Their own recommendations primarily concern the role of the co-operating teacher who “must have a big role in our summative assessment” (S7ST2): he “plays a vital role in training us, so he should have the same important role in our summative assessment” (S9ST5), some going so far as to say “the main role in our formative and summative assessment must be given to the co-operating teacher because he knows everything about our abilities as we are

with him everyday, so only he can assess us honestly” (S8ST2). One co-operating teacher supported this by saying “the role of college supervisor should be of a consultant only”. College supervisors as a minimum should explain more clearly to student teachers “how we can prepare for lessons in an excellent way to get a good mark in the summative assessment” (S11ST1) and should set and abide by agreed fixed dates for assessment visits. The problems associated with assessment are linked with difficulties identified in communication.

### **5.3.11. Communication**

The dimension of communication emerged from the data collection and specific aspects presented here are communications within the school team, between school and university and recommendations from participants. Key quotes supporting the theme of communications within the school team included “Talking with them [student teachers] anywhere and anytime in my free time at school” (CT4) and highlighted the importance of the headteacher role. “The headteacher may be able to create more collaboration between special education needs student teachers and mainstream teachers because he knows all teachers in the school including student teachers but he doesn’t play any role like that because there is no collaboration between school and university” (CS5) and “The headteacher ought to create good communication between student teachers and mainstream teachers and there should be a meeting every month to discuss problems and difficulties to exchange experiences in resolving them together” (CT8). School-university communications were typified by comments such as “The college supervisor should give us the timetable of meetings” (S17ST2) and more bluntly “...there is no collaboration between school and university” (CS5). Communications generally came in for criticism, whether

within the school, between school and university, between student teacher and college supervisor or more widely.

Within-school-team communications were generally problematic. There was little mention of communication between student and main teachers except for observations of how to teach and occasional examples of help being asked for and obtained. Student teachers were not always clear about their duties in the school, including the hours they were expected to teach and so it appears that even within the SEN teaching team communications were not always operational or effective. Yet at least one of the co-operating teachers stressed the “importance of informal conversation” with student teachers. It may be that informal communication takes precedence in the absence of more efficient formal communication.

Communication between school and university, whether between organisations or between individuals, seemed to suffer from similar difficulties. At the individual level, student teachers welcomed college supervisors’ advice but were quite critical of overall communication with them, starting with “The college supervisor should give us the timetable of meetings” (S17ST2). However, many of the meetings seemed to be largely one-way communication from the college supervisor: “I spent most of the meeting time listening to the college supervisor because I was not given any time to talk” (S20ST1) and “My college supervisor preferred to talk a lot but didn't listen to us and didn't give us time to exchange views or discuss with him” (S20ST2).

The problems were summed up by one student teacher as follows:

“We don't benefit from the college supervisor as expected because he is very busy, and the co-operating teacher is also busy even though he offers his help all the time, but we find him always busy with some work for his job, so I think there is no real relationship between school and the university. The evidence for what I said is that the co-operating teacher is a teacher in school and he doesn't get any advantage from his supervision and there is no direct communication between school and university, so it is necessary to free up the college supervisor or co-operating teacher to teach and supervise us in school” (S15ST2)

The greatest awareness of communication problems came from co-operating teachers, probably because they were situated at the centre of the broken web of communications. They recognized the need for better communications and sometimes acted on it “by consulting experts like my colleagues and college supervisors” and “discussing matters with supervisors at the Ministry of Higher Education” or “corresponding with the Ministry of Education”. They clearly understood that improvements would have to come from changes to the whole supervision system which could only be implemented by the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for schools and supervision of qualified teachers, working together with Ministry of Higher Education, which is responsible for initial teacher education.

On the theme of communications, participants proposed a number of improvements. First and foremost, “communication should be improved and increased between university and school” (CS3). In addition to the suggestion that supervision should be carried out in school by a dedicated supervisor, there were practical suggestions along the lines of the

headteacher creating good communication between student teachers and mainstream teachers by arranging joint weekly meetings. A co-operating teacher suggested it would be helpful to have workshops to improve mainstream teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and student teachers.

College supervisors recommended more joint meetings, workshops and conferences for all parties and greater co-ordination of educational services for SEN pupils. Only one directly addressed the college supervisor-student teacher communication issues, saying “there should be an electronic mechanism to communicate between supervisors and student teachers” (CS3). As a first step which is consistent with the national plans for implementing ICT across the education system, this represents a positive and achievable first step.

### **5.3.12. Rules**

Effectively, the rules governing supervision activity are the national policy and procedures and the manner in which these are implemented. Schools norms vary from one educational establishment to another in terms of what is expected of student teachers, of example the number of hours of teaching, cover teaching, supervision of breaks and other non-teaching activities. Due to the underdeveloped relationships between schools and university and the non-involvement of the headteachers in the supervision of SEN student teachers, in the majority of cases the school norms have relatively little influence, although they can cause some inconvenience to individuals. The norms expected of student teachers can also vary from one Higher Education institution to another and between college supervisors. Central

policy, therefore, is all-important and, together with recommendations from participants, forms the theme presented under the dimension of rules.

Student teachers were also generally uncomfortable with their knowledge of the rules of their placement school, “Asking about the school rules which can help me to deal with teachers, pupils and teaching practice at school” (S11ST3). It was felt that more explanation and guidance was necessary before starting the practicum. They felt this should be provided at or by the university. “We went to school with no information about the school policy and its system and what it includes, how to deal with everything in school, so we should be given some lectures about everything I have mentioned before the practicum starts if we know the practicum is first and last chance for practising teaching during university study” (S15ST3). College supervisors should be “Giving student teachers clear information about their exact role in the school” (S2ST4), not only in lectures but through “Writing a guideline for our role and responsibilities in school” (S2ST5).

Strong views emerged around policy issues, from the recruitment and allocation processes for student teachers through to time that should be dedicated to supervision, training provided for supervisors and financial incentives. Not only was it felt “There should be incentives for co-operating teachers for their supervision of student teachers” (CS3) but a number of student teachers favoured “Giving us a salary like main teachers because we working similarly to them” (S3ST1). The aspect that attracted most attention was teaching practice itself, with comments about the preparation and planning, and the proportion of the whole course given to practical teaching. Microteaching should be introduced into the university component of ITE (CS1) so that student teachers are better prepared for the practicum. Student teachers should have an opportunity to visit schools before the teaching

practice semester to make plans together in advance (CT). “There should be visits to the school by student teachers before the teaching practice semester to make plans together in advance” (CS3). Most often mentioned was the need to dedicate more time to practical teaching, some saying it “should be divided into two or three courses or more to give student teachers the opportunity to learn and teach at the same time”, it should start from the first year at university and there should be “teaching practice and observing teachers to learn how to teach [...] every year not once to be able to apply theory in practice in good time” (CT). Regarding effective supervision, some co-operating teachers and college supervisors considered it was important to make more hours available for college supervisors by reducing university teaching hours and proposed training courses for co-operating teachers and, to a lesser extent, for college supervisors. A further consideration, discussed under roles in the following section, was the division of responsibilities and final mark allocation between college supervisors and co-operating teachers.

### **5.3.13. Roles: division of roles, tasks and responsibilities**

Findings in the dimension of roles are presented as shown in Table 5.10 under the headings of college supervisors, co-ordinating teachers and student teachers followed by recommendations from participants. Strong opinions were expressed about the various roles and responsibilities in supervision and the tasks required of student teachers during the practicum. Some participants recommended a complete overhaul of supervision arrangements.

Table 5.10 Dimension 13 Roles in supervision

<b>Dimension (element of activity theory/ theme)</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Data sources and quotes illustrating how code was developed</b> KEY: CS = college supervisors, CT = co-operating teachers, ST = student teacher, S = school, S1ST3 = school 1 student teacher 3. Q = questionnaire, I = interview, O = researcher's observation
<b>13. Roles division of roles, tasks and responsibilities</b>	<b>Div</b>	<p><b>1. College supervisors' role</b>                      "The role of the college supervisor is complex and very tiring , he is a supervisor, educator, researcher, attends workshops for Quality Project and has to do some office hours, he has lots of responsibilities which could impact negatively on supervision of student teachers" (Q CS1)                      "I wish that the supervisor played a bigger role by visiting the school frequently and regularly" (Q CS3)</p> <p><b>2. Co-operating teachers' role</b>                      "his collaboration with us and making our task easier" (Q S14ST2)                      "Student teachers' attendance everyday puts me under pressure because I have classes and I supervise and assess main teachers at school" (Q CS2)</p> <p><b>3. Student teachers' role</b>                      "We want to be a teacher's assistant before we practice teaching" (Q S14ST2)                      "I think the role of student teachers is difficult because they have to teach and assess pupils without any experience, and there is lack of courses which are related to how to teach, so they should do microteaching at university before they go to school to do full teaching" (Q CS1)                      "Put a fixed timetable for student teachers in school to avoid giving them more work than expected" (Q CS3)</p> <p><b>4. Recommendations from participants</b>                      "Employ our skills in appropriate aspects of teaching" (Q S13ST1) [college supervisors should] "Collaborate with us, especially in resolving problems, for example, the problem of creating friendships between students" (Q S13ST2)                      "There should be coordination and a clear distinction between the co-operating teacher and the college teacher on the dates of the visit because the co-operating teacher doesn't know when the college supervisor is coming so we are a bit worried about that" (Q S13ST2)</p>

There was general agreement by almost all participants that roles, tasks and responsibilities in supervision would benefit from review and greater clarity, subject to appropriate policy amendments. It was widely acknowledged that the complete roles of college supervisor and co-operating teacher represented an overload of work which could in many instances

simply not be managed because of the sheer volume of work and conflicting demands on time and that, as a consequence, the quality of supervision was likely to suffer.

Participants' perceptions of the relative importance of their own roles is shown in figure 5.12.

Figure 5.12 Perceived importance of supervision roles

	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>Not important</i>	<i>Not at all important</i>
<b>College supervisors</b>					
Importance of own role in supervision in comparison with other members of the supervision team	2	4	0	0	0
<b>Co-operating teachers</b>					
Importance of own role in supervision in comparison with college supervisor role	10	1	1	0	0
<b>Student teachers</b>					
Importance of own input to your supervision meetings	37% (34)	32% (30)	6% (6)	4% (4)	10% (9)

Turning to how different participants saw their role in supervision, college supervisors had a clearer understanding of their role than co-operating teachers or student teachers. This is related to their capacity to decide the role they wish to play in the supervision team. Although all college supervisors and co-operating teachers agreed or strongly agreed they could decide their role, a higher proportion of college supervisors strongly agreed compared with co-operating teachers as illustrated in figure 5.13.

Figure 5.13 College supervisors' role

How far do you agree with each of the following statements?	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Disagree completely
1. I am clear about my role in the supervision team	5	1	0	0	0
2. I can decide the role I wish to play in the supervision team	5	1	0	0	0
3 The college supervisor role is the most important	3	2	0	1	0
4 The co-operating teacher role is the most important	3	2	0	1	0
5 The headteacher role is the most important	0	1	0	3	2
6. Each role is equally useful	0	0	0	4	2
7. I inform my student teachers of the evaluation criteria	2	3	0	1	0

An interesting point is that half the college supervisors in the sample said they saw the co-operating teacher role as the most important, despite more of them having just said the same about the college supervisor role. This is further evidence of the lack of clarity in supervision arrangements. Two opposing views were expressed by participants about college supervisors, one that they should be freed from some other duties to concentrate more on supervision and the other that their supervisory responsibilities should be transferred to co-operating teachers.

In contrast with the college supervisors, co-operating teacher were unanimous in saying their role was the most important, as indicated in Figure 5.14.

Figure 5.14 Co-operating teachers' role

How far do you agree with each of the following statements?	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree completely</i>
1. I am clear about my role in the supervision team	8	4	0	0	0
2. I can decide the role I wish to play in the supervision team	6	6	0	0	0
3 The college supervisor role is the most important	0	0	1	0	5
4 The co-operating teacher role is the most important	12	0	0	0	0
5. I inform my student teachers of the evaluation criteria	8	4	0	0	0

It was suggested by one college supervisor that “there should be incentives for the co-operating teacher for his supervision of student teachers” (CS3) but this would not alleviate the shortage of time and would effectively reward co-operating teachers for tolerating greater stress rather than for concentrating more on supervision.

Whilst at first sight it seems obvious that the role of student teachers in the practicum is to learn to teach, their role in supervisory processes is less clear. In line with the ‘knowledge transmitter’ learning culture in Saudi Arabia, their main role is to listen, learn and act on what they are told. However, over a potentially long teaching career, teachers have relatively few observations and inspections and little chance of CPD (continuous professional development) so there may be no opportunity after the practicum for either feedback or self-development. Discussion with co-operating teachers, including discussion of feedback, and having the opportunity to put forward ideas were welcomed by almost all

student teachers, the majority of whom wanted more time for discussion with college supervisors.

Figure 5.15 Student teachers' perceptions of importance of roles

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree completely</i>
How far do you agree with each of the following statements?					
1- I am clear about my own role in the supervision process	14% (15)	26% (24)	27% (25)	22% (20)	10% (9)
2- I am clear about the different roles of the college supervisor and co-operating teacher	25% (26)	44% (41)	12% (11)	14% (13)	3% (3)
3- The college supervisor role is the most important	5 (5)%	19%(18)	8% (7)	43% (40)	25% (23)
4- The co-operating teacher role is the most important	46% (43)	46% (43)	3% (3)	3% (3)	2% (2)
5- Each role is equally useful to me	10% (9)	17% (16)	6% (6)	32% (30)	34% (32)

It is striking that almost 1 in 3 of the student teachers are unclear about their own role, while more than 1 in 4 are unclear about the different roles of the college supervisor and co-operating teacher. Equally striking is the fact that 4 out of 5 disagree or strongly disagree that the college supervisor role is the most important. On the other hand, 92% agree or strongly agree that the co-operating teacher role is the most important.

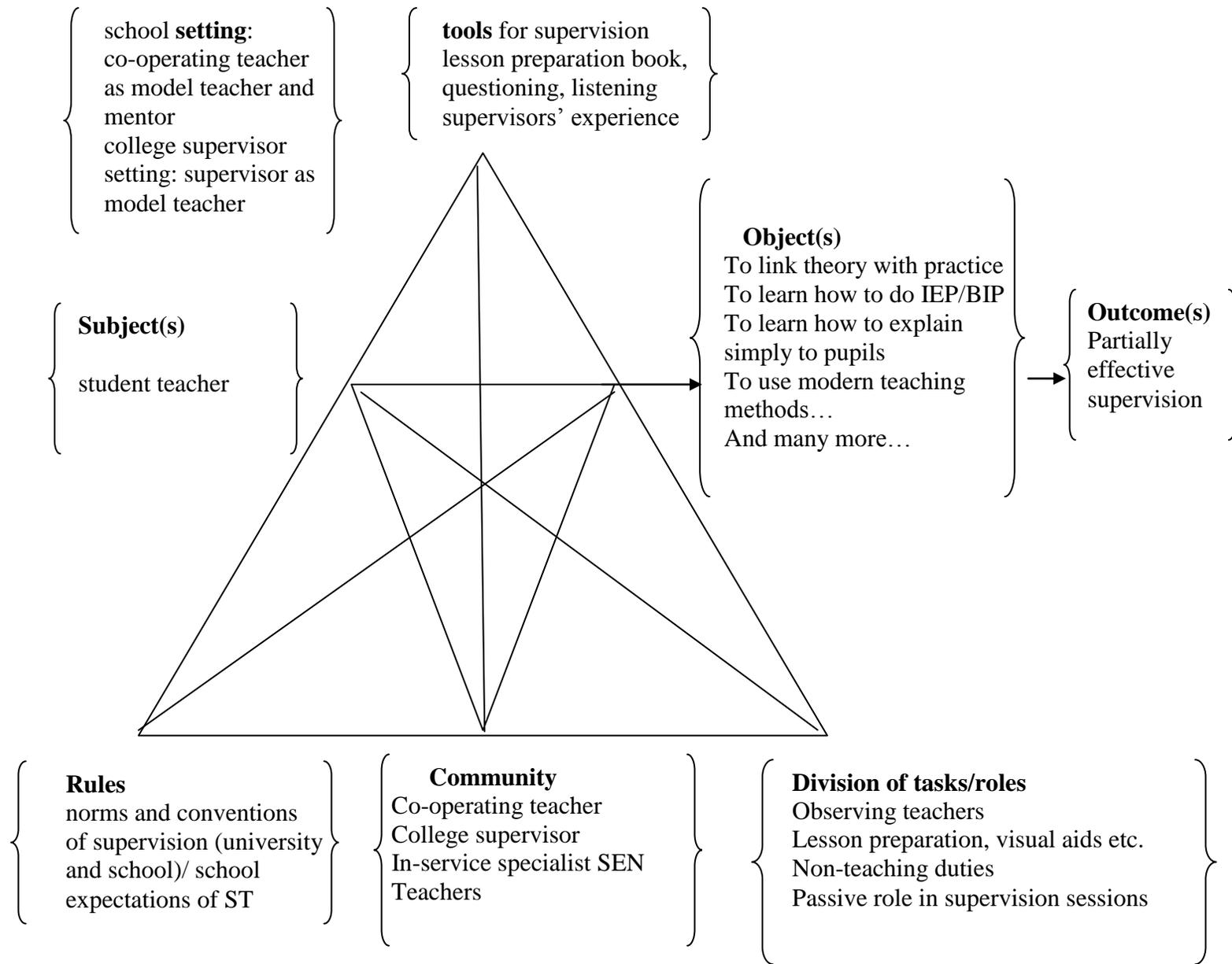
Participants' recommendations regarding roles and division of tasks can all be contained in a single statement that the supervision system as a whole would benefit from review, even if the ITE model remains unchanged, as very few participants were happy with the processes as they stand. The review should incorporate consideration of a role for the

Headteacher in formative and summative assessment in addition to giving a larger proportion of the final mark to the co-operative teacher. Pressures on co-operating teacher time could have implications for main teachers, for example by giving individual main teachers responsibility for specific elements, in particular where their own strengths lay. A starting point, however, could be the production of written guidelines for the practicum as a whole, with a clear and agreed plan of who will do what and when. These guidelines should include a set of assessment criteria with standards attached in order to distinguish clearly between 'fail', 'pass' and 'very good standard' which would help to improve consistency and coherence in supervision as a whole.

One college supervisor suggested creating school-university collaboration on a range of professional development events. This would help to overcome perceived problems of schools being uninterested in student teachers' professional development and divisions between main and student teachers, and SEN and general teachers, provided that an appropriate range of topics was selected, such as inclusion, supervision and professional development itself.

Before examining some of the contradictions emerging from the use of the activity theory framework in this analysis, it is useful to take stock of the student teachers' supervision activity system. Figure 5.16 shows that the objects were much more specific than had been anticipated and the outcome of 'partially effective supervision' reflects the lack of structure and sequence which for some student teachers led to dissatisfaction and frustration.

Figure 5.16 Student teachers' supervision activity system



### **5.3.14. Contradictions**

As explained in chapter three, activity theory provides a framework for identifying and analysing contradictions within an activity system and among activity systems in a network of activity systems. The contradictions revealed in the current study pinpointed differences between intended and actual outcomes of student teacher supervision. One example of a primary contradiction related to different value systems behind the object of ‘learn how to teach’. This was evident when a student teacher wanted to practise the “Use of modern educational methods” (S5ST1) or “Link the lesson with daily life of pupils” (S23 ST1) but might learn traditional teaching methods, or perhaps not very effective ones, from experienced teachers. “Everyday I learn from older teachers in school, so I develop my teaching skills by consulting by them about different approaches of teaching” (S8ST4). A related but different example is the reported exchange between a student teacher who had modelled his behaviour modification plan on a real plan produced by an experienced teacher, only to be told by his college supervisor that it was wrong. These types of contradiction can lead to new teachers adopting the existing ways of working in their employing school if the in-service teachers are resistant to change. In addition, there was clear evidence in some cases of contradictions between the supportive value system of a co-operating teachers and the professional judgment value system of the supervisor, a contradiction in the community element. Perhaps the most worrying primary contradiction was the difference between objects that the college supervisor and student teacher sought to achieve from specific sessions. Whilst the student teachers might seek to learn how to do a BIP or pupil assessment, the college supervisor might be seeking to award a formative assessment mark or make a judgment of overall teaching ability.

Secondary contradictions, those which are provoked by the entry of a new element into the activity system, include the unexpected additional responsibilities experienced by some student teachers, such as covering for an absent in-service teacher or undertaking break time supervision duties at very short notice. Since these are taken into account in awarding the summative assessment mark, student teachers grumble about the extra element, feel the tension and conflict, but comply.

The student teachers who pleaded for greater clarity about their duties may have been reacting to a quaternary contradiction resulting from the lack of effective communication between school and university, and as a consequence between a number of co-operating teachers and college supervisors, for instance when a college supervisor arrived unexpectedly for a teaching observation when the student teacher may have been concentrating on covering for an absent teacher.

Furthermore, although not explored in detail in the current study, there was evidence of conflict between activity systems as in third generation activity theory (Engestrom, 1999). It was clear that the activity systems of teaching and supervision of in-service teachers in which co-operating teachers were involved were at times in conflict with the supervision activity system. Similarly and very obviously, college supervisors were engaged in lecturing, research and organization development activity systems which conflicted in terms of time and importance with supervision of student teachers.

At this point it is useful to summarize findings insofar as they answer the research questions. How the existing model(s) of supervision can be improved has been discussed in some detail, with positive recommendations for improving the dimensions of

communication, division of roles and school-university collaboration in addition to relevant training for those with supervisory responsibilities.

#### **5.4. Summary of findings**

This section brings together the key points under the headings of the research questions in preparation for the fuller discussion in the next chapter.

##### **How Saudi special education needs specialist student teachers are supervised in their teaching practice**

Different student teachers may have a very different experience depending on the school, the co-operating teachers and the college supervisor. Frequency of contact and style of supervision can vary enormously. Typically, college supervisors said they visited their student teachers on average 4 to 6 times, with each visit being between 20 and 40 minutes long. Student teachers felt they did not see their college supervisor often enough or for long enough, although they clearly almost all had daily contact with their co-operating teacher. With few exceptions, during supervision sessions with college supervisors, the directive style predominated strongly, leaving student teachers little opportunity for questions or debate. Whether student teachers were being supervised by the co-operating teacher or college supervisor, there was no evidence of systematic development from first steps onwards. Instead, aspects of teaching appeared to be addressed as they arose, often as a result of problems. This may have resulted in the strong emphasis on resolving problems. Whilst there was much regular and informal contact and support from co-operating teachers, it was largely unplanned and lacking clear objectives, although the fact that the

relationship was like a relationship of brothers, 'standing beside me every day', was highly valued by the student teachers. The difficulties with structuring a sequence of objects to achieve the desired outcome may in part be due to contradictions between competing activity systems, with the main duty of co-operating teachers being to teach and assure pupil progress. For both co-operating teachers and college supervisors, the supervision function was added on to their core tasks and responsibilities, although both groups recognized the importance of supervision.

### **To what extent do the roles of different supervisors enhance pre-service teacher education**

The co-operating teacher role is regarded as invaluable by the majority of student teachers who receive an apprenticeship in practical teaching. The college supervisor's role can influence pre-service teacher education either positively or negatively, depending on the time allowed for passing on useful experience and information about the assessment process and also on the style and communication skills of the college supervisor, in particular concerning feedback. Both roles have the capacity to make a more positive contribution to initial teacher education and professional development of student teachers, also to be generally more productive than at present, but the current situation is that the co-operating teacher is perceived by the student teachers to be the main source of learning how to teach and therefore, in many cases, as the only role which actually enhances pre-service education. In practice, the co-operating teacher role is formative assessment, in contrast to the college supervisor role which is summative assessment. In terms of the final assessment grade, technically equal shares of marks are awarded by both supervisors, but again this varies in practice. The extent to which the respective roles enhance pre-service teacher

education remains therefore unclear and this lack of clarity impacts the overall contribution of the roles. For example, much is dependent on the day-to-day coaching aspects of the apprenticeship element provided by the co-operating teachers, but input from this to the final mark can vary considerably.

### **The extent to which supervision approaches contribute to professional development**

It would appear that the authority and power of the college supervisor make students pay careful attention to any instructions he gives them to ensure that they obtain a good final mark. However, the abrupt manner in which feedback is delivered by some college supervisors means that inappropriate messages are conveyed to student teachers about how professionals should behave towards each other. The co-operating teachers' more collaborative approach assists the student teachers in learning from their own experience by providing a supportive learning environment. Most importantly, supervision approaches have no useful life beyond the end of the practicum, as very few co-operating teachers or college supervisors impart the skills of self-assessment and reflection for student teachers to use once they are full teachers. The contribution of existing supervision practices to professional development can therefore be said to be minimal, although there is considerable potential for future improvement.

### **Perceptions of participants in the supervisory process**

As indicated in the more detailed report of findings above, perceptions are very mixed, ranging from very positive to very negative. The majority of student teachers simply made use of the existing system to try to derive the greatest advantage from it by doing what they

were told was necessary to gain their qualification. College supervisors appear to be more satisfied with the process than other participants, although they recognize that the quality would be better if more time were available. The lack of time was a significant frustration for many of the participants in all three groups.

### **How these perceptions influence the practice of supervision**

In general, at one level everyone accepts the status quo and at least goes through the basic procedures of supervision. However, this acceptance does not always lead to development or improvement. Suggestions have been made by some participants that could assist in achieving improvements in supervision practice.

Reflecting on the relevance of activity theory to the current study, it highlights the difference between the short contacts of meetings and observations and the longer overall process of the practicum. Whilst each short meeting may have a clear object and positive outcome, these do not necessarily feed into the overall formative or summative assessment except in a relatively haphazard way. Evidence for this comes from the contradiction between the many specific objects mentioned by student teachers and the objects of cooperating teachers and college supervisors. Further evidence comes from the contradiction between the requirements laid down for college supervisors and the time made available for them to fulfil their commitments, especially when they may have to cover significant distances to carry out an assessment. For student teachers, putting theory into practice does not necessarily occur, although learn to teach through classroom experience clearly takes place. Best practice in schools may not be covered in theoretical modules and new and useful theory may be resisted in practice by the school.

The following chapter deepens discussion of the findings in the light of theory and previous research findings before conclusions are drawn and recommendations put forward.

## **Chapter 6 Discussion of findings**

### ***6.1 Introduction***

This chapter examines the key points of theory and issues of praxis arising from the findings regarding the supervision of special education needs student teachers, drawing on relevant studies for comparison. Issues highlighted in the findings chapter were: problems in the way student teachers are supervised, the relatively limited contribution made by supervisory practices to ITE and professional development, the lack of clarity surrounding objects, outcomes and rules, and the contribution made by different supervisory roles which is affected by all of these. For the purposes of discussion, these issues are discussed under broad headings which lead to recommendations for the different stages and levels of the supervision systems in Saudi Arabia. The chapter opens with a summary of the key issues as set out in Table 6.1 (on three pages), showing how they link to the broad themes in this discussion chapter. This is followed by discussion of the current and potential contribution of supervision to ITE in Saudi Arabia, leading to a critical examination of the goals (outcome and objects) that might be appropriate for alternative ways in which supervision contributes to ITE. Discussion then moves to ways in which achievement of goals and purposes may be measured, covering methods of assessment and assessment criteria, and then to the relationships in the supervision triad. Comparisons are made with the literature and relevant studies involving special education needs and general student teachers. The relationship between the goals of supervision is discussed, as is the way in which clinical supervision can contribute to the practicum, in order to establish the appropriate outcome and objects for a supervision activity system in Saudi Arabia. An assessment of the contribution made by the study to new knowledge is presented before the chapter concludes

with a summary of key points linked to the research questions and recommendations concerning improvements for supervision.

Table 6.1 Relationship between key findings and discussion chapter

RESEARCH QUESTION	KEY THEMES AND ISSUES	DISCUSSION CHAPTER
<p>How are Saudi special education needs specialist student teachers supervised in their teaching practice?</p>	<p>Different student teachers can and do experience supervision differently.            College supervisors visit student teachers 4-6 times, for 20 to 40 minutes, typically using directive supervision targeted on summative assessment.            Most student teachers felt this was not enough.            Most student teachers had daily contact with their co-operating teacher. Co-operating teachers used a collaborative approach.            Student teachers' professional development lacked evidence of planned, structured and systematic development.            Aspects of teaching were addressed as they arose, often as problems.            Student teachers highly valued relationships with co-operating teacher.            They also valued the knowledge to be gained from college supervisors to help them qualify.            Co-operating teachers and college supervisors had other essential tasks and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Section 6.3 Models of supervision            Continuum of approaches             Section 6.5 Supervisor-student teacher relationships            Feedback             Section 6.6 Roles</p>
<p>To what extent do the roles of university supervisors and cooperating teachers enhance pre-service teacher education?</p>	<p>Most student teachers consider the co-operating teacher role is invaluable; it provides an apprenticeship in practical teaching.            The college supervisor's influence can be positive or negative, depending on the time allowed and supervision approach, in particular feedback.            Both roles could make a greater positive contribution to ITE and student teachers' professional development.            Student teachers see the co-operating teacher role as more useful and important.            The college supervisor's role is seen as more important by supervisors.            The extent to which the roles enhance pre-service teacher education remains unclear.</p>	<p>Section 6.2 Contribution of supervision to ITE (actual and potential)             Section 6.3 Models of supervision             Section 6.4 Aims and objectives of supervision</p>

<p>How do the supervision approaches contribute to professional development?</p>	<p>The power of the college supervisor in awarding the final mark ensures that student teachers pay careful attention to any instructions he gives them.  Abrupt feedback by some college supervisors means student teachers may receive inappropriate messages about how professional teachers should behave.  The co-operating teachers' collaborative approach provides a supportive learning environment for student teachers.  Supervision approaches do not contribute to professional development beyond the end of the practicum, as few skills of self-assessment are imparted.</p>	<p>Section 6.2 Contribution of supervision to ITE (actual and potential)</p> <p>Section 6.3 Models of supervision</p> <p>Section 6.4 Aims and objectives of supervision</p>
<p>What are the perceptions of participants in the supervisory process?</p>	<p>College supervisors appeared more satisfied than other participants, but recognize quality would improve if more time were available; "schools don't care about the professional development of student teachers".  Student teachers saw supervision as more important than practical experience (77%) and than university-based learning (94%).  However, to develop their ideas and skills they made more use of teaching placement, observation of teachers and discussion with colleagues.  96% rated co-operating teacher supervision more important than college supervisor supervision.  Lack of time was a great frustration for many participants in all groups.</p>	<p>Section 6.5 Supervisor-student teacher relationships</p> <p>The whole chapter</p>
<p>How do these perceptions influence the practice of supervision?</p>	<p>In general, the status quo is accepted. Supervision practices reflect the lack of time available.  Some co-operating teachers and college supervisors seek ways to improve supervision through developing communities of practice.  Supervise and supervised make many suggestions for review and change.</p>	

<p>How can the existing model or models of supervision can be improved using participants' recommendations?</p>	<p><b>Before starting the practicum</b> Student teachers want clear written guidelines and instructions are needed regarding the student teacher role, supervision and assessment criteria.  The practicum should be understood as a learning experience.  The objects and outcome should be clear to all participants.  To achieve the objects, better planning of the practicum experience and more dedicated supervisor time are needed.  College supervisors and co-operating teachers should have consistent tasks, assessment criteria and standards; “the goals of supervision and teaching practice should be clear for supervisor and student teacher”.  Student teachers “should do microteaching at university before they go to school to do full teaching”.  Co-operating teachers should be trained in supervision.  <b>During the practicum</b> There should be meetings between mainstream teachers and student teachers to learn from each other; headteachers could arrange this.  College supervisors should visit more often and for longer.  College supervisors should plan and notify visits in advance.  <b>Review of supervision arrangements.</b>  Student teachers overwhelmingly recommended that co-operating teachers “should have the same important role in our summative assessment”.  “Communication should be improved and increased between university and school”.  College supervisors recommended more joint meetings, workshops and conferences for all parties.</p>	<p>Section 6.5 Supervisor-student teacher relationships  University-school communication, communities of practice  Training for supervisors</p> <p>Section 6.6 Roles</p> <p>Section 6.7 Recommendations for supervision</p>
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## ***6.2 Contribution of supervision to ITE in Saudi Arabia***

It should be noted at the outset that the terminology used to describe the practical component of initial teacher education has changed over the years from ‘teaching practice’ to ‘practicum’ to ‘professional development’ as different understandings have developed of what is involved in the student teacher’s experience and depending on the context, as can be traced in reading articles from the 1980s to the present day. The contribution of supervision to initial teacher education has been shown to vary according to the model of ITE in use. In activity theory terms, the objects of individual activity systems of supervision sessions, observations and other direct supervisor-student teacher interactions contribute to the wider activity system of the practicum, which in turn contributes to the objects and outcomes of ITE. For example, a theory-into-practice model implies that supervision will include an emphasis on making connections between theory and practice, and on how to interpret and apply theory in practice. In an apprenticeship model of ITE, there is likely to be more emphasis on practical instruction and possibly step-by-step graduated learning. In the third main model, which relies heavily on reflective practice, supervision is likely to place more emphasis on facilitation of analysis and professional development. All of these fit the definition of supervision by Sullivan and Glanz (2004, p.24) as “a process of engaging teachers in instructional dialogue for the purpose of improving teaching and increasing student achievement”. Furthermore, Cheng (2005) argues that in every model of ITE the preparation for teaching practice is important in establishing an appropriate mindset for the practicum, therefore supervision has a role in ensuring that teachers are ready to benefit from the experience. Not only does practical teaching have an important role in every model of ITE but so does supervision. Education researchers have asserted that supervision is one of the three main components of the

practicum, together with the classroom context and the socio-professional context or teacher socialization, all of which are essential to effective teacher development (Tang, 2003). Irrespective of the model of ITE, Stimpson (2000, p.11) emphasized that supervision should be purposeful and systematic, an activity “in which we as supervisors engage in a learning process in which we and our student teachers learn together”. This is very close to the outcome hypothesized by the researcher, that all parties would share a goal of professional development. However, empirical findings of the current case study did not find professional development to be a widely shared goal despite occasional comments such as “It has a positive purpose which is to serve and help the student teacher as well as to lead student teachers to have successful professional development” (S26ST1). The supervision element needs to be clearly focused on formative professional development as a precursor to summative assessment. Although the final marks are awarded against specific categories, the elements of the practicum that contribute to these categories need to be clearly stated and planned.

As an activity system, ITE contributes its outputs and outcomes to the whole system of the wider society which is one of the reasons why ITE for general teachers and special education needs teachers varies from country to country. In many societies both groups of teachers receive the same initial education which is supplemented by specialist modules or continuous professional development events that enhance skills and knowledge regarding special education needs. “Teachers must be equipped to meet the diverse needs present in Europe’s classrooms with confidence” (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010, p.76). However, there is an assumption by European policymakers that ITE is geared to preparing teachers for working in classrooms and schools where full inclusion is the goal and/or widely practised and therefore should address issues of

diversity and skills for working with learners whatever their gender, sexual orientation, religious, cultural or linguistic background, in addition to special educational needs and disability. The context in Saudi Arabia is somewhat different: genders do not mix and sexual orientation is a matter for normalization and obeying divine instructions, while Arabic is the language of instruction and gives access to true faith, therefore learners who are not native speakers must acquire Arabic. Inclusion means inclusion into Saudi Arabian society, rather than a more global understanding of inclusion.

It is evident that although general teachers can take further in-service courses or a formal qualification in special education needs, Saudi Arabian universities offer a longer teaching degree which covers many more different categories of disability and learning difficulty in this field than any other country (Appendix 1). The fact that student teachers gain one of four specialist qualifications requires them to be supervised during the practicum by a co-operating teacher and college supervisor sharing the same specialism, and assessment forms differ from one specialism to another, although there are common elements. Comparison with the overall direction of initial teacher education in Europe are instructive: EU member states are moving at varying rates towards ITE which includes core modules on teaching strategies aimed at overcoming particular types of difficulty such as dyslexia and autistic spectrum disorder that learners may experience and working with pupils with a wider range of SEN (UNESCO, 1995; European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010). Some courses include practical elements focused on working with an individual child with SEN and developing an appropriate individual plan (UNESCO, 1995). Spain has started to reform its ITE to include inclusion, diversity and special education needs across the whole curriculum (Cardona, 2009). Whilst the trend in Europe is towards preparing all teachers to work effectively with learners with SEN, compulsory or optional modules are

commonplace (Lancaster and Bain, 2007). Some educators argue, however, that this can create or reinforce a view that the education of children with special needs is the responsibility of specialist teachers rather than all teachers (Florian and Rouse, 2009). A feature of European ITE policy is that inclusive teachers are considered to need to engage in research and reflective practice, and to be autonomous learners in their continuous professional development after initial qualification (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010).

This is not yet the direction that ITE has taken in most Arab countries where the teachers as 'transmitter of knowledge' model continues to predominate (Halstead, 2010). Egypt pre-revolution had a system of offering a 1-year diploma in special education for general teachers who had a minimum of 2 years' experience (UNESCO, 1995), requiring teachers to have gained all the basics of teaching together with some practical experience before specializing. A different approach is taken in Malaysia, where learners with special education needs are taught in regular classes alongside other pupils but have a special education needs teacher assisting the class teacher. As in Saudi Arabia, there is distinct ITE provision for special education needs teachers, but in Malaysia collaborative and team teaching enable sharing of knowledge and experience between regular and special education needs teachers (Ali et al., 2006). Several studies have attempted to compare the effectiveness of different overall approaches to inclusion in ITE, such as Stayton and McCollun (2002) who distinguished three models; the Collaborative Training model (general and special needs student teachers do some or all of their practicum together and there are many courses addressing inclusive education), the Infusion model (1-2 modules dealing with inclusive education), and the Unification model (a single programme followed by general and special needs teachers that aims to equip teachers for mainstream education

but with an emphasis on learners with special needs). Since the Saudi Arabian model does not readily fit any of these three, the country's ITE programme would seem to be directed towards teaching separate categories of difference rather than inclusion which in turn can result in pupils being considered in terms of their category rather than as children. This may be related to the point raised by some students who wanted to know to teach children with multiple disabilities, or as one of them said, "to know how to teach the multiple disabilities" (S9ST1). Moreover, the ITE model appears to be a theory into practice model, but so little of the university course content is devoted to theory of practical teaching that the practicum in fact operates as an apprenticeship model, "to ensure that we apply the theory we learnt in practice at school and to know more about how a school is run" (S34ST1). There was strong support for increasing the time given to the practicum; "Teaching practice should be divided into two or three courses or more to give student teachers the opportunity to learn and teach at the same time". The shock experienced by some students as a result of very different ways of working in the school situation from the theory they had learned may not be helpful to their professional development without appropriate and careful supervision to help them come to terms with the differences. Implications for supervision of the ITE model and its separation into two programmes in different university departments, one for general teachers and one for special education needs teachers, are discussed in the next section.

### ***6.3 Models of supervision***

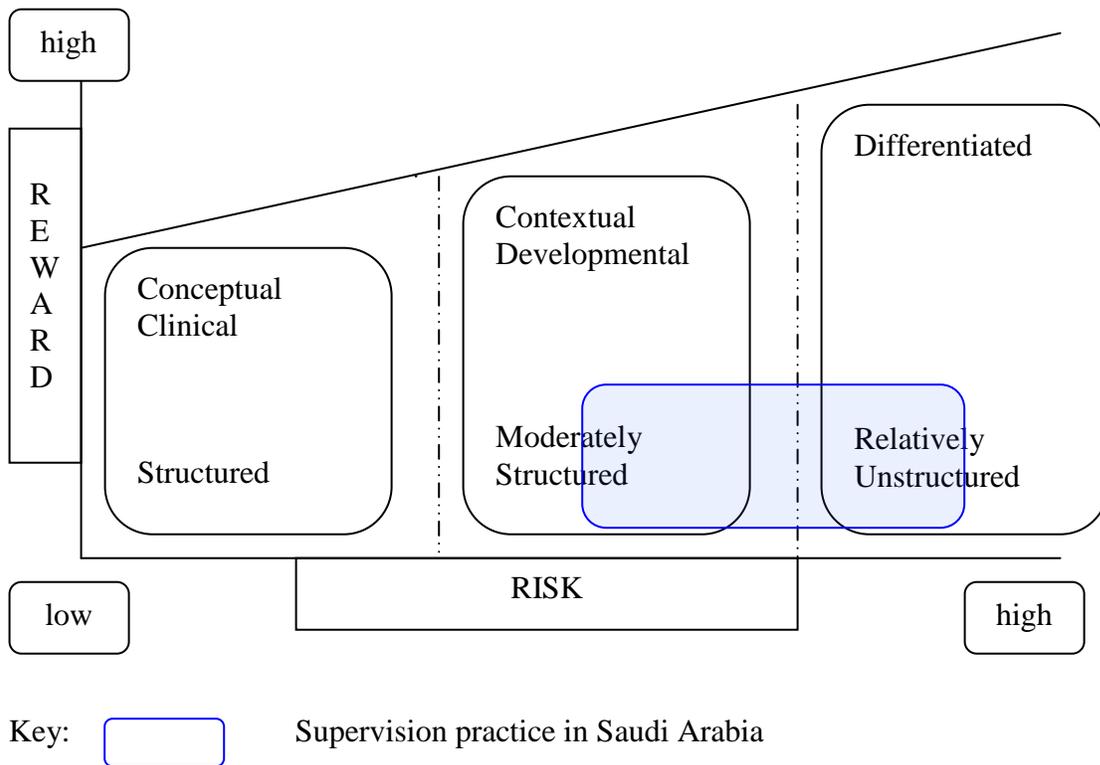
Models of supervision may vary with the type of ITE provision and the underlying doxa, although there are several principles that apply equally to all ITE contexts. However, there is little or no disagreement about the importance of actual teaching practice to the process of learning to be a teacher. As Hagger and Macintyre (2006, p.65) expressed it, "whatever

student teachers need to learn to do as teachers in schools for their future careers, it is in schools that they need to learn to do these things”. Without supervision, the matter of whether they learn to do it well or badly is left to chance. Student teachers requested “instructions that talk about our roles and our exact duties in schools and what criteria of assessment we should meet for summative assessment” (S17ST1). It is therefore argued that supervision in the practicum should be closely associated with preparation for the practicum and activities that follow up the teaching practice, also that initial teacher education establishments and schools hosting student teachers for their practicum should participate equally in these processes. Arrangements should be clear. “There should be clear guidelines for supervision which is not clear for us as student teachers” (S1ST3). Furthermore, in order to determine improvement, it is argued that supervision relates to a sequence of lessons (Stimpson, 2000), which in activity theory terms means that the object and outcome of one activity system, the learning which takes place in a supervision intervention, should inform and influence the next.

At present, the extent to which supervision aims to promote reflective practice and autonomous continuous professional development depends on the country and model of ITE, but a model aimed at developing reflective practice would need to incorporate discussion of what the student teacher hoped to gain from an activity before the activity took place and later discussion of whether the objective had been achieved and, if not, what could be done the next time a similar objective or activity occurred. Similarly, a supervision model aimed at transmitting knowledge would involve demonstrations and instructions on how specific aspect of teaching should be carried out, while a supervision model aimed at putting theory into practice would place more emphasis on informing or discussing with student teachers how elements of the theory apply and how to apply them. In practice, it is

likely that a combination of all three will be used to support any of the models of ITE discussed above. Furthermore, although supervision has been classified in a number of ways, such as the three categories of directive, collaborative and non-directive identified by Gebhard (1984) and the categorization of Hopkins and Moore (1993) into clinical, developmental, scientific, accountable, artistic and self-assessment, all approaches carry a degree of structure, context-relatedness, risk and reward (Fritz and Miller, 2004). Based on the collected data, together with the researcher's own experience as both student teacher and college supervisor, the current situation in Saudi Arabia is represented by a combination of relatively unstructured supervision and only moderate reward. Although supervision sessions tended to be relatively unstructured, there almost no evidence in either the study or the researcher's experience that pointed to differentiation which was centred on individual student teachers. It was reported in the analysis chapter that student teachers considered that the whole teaching placement and observations of other teachers were more useful than supervision in developing their skills. Furthermore, the researcher's own experience of being supervised was not particularly positive. Therefore the researcher's view is that when the supervision approach was congruent with the needs of a particular student teacher, the rewards could be high, but when there was little or no match between the supervision approach and the student teacher's needs, the risk was relatively high while the reward for both participants was relatively small. The current position regarding SEN student teacher supervision is therefore represented in figure 6.1 as relatively to moderately unstructured but low in reward whilst quite high in terms of risk.

Figure 6.1. Current position in Saudi Arabia



Source: adapted from Fritz and Miller (2004, p.47)

Much of the supervision by college supervisors in the current study could be said to be expert-centred, directive yet relatively unstructured, while co-operating teachers' supervision tended to be more strongly related to context and less directive. However, at least one study has shown that despite the continuing use of expert-centred approaches and their potential value in transmitting good practice to new student teachers, they have not conclusively been shown to be effective in changing classroom practices (Waldron and McLeskey, 2010) so may not be the most helpful way forward when changes in policy and practice are desired, as in Saudi Arabia's ambitious ICT and special needs initiatives under the King Abdullah project. If further moves towards inclusion take place, specialist and general teachers will benefit from greater support in implementing the changes. The

difficulty at present is that much of the supervision is relatively unstructured yet is not yielding the high rewards that might be expected following the model in figure 6.1. This is chiefly because the model assumes a conscious process of differentiation between individual student teachers related to a conscious decision on the extent to which a particular supervision session should be structured, whereas the dissatisfaction expressed by a number of student teachers indicates that they are not aware of high rewards.

It has been proposed that supervisors select different models from the continuum to suit different situations (Fritz and Miller, 2003b). The current study found minimal evidence of such adaptation among college supervisors, despite the fact that the importance of individual education plans tailored to the child was stressed with special needs student teachers. On the one hand, new teachers are expected to be more child-focused than their predecessors, and supervisors are nowadays expected to adopt less threatening approaches than previously (Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 2001). On the other hand, supervision of special needs student teachers in Saudi Arabia does not really mirror these changes. This reflects the lack of training for all supervisors; “There should be training courses for co-operating teachers at the university or run by the Ministry of Education to train us as co-operating teachers in how to supervise student teachers” (CT1). Confusion about how supervision could and should operate is further illustrated by the comment of one co-operating teacher who said “the role of college supervisor should be of a consultant only” (CT4). This could be tackled “between school and university by making courses and training in supervision for co-operating teachers to enable and qualify them to supervise student teachers in school” (CT4).

In the UK and Europe, the reflective practice model of supervision is promoted (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010). This model has been described as an iterative process of interactive communication between a supervisor-mentor and student teacher which enables connections to be made between theory and its practical application through encouraging and supporting analytical processes (Weiss and Weiss, 2001). Reflective practice implies a collaborative approach between supervisor and student teacher, a feature of co-operating teacher supervision much more than of college supervisor supervision in the current study. It further implies a more individualised approach because it will relate to the specific teaching experience of the student teacher. However, this could also imply a more isolating and less structured experience than exists in a directive instructional model of supervision. It has been suggested that isolation can be avoided by small groups of student teachers meeting with a supervisor to discuss and share shared themes and issues (Tanner et al., 2000), a suggestion supported by some participants in the current study. Furthermore, structure and clarity in communication are helpful to all participants in supervision processes and it is possible to ensure an appropriate degree of structure in whichever approach to supervision is adopted. Whilst there was some evidence of structured supervision events in the current study, the majority of participants reported relatively haphazard encounters, with the purpose of supervision meetings typically being set, but not made clear, during the encounter. While some college supervisors would ask to see the lesson preparation book at the next meeting, others asked to see it then and there, identifying points to focus on as they came across them during the session itself. Whereas co-operating teachers would respond to student teacher questions as quickly as possible and wherever they could, the onus was on the student teachers to identify where they needed help. Together with the overall dominant use of the directive model of supervision, this

restricted the extent to which the existing supervision approaches contributed to student teacher professional development.

#### ***6.4 Aims and objectives of supervision***

Perceptions of the supervisory practices varied considerably. Multiple objects (motives/objectives) of the supervision meeting activity system sometimes obscured the overall outcome, which should be for student teacher supervision to ensure that teachers are qualified and able to teach effectively at the end of a period of professional development. Distinct supervisor objectives tend to fall into two categories, encouraging progression and development (formative supervision) and making judgments about the standard reached (summative assessment), or ‘making the transition’ and ‘summative assessment’ in the current study. Directive supervision, the most popular approach among the college supervisors sampled, is associated with the concept of teaching as the application of a set of knowledge, skills, standards and competences (Sidhu and Fook, 2010). In this case, in accordance with the ‘teacher as transmitter of knowledge’ doxa, the supervisor needs a ‘tell, show, do’ approach combined with an assessment of the required competences (Sidhu and Fook, 2010). However, the existing differences between special needs and mainstream teaching in Saudi Arabian schools are likely to increase if separate ITE courses and provision are accompanied by different supervision and supervisors as is happening at present. This runs counter to the overriding purpose of all supervision of teaching, experienced teachers as well as student teachers, which has been defined as “promoting teacher growth, which in turn leads to improvement in teaching performance with greater student learning” (Nolan and Hoover, 2004, p.26). In the special education context, teacher development of new skills and strategies has been shown to result in better student

outcomes and improved retention of teachers (McCleskey, 2011). Supervision applied in this way has the capacity to facilitate major changes such as the implementation of ICT in teaching and other initiatives that Saudi Arabia may introduce as the education systems continue to develop. Within an overarching aim of professional development for all teachers (student, beginning, experienced), and the conscious creation of boundary objects to help achieve this, different communities of practice in schools and the wider education system could over time be brought into alignment. However, traditional directive supervision may not be the most appropriate form of supervision to apply as teachers need to work collaboratively to bring about system change. Whereas directive supervision focuses on developing teaching skills that are primarily objectives set by a supervisor, clinical supervision facilitates a more teacher-centered process in which the supervisor-teacher relationship is more collaborative. If the main aim of clinical supervision is helping the teacher to understand their teaching, through knowing their strengths and weaknesses, examining the effect of their teaching and altering their practice to improve learner outcomes, this applies to student teachers as much as to any others. This is appropriate for the range of purposes identified by student teachers and illustrated in the following quotes: “To know my points of strengths to reinforce them and points of weakness to improve them” (S1ST3), “Working to develop our training and our experience in teaching methods” (S7ST1), and “Qualifying us to become a skilful teacher” (S7ST2).

Methods of both formative and summative assessment (tools) can and do vary among ITE courses which respond to different cultural settings as discussed earlier. This is well illustrated by the findings of a study of co-operating teachers which identified two main categories of co-operating teacher, ‘maestros’ who emphasized the “technical and managerial skills of teaching” and ‘mentors’ who “embodied the notion that teaching is an

intellectual endeavor requiring dialogue about practice” (Graham, 2006, p.1126). Student teachers in the current study recognized the usefulness of both approaches, some requesting “an ideal lesson as an example to copy” (S1ST4), others wanting “professional development by observations and feedback from supervisors” (S17ST3), with the co-operating teacher often being valued for “his collaboration, his welcoming, his dealing with me like his brother, needing him, he is close to us everyday” (S1ST2). The importance of the affective as well as the cognitive relationship was highlighted by Graham (2006) who argued that psychological and emotional support encouraged dialogue about tasks involved in teaching. In implementing and evaluating a variant of clinical supervision they termed ‘focused observation’, Foster et al. (2007) found that the most influential factor was a supportive relationship between the student teacher and co-operating teacher. College supervisors in the current study had little time to provide affective support because of their other responsibilities; “The college supervisor should visit the placement school once a week” (S23ST1). In some cases co-operating teachers also struggled to find the necessary time; “It is important for co-operating teachers to work with student teachers full-time” (S2ST2). Even among co-operating teacher relationships, difficulties existed; “Some co-operating teachers believe that student teachers should understand teaching practice straightaway, not seeing it as training in which mistakes may be made” (S9ST1). In addition to student teachers’ needs for greater affective support, it is suggested that “As more active teaching methods are introduced in initial teacher education, the ways in which both academic requirements and teaching/school practice are assessed must also change” (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2011, p.22). The possibility of meeting affective needs in supervision through cooperating teachers and cognitive and academic requirements through the college supervisors was acknowledged in

a study of US master's students in elementary and secondary education programmes conducted by Koerner et al. (2002).

Where there is a particular standard to be achieved in summative assessment (or in annual assessment of teachers' performance), this needs to be measured, ideally in a consistent manner. Saudi Arabian student teacher evaluation procedures for special education student teachers concern the required training tasks, educational roles and duties in relation to the nature of the disability [sic] and the educational needs of special education students (Al Beshar et al., 2006). However, in contrast to student teacher evaluation in the UK, there is no information on standards or levels to be attained, so even if all supervisors are using the same assessment methods, there is no guarantee that a student teacher rated very good by one college supervisor would not be rated excellent or good by other supervisors. Judgments made by college supervisors may not reflect informal assessments by co-operating teachers, although some supervisors are able to allocate more time than others to discussions with the co-operating teachers who work with their student teachers. In contrast, in the context of supervising regular student teachers on the PGCE programme at Umm Alqura University, guidelines state that supervisors assess student teachers at the end of the practicum accurately and objectively according to the assessment criteria (The Manual of The Faculty of Education at Umm Alqura University, 2005 cited in Alzaydi, 2010). It is important to make assessment criteria clear, not only to reduce the uncertainty about them expressed by many student teachers, but also to ensure that appropriate methods are used. In activity theory terms, the outcome is unclear. The communication of assessment criteria to student teachers, together with the style of supervision employed, raises the question of the supervisor/co-operating teacher/student relationships.

## ***6.5 Supervisor-student teacher relationships***

In the current study, student teachers' perceptions of supervisor-student teacher relationships were found in general to be warmer and closer with co-operating teachers than with college supervisors, with co-operating teacher relationships often being described as like a brother. In addition, individual supervisor-student teacher relationships were observed to vary. It has been argued that in general these relationships should be open and honest, and that student teachers should participate more actively in the process rather than be passive recipients (Pinder, 2003). The current study revealed the majority of student teachers to be passive recipients with regard to college supervisors but much more actively engaged with their co-operating teachers, partly because of frequent contact. These findings are consistent with those of other studies which revealed supervisor-student teacher interactions to be affected by ease of contact, support and mutual respect (Caires and Almeida, 2007; Rajuan et al., 2008), which lead to relationships with co-operating teachers being valued more highly (Rajuan et al., 2008). However, the method of supervision also plays an important part: in one study involving agricultural education student teachers, preference was expressed for collaborative supervision followed by directive informational, then non-directive. Directive supervision was preferred by less than 6% of the sample. Hence supervisor-student teacher relationships exert a major influence on student teachers' personal and professional development (Caires & Almeida, 2007) and are influenced by methods of supervision. The community, setting and rules remain unclear to many of the subjects in the existing activity system of supervision and, due to their tendency to vary from one specific setting to another, lead to confusion and contradictions.

Developing these relationships and appropriate methods are therefore important factors. Turnbull (2002) stated that effective supervision starts with common principles, values and a teaching philosophy being developed between the co-operating teacher and student teacher. Elements of co-operating teacher supervision required by student teachers include joint planning, organized workloads, feedback, flexibility, and emotional support as well as the modelling of good practice, as identified in a study by Beck and Kosnik (2002). Whilst the Saudi Arabian student teachers stated they experience the last four of these, they emphasized a need for better planning and organization of the whole practicum, although responsibility for this was attributed to the university-school relationship and failure to achieve it was largely ascribed to college supervisors' heavy workloads as set by their university.

In contrast with the somewhat separate and at times conflicting relationships of co-operating teachers and college supervisors in the current study, there are philosophical and practical moves towards strengthening communities of practice, in particular what have been termed professional learning communities (Le Cornu and Ewing, 2008) in which partner organizations and individuals develop more collegial relationships. This shift began with continuous professional development for in-service teachers but has since extended to student teachers' development (Le Cornu and Ewing, 2008). This calls for universities and college supervisors to reframe supervision and there were distinct but occasional signs of this shift in the current study, with comments such as "in the future we will focus on reform of learning that centres around schools" (CS1) and already encouraging student teachers "to visit each others in their classrooms which is called partner learning" (CS1). Similarly, one co-operating teacher was seeking to network with others across a number of schools, while another was proactively seeking to involve mainstream teachers in the development and

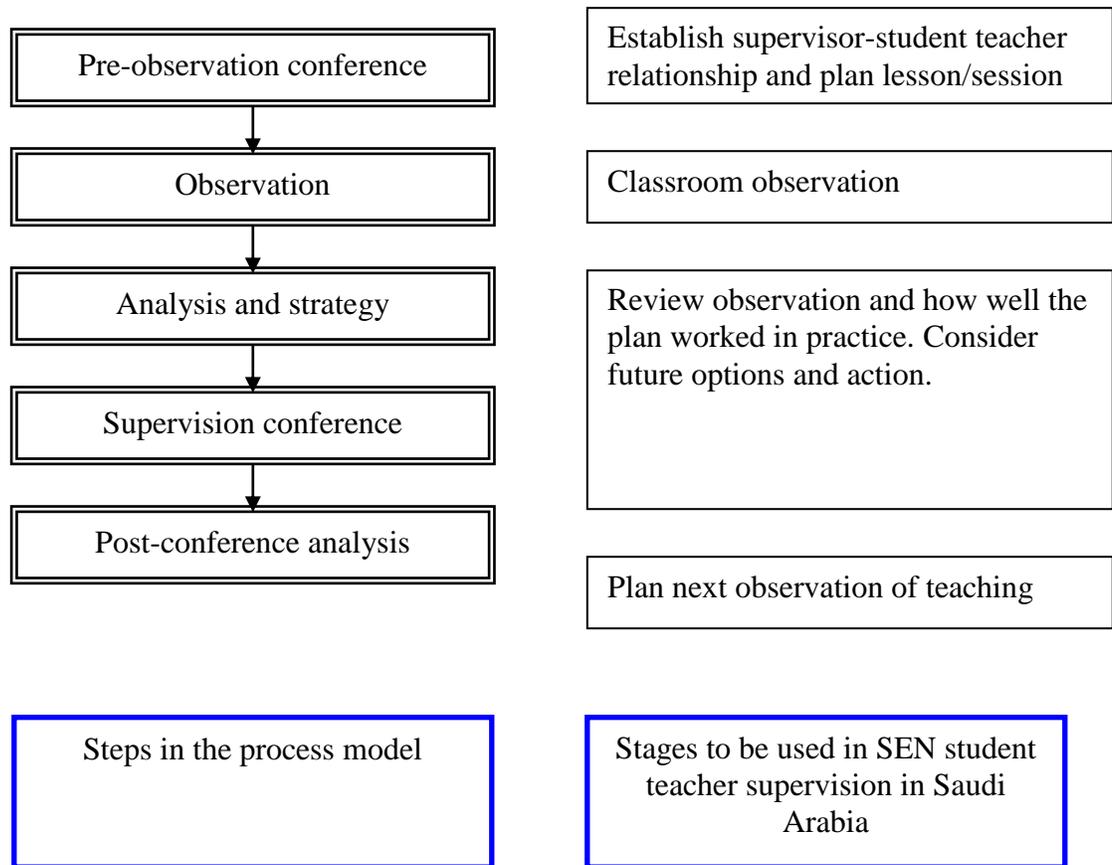
socialization of special education student teachers. There are clear signs that change is continuing, and it may be that supervisors and co-operating teachers can arrange to provide the full range of support needed by student teachers in a more systematic way.

However, scholars have argued that student teachers must also take responsibility for successful learning in the practicum by being participative and responsive to suggestions, reflecting critically on their development (Ball, 2000). The vast majority of student teachers in the current study did so, working within the constraints of the system and acting on feedback in order to qualify as teachers, although some were more obviously focused on their future success as in-service teachers while others were concentrating on completing their course. College supervisors are better placed than other participants to make the necessary adjustments to achieve a more participative process. The imbalance of power in supervisor-student teacher relationships means that the student teacher's ability to take more responsibility for their own learning will be circumscribed by the nature of the relationship. The power to change this rests primarily with college supervisors, in particular in an environment where existing practice is strongly reinforced by a country culture which promotes homogeneity and hence may be relatively resistant to change. Supervisors have the scope to modify their approach to be more directive, more supportive and so on in a way that co-operating teachers and student teachers do not.

Whichever approach is taken, feedback is a key tool and an essential component of supervision, as indicated by the case study findings and supported in literature (Koerner et al., 2002; Tang and Chow, 2007). Student teachers highlighted regular, clear, constructive feedback as essential in the supervision process, saying it helped them in a broad range of areas. Feedback was given through informal and formative formal means by co-operating

teachers, and through formal and mainly summative interventions by college supervisors. Methods of feedback were limited to more traditional ones: mainly oral and written feedback from supervisors related to the lesson preparation book, lesson preparation and observation, with the most frequent form being student teachers taking notes of oral feedback. Alternative forms of feedback such as videotaping and peer observations (Heppner, 1994) were not employed and there were no opportunities for student teachers to meet and learn from each other's feedback. Similar findings emerged from a survey of special education university lecturers in 100 US higher education establishments. Some 95% of special education college supervisors used oral or written feedback (Conderman et al., 2005). Feedback in any form can be used to look forwards as well as backwards, to build on progress by setting the next step objectives and hence contribute to structuring the whole of the practicum experience. Furthermore, it can be used to encourage students to set their own objectives, a habit that would help subsequent professional development (Latham and Locke, 2006). Specific and challenging objectives have been identified as important to professional development (Wilson, 2006). However, the current study found little evidence of systematic and sequential objective-setting. Clinical supervision would offer one way of structuring supervision within student teacher-supervisor relationships with differing degrees of formality, in particular formative supervision, to ensure that objectives are set and reviewed, as shown in figure 6.2. As initially developed by Cogan (1973) and Goldhammer et al. (1980), clinical supervision was a 5-step formalization of reflective practice designed for teachers.

Figure 6.2 Clinical supervision



The left hand side of figure 6.2 shows the steps in the model proposed by Goldhammer et al. (1980) while the right hand side shows how these could be used in a modified form in the supervision of student teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Supervisors, as well as being teacher educators, are facilitators (Sidhu and Fook, 2010) and mentors (Ralph, 2003), roles for which they may not be prepared. Investigating the implementation of a clinical supervision model of formative supervision in 29 state schools in Malaya, Sidhu and Fook (2010) found a relatively low level of knowledge regarding formative assessment, therefore stressed the importance of shared understanding promoted by appropriate training and dialogue. This finding was supported in the current study by student teachers who highlighted the non-communication between school and university,

co-operating teacher and college supervisor. It was further supported by those co-operating teachers and college supervisors who sought a wider network, an extended community of practice, to discuss and improve supervision, the practicum and standards of teaching and learning. Formative assessment is closely related to problem-solving and although in the current study problem-solving was strongly emphasized by all groups of participants, the lack of systematic process prevented supervisors from guiding student teachers as effectively as they might.

In part, the maintenance of hierarchical and directive supervision reflects weaknesses in coordination and collaboration between the university and the placement schools, a difficulty identified by Wilson (2006) and exacerbated in the current study by the separation of special education and general education. In addition, there is a separation of responsibility for student teachers (the Ministry of Higher Education) from responsibility for schools and regular teachers (the Ministry of Education). Some participants called for greater involvement with others in their immediate community of practice (variously student teachers, special needs teachers and student teachers, co-operating teachers), while others called for involvement in a wider community of practice such as the whole school. Some were even trying to make it happen within the limited sphere of their control. However, in a country where education policy and practice is so strongly centralized, real change has to start at the top, with Ministries issuing instructions concerning the practicum experience and supervision to schools and universities at the same time. However, such change is only possible where the desire to change is accompanied by the power to implement the change. To ensure changes are implemented, training would need to be provided to all supervisors and co-operating teachers involved. This would address two further problems found in the current study that are associated with poor collaboration between university and school that

were identified by Wilson (2006), namely inconsistent quality of supervision between college supervisors and co-operating teachers, a persistent problem identified almost twenty years earlier by Zeichner (1990), and the lack of clear plans and timetables regarding the practicum. It has already been shown that Saudi Arabian special needs student teachers learn how to teach mainly from the practicum experience and the contribution of co-operating teachers. In a literature review of university-school partnerships, Brisard et al. (2005) argued that “the fact that the universities do hold the formal lead does not necessarily mean that therefore the schools play a subsidiary role in the actual provision” and “very careful consideration should be given to the optimisation of the contribution of schools” (Brisard et al., 2005, p.14). Partnerships could be led by a Higher Education institution (HEI), or collaborative, or complementary. Each has advantages and drawbacks; collaborative partnerships require considerable trust and mutual respect, HEI-led partnerships may be more able to monitor and control quality, and complementary partnerships may be easier to establish in the sense that each partner can focus on what they do best, provided that areas of uncertainty can be clarified and responsibilities allocated. All forms of partnership required effective two-way communication (Brisard et al., 2005). They also require clarity about roles at all levels, from the Ministry to the individual participants in supervision in each school hosting a practicum placement.

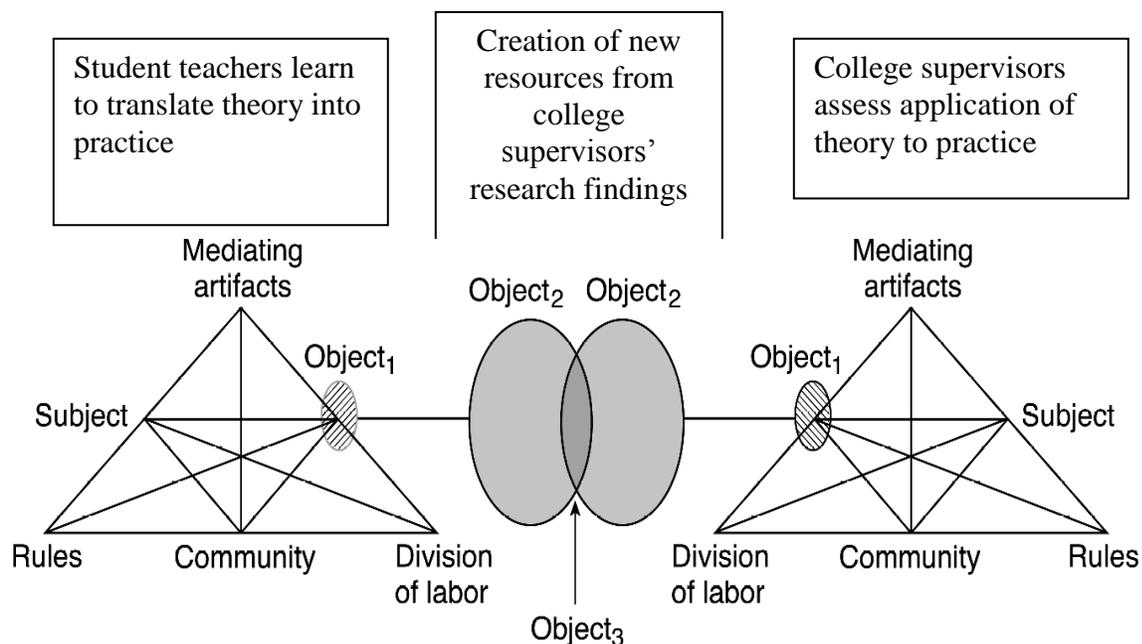
It should be recognized that partnership arrangements take time and that new arrangements may not please everyone. For example, redefining the college supervisor role to include mentoring of, say, cooperating teachers could lead to greater satisfaction for the individuals concerned, increase university understanding of schools and teaching, and strengthen the university-school relationship, but would undoubtedly affect the work of the faculty or department directly involved. As work with schools may be less highly valued by the university than research, some college supervisors could experience a loss of prestige. The

perceptions of conflicting roles, responsibilities and hence priorities that were expressed by co-operating teachers and supervisors in the current study tend to negatively affect the practice of supervision in Saudi Arabia.

## **6.6 Roles**

The study set out to establish the extent to which the roles of different supervisors enhance pre-service teacher education. Findings indicated a general lack of clarity about all roles. One role which relates to how universities and schools work together is that of the college supervisor, a role perceived by some participants as the link between the two, a finding shared with the study by Koerner et al. (2002) who stated that therefore the college supervisor acted as an advocate for student teachers in respect of ITE including the practicum. College supervisors have considerable power in the practicum and considerable power to influence its operation. A 2003 study exploring power structures revealed that whereas student teachers freely acknowledged the existence of power issues, co-operating teachers did not wish to discuss them, partly because they did not consider it polite to do so and partly because they did not wish power or manipulation to become a problem in their professional relationships with student teachers (McNay, 2003). Power structures always exist, but there are choices about how to use them. For example, an earlier study found that despite the combination of academic knowledge and practical experience available for student teachers to learn from, little or no advantage was taken of the opportunities for interaction to elicit best practice and capitalize on it (Ball, 2000). College supervisors are best placed to change this, through their research and teaching functions in addition to their supervision role. In activity theory terms, the college supervisor is potentially a boundary spanner, able to work between the university and the teaching placement schools to assist in the creation of new boundary objects as illustrated in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 Illustrative boundary object



Source: Adapted from Engeström (2001, p.136)

However, this raises a key issue in supervision, namely that supervision of student teachers is perceived as an additional workload and, in terms of hours and days available, one which does not readily fit with other duties and responsibilities. This is consistent with the finding of Brisard et al. (2005) that supervision was an add-on activity. Moreover, student teachers are often unsure of their own role which can be learner, teacher, classroom assistant and, occasionally, break time supervisor or general assistant. Resolution of the student teacher role requires dialogue between universities and schools, and thereafter between Ministries followed by college supervisors and headteachers as well as co-operating teachers. The extensive literature review conducted by Brisard et al. (2005) found no clear guidelines for either partnerships or roles, but argued that partnerships should be formed and roles agreed within them.

In the current study, the role of the cooperating teacher seemed to have two key functions, to teach student teachers how to teach in a practical setting and to provide the affective support they need to succeed in the practicum. However, in almost every case, they played no part in the summative assessments. In Singapore, cooperating teachers conduct some of the teaching observations of special needs student teachers that count towards final assessment marks (Nonis and Jernice, 2011). This does not appear to negatively affect relationships as student teachers who had less involvement with their cooperating teacher reported lower overall satisfaction with the practicum experience.

#### **6.7 Contribution to new knowledge**

One aspect of this study that particularly interested the researcher was that whilst the literature review indicated that it was possible to successfully transfer the educational concepts and processes of reflective practice from a western to an Arab setting in the UAE (Clarke and Oktay, 2006), this would be less likely in Saudi Arabia. The researcher has attributed this to the nature of the *doxa* with its mutually reinforcing Islamic and Bedouin traditions and to a *habitus* in the teaching profession that allows little room for manoeuvre in accommodating oneself to societal norms. Since the culture of learning was not the direct focus of this study, it is possible only to speculate on why this should be different in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Possibilities include the importance of Mecca as a worldwide focal point for pilgrims, the greater history of international trade in UAE and perhaps the strength of family ties and emphasis on stability in Saudi Arabia. A relationship is proposed between the culture of learning and the extent to which changes could be made in an activity system depending on the *doxa* (commonly held values and beliefs) and the strength

of the influence of societal norms on the activity. This is represented schematically in figure 6.4 with reference to the field of education. It is further proposed that this relationship may be stronger in education than in some other fields because of the close association of the goals of an education system and the nature of the society in which it exists.

Figure 6.4 Proposed relationship between culture of learning and change in the field of education

<b>DOXA</b> <b>Preservation of stability</b>	<b>PROBABILITY OF REDUCING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE</b>		
<b>High</b>	Very difficult	Difficult	
<b>Low</b>	Easy	Very easy	
	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>HABITUS</b> <b>Individual creativity</b> <b>within societal</b> <b>structuring mechanisms</b>

Where preservation of stability has high importance in the *doxa* and there is little scope in the *habitus* for individuals to exercise creativity in adapting to social norms, the probability of reducing resistance to change is lower, and small-step incremental changes may be more appropriate than larger step changes.

The probability of reducing resistance to change can also be understood in activity theory terms as related to the extent of the Zone Of Proximal Development. The Zone Of Proximal Development was proposed by Vygotsky (1978) to describe the distance between an

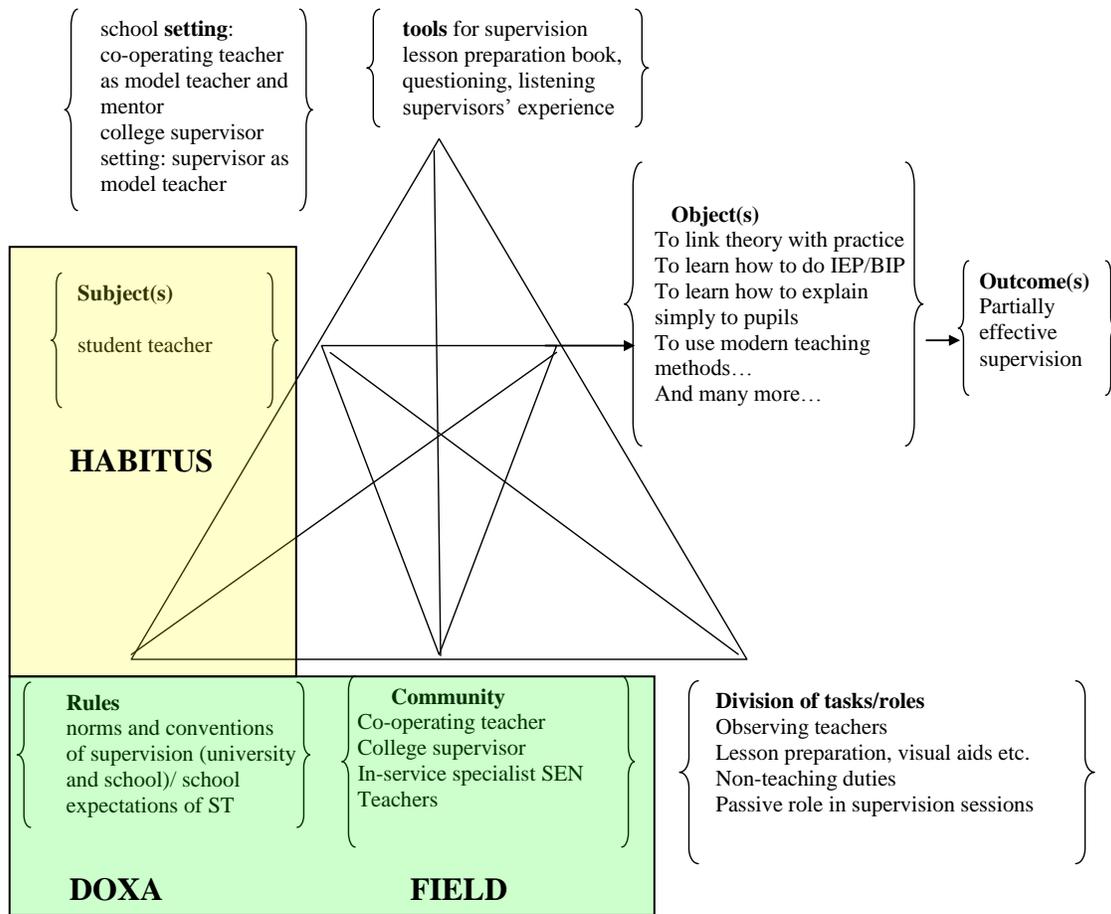
individual's current state of knowledge and the desired future state. This concept was extended by Engeström to refer to the area or distance between the actual and foreseeable states of an activity system, which he summarized as “the foreseeable activity in which the contradictions are expansively resolved, and the foreseeable activity in which the contradictions have led to contraction and destruction of opportunities” (Engeström, 1999b, p. 67). It has subsequently been proposed that in the context of professional development in teacher education, identification of the distance between what student teachers can do without support and their potential achievement with help from more capable others (such as supervisors or co-operating teachers) could inform curriculum design and delivery of ITE courses (Warford, 2011). The researcher further proposes that the concept can be used in conjunction with those of *doxa* and *habitus* to indicate the potential scope for change at the organizational level in relation to its wider society, as shown in figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5 Proposed relationship between culture of learning and activity theory zone of proximal development.

<b>DOXA</b> <b>Preservation of stability</b>	<b>ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>High</b>	Smallest	Fairly small	
<b>Low</b>	Fairly small	Largest	
	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>HABITUS</b> <b>Individual creativity within societal structuring mechanisms</b>

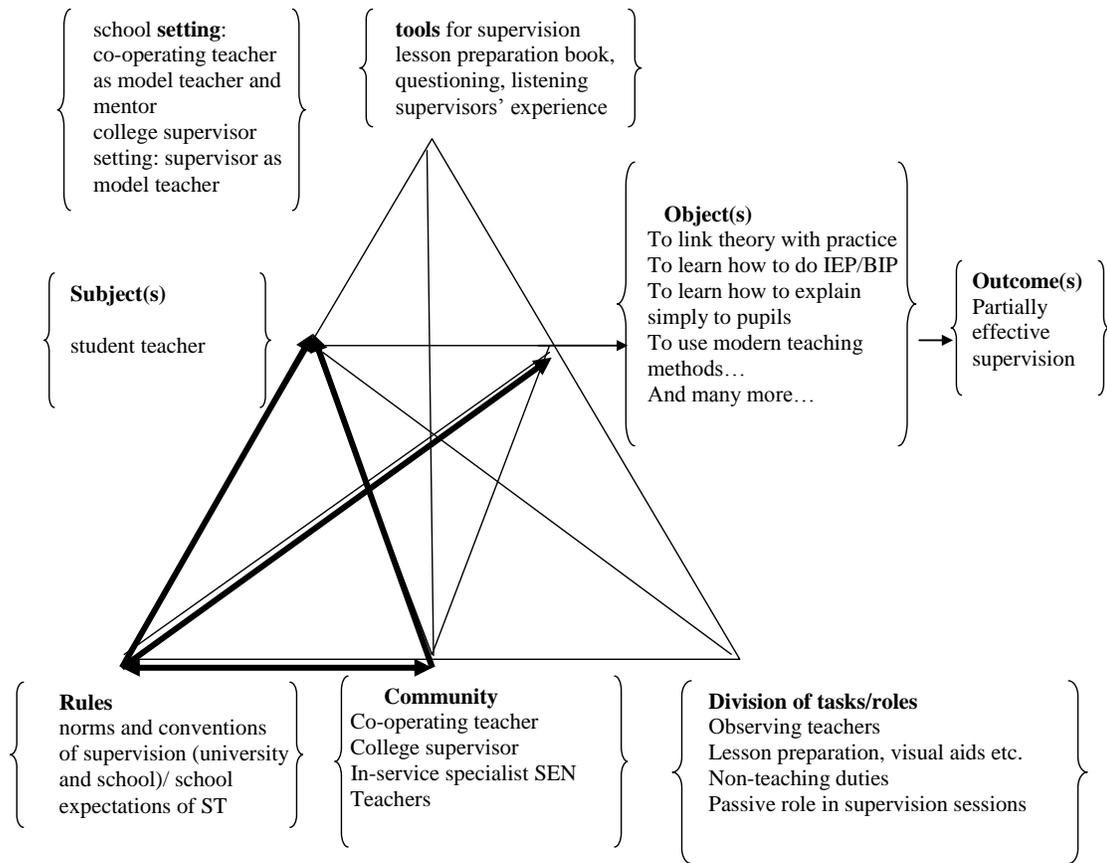
The relationship between the theories of Bourdieu as developed by James and Biesta (2007) and those related to activity theory such as Engeström (2001, 2004) is shown in figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6. Culture of learning theory mapped onto activity theory



One further aspect of activity theory which may not be sufficiently emphasized in existing literature is the relative impact of the different elements of the activity system. It would be useful in reporting findings of data analysed using activity theory to provide a diagrammatic representation of the relative impact by including arrows of varying thickness. An example is given in figure 6.7 showing the impact of doxa, field and habitus (rules, community and subject) for the current study.

Figure 6.7 Impact of doxa, field and habitus in the current study



These aspects are important because the *habitus* and *doxa* may affect the ability to create boundary objects. These considerations were incorporated into thinking about appropriate recommendations in the current study. Although not highlighted in figure 6.7, the doxa also directly influences the relative power in the division of tasks and roles, in addition to influencing this through the community. This at least in part explains why many college supervisors scarcely involve their co-operating teachers in awarding assessment marks and why they remain confident in directive supervision (patrilineal, patriarchal and with individual creativity restrained by the societal structuring mechanisms).

## ***6.8 Recommendations for supervision***

From the foregoing discussion, it can be asserted that supervision of specialist SEN student teachers would benefit from a full review. However, in recognition of the major challenges facing the education system in Saudi Arabia, not least the rapidly increasing school population and extensive school building programme, changes need to be phased in rather than attempting a radical transformation. In respect of the first research question, ('How are Saudi special education needs specialist student teachers supervised in their teaching practice?') it may not be possible to quickly address the need for more dedicated supervision time, but it should be possible to tackle most of the problems of appointments not being made or kept by better planning. "There should be coordination and a clear distinction between the co-operating teacher and the college teacher on the dates of the visit because the co-operating teacher doesn't know when the college supervisor is coming so we are a bit worried about that" (S17ST1). The main problem with the way in which supervision currently operates is that the whole process is somewhat haphazard. Student teachers learn to teach because they have daily contact with and guidance from co-operating teachers and because in general they have occasional brief input from college supervisors regarding necessary improvements to their teaching performance. Many of them never see or know the assessment criteria so are unaware of the goal they are expected to reach. The researcher's recommendation is that existing outline plans for the practicum which include activities such as observations only for the first three weeks should be developed to include statements of what student teachers are expected to learn in these weeks, week by week. This would help to ensure the clarity of objects and their contributions toward outcomes in the supervision activity system. It would also be possible to incorporate assessment criteria and goals into the practicum plan, for example, using activity theory objects mentioned by

college supervisors, by stating the purpose of the observations, such as ‘assess how well the lesson plan worked’ or ‘record what visual aids were used and assess how well they worked’. Incorporating assessment criteria would build in some of the essential rules regarding not only the supervision activity system but the activity systems of the practicum and ITE as a whole.

Turning to the second research question, the extent to which the roles of different supervisors enhance pre-service teacher education, there were three areas where greater clarity was needed. One of these was the distinction between the purposes of formative and summative assessment and, following from this, another was the reason for having different roles. The third, and perhaps most serious difficulty, was that the goals of supervision were unclear. The majority of student teachers had problems in discovering what standards they were supposed to reach. This resulted in comments such as “[the co-operating teacher] plays a vital role in training us, so he should have the same important role in our summative assessment” and “the main role in our formative and summative assessment must be given to the co-operating teacher because he knows everything about our abilities as we are with him everyday, so only he can assess us honestly”. The researcher recommends building on the practicum plan to include, as suggested by participants, written guidelines for student teachers and to have at least one session at the university to talk through these, giving an opportunity for questions. Written guidelines should not only cover the student teacher role, but also the roles of the two supervisors and the assessment form. This would not only assist in clarifying rules (assessment criteria) but by clarifying the division of labour would help to prevent some of the contradictions that currently exist. However, whilst guidelines should be put in place, it should be recognized that without further training and

development for supervisors, the guidelines would do no more than help to attain and maintain minimum provision.

Recommendations related to the third research question, the extent to which supervision approaches contribute to professional development, come mainly from the researcher as supervisors and student teachers had little or no exposure to the different models of supervision or the concepts of reflective practice or continuous professional development. The essential requirement is for student teachers to be given a model which they can use for their own development in future, as at the present time there are no arrangements for supervision of in-service teachers.

The fourth and fifth research questions aimed to identify the perceptions of participants in the supervisory process and how these perceptions influence the practice of supervision. It has been shown that although student teachers find the practicum invaluable as it provides their only real experience of learning to teach and state that supervision is more important than practical experience and university-based learning, there is nonetheless a considerable amount of dissatisfaction with existing arrangements. Student teachers nonetheless rated the importance of supervision highly, probably because a good mark in summative assessment is the key to a secure job. This assertion is based on their saying that they developed their ideas and skills through the teaching placement, observation of teachers and discussion with colleagues rather than through supervision. This helps to explain why 96% considered co-operating teacher supervision more important than college supervisor supervision. College supervisors themselves recognized that the quality of supervision would be better if more time were available and there were fewer competing lecturing and research commitments. One also complained that “schools don't care about the professional

development of student teachers” (CS1) which made their work more difficult, highlighting the lack of effective communication between schools and university. The recommendations relating to these research questions are likely to take longer to address as they concern the availability and allocation of resources. A medium term recommendation from the researcher is to ensure that all supervisors receive training and that headteachers are involved in relevant elements of the training. It might be possible to make this happen sooner if the Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Education decide that changes are necessary and issue instructions to the schools.

This investigation of supervision of special need student teacher supervision has raised many more questions than it has answered, for instance why there is no link between student teacher supervision and supervision of in-service teachers and whether there should be some continuity in continuous professional development, and has identified problems that required solutions at every level from Ministry to student teacher. The recommendations address short term and longer term issues. In the short term, there is an urgent requirement for clear outcomes and objects (motives/objectives), and for a structured sequence of development with more details than the current ‘observe for three weeks, then start teaching’. Options for improvement include preparation of a standard planned programme of induction which should ideally be prepared by a co-operating teacher and college supervisor working together, to be delivered at the university and completed at the school in terms of familiarization with premises and staff. A more detailed planned programme for the practicum period itself should also be prepared. These plans could be drawn up by a Ministry of Higher Education official in collaboration with one or more supervisors and co-operating teachers, the former to assure academic content and standards, the latter to ensure practicality. Provisional dates would be timetabled for college

supervisor visits and dates could be changed only by giving, for example, 3 days' notice, except in cases of real emergency. It is recommended that a specific period is given and also that it is monitored in order to avoid a degree of flexibility and short notice that would in effect allow the present practice to continue. These recommendations would address the concerns expressed by student teachers in particular, and would address some of the urgent needs for improvement in the short term, tackling the most pressing difficulties regarding how student teachers are supervised.

In the medium term, one key area that would benefit from attention is training of college supervisors and co-operating teachers in order to support their own professional development as well as begin to provide a greater degree of clarity and consistency among supervisors. It is recommended that this training should be designed as soon as practicable, ideally in the forthcoming academic year and include exploration of the roles and responsibilities of the different players and include development of guidelines for the practicum by those involved in supervising student teachers, so that the Ministry of Higher Education benefits from the available body of practical experience. Critically, training should include a modified form of clinical supervision which focuses on objectives for and feedback on observations to produce systematic progression throughout the practicum period. This would avoid potential difficulties associated with the concept of reflective practice while addressing two key issues – improving the way in which student teachers are supervised and increasing the capacity of all roles in supervision to enhance student teachers' professional development.

For such recommendations to be implemented, key senior managers from the Ministries involved should participate in a conference or a series of formal meetings focused on

supervision of teaching as quality improvement, with an initial emphasis on student teachers. It is also recommended that there should be exploratory meetings between universities and schools with officials from both Ministries in attendance to begin a long and careful process of establishing viable partnerships and associated arrangements. Recommendations regarding roles include the allocation of more dedicated time for college supervisors to carry out their responsibilities for supervision, highlighted by study participants and supported by the findings of Beck and Kosnik (2002) who proposed that universities should be more involved in teaching practice supervision. In activity theory terms, this type of change requires boundary spanners participating in the creating of boundary objects.

Adjustments to the supervision process could be made at the individual level, especially if led by a college supervisor. Planning and keeping appointments and setting and reviewing objectives for teaching observations could be adopted as good practice by any college supervisor. These actions involve no conflict with the doxa informing ITE and student teacher supervision, but lie within the habitus, whereby a supervisor can adapt within his field without disturbing the doxa. Put more simply, individual educators are part of their environment and influence the structure of their environment (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2005).

In the longer term, research should be undertaken into the effectiveness of different forms of supervision from the different participant perspectives. Further initiatives should be directed towards supervision of regular teachers as a means of continuous professional development and towards systematizing supervision for all student teachers rather than allowing the existing gap between special needs and regular student teachers to widen.

## **6.9 Conclusion**

In Saudi Arabia, supervision contributes to a consecutive model of ITE which continues to emphasize the ‘teacher as transmitter of knowledge’ model. The practicum is condensed into one period at the end of four years for most special needs student teachers. Supervision is one of the three essential elements of any practicum, playing a key role in ensuring that student teachers benefit from the experience, starting with preparation. It should be purposeful, systematic and focused on successful professional development (Stimpson, 2000). This is more critical in Saudi Arabia because separate thinking about special needs and inclusion has resulted in discrete organization structures at Ministry level, in ITE and in associated supervision of student teachers. Whilst focusing on special needs ensures differing types of needs are given particular attention, ITE is therefore directed towards teaching separate categories of difference, leading to a greater distance between special needs and regular teachers. Therefore supervision needs to address not only ‘how to teach’ and ‘how to teach special needs learners’ but also the wider aspects of teacher socialization.

Supervision is predominantly directive, which may be suitable for student teachers who must be able to apply particular knowledge and skills (Sidhu and Fook, 2010), but it does not tackle their requirement for autonomous ongoing professional development once they are fully fledged teachers. A more learner-centred process (McLeskey, 2011) combined with greater flexibility in the use of models of supervision would facilitate the acquisition of the necessary skills. Whilst wholesale adoption of a reflective practice model of supervision would not fit well with the existing model of ITE, clinical supervision could offer a way forward, at least by providing a structure for setting objectives for teaching

observations and for debriefing in a developmental sequence. Structure and clarity in communication are helpful to all participants in supervision processes and it is important to replace the relatively haphazard encounters reported by many student teachers with a more planned approach. Lesson preparation books could provide the basis for a more thoughtful approach.

Under current arrangements, the twin roles of formative and summative assessment are dominated by summative assessment, partly because although co-operating teachers invest a lot of time in student teachers formative assessment and development the power resides with the college supervisor who decides if a student teacher passes the practicum or not. A more developmental supervision model applicable to all teachers could not only benefit individual student teachers and other teaching staff, but could also facilitate major changes in education policy and practice such as the use of ICT in teaching.

Supervisor-student teacher relationships were shown to be highly influential, with affective needs of student teachers being as important as cognitive needs and competences. Most of the co-operating teachers in the current study were mentors rather than maestros, whereas college supervisors tended to be maestros, technical experts in teaching (Graham, 2006). One possibility is to use both in a coherent arrangement to meet all the main needs of special needs student teachers.

Criteria and standards used in summative assessment should be clear to all parties involved in supervision and should be applied consistently. Criteria for Saudi Arabian special education student teachers tend to focus on tasks, educational roles and duties in relation to the nature of the disability rather than the individual who has the disability (Al Beshar et

al., 2006). As yet, criteria are not specified well enough for supervisors to achieve consistency in their assessment of special needs student teachers. Supervision of regular student teachers appears to have greater clarity around criteria (The Manual of The Faculty of Education at Umm Alqura University, 2005 cited in Alzaydi, 2010).

In common with other studies, the Saudi Arabian context showed student teachers as passive recipients of college supervisor communications but to be more participative and active with their co-operating teachers. Supervisor-student teacher relationships exert a major influence on student teachers' personal and professional development (Caires and Almeida, 2007) and it is important they are effective. Shared principles and values play an important part in co-operating teacher-student teacher relationships, as do joint planning, feedback and modelling good practice (Beck and Kosnik, 2002). Saudi Arabian special needs student teachers' identified need for improved planning and organization of the whole practicum was supported by findings from other studies (Brisard et al., 2005; Le Cornu and Ewing, 2008).

Improvements in organizing the practicum require improvements in communication between universities and schools providing student teacher placements, which in turn necessitate dialogue between departments and Ministries involved in education. More communication is required between teacher educators involved with special needs and those working with regular student teachers. Similarly, more communication is needed between the Ministry of Higher Education, responsible for initial teacher education, and the Ministry of Education, responsible for schools. This indicated the need for more individuals to function as boundary spanners and to work together to create new objects that will help achieve the outcome of professional development from the student teacher supervision

activity system. Within the supervision activity system, contradictions between objects could be reduced as a starting point by giving serious consideration to adopting a modified form of clinical supervision which would offer clarity about objectives and their achievement, together with a progression path to successful professional development.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

This thesis has explored one of the key elements of the ITE of special education needs specialist teachers in Saudi Arabia, namely the perceptions of college supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers involved in supervision of special needs student teachers during their practicum. The opening chapter established the background to the research by offering essential insights into the educational and cultural context. It highlighted the importance of supervision as a major component of the practicum, strongly influencing the development of student teachers, whether positively or negatively (Tang, 2003; Sabar, 2004; Sullivan and Glanz, 2005; Graham, 2006). Despite the importance and expansion of supervision, there is no overall consensus about what it should be or how it should operate.

Saudi Arabia's ambitious King Abdullah Project for the Development of Public Education, with its goals of Education for All and ICT literacy, was launched in February 2007. The need for improvements to initial teacher education and in-service teacher development was recognized. Since teacher education, training and development is critically important and demands substantial support (UNESCO, 2007), so is supervision of student teachers because it plays a key role in the practicum. Redesign of ITE as a component of the change process will certainly influence student teacher supervision, and in turn be heavily influenced by the deeply embedded values, concepts and practices that underlie pre-service teacher training, as is the case in every country. Furthermore, it will impact established teachers through the adoption of a wider range of teaching methods including participative learning activities. The development of more than 400,000 teachers will be addressed

through training programmes such as specialization, supervision, self-development and skills improvement. In the late 2000s in Saudi Arabia, education is undergoing a major transformation and questioning the nature of teacher education in order to prepare the country for the wider economy and international environment of the future.

For student teachers, the practicum is the main opportunity for making connections between theory and practice, with assistance from teacher educators providing guidance on classroom strategies and methods of teaching that meet the needs of each learner. Supervision is a vital tool for providing the necessary guidance. Yet supervision is fraught with difficulties such as lack of trust between supervisors and supervised, weak communications and working in isolation (Alhammad, 2000; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000). However, supervisors should minimize problems by establishing professional relationships to share information, promote development and give and receive constructive criticism. The situation deserves careful study in order to identify the factors behind these problems and to try to overcome them with appropriate recommendations. Understanding perceptions of co-operating teachers, college supervisors and student teachers will assist in identifying ways of improving supervision while avoiding unnecessary obstacles.

Whereas several previous studies, most recently Abdulkareem (2001), have quantitatively reported supervisors' perceptions of supervisory practices and identified strong support for reconsideration of instructional supervision in Saudi Arabia, no prior qualitative interpretive research was identified. In contrast, the current study has offered an interpretive investigation into the supervisory practices dominant in the country's teaching practice context with a focus on special education needs student teachers.

In Saudi Arabia, educational provision for children assessed as having special educational needs continues to be provided on a spectrum from separate schools, through separate classrooms co-located with mainstream school premises to pull-out sessions and inclusive classrooms (Al Quraini, 2011). The Special Education Department at King Saud University, Riyadh, delivers ITE for special needs student teachers as a key element of its mission. Department staff design and implement specialized training courses for special needs in areas including severe learning difficulties (SLD) and talented and gifted, both independently and in cooperation with the community service centre at the university and the centre for diploma courses. An integrated development programme for both teachers and special education teachers is delivered, consisting of 128 modules, of which 52 are in the compulsory special education field and 15 units make up the university requirements. Pre-service special needs teachers take specialist modules in addition to the standard ITE programme. It should be noted that initial teacher education is provided separately for male and female student teachers and that those who succeed go on to teach in schools that are also separated on the basis of gender.

After four years a successful special needs student teacher receives a degree in one of several specialisms; visual impairment (disability), audial impairment (disability), mental impairment (disability), excellence and innovation, or learning difficulties. Qualified teachers work with special needs learners at primary and secondary levels, in special education institutes and charities or private sector agencies that offer services and special education programmes ([www.ksu.edu.sa](http://www.ksu.edu.sa)). Increasing demand for these teachers has reflected the growth in special education provision: in 2007, almost 50,000 boys were

attending special institutes, while 93% of all boys identified as having SEN were attending regular schools (Al Musa, 2007, p.222-225).

According to UNESCO (2007), the aims of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are for learners to understand Islam and its values, ideals and beliefs completely and correctly, and secondly to develop the society economically and culturally by preparing individuals to be useful members of their community. For the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education (2007) this includes a capacity to interact with new developments, be comfortable using technological innovations and confident in competing internationally in scientific and technological arenas, all of which are to be achieved through an effective education system that identifies potential and talent and promotes action. Teaching practice, as a cornerstone of ITE in Saudi Arabia, is therefore of considerable importance, as is the supervision of student teachers, in particular as educational inclusion is being progressively implemented and numbers of special education pre-service teachers are rising. The research focuses on whether current supervisory practices meet the changing needs of pre-service teachers, special educational needs pupils and the education system as a whole. Study participants were special needs student teachers undertaking their practicum in resource rooms or separate classrooms in regular schools, together with college supervisors and co-operating teachers.

This study addressed a gap in both literature and theory. Although some studies had been conducted into Saudi preservice teacher supervision at the school level (Al Dawood, 1994; Al Zahrani, 1995 and Ambabi, 2002), no prior research was found regarding preservice teacher supervision for special needs specialists. Additionally, there was a scarcity of

literature linking theories of ITE, the role and purpose of the practicum, perspectives on disability and inclusion, and approaches to supervision. This study therefore makes a timely and important contribution to the body of knowledge arising from research into higher education in Saudi Arabia in terms of initial teacher education, pre-service teacher supervision and meeting the needs of special educational needs learners and their teachers. Specifically, this study contributes to:

- a) identification of the knowledge, skills, experience and support required for special needs student teachers to enjoy a successful practicum.
- b) understanding the teaching challenges facing special needs student teachers and their perceptions of those challenges in order to inform supervision practices.
- c) identification of ways in which special needs student teachers apply theoretical knowledge gained at university to practical teaching situations in schools, in order to highlight good practice and potential improvements in both teaching practice and supervision.
- d) identification of appropriate approaches to supervision and assessment for Saudi ITE in respect of special needs student teachers working in inclusive settings.

It further contributes to educational research in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries by adopting an interpretive-constructivist research framework, in particular employing activity theory and triangulation of research methods through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and semi-structured observation, a combination of research methods not extensively used in previous research.

With the focus on supervisory practices relating to Saudi special needs student teachers clearly in mind, the broad aim of the study was to examine current practices in the light of relevant theories in order to improve the processes and outcomes of supervision. In particular, it sought to establish whether current supervisory practices were meeting the changing needs of pre-service teachers, special educational needs pupils and the education system as a whole. This involved an exploration of the different ways in which pre-service teachers were supervised in their teaching practice, principles governing supervision, supervisory approaches adopted in schools, assessment methods employed, and the views and perceptions of participants in the supervision processes and practices in the KSA teaching practice context.

Research objectives generated by the overall aim were defined as: to explore the different ways in which Saudi pre-service teachers are supervised in their teaching practice; to investigate perceptions of principles and practice in supervision of Saudi student teachers in the teaching practice, considering distinct perspectives of university supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers; and to improve supervision of student teachers to better equip them for their profession. The research questions were framed as; how Saudi special education needs specialist student teachers are supervised in their teaching practice, the extent to which the roles of different supervisors enhance pre-service teacher education, how supervisory practices are perceived by Saudi student teachers, college supervisors and co-operating teachers, and how existing model(s) of supervision might be improved.

The literature review in the second chapter explored seven key strands of theory and research grouped under four headings; the culture of learning and learning cultures, Special

Educational Needs, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and the role of supervision. In addition, an overview of research findings regarding perceptions of supervision was provided. The culture of learning highlighted the culture-specific nature of perceptions of teaching and teachers (Brisard, 2003), ranging from who should provide ITE and how it should be provided (Young, Hall and Clarke, 2007), through the balance of elements in ITE content, teaching standards, and linkages between theory and practise to whether education in subject-centred, teacher-centred or learner-centred. Corresponding differences in expectations and content of the practicum were also highlighted.

ITE was seen as directed towards producing the kind of teachers expected and accepted in a particular socio-political context. In Saudi Arabia, as in many countries, expectations were shown to include both preservation of traditional knowledge and development of teachers and teaching. The overarching purposes were defined as; to satisfy the needs of the society, to reflect cultural norms and way of life, to represent the cultural values, beliefs and ideology of its members but above all “a continuation of its Islamic educational heritage” (<http://faculty.ksu.sa>). The current position of the Saudi Arabian education system was analyzed in terms of learning culture theory, which defines learning cultures as “complex and multifaceted entities” (James and Biesta, 2007, p.4), and the concepts of habitus, field and doxa as originally proposed by Bourdieu (1990). The concept of habitus proposes that teachers and other social actors develop unconscious strategies appropriate to the social worlds that they inhabit. The field is the social arena in which individuals try to obtain desirable resources and, according to Bourdieu, is structured in terms of power relationships and power differentials, such as ministry officials, university professors and headteachers in schools. Ownership and allocation of resources are considered to be one

way of determining power relationships and in Saudi Arabia, teachers, equipment and other resources are owned and allocated centrally in the case of SEN pupils with very little flexibility at school level and even less flexibility or power for classroom teachers. In terms of Bourdieu's theory, the Islamic setting would be described as 'doxa', beliefs so deeply held that they determine actions and thoughts. However, in Saudi Arabia, power relationships are also deeply embedded in the doxa which in turn influences the field and this combination of field and doxa works against change in the Saudi Arabian education system. Although Bourdieu argued that habitus – the teachers – can generate change because of its central position in creating and controlling practices that make up social life, the three concepts of doxa, habitus and field remain tightly aligned in Saudi Arabia, leaving relatively little room for individuals to exercise creativity within the societal structuring mechanisms. This could be either a positive or negative factor. If the Arabic word for "read" – meaning read, examine, question and understand – is taken to the heart of the education system, there is potential to create a new model of education. If "read" is understood as 'read and memorise', then the education system could continue to lag behind those of many other countries.

Teaching is also influenced by various 'communities of practice', while the whole of society in Saudi Arabia is influenced by the community of practise of Islamic principles and beliefs on which all social systems are based. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), the social process "subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills", a position in agreement with learning culture as "the social practices through which people learn" (James and Biesta, 2007). Daily life in Saudi Arabia is itself a cognitive apprenticeship in Islam, privately, with the family and in social and religious gatherings. A teacher in the learning

culture of Saudi Arabia is therefore first and foremost a transmitter of knowledge. However, this may present difficulties for special educational needs teachers because many of the learners understand in concrete rather than abstract terms and in addition the emphasis is less person-centred than might be required by special needs learners.

Inclusion in education in Saudi Arabia is therefore a major component of inclusion into the society. Inclusion in education is more broadly understood as part of a wider human rights agenda as first asserted in a global context in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). In Western countries, educational inclusion is seen to entail a shift from deficit models of disability towards socialization based on concepts of fairness, equity and justice (Avramidis, 2005). According to Avramidis, this requires educationalists to focus more on productive pedagogies, which he considers to depend on professional development through reflective practice and communities of knowledge. However, the understanding and implementation of inclusion varies between countries, even within a single country. For example, UK legislation allows a mixed model of provision, as indeed do the Saudi laws and regulations. The inclusion policy in Saudi Arabia is one of 'Least Restrictive Environment' and, although fierce debate continues about the merits and morality of partial inclusion compared with full inclusion, some support has been evidenced for both points of view (Lindsay, 2007). According to Avramidis and Bayliss (2002), inclusion is about belonging, whilst integration is the process for achieving inclusion, for example location (all learning on same school site), functional (interaction between for example groups of children with SEN and groups of children with no SEN), social (individuals make wider social contacts for activities) or psychological (linked to teaching and learning strategies).

Inclusion in Saudi Arabia targeted two categories initially; students with minor physical and communicative disabilities who were included into mainstream schools, and students who are blind, deaf, have severe learning difficulties, autism or multiple disabilities and were traditionally taught in special classrooms affiliated to mainstream schools (IBE UNESCO, 2007). Inclusion has recently been extended to students described as behaviourally and emotionally disabled, hyper-active, and inattentive students (Al Musa, 2007).

Models of special education needs were categorized according to the underpinning theory as deficit models, medical/psychological models, educational models, or models emphasizing the interaction between individual characteristics and contextual circumstances. As in the UK, special educational needs includes gifted and talented children, raising questions about the conceptualization of special educational needs and appropriate educational interventions. Models of disability, and hence of special educational needs, with perhaps the exception of gifted children, were shown to fall into two main categories - the medical model and the social model (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). The medical model assumes that the person has or is the problem, so is also known as the 'individual model'. The social model, on the other hand, assumes that it is society that is or owns the problem. The social model ascribes perceptions and definitions of disability and special education needs, as well as reactions to them, to societal values and actions that have led to the exclusion or marginalization of the individuals concerned. Change is therefore required in social and societal structures and process to change perceptions. Newer models stressing economic issues and human rights can all be traced back to the fundamental perception of the problem and who owns it. The medical model typically

focuses on identification of needs through correct assessment and matching of correctly assessed need with provision, an approach visible in the Saudi Arabian system. Assessment follows specific procedures that vary according to disability, although improvements and the search for comprehensive assessment systems continue (Al Musa, 2007). Models of disability are inevitably related to assessment procedures and also to models of intervention. Intervention models reflect the continuance of the medical model, aiming to reduce or remove the deficit, and, to a lesser extent, the socialization model that employs techniques such as co-operative learning (Riddick, 2001).

In Saudi Arabia, people with disabilities are guaranteed rights to protection, care and rehabilitation. Regulations governing education for disabled children specify that the natural environment for education is the regular or ordinary school in order to facilitate psychological and social development alongside the educational. Education, the curriculum and inclusive education are all considered highly important in Saudi Arabia and the country's leadership pays great attention to people with disabilities. Acceptance of people with disabilities has increased in recent years, with more services and opportunities being made available (Al Musa, 2007). In education, although the need to adapt the curriculum to the disability is acknowledged, almost all learners follow the mainstream curriculum at a slower pace (IBE UNESCO, 2007).

Findings of research aimed at identifying factors that facilitate inclusion are important (Ainscow, 1999; Clark et al, 1999; Florian and Rouse, 2001). Key success factors included collaborative teamwork, opportunities for training, effective use of support staff, parental involvement and the attitudes of teachers themselves towards pupils classified as SEN.

Teacher education was shown to be particularly important. In contrast to the prevailing Western view of teacher education, based on a constructivist model of teaching and learning with a strong element of reflective practice, Karasneh (2001) showed student teachers need to gain subject knowledge, pedagogy and pedagogical content, curriculum, learners and learning, educational contexts, and education philosophies. Of the main models of initial teacher education and training, Saudi Arabia employs, at least for its special needs teachers, a consecutive theory-into-practice model with a long theory component and followed by a single short practicum. University lecturers remain chiefly transmitters of knowledge, while supervisors are mainly responsible for the teacher-as-apprentice period of the practicum. Support during practical teaching experience is essential (Amos and Postlethwaite, 1996), highlighting the contribution of supervision to the whole process of teacher education. The relevance and appropriateness of reflective practice as adopted in Western countries were called into question at this stage in the development of ITE in Saudi Arabia, in accordance with assertions by Richardson (2004) and Gopinathan (2006) that the adoption of reflective practice varies with the role and purpose of teacher education. It was suggested that supervision might be more appropriate, provided student teachers receive affirmation, constructive feedback and support in translating theory into practice (Tang, 2004). A lack of partnership between higher education institutions and placement schools contributes to the gap between theory and practice (Tang, 2004), a potential problem with college supervisors and co-operating teachers in the Saudi Arabian system.

Specific needs of special needs student teachers were examined; knowledge and understanding of models of disability (Pearson, 2009) and how these relate to teaching and

learning strategies in the classroom. Powell (2009) highlighted the role of relevant research papers in initial education of special needs teachers, a requirement that could be fulfilled by research function of the specialist Department at King Saud University.

The most immediate significant issue for Saudi Arabia was identified as the training of sufficient numbers of qualified professionals and specialist teachers to work with SEN learners. An integrated development programme for both regular teachers and special education teachers is delivered, consisting of 128 modules, of which 52 are in the compulsory special education field and 15 units make up the university requirements. Successful SEN student teachers receive a degree after four years in one of the following specialisms; visual impairment (disability), audial impairment (disability), mental impairment (disability), excellence and innovation, or learning difficulties. The department prepares special education teachers to work with special needs (whether disabled or gifted) at primary and secondary levels in special education institutes and charities or private sector agencies that offer services and special education programmes.

The emphasis on ITE tailored to differences based on the apparent cause of the special educational need was contrasted with the findings of Davis and Florian (2004), and of Karim (1983) twenty years earlier, who reported comparative findings of studies of special education teacher competencies in several Arab countries and found little difference between the requirements for regular and special needs teachers. However, Saudi Arabia considers that teaching quality with SEN pupils is improved by teacher training focused on knowledge and understanding of different categories of SEN and specialized teaching methods where appropriate. The role of supervision in equipping pre-service teachers to

teach in the classroom is therefore absolutely critical as it provides the only real guidance to practical teaching.

Supervision has been conceptualized in varying ways as it has evolved, becoming associated with professional development in the 1990s, then with effective teaching performance, and collaboration (Beach and Reinhartz, 2000) and with increasing analysis of roles and functions such as feedback, classroom coaching (Nolan and Hoover, 2008) and mentoring. Since the actualization of supervision is closely linked to the underlying theoretical model, it was important to identify the model in use in Saudi Arabia. Using a taxonomy of supervision (Gebhard, 1984) together with the clinical supervision model, the Saudi supervision model was assessed as predominantly directive, in keeping with the transmitter-of-knowledge model of teacher and teaching. The supervisor's role is "to direct and inform the teacher, model teaching behaviours, and evaluate the teacher's mastery of defined behaviours" (Gebhard, 1984, p.502). Irrespective of the model of supervision, constructive feedback was shown to be necessary for professional development to take place.

Consideration was then given to the roles of the partners and key procedures in supervision. In the Saudi context, there has been very little training for supervisors, resulting in ad hoc guidance rather than planned development (Daresh, 2001) and ad hoc division of roles during the practicum. Of the varied roles supervisors might perform, it was suggested that Saudi supervisors were shown to fulfil those of administrative supervision related to summative assessment, clerical supervision focusing on aims, programmes, records and results. Roles less likely to be adopted by Saudi supervisor were those involving

developmental supervision related to formative assessment,, co-operative supervision emphasizing peer assessment, responsive supervision in which teaching and professional development are directly related to the personal psychological or social needs of the individual in the classroom rather than to the teaching process, and clinical supervision related to the professional growth of all teachers from student teacher to experienced teacher. The role of the college supervisor was shown to include representation of and advocacy for the university and to be key in linking faculty education with school practice. Together with co-operating teachers, the college supervisor's role was to model effective teaching, scaffold development, promote a climate of inquiry and reflection, and challenge student teachers to grow as a professional (Nolan and Hoover, 2008). The role of student teachers was acknowledged to be perhaps the most difficult, given the critical stage of transition in their lives.

The Saudi Arabian supervision arrangements were shown to vary between general and special needs student teachers, with the college supervisor playing a greater role in summative assessment of the latter and with almost no involvement on the part of the headteacher. The first task was to allocate student teachers to schools for their practicum and accompany each group of student teachers to their school to assist with introductions and familiarization. The main task during the practicum was reported to be summative assessment with guidance and resolution of any problems along the way. Assessment was based on teaching observations. Literature showed the college supervisor's role to be problematic in terms of perceived priority and time allocation (Borko and Mayfield, 1995; Slick, 1998; Beck and Kosnik, 2002).

In the case of regular student teachers, the headteacher allocates 20% of the final assessment mark. In contrast, the headteacher plays no part in the assessment of special needs student teacher assessment: instead, the co-operating teacher, who is a specialist in an area of special needs education, takes this role. In practice, the apportionment of marks may vary among the members of the supervisory team, with the college supervisor having the final say. Any student who fails the practicum must wait a year before trying again, a situation that leads to high stress levels but very few failures, often thanks to the contribution of the co-operating teacher. The co-operating teacher role is to provide the assessment of specialist teaching knowledge and techniques that headteachers are unable to provide unless they themselves are specialists. In Saudi Arabia as in many other countries, co-operating teachers receive little or no preparation for supervising the formative professional development of student teachers. Moreover, communication and co-ordination of supervisory roles was shown to be problematic

Perspectives on supervision from earlier studies revealed that some factors had not changed in thirty years, such as lack of time (Boydell, 1986), delays in giving feedback, correcting student teachers in front of the class, and having unrealistic expectations (Field and Field, 1994). As recently as 2006, Wilson's findings were similar, with student teachers preferring a collaborative model of supervision over the traditional triad. It is important to hear the voices of Saudi Arabian college supervisors, co-operating teachers, headteachers and student teachers in order to take account of the prevailing learning culture and to understand the interactions of institutions and individuals in addition to the dynamics of supervision meetings. Examination of the current situation of supervision of Saudi student teachers led to the consideration of activity theory as a framework for the study in order to

explore ways in which student teachers feel and act when they experience contradictions between teacher education at university and practical teaching experience in schools.

The selection of activity theory was justified in terms of its socio-cultural research perspective (Jonassen, 2000) including historical scope (Nardi, 1996), and its flexibility as a framework for professional development research (Dayton, 2006). Its suitability for examining supervision was justified in terms of supervision as an activity concerned with professional development, involving multiple perspectives and issues and tensions, all of which fit the activity theory framework. Activity theory asserts that all activity takes place within a system and that activity itself can be the unit of analysis. The elements which permit analysis are; subject, object, division of tasks, rules, artifacts/tools and community. All of these influence each other and the activity as a whole. Subjects are identified individuals in the activity system being explored (college supervisors, co-operating teachers and student teachers) while objects are the immediate goals that subjects aim to achieve such as professional development of student teachers or visual aid created. Objects link individual subject actions with the activity. Outcomes are the end results of the actions and the community in an activity system (Waite, 2003).

In order to ensure that activity theory worked coherently with other elements of the research design, the methodology chapter outlined the four stages of ontology, epistemology, methodology and research methods recommended by Crotty (2003). An interpretivist ontology was described and justified, as were constructivist epistemology and a case study methodology, to suit the uniqueness of the phenomenon and to gather the rich and complex data needed for analysis. Mixed methods were chosen for their real-world orientation (Cresswell, 1994); questionnaire, semi-structured interview, observation and

review of documentation. A purposive sample of supervisors selected according to two criteria, purposiveness and accessibility (Silverman, 2001), consisted of 100% of male special needs student teachers at the Department of Special Education at King Saud University undertaking a practicum in the final semester of their four-year course, a 100% sample of college supervisors at the university and 15 co-operating teachers. The questionnaire survey had response rates of 59% for student teachers, 80% for co-operating teachers and 40% for college supervisors and was followed by a much smaller sample of semi-structured interviews. Observations of teaching, supervision meetings and supervisors' introductions to the placement schools and meetings with co-operating teachers were carried out. Turning to the data analysis, questionnaires were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, while interviews were analyzed qualitatively and findings supported by observations. The coding system used in data analysis was developed from the texts themselves and refined using elements of the activity theory framework. Ethical considerations were fully taken into account throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study.

Chapter five presented the findings and summarized the key points and issues under the headings of the research questions. Saudi special needs student teachers were shown to experience supervision differently depending on the school, their co-operating teachers and their college supervisor. Frequency of contact and style of supervision varied in important ways, although directive supervision was dominant. Somewhat worryingly, no evidence was found of planned and progressive development from first steps to fully fledged teacher. Instead, specific aspects of teaching seemed to be addressed in supervision as they happened to occur, often as a result of problems experienced in preparing or delivering a lesson. This corroborates the strong emphasis on resolving problems found in questionnaire

responses and interviews. Supervision visits by college supervisors were rarely planned and appointments were not always kept, making supervision difficult for all parties. In contrast, there was considerable and frequent contact between student teachers and co-operating teachers, although much of this was also unplanned and without clear objectives. This means that supervision was unable to deliver the value for all triad participants that might be expected.

The contribution to ITE made by the differing supervisory roles, like the supervisory practices themselves, varied among schools and participants in the process. However, it was clear that the co-operating teacher role was highly valued by the vast majority of student teachers who relied heavily on their co-operating teacher for learning how to teach in a practical real-world setting. The college supervisor's role was seen to influence student teachers for the most part positively although in some cases negatively. Problems were caused by the conflicting demands of college supervisors' workloads, and at times by the preferred style of giving feedback and providing supervision overall. Both supervisors roles exhibited the potential to make a more positive contribution to ITE and student teachers' professional development, as evidenced by some of the approaches and techniques employed by some of the supervisors. General, however, the co-operating teacher role was perceived by student teachers to be the key to learning how to teach and therefore, in many cases, the only role considered to enhance pre-service teacher education.

The authority and power of the college supervisor appeared to make students pay careful attention to his instructions in order to achieve a good final mark. However, abrupt and sometimes offhand delivery of feedback by some college supervisors meant that student teachers received inappropriate messages about how professionals should behave towards

each other and hence worked against the socialization of student teachers. Significantly, the current supervision approaches were not useful after completion of the practicum, because there were very few attempts to pass on skills of self-assessment or reflection that student teachers could use after qualification. The contribution of existing supervision practices to professional development were therefore evaluated as minimal in comparison with what could have been achieved using other approaches.

These factors led to participants expressing very mixed views of the supervisory process. Perhaps unsurprisingly, college supervisors seemed to be satisfied than other participants, although they acknowledged there was scope for considerable quality improvement subject to more time being made available for supervision. Perceptions did not seem to influence the practice of supervision but instead seemed to preserve the status quo. This was partly attributed to the centralized strong influence of the Ministries of Education and Higher Education which results in change being almost exclusively a top-down process.

Using activity theory to analyze supervision revealed that many short supervision interventions had highly specific objectives which did not necessarily form a coherent whole as elements of the practicum. Evidence for this was the contradiction between the many specific objects mentioned by student teachers and the more general objects of cooperating teachers and college supervisors. In addition, primary contradiction was identified between the responsibilities set for college supervisors and the time allocated for discharging these responsibilities. A further contradiction was identified in discrepancies between theory and practice. Best practice in schools did not appear to have been covered in theoretical modules, whilst new and potentially useful theory was not necessarily adopted in all the practicum schools.

Discussion of these findings in chapter six revealed that the model of ITE in Saudi Arabia not only employed a theory into practice approach but resulted in clear separation of special education needs ITE and regular ITE. It could be said that special needs teachers were directed towards ‘teaching to the disability’ rather than teaching the individual child. Whilst it can be said to contribute to Education for All, it shows little sign of contributing to the implementation of inclusion.

It has been argued that supervision in the practicum should address issues of preparation for the practicum, follow up of teaching practice, and active involvement of placement schools. Due to lack of partnership arrangements and a partnership mindset, this was not happening, therefore universities and schools should consider how to move forward together. At the time of the study, supervision followed a largely directive model, sometimes a directive informational one which student teachers have been shown to value (Caires & Almeida, 2007). Across a number of studies, a collaborative model of supervision was shown to be preferred, but the researcher considered some fundamental points of organization needed to be addressed at the beginning of any proposed change. These included keeping appointments and agreeing clear objectives in advance of teaching observations so that student teachers could be well prepared and receive appropriate and relevant feedback on their performance. Therefore a straightforward model of clinical supervision was proposed as the way to maximize benefit while minimizing change. In order to achieve successful professional development, supervision should be sequential, progressive and systematic (Stimpson, 2000). This offers a way forward for supervision in Saudi Arabia that will work successfully within the doxa, habitus and field, concepts which this thesis has argued can be usefully considered in conjunction with Activity Theory to deepen understanding in

education research studies. In particular, combining culture of learning theory with Activity Theory enables the strength of the influences on education and their sources to be better identified and understood.

## **Appendix 1      ITE modules for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Saudi Arabia**

### ***Content of the SEN Teacher Training***

The teacher training includes two years of general modules that include such topics as introduction to teaching (2 credits), aspects of Islam and Islamic education, using computers and communication technologies and introductory specialist modules. In the third year students take one of specialist options; hearing impaired, visually impaired, mental retardation, learning difficulties or talent and creativity. At the end of the fourth year, successful students will graduate with a B.Sc. in Special Education.

The overall programme offered by the Department of Special Education consists of 128 study units: 52 mandatory units in special education, 29 units in the specific specializations, 15 units as university requirements and 32 units as Faculty requirements.

As at April 2009, the up to date information from the Department of Special Education website listed the following courses. The language used in the table is as it appears on the website ([www. http://www.ksu.edu.sa](http://www.ksu.edu.sa)).

<p>SPED 100</p> <p>Introduction to Special Education</p> <p>(4 credit-hours)</p>	<p>The goal of this course is to give the student an overview of the historical development of the field of special education and to understand the concept of special education and exceptional children. The content of this course covers different categories of disabilities such as mental retardation, visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disability, emotional and behavioural disorders, learning disability and communication disorders. Also, this course provides information regarding modern techniques of services delivery, and education for each category.</p>
<p>SPED 151</p> <p>Assessment and Diagnosis in Special Education</p> <p>(4 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course is designed to give the student the skills and the basic understanding of the assessment process. It also covers the conditions required to use the assessment methods and the explanation of their results and how to make appropriate educational decisions.</p>
<p>SPED 160</p> <p>Physical Handicaps</p> <p>(3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course is designed to introduce students to the area of physical disability; its causes, classification, and the unique characteristics and needs of physically disabled individuals.</p>
<p>SPED 170</p> <p>Emotional Disturbance for Exceptional Children (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>The course is designed to give students a basic knowledge of the area of emotional disturbance among exceptional children and its causes, classification, and diagnosis. It also covers certain aspects of emotional disturbance such as aggressive behaviour, hyperactive behaviour, and autistic behaviour as well as services for these children.</p>
<p>SPED 180</p> <p>Introduction to Rehabilitation of the Handicapped</p> <p>(3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course is designed to introduce students to the concept of rehabilitation and its relationship with special education. It covers subjects such as the importance of rehabilitation, the role of the rehabilitation specialist, and new developments and trends in the area of rehabilitation.</p>

<p>SPED 201 Behaviour Modification (3 credit- hours)</p>	<p>This course is designed to introduce the student to the concept of behaviour modification, its historical background, and its theoretical basis. It teaches how to use different behaviour modification methods that can be used to teach new behaviours or reduce inappropriate behaviours.</p>
<p>SPED 202 Speech Disorders (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course is designed to introduce students to the concept of speech disorder; its types, characteristics, diagnosis, and treatment.</p>
<p>SPED 260 Public Awareness of Handicapping Conditions (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course aims to provide the student with the following: the media used in the transmission of awareness among different sections of society. The focus will be mainly on early diagnosis and assessment procedures</p>
<p>SPED 295 Aids and Prosthesis for the Handicapped (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course aims to provide students with the following knowledge: 1) The different aids and prosthetics suitable for the various types of handicapped conditions. 2) The principles of selection. 3) The methods of utilization.</p>
<p>SPED 371 Curriculum Development for Exceptional Children (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course is designed to provide students with theoretical and practical background in the area of curriculum development for exceptional children.</p>
<p>SPED 385 Educating Exceptional Children in Regular Schools</p>	<p>This course aims to provide students with the main principles of educating certain types of handicapped students in regular schools. This could include such topics as; 1) The concept of</p>

(3 credit-hours)	mainstreaming and its different methods and problems, 2) The programmes by which special education services can be introduced in regular schools for example resources rooms, peripatetic teachers and teacher consultants, 3) The advantages and limitations of different systems, 4) The specific role of each regular and special classroom teacher in educating handicapped students.
SPED 390 Working with Families of Exceptional Children (3 credit-hours)	This course is designed to give students a background concerning the reaction of families toward different disabilities, guidance and counselling methods, and the needs of families.
SPED 392 English Texts and Terminology (2 credit-hours)	This course aims to provide the student with the basic terminology used in the field of special education. This would be achieved by reading selected English texts.
MAJORS COURSES	
SPED 251 Introduction to Visual Impairment (3 credit-hours)	This is designed to introduce students to the visual system; what it is, what it does and how it works. It familiarizes them with the terminology, etiology, incidence, prevalence, prevention and treatment of visual impairment. It also helps students achieve a better understanding of visually impaired children through the exploration of the physical, intellectual, motivational, emotional and social characteristics of these children throughout their different stages of growth and development. The needs of visually impaired children are highlighted together with the approaches available to meet such needs. This course provides a good theoretical background on the impact of visual loss on the individual and his life in society, so that students are better able to study the educational and rehabilitative programs related to visually impaired children.
SPED 261 Braille (1)	This course has the following purposes: 1- To provide students with the basic skills in Braille reading

(3 credit-hours)	<p>and writing so that they can communicate in writing with the blind child, read his written work and correct it.</p> <p>2- To familiarize students with the equipment and devices used in Braille writing.</p> <p>3- To provide a brief history of the development of reading and writing for the blind.</p> <p>4- To introduce some of the problems associated with teaching Braille reading and writing to the blind, and offer some suggestions for dealing with such problems.</p>
<p>SPED 301 Braille (2) (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course is designed to help the student achieve the following objectives: 1) Mastery of Arabic Braille symbols. 2) Mastery of Braille reading and writing with simple as well as complex contractions. 3) Mastery of mathematical symbols use in elementary grades in the Institutes of Light according to the British code. 4) To become familiar with the new methods used in Braille reading, writing and production. 5) To become familiar with the problems commonly encountered in teaching Braille reading and writing to the blind, and also to become familiar with the suggestions offered to overcome such problems.</p>
<p>SPED 351 Orientation and Mobility and Daily Living Skills for the Visually Impaired (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>The purpose of this course is to provide students with a basic understanding of the process involved in helping visually impaired individuals develop orientation and mobility skills, as well as daily living skills. Techniques and factors influencing this process are discussed and, in the meantime, practical training is provided in this course.</p>
<p>SPED 401 Teaching Methods for the Visually Impaired (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course has the following purposes: 1) To familiarize students with the different educational approaches, programs, strategies and theories along with thorough examination of their efficiency in teaching various subjects. 2) To train students to use the new technological devices used in the field of visual impairment. 3) To familiarize students with the problems and</p>

	<p>difficulties encountered by teachers in teaching visually handicapped children. 4) To help students acquire the necessary skills which not only enable them to assess and critique available materials, but also provide them with the ability to engage in innovative and creative activities that can ultimately lead to more effective methods, approaches and programs, and offer useful solutions, suggestions and alternatives which can be utilized in teaching visually handicapped children.</p>
MINORS	
<p>SPED 252 Introduction to Hearing Impairment (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course aims at introducing students specializing in this area to the concepts and nature of hearing impairment, its classification, causes, and identification and diagnosis methods. Special emphasis is put on the characteristics and needs of the hearing impaired, in addition to appropriate care services offered for them.</p>
<p>SPED 262 Language Development for the Hearing Impaired (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course aims to introduce students to the basic concepts and definition of language and its development, together with the processes of language acquisition, development stages, and their implications for helping the hearing impaired acquire language skills. Special emphasis is put on the psycho-educational theories of language development, and consideration of system in both oral and total communication philosophies.</p>
<p>SPED 302 Oral Communication Methods (3 credit-hours)</p>	<p>This course aims at realizing the following: The understanding of the communication process and its components with concentration on techniques for aiding development of intelligible speech in individuals with severe and profound hearing losses.</p>
<p>SPED 352 Total Communication Method</p>	<p>This course emphasizes the development of skills in total communication for use in educational service delivery systems.</p>

(3 credit-hours)	It provides practice in simultaneous use of speech, finger spelling and the language of signs.
MINORS COURSES	
SPED 253 Introduction to Mental Retardation (3 credit-hours)	The course aims to provide students with basic knowledge in the field of mental retardation that includes basic definitions, causes, classification system as well as characteristics and needs. The course also focuses on increasing students' understanding of various services delivery systems and their historical development.
SPED 263 Mental Retardation in the Perspective of Different Theories (2 credit-hours)	This course is designed to discuss the concept of mental retardation from the perspective of different theories. Emphasis is placed on learning theories and their application in educating and training mentally retarded students.
SPED 303 Educating the Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR) (2 credit-hours)	This course aims to introduce students to special curricula, and educational programs for EMR with emphasis on the current trends of such programs.
SPED 313 Educating the Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR) c(2 credit-hours)	The main goal of this course is to emphasize the rights of this group in educational and rehabilitational process through the introducing the students to the types of appropriate educational alternatives as well as educational and vocational curricula for TMR.
SPED 353 Adaptive Behaviour Skills for Mentally Retarded (2 credit-hours)	Topics covered in this course include the concept of adaptive behaviour and the dimensions of adaptive behaviour skills as well as types of maladaptive behaviour problems and treatment procedures. The other purpose of this course is to train students on the application of adaptive behaviour scales to identify the degree and level of adaptive behaviour of mentally retarded

	children.
SPED 403 Teaching Methods for the Mentally Retarded (3 credit-hours)	This course aims to provide students with the learning principles as they relate to instruction processes for the mentally retarded. Emphasis is placed on the individualized education programme for MR as well as other teaching strategies such as behaviour modification, and task analysis.
SPED 254 Introduction to Learning Disabilities (3 credit-hours)	The goal of this course is to study the field of learning disability from a historical point of view, introduce students to the characteristics and needs of students with learning disabilities including physical developmental, psychological, emotional, social, and academic characteristics of these students.
SPED 264 Learning Disabilities in Reading and Writing (3 credit-hours)	The goal of this course is to introduce the student to the nature of reading and writing, the types of learning disabilities in reading, writing and their connections.
SPED 304 Developmental Learning Disabilities (2 credit-hours)	The goal of this course is to introduce the student to the developmental learning disabilities in preschool level, and its different types (cognitive, social, emotional and motor). It also covers the methods used to evaluate the disabilities and take remedial action.
SPED 314 Learning Disabilities in Perspective of Different Theories (2 credit-hours)	This course presents the historical development of theories related to learning disabilities and the effect these theories and the consequent research have on understanding the nature of learning disabilities. It also presents the concept of learning disabilities in the light of theory and the applications of these theories to teaching students.
SPED 354 Case Study in Learning Disabilities (2 credit-hours)	The goal of this course is to: 1. Study in a comprehensive and precise way a student who has learning disabilities. 2. Evaluate and identify his disabilities.

	3. Analyse the student's skills and develop an educational plan which contains the goals and skills that will be presented to the student.
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Further courses tackle behavioural and emotional disorders are:

256 SPED Introduction to Behavioral and Emotional Disorders (3credit-hours)

266 SPED Behavioral & Emotional Disorders in Perspective of Different Theories  
(3 credit-hours)

306 SPED Behaviour (3 credit-hours)

357 SPED Case study in Behavioural Emotional Disorders (3 credit- hours)

406 SPED Teaching Methods for children with Behavioural and Emotional  
Disorders.

480 SPED Field Experience in the area of Behavioural & Emotional Disorders  
(3 credit-hours)

SPED 404 Teaching Methods For Learning Disabled Students (3 credit-hours)

The goal of this course is to introduce the student to the teaching methods for learning disabled students in different academic fields such as language, math social science and natural science. It is also concerned with the necessary skills and strategies for learning disabled students to increase their academic level and improve their social behaviour.

SPED 255 Introduction To Giftedness And Creativity. (3 credit-hours)

This course aims to give students general background on the concepts of giftedness and creativity together with related theories, to introduce them to tools and methods

for identifying the gifted and creative student and to identify the characteristics and needs of the gifted and creative in light of recent differing theories.

SPED 265 Mental Abilities And Theories of Mental Structure. (3 credit-hours)

This course provides students with general background on mental abilities through the study of varying theories, especially those using factor analysis such as the two-factor model, multi-factor model, the hierarchy model and Guilford's structure of intellect model. Students will also be introduced to the historical development of related theory and the classification of abilities with a focus on differing abilities that contribute to creative thinking and in relation to general intelligence.

SPED 305 Problems Of The Gifted And Creative. (2 credit-hours)

This course aims to provide students with general background on the most prevalent educational, psychological and social problems that gifted and creative students may experience. The causes, preventative measures and dealing with existing problems will be discussed.

SPED 315 Educational Programs For The Gifted And Creative. (3 credit-hours)

This course introduces students to the historical evolution of ways of educating the gifted and creative, the advantages and disadvantages of each method, also introduces students to educational programmes for the gifted and creative, and the different options concerning these programmes. It aims to prepare teachers for educating these students and explores the requirements for facilitating for the gifted and creative at home and in the society.

SPED 355 Developing of the Creative Abilities and Special Talents. (2 credit-hours)

The aim of this course is to introduce students to educational programmes and procedures that develop creative abilities and special talents in children. Examples include training in problem solving and enhancing imagination, the role of fine and performing arts, and the breaking away from restrictive thinking in these endeavours.

SPED 405 Case Study.

This course is to train students to identify the gifted and creative using psychological tests and measurements and applying these in an in-depth case study.

406 SPED Teaching Methods for children with Behavioral and Emotional Disorders.

480 SPED Field Experience in the area of Behavioral & Emotional Disorders.  
(3 credit-hours)

The Department has now added a sixth specialization, namely behavioural and emotional disorders. The intention is to implement this as soon as possible in recognition of its importance in dealing with children with behavioural and emotional disorders.

## Appendix 2 Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria for student teachers

Student teacher's name ..... University Number

.....

Semester ..... Year .....

College supervisor's name .....

Type of assessment Formative assessment ... Summative assessment .....

Final mark .....

Elements	Mark					Comments
Personal characteristics						
Collaboration	1	2	3	4	5	
Independence	1	2	3	4	5	
Enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5	
Appearance	1	2	3	4	5	
Initiative	1	2	3	4	5	
Voice	1	2	3	4	5	
Balanced	1	2	3	4	5	

Working in the school

Attendance	1	2	3	4	5	
Working with school administration	1	2	3	4	5	
Awareness of school policy and legislation	1	2	3	4	5	
Awareness of special education rules	1	2	3	4	5	
Taking part in activities	1	2	3	4	5	
Contribution to the special needs programme	1	2	3	4	5	
Observation of other teachers in a classroom	1	2	3	4	5	
Substitution	1	2	3	4	5	

Assessment of pupils' needs

Taking part in the procedure of transferring special needs pupils	1	2	3	4	5	
Using different types of tools to collect information	1	2	3	4	5	
Preparing different assessments to diagnose special needs	1	2	3	4	5	
Applying different unofficial diagnostic assessments	1	2	3	4	5	
Marking pupils' work	1	2	3	4	5	
Interpreting results	1	2	3	4	5	

Converting the results into strengths and weaknesses of each pupil	1	2	3	4	5	
--	---	---	---	---	---	--

### Individual Education Plan

Taking part in the procedure of meetings	1	2	3	4	5	
Taking part in the preparation of programmes	1	2	3	4	5	
Taking part in continuous assessment of the programme	1	2	3	4	5	
Taking part in the final assessment of the programme	1	2	3	4	5	
Adopting the curriculum to be more suitable for the needs of each pupil	1	2	3	4	5	

### Implementation of the programme

Awareness of the subject matter and skills	1	2	3	4	5	
Suitable curriculum is chosen for pupils	1	2	3	4	5	
Preparation of learning and teaching aids before every lesson	1	2	3	4	5	
Use of directive teaching	1	2	3	4	5	
Consideration of learning levels	1	2	3	4	5	
Use of all methods of teaching	1	2	3	4	5	
Use of different levels of learning (abstract, semi-abstract and concrete)	1	2	3	4	5	
Cognitive learning strategies are taught to pupils	1	2	3	4	5	
Meta-cognitive learning strategies are taught to pupils	1	2	3	4	5	
Consideration given to pupils with attention disorders	1	2	3	4	5	
Consideration given to pupils with memory disorders	1	2	3	4	5	

Observation of the progress of pupils	1	2	3	4	5	
Use of charts to map pupil's progress	1	2	3	4	5	
Determining the reasons why an individual pupil is not progressing	1	2	3	4	5	
Adjustments to improve the learning environment	1	2	3	4	5	
Adjustment of the teaching strategies	1	2	3	4	5	
Has good morals within the classroom	1	2	3	4	5	
Keeness to help the pupils benefit from the class time	1	2	3	4	5	

Communication with parents for:

Referrals	1	2	3	4	5	
Diagnosis	1	2	3	4	5	
Individual educational plan	1	2	3	4	5	
Monitoring of pupil's progress	1	2	3	4	5	
Programme changes	1	2	3	4	5	
Final assessment for the programme	1	2	3	4	5	

Communication with teachers for:

Referrals	1	2	3	4	5	
Diagnosis	1	2	3	4	5	
Individual educational plan	1	2	3	4	5	
Monitoring of pupil's progress	1	2	3	4	5	
Programme changes	1	2	3	4	5	
Classroom environment changes	1	2	3	4	5	
Continuous assessment and tests	1	2	3	4	5	
Final assessment for the programme	1	2	3	4	5	

Communication with pupil guidance teacher for:

Referrals	1	2	3	4	5	
Diagnosis	1	2	3	4	5	
Individual educational plan	1	2	3	4	5	
Monitoring of pupil's progress	1	2	3	4	5	
Programme changes	1	2	3	4	5	
Anything related to parents	1	2	3	4	5	

Instructions

- Formative assessment to find out the different strengths and weaknesses of individual student teachers not considered in the final mark

Assessor's name

.....

Signature

.....

Date

.....

## Appendix 3

## Data Collection Instruments

### INVESTIGATING THE SUPERVISORY PRACTICES USED IN THE TEACHING PRACTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS STUDENT-TEACHERS

#### Student teachers' questionnaire

#### Introduction

With the focus on supervisory practices clearly in mind, the aim of the study is to examine current practices in the light of relevant theories in order to improve the processes and outcomes of supervision in Saudi SEN pre-service teaching practice. I would be grateful if you would answer this questionnaire fully. All the information you provide will be confidential and for study purposes only. Thanks very much in advance for your help and collaboration.

Name:.....(Optional)

Age:.....

Teaching specialism:

.....

.....

Name of Placement School .....

E-mail:.....

Mobile No: .....

**Thank you in advance for your help,**

Mogbel Aleinizi

PhD Student,

Graduate School of Education,

University of Exeter, UK

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[mugbel999@hotmail.com](mailto:mugbel999@hotmail.com)

#### SECTION (I): SUPERVISION

1. How important do you think that supervision is in helping your professional development as a teacher? (please circle the appropriate number)

**Very Important (5) Important (4) Unsure (3) Not important (2) Not at all important (1)**

2. How important is supervision in helping your professional development in comparison with practical experience in the classroom?

**Much more important (5) More important (4) Similar (3) Less important (2) Much less important (1)**

3. How important is supervision in helping your professional development in comparison with what you have learned at university

**Much more important (5) More important (4) Similar (3) Less important (2) Much less important (1)**

4. How many meetings do you have during your placement with your college supervisor? (please give the number)

.....

5. Who decides what will be discussed at meetings with your college supervisor?.....

.....  
6. Looking at meetings with your college supervisor, how important do you think they are in helping your professional development as a teacher? (please circle the appropriate number)

**Very Important (5) Important (4) Unsure (3) Not important (2) Not at all important (1)**

7. How many meetings do you have during your placement with your co-operating teacher? (please give the number)

.....  
8. Who decides what will be discussed at the meetings with your co-operating teacher?

.....  
9. Looking at meetings with your co-operating teacher, how important do you think they are in helping your professional development as a teacher? (please circle the appropriate number)

**Very Important (5) Important (4) Unsure (3) Not important (2) Not at all important (1)**

10. How important is supervision from your co-operating teacher in comparison with supervision from your college supervisor?

**Much more important (5) More important (4) Similar (3) Less important (2) Much less important (1)**

11. How important is your own input to your supervision meetings?

**Very Important (5) Important (4) Unsure (3) Not important (2) Not at all important (1)**

12. In your opinion, how important is it for supervisors to receive training and development in supervision?

**Very Important (5) Important (4) Unsure (3) Not important (2) Not at all important (1)**

13. Please describe how you see the purpose of the whole supervision process.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION (II): YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS TEACHER**

**14. Please tell us what made you want to become a special education needs teacher**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**15. What do you consider you bring to the task of teaching special education needs pupils?  
(eg new ideas, life experience, knowledge of subject such as Arabic or mathematics)**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**16. How do you develop your ideas and skills as a special education needs teacher? (Tick all that apply)**

- (i) University course
- (ii) Teaching placement
- (iii) Supervision
- (iv) Discussion with colleagues
- (v) Observation of other teachers
- (vi) Other life experience

**17. In your teaching role, what skills and ideas are you currently seeking to develop?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**18. How important are the following aspects of supervision to your professional development as a special education needs teacher?**

**Very Important (5) Important (4) Unsure (3) Not important (2) Not at all important (1)**

1- Formative assessment.....	5	4	3	2	1
2- Summative evaluation.....	5	4	3	2	1
3- Receiving immediate feedback after observation.....	5	4	3	2	1
4- Receiving both written and oral feedback.....	5	4	3	2	1
5- Completing required documentation eg checklist.....	5	4	3	2	1
6- Receiving suggestions about resources.....	5	4	3	2	1
7- Receiving advice on alternative teaching strategies.....	5	4	3	2	1
8- Setting clear goals with your college supervisor.....	5	4	3	2	1
9- Being clear about what your university and the school expect of you.....	5	4	3	2	1

**19. Which of the following do you do in supervision meetings with your college supervisor? (please tick all that apply)**

- 1- I decide some of the topics and issues to be discussed
- 2- I spend most of the meeting listening to the supervisor
- 3- I ask for help or suggestions about my teaching
- 4- I ask for suggestions about how I can develop my skills independently

**19- A. Please comment on anything else that you do during supervision meetings with your college supervisor**

.....

.....

.....

**19 –B. Please say what you find most helpful in your supervision meetings with your college supervisor**

.....

.....

.....  
**20. Which of the following do you do in supervision meetings with your co-operating teacher? (please tick all that apply)**

- 1- I decide some of the topics and issues to be discussed
- 2- I spend most of the meeting listening to the supervisor
- 3- I ask for help or suggestions about my teaching
- 4- I ask for suggestions about how I can develop my skills independently

**20-A. Please comment on anything else that you do during supervision meetings with your co-operating teacher**

.....  
.....  
.....

**20- B. Please say what you find most helpful in your supervision meetings with your co-operating teacher**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION (III): ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**21. How far do you agree with each of the following statements?**

**Strongly agree (5) Agree (4) Unsure (3) Disagree (2) Disagree completely (1)**

- 1- I am clear about my own role in the supervision process.....5 4 3 2 1
- 2- I am clear about the different roles of the college supervisor  
and co-operating teacher.....5 4 3 2 1
- 3- The college supervisor role is the most important.....5 4 3 2 1

- 4- The co-operating teacher role is the most important .....5 4 3 2 1
- 5- Each role is equally useful to me..... 5 4 3 2 1

**21. Please add any comments on the roles and responsibilities involved in the supervision process that you wish to make.**

.....

.....

.....

**SECTION (IV): SUPERVISORY TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES**

**22. How frequently do you do each of the following?**

**Always (5) Often (4) Sometimes (3) Rarely (2) Never (1)**

- 1- choose what I say and how I say it carefully .....5 4 3 2 1
- 2- follow the supervision checklist .....5 4 3 2 1
- 3- work with a supervisor to address a problem ..... 5 4 3 2 1
- 4- have freedom to be creative in my teaching.....5 4 3 2 1
- 5- express my own development needs.....5 4 3 2 1

**23. Please add any suggestions for improving supervision meetings that would help your own professional development**

.....

.....

.....

.....

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.*

**INVESTIGATING THE SUPERVISORY PRACTICES USED IN THE TEACHING PRACTICE  
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS STUDENT-TEACHERS  
College supervisors' questionnaire**

**Introduction**

With the focus on supervisory practices clearly in mind, the aim of the study is to examine current practices in the light of relevant theories in order to improve the processes and outcomes of supervision in Saudi SEN pre-service teaching practice. I would be grateful if you would answer this questionnaire fully. All the information you provide will be confidential and for study purposes only. Thanks very much in advance for your help and collaboration.

Name:.....(Optional)

Age:.....

Experience in supervision:

Type (eg general, secondary school or SEN school for blind boys)

.....

Years..... Months.....

Teaching specialism:.....

School Name (if appropriate).....

E-mail:.....

Mobile No: .....

**Thank you in advance for your help,**

Mogbel Aleinizi

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Graduate School of Education,

University of Exeter, UK

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[mugbel999@hotmail.com](mailto:mugbel999@hotmail.com)

**SECTION (I): SUPERVISION OF STUDENT TEACHERS**

**23. How important would you say your role in supervising student teachers is in comparison with your teaching and lecturing? (please circle the appropriate number)**

**Much more important (5) More important (4) Similar (3) Less important (2) Much less important (1)**

**24. How important would you say your role in supervising student teachers is in comparison with your research role? (please circle the appropriate number)**

**Much more important (5) More important (4) Similar (3) Less important (2) Much less important (1)**

**25. How important would you say your role in supervising student teachers is in comparison with your administrative role? (please circle the appropriate number)**

**Much more important (5) More important (4) Similar (3) Less important (2) Much less important (1)**

**26. On average, how many supervisory meetings do you have with each of your student teachers during their teaching placement in schools? (please give the number)**

.....

**27. How important are the following aspects of supervision?**

	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Unsure (3)	Not important (2)	Not at all important (1)
10- Formative assessment.....	5	4	3	2	1
11- Summative evaluation.....	5	4	3	2	1
12- Giving immediate feedback to a student teacher after observation.....	5	4	3	2	1
13- Giving both written and oral feedback.....	5	4	3	2	1
14- Completing required documentation .....	5	4	3	2	1
15- Suggesting resources for student teachers .....	5	4	3	2	1
16- Giving advice on alternative teaching strategies.....	5	4	3	2	1
17- Setting clear goals for student teachers.....	5	4	3	2	1
18- Setting clear expectations for student teachers (of college, school etc) .....	5	4	3	2	1
19- Completing the supervision meeting checklist.....	5	4	3	2	1
20- Liaising with the university.....	5	4	3	2	1
21- Discussing the relationship between special educational needs and mainstream teaching.....	5	4	3	2	1

**28. What do you see as the differences between supervision of special educational needs specialist student teachers and mainstream student teachers?**

.....

.....

.....

**29. How important is your own role in supervision compared with other members of the supervision team?**

**Very Important (5) Important (4) Unsure (3) Not important (2) Not at all important (1)**

**30. In your opinion, how important is it for supervisors to receive training and development in supervision?**

**Very Important (5) Important (4) Unsure (3) Not important (2) Not at all important (1)**

**31. Please describe how you see the purpose of the whole supervision process.**

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.....

**SECTION (II): YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A SUPERVISOR**

**10. How did you develop your ideas and skills as a supervisor? (Tick all that apply)**

- (vii) Professional development short course
- (viii) Other course
- (ix) Postgraduate course (Master's)
- (x) Discussion with colleagues
- (xi) Observation of other supervisors
- (xii) Other life experience
- (xiii) Other (please specify).....

**11. In your supervisory role, what skills and ideas are you currently seeking to develop?**

.....

.....

.....

**12. What has made you, as an educator and supervisor, particularly interested in special educational needs?**

.....

.....

.....

**SECTION (III): PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT TEACHERS**

**13. Which of the following do you do in supervision meetings? (please tick all that apply)**

- 1- Decide the topics and issues to be discussed
- 2- Encourage student teachers to choose topics/issues to discuss
- 3- Spend most of the meeting giving information and advice
- 4- Spend most of the meeting listening to the student teacher
- 5- Explain the core standards
- 6- Explain expectations of school and headteacher
- 7- Follow the checklist
- 8- Help students to become independent in their own professional development
- 9- Help them to make links between mainstream and special education needs teaching

**14. How long does a typical supervision meeting last? (please state the length of time)**

.....

**15. In a typical supervision meeting, how much time do you spend listening to the student teacher? (please state the length of time)**

.....

**16. What do student teachers talk to you about? (eg questions, concerns, teaching experience)**

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.....  
.....  
.....

**17. Please comment on anything else that you do during supervision meetings that is relevant to student teachers' professional development in the area of special educational needs**

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**18. Please say what your specialist SEN student teachers find most helpful in your supervision?**

.....  
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.....

**SECTION (IV): ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**19. How far do you agree with each of the following statements?**

**(1) Strongly agree (5) Agree (4) Unsure (3) Disagree (2) Disagree completely**

- 1- I am clear about my role in the supervision team.....5  
4 3 2 1
- 2- I can decide the role I wish to play in the supervision team.....5  
4 3 2 1

- 3- The college supervisor role is the most important.....5 4  
3 2 1
- 4- The co-operating teacher role is the most important .....5 4  
3 2 1
- 5- The headteacher role is the most important.....5  
4 3 2 1
- 6- Each role is equally useful..... 5  
4 3 2 1
- 7- I inform my student teachers of the evaluation criteria .....5 4  
3 2 1

**20. Please add any comments about roles and responsibilities specifically relate to special educational needs.**

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**21. Please add any further comments on roles and responsibilities that you wish to make.**

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**SECTION (V): SUPERVISORY TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES**

**22. How frequently do you do each of the following?**

**Always (5) Often (4) Sometimes (3) Rarely (2) Never (1)**

- 1- choose my language carefully .....5 4  
3 2 1

2- follow the supervision checklist .....	5	4
3    2    1		
3- work with a student teacher to address a problem .....	5	4
3    2    1		
4- derive solutions to teaching problems from my student teachers.....	5	4
3    2    1		
5- allow my student teachers freedom to be creative .....	5	4
3    2    1		
6- actively involve my student teachers in expressing their development needs.....	5	4
3    2    1		

**23. Please add any suggestions for improving supervision meetings that would help your own professional development as an educator, researcher and supervisor of student teachers in special educational needs**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**24. Please add any final suggestions that would help special educational needs student teachers and mainstream teachers to collaborate more effectively in an inclusive school setting.**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.*



<p>Effects on professional development of:</p> <p>Community ('other influences')</p> <p>Tools</p> <p>Division of labour ('roles and responsibilities')</p> <p>Rules</p> <p><b>Supervision activity</b></p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>Conduct of meetings</p>	<p>What ideas have you had that you thought could be useful?</p> <p>Where did they come from?</p> <p>Have you been able to put your ideas into practice? If not, why not?</p> <p>What do you see as the purpose of supervision?</p> <p>Do other people involved share the same purposes?</p> <p>If there are differences, what problems does that cause? How do you try to overcome problems?</p> <p>How often do you observe/meet your student teachers?</p> <p>How many student teachers do you personally have?</p> <p>What happens during a typical formative assessment meeting?</p> <p>What happens during a typical summative evaluation meeting?</p> <p>What influences what you focus on?</p> <p>What hinders you in doing this?</p>	<p>procedures</p> <p>University/college philosophy and atmosphere, expectations of inspectors/student teachers</p> <p>Probe others - college supervisor/headteacher/student teacher/co-operating teacher</p> <p>Division of labour Power</p> <p>Rules</p> <p>Rules Roles &amp; responsibilities/ Division of labour Tools Other influences</p>
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## **Appendix 4 Data Analysis Process**

This appendix gives details of how the coding framework was developed during the data analysis process, starting with the analysis of the questionnaires, first the student teacher questionnaires, next the co-operating teachers and lastly the college supervisors. Following translation, which was as literal as possible while avoiding distortion of meaning in either language, an Excel spreadsheet was set up to enter the responses to each open-ended question. Key words from each response were entered in the two columns to the right of the responses, a main word and a secondary word, as shown overleaf.

This figure also shows the next step, which was to re-read the responses and key words in order begin to group the ideas into more abstract categories as well as to identify responses which were ‘outliers’ to the majority of responses in terms of emerging ideas and themes. Actions in this step are shown in blue, with emerging themes highlighted in yellow.

The second step identified broader categories that could all be said to be situated under the general heading of ‘teaching practice’; purpose, content, style and feedback, followed at a later point in the thinking and analysis processes by the heading of standards. This was subsequently replaced by ‘assessment criteria’ which more specifically reflected the standards against which student teachers were judged in their summative assessment such

as lesson planning (content and timings, for example), lesson delivery, completion of the lesson preparation book and individual educational plan.

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Response

Code of respondent (school and individual number)

Question number: question in comment

Main key word

Second key word

STUDEN	SCHOOL	Q no.				
1	1	1		13 Code a 13	code b 13	
1	1	1		13 Code a 13	code b 13	
3	1	1	Prepare us to be teachers in future	training	prepare	purpose
4	1	1	Direct us to appropriate teaching methods	training	direction	style
5	1	1	Helping us to overcome problems that face us in the school	problem solving		feedback
6	1	1	Make sure that we apply what we have studied in the right way	apply	correct	standards
7	1	1	Helping us to make the transition from student to teacher	role change	prepare	purpose
8						
9						
10	2	1	Prepare us to be teachers in future	training	prepare	purpose
11			Direct us to the right teaching methods	training	direction	style

Read again 2-3 times to identify broader categories

All student teacher questionnaires were processed in the same way, then an attempt made to distinguish between fixed and variable elements of the codes. This turned out not to be helpful and so an approach was adopted which was more closely aligned with activity theory. The alignment was achieved by concentrating on process (col 1), focus (col 2) and activity pointing towards activity theory headings at the final stage. During the

second attempt at coding into process and focus, responses from different individuals could sometimes look very similar and so each respondent's answers were read across as a whole to ensure there was consistency in the replies of a single individual. Following this, an additional column was created to try to identify codes that would look towards activity theory without actually classifying the data into activity theory related headings.

Previous codes were double-checked to make sure that appropriate terms had been used for process and focus in coding columns 1 and 2 where the response made it possible to identify a process and focus. Some questions such as "What do you bring [to teaching]?" had the obvious process of 'bringing' but a diversity of answers that could be knowledge, skills, experience or something completely different. It was felt that whatever the student teacher brought to the task, it made no difference to the activities of supervision, so coding left unchanged. Data from this question will be used in describing the characteristics of the sample. Questions such as "Please add any other comments" tended to produce a similar variety of answers and so were not treated as process and focus for coding purposes.

The next figure shows a snapshot of the revised coding process: process, focus, concept/theme heading and activity theory element.

	Process	Focus of process	Overarching heading	Activity theory element or literature review theme heading		
1	Prepare us to be teachers in future	prepare	future role	purpose	making transition	outcome
1	Direct us to appropriate teaching methods	guide	teaching methods	teaching strategies	developing teaching	object
1	Helping us to resolve problems that we face in the school	mentor	problem solving	feedback	resolve problems	object
1	Prepare us to be teachers in future	prepare	future role	purpose	making transition	outcome
1	Direct us to the right teaching methods	guide	teaching methods	teaching strategies	developing teaching	object
1	Benefit from college supervisor's experience	learn	others' experience	style	learning from other people	object
1	It is very important because teaching practice is new	practise	teaching	practice	importance of practise	subject ST
1	It gives me experience	gain	experience	experience	experience	object
1	Qualifying us to become successful teachers	prepare	future role	summative assessment	making transition	outcome
2	So we learn the principles of correct teaching	learn	principles	assessment criteria	guidance	object

*Making decisions about coding and codes*

In deciding how to code a process, it was important to think of the subject (activity theory term). For example:

1 43 To give us advice and instructions about how to learn to teach in practice Advise practical teaching **feedback**

‘Learn to teach’ would be the process applicable to the student teacher as subject whereas ‘Advise’ would be the process applicable to the supervisor as subject. In this case, ‘Advise’ was chosen because of the words used by the student teacher ‘to give us’

(something done to the student teacher by somebody else, the supervisor does the advising).

‘Giving advice’ implies it is an action within activity theory because of the verb ‘giving’. ‘Advice’ however is more clearly a tool. Is ‘giving advice’ a tool? It could also be considered as a task under division of labour. However, division of labour implies that the task should have a doer attached to it somewhere. It is not clear from the response whether the advice is given by the supervisor or co-operating teacher or both, so this does not suit this example.

#### *Decisions about object and outcome*

Answers to the question about the perceived purpose of supervision would be expected, in terms of activity theory, to relate to object or outcome, depending on whether they referred to supervision overall or to a constituent part such as a specific meeting with a college supervisor, say ‘learn to teach’ or ‘resolve problems that we face’ respectively. However, the example above could lead to an object-related category of ‘formative assessment’ if the activity was an observation of teaching or supervision session to discuss a teaching observation. Decisions similar to these had to be made throughout the whole analysis process, using process, focus and subject to guide coding.

The following example indicates how one of the outcome codes was chosen and used. The first ‘process’ column of coding (D) was ‘prepare’ with the ‘focus’ column (E) as ‘future role’, therefore in the researcher’s judgment, the subject was the student teacher preparing themselves for their future role (since ultimately they would become the

teachers, no matter how much effort supervisors made to prepare them). From this, along with other similar statements made by various student teachers, an outcome code of ‘making transition’ was allocated. The response clearly indicated an understanding of the difference between student teacher and qualified teacher and between present and future, leading to the concept of ‘transition’.

Prepare us to be teachers in future    Prepare    future role    **purpose**    making transition

Different statements were treated in accordance with certain principles that applied to all data analysis. Verbs were used for process, verb forms in the raw data where provided. For instance, in the following example, ‘*Managing*’ was chosen because it reflects process, doing something.

I try to know how to manage the    class    **managing the**    **classroom**  
time and the classroom    management    personal    classroom    management

In the next example, *creating* was retained because it was in the raw data.

Creating computer programs that  
can help pupils with severe  
learning difficulties    **creating**    ICT    SLD pupils

In the following example, ‘*Adapting*’ covered all the statements and a further principle of coding at later stages was not to create more codes than were necessary.

Curriculum reform so that it is more proportionate to pupils' abilities	curriculum	reform	proportionate to abilities	Curriculum development	Adapting curriculum
I try to create curriculum for SEN pupils that could be easier than what exists	curriculum	create	easier one	curriculum development	Adapting curriculum
Curriculum	curriculum			curriculum development	Adapting curriculum

On occasions, ‘curriculum’ as the focus created a problem for coding because the statement referred to the specific process of explaining elements of the standard national curriculum to individual learners. This related to the teaching situation in the classroom as did a later response of ‘Be sure to use appropriate teaching methods’. Therefore both of these were coded in column G as ‘practical teaching’. Practical teaching is understood as *doing* whereas applying concepts is understood as more like *thinking how to apply*. Some responses included the word ‘curriculum’ but concerned individual pupils and their abilities rather than groups of pupils, as in “development of individual programmes and implement the integration programme”. In these instances, links were made with the individual educational plan and pupil assessment of children with SEN.

Finally, in questions about additional activities and improvements in general, the researcher took the decision that these responses were very useful in contributing to answering the research question about implications and improvements but that they did not fit so readily with activity theory focused on supervision meetings, therefore it was decided not to try to code them. There were a number of questions, regarding changes

participants would like to see, to which responses simply did not lend themselves to analysis by process and focus. One example concerns comments on roles and responsibilities in the supervision process. Participants wrote what they wanted someone to do (or not do), therefore the researcher decided to use what they said they wanted as the first column and the role involved (eg college supervisor) in the second column. As the next step would logically reflect the activity theory term of ‘division of labour’ it was decided not to make any entries in an additional column at this stage. This is illustrated in the following extract:

I hope supervisors are close enough to us in school to know and help resolve problems we face in school, we don't want them to be with us all the time but we need them			
sometimes, for example once a week at least	more time	college supervisor	dedicated time
Let our college supervisor work with us for most of the term which is just one term in four years' study at university, so attention must be paid to us by the university through not giving the college supervisor any responsibility in university except supervision of us in school	more time	college supervisor	dedicated time

Once the coding of student teacher questionnaire responses was complete, attention turned to carrying out the same process with co-operating teacher and college supervisor questionnaire responses.

The next step was to apply filters to the Excel sheets to weed out duplicates, and to ensure that distinctions were retained where appropriate and removed where unnecessary.

In the following example from filtering on 'apply' in column D of the student teacher questionnaire analysis spreadsheet, although the process 'apply' was the same in each case, it was felt that the focus was different enough to be coded differently, despite the fact that all responses related to applying theory in practice.

1	1	Make sure that we apply what we have studied in the right way	apply	knowledge	theory into practice
2	6	Implementation of what we learned in our university and practising it in school	Apply	Theory	theory into practice
		Implementation of the right way in the field training	Apply	Correct	theory into practice
4	8	Applying what we learned at university in from theoretical way to practical way	Apply	Theory	theory into practice
3	9	Practising what we learned at university in a practical way	Apply	Theory	theory into practice
6	9	Connecting a theoretical way with a practical one	Apply	Theory	theory into practice
2	14	The application of concepts, principles and educational theories into practice	Apply	Concepts	theory into practice
2	14	The application of concepts, principles and educational theories into practice	Apply	Principles	theory into practice
2	14	The application of concepts, principles and educational theories into practice	Apply	Theory	theory into practice
1	15	Try to apply what we have learned in theory at the university and provide us with the expertise necessary for the exercise of practical teaching	Apply	theory	theory into practice
1	17	Identify the educational curriculum and how to apply them in schools	Apply	curriculum	Practice
2	18	To apply what we learned as theoretical from university to practical in school during teaching practice	Apply	theory	theory into practice
1	21	Interest to convert theoretical information into concrete experience	Apply	theory	theory into practice
2	21	The practical application of what we have studied at the University	Apply	theory	theory into practice
2	22	Be sure to use appropriate teaching methods	Apply	teaching methods	Teaching practice
1	34	To ensure that we apply the theory we learnt in practice at school and to know more about administration affairs	Apply	theory	theory into practice

Filtering on 'assess' gave:

To evaluate us	Assess	summative assessment	summative assessment
to tell us what level we reached in our professional development and improve this level by supervisors through their supervision of us in the school in addition to their assessment of us	Assess	teaching	summative assessment

It was decided upon review that the second statement here contained concepts of both formative and summative assessment together with more general professional development. It was therefore decided that a broader code was needed to include all of these because in activity theory terms they are all 'object'. The code chosen was 'developing teaching'.

The same code was chosen for 'To clarify the importance of plans in use for teaching and how to do them in lessons preparation book as well as how to apply these plans in the classroom' because lesson preparation was considered an integral element of developing teaching. In comparison, the code 'practical teaching' was used for lesson delivery, while 'teaching practice' included the experience of being in a school with other teachers, undertaking other assessed duties such as breaktime supervision and following school rules.

A further distinction was made between teaching in general and more specific aspects of teaching. For example, a student teachers' object of 'Showing how to do the individual educational plans for pupils' made no reference to teaching and so was given a different code, that of 'learning to do IEP' (individual educational plan). This occurred many times in student teachers' responses hence it was considered appropriate to code it as a separate category.

Filtering on ‘Resolve problems’ resulted in this code being assigned to all types of problems in the school as a whole and in preparation and delivery of lessons, including correction of mistakes and errors in the classroom.

Filtering on ‘coach’ raised an interesting issue with regard to the following two statements:

<p>to train me in teaching by putting me in a real situation which is teaching in classroom then supervisors support me by their advice and oral feedback that may help me in the journey of teaching practice in school placement</p>	coach	practice	theory into practice	feedback
<p>I have been trained, so the supervisor and co-operating teacher support me in the school by telling and showing me how to explain lessons for pupils in the classroom and they amend what should be amended</p>	coach	teaching methods	teaching strategies	developing teaching

The first of these specifically mentioned feedback, therefore although it could equally well have been coded as ‘developing teaching’, it was coded as ‘feedback’ (which would place it in a different category under activity theory, as a tool rather than as an object). The decision to apply ‘feedback’ as the code was also influenced by its being the central link between the classroom teaching and the ‘journey of teaching practice’. The second, although similar to the ‘resolve problem’ code included more aspects of the whole process of learning to teach, such as how to explain lessons, and was therefore coded as ‘developing teaching’.

Filtering on ‘complete’ gave 2 responses with a variety of ideas contained within them – the only word in common was ‘complete’, therefore they were coded as ‘completion’ and ‘outcome’.

It completes the teaching practice aims	complete	Aims	purpose
I think the supervision is to complete what the student teacher does - that means to help student teacher to do what is difficult to be done	complete	Training	summative assessment

The following statement (filtering under ‘determine’) was coded as guidance because the statement contained the word ‘guide’ and the content was different from previously coded statements up to that point in the filtering process.

Determination of the main principles to guide us in school	determine	principles	teaching practice	guidance
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Filtering on ‘develop’ gave the following results:

to develop strengths in my teaching	develop	strengths	self-knowledge
Helping us to develop our training and enhance our ability	develop	strengths	practice
Working to develop our training and our experience in teaching methods	develop	experience	experience theory into practice
Strengthen our abilities in a practical way	develop	ability	practice
to learn and develop teaching skills which enable me to become a teacher	develop	skills	Skills

All except ‘experience’, after much thought about whether and how strengths, abilities and skills were different (or not), it was decided to code them all under ‘developing teaching’ because the differences were too small in comparison with the clear common thread of ‘develop’.

Filtering on ‘direct’ gave a statement very similar to previously coded statements which were allocated to ‘resolve problems’ therefore the thematic code was changed to reflect that.

To be honest the direct supervision is to direct us to avoid doing things wrong	avoid mistakes	purpose	resolve problems
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Filtering on ‘discover’ gave the following result:

Discovering our skills and abilities during the practical teaching	discover	ability	feedback
Discovering our skills and abilities during the practical teaching	discover	skills	feedback
Discovery of our capabilities through teaching by myself	discover	abilities	self-knowledge

It was decided to create a new code ‘discovering skills’ because the idea of ‘discover’ was sufficiently different from the idea of ‘develop’ to merit a separate code.

In contrast, ‘equip’ in the next example was coded under ‘developing skills’ because it was essentially about a specific aspect of teaching, skills rather than teaching in general, and was ore closely related to developing skills than to other categories.

To equip student teachers with necessary skills required for teaching at school	equip	necessary skills	skills
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Filtering on ‘learn’ introduced a new code where the student teacher as subject had the object of learning to teach (as distinct from the more general object of ‘developing teaching’). This reflected the view of a number of student teachers who wanted their

supervisors to remember that they were still learning, and in fact had only just stated to learn in the classroom situation. The following examples were among those incorporated into ‘learn to teach’.

and to learn how to teach pupils under supervision of college supervisor and co-operating teacher by correcting and giving us some advice that can help us to keep going and teaching in classroom with confidence	learn	to teach	feedback
Help us to learn the techniques and methods of teaching in the school	learn	teaching methods	teaching strategies

Careful consideration was given to ‘Learn to teach’ and ‘developing teaching’. A distinction was made on the basis of (1) learning comes before development and (2) the subjects (in the activity theory sense) may be different.

Particular difficulty was experienced with the following statement:

From my point of view the student teacher must be supervised because he cannot do anything alone	support	close supervision	formative assessment	Watching progress
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Following the logic set out thus far, this should be ‘being supervised’ or ‘supervising’. ‘Watching progress’ was used in order to avoid ‘supervision’ and associated confusion with the research focus.

The same process was applied to co-operating teacher and college supervisor questionnaires, with some new codes added as necessary. Both the co-operating teacher and supervisor responses generated some additional categories in terms of their particular perspective, work and roles. One example is given below. This is clearly a wider perspective than the student teacher alone and the aim of developing the team links with other responses from the same co-operating teacher which indicate

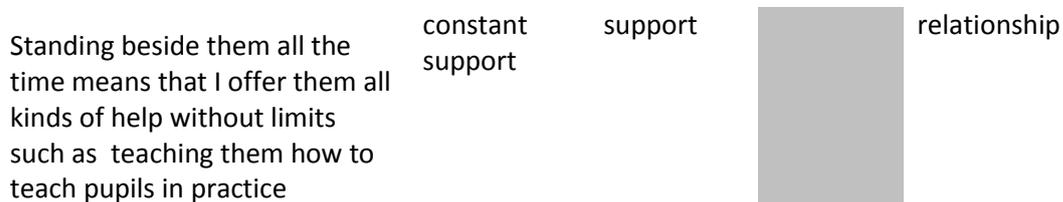
he is trying to develop a team to carry out the supervision processes of student teacher and developing SEN teaching in the school more generally.

Highlighting the importance of collaboration between SEN teachers at school.	highlight importance	collaboration between SEN teachers at school		developing a team
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Further examples of how adjustments were made follow.

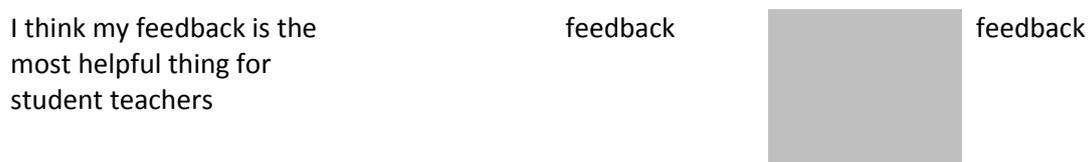
*Example 1:*

In example 1, ‘relationship’ was used rather than developing teaching because the key words were unlimited help, teaching how to teach was an example of what the unlimited help might be about.



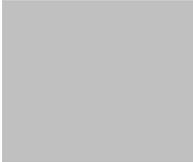
*Example 2.*

In this next example, feedback in general was used because the response was non-specific.



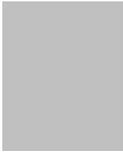
*Example 3.*

In contrast to the preceding example, here ‘feedback on practical teaching’ was used because this was clearly feedback on observations of teaching. Where feedback was specific in this way, a specific code was used because feedback played such a significant role in student teacher supervision.

Observing them and giving them feedback	observe	feedback		feedback on practical teaching
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*Example 4.*

The researcher made many revisions to the coding of comments like the one which follows. Finally, ‘assessment criteria’ was used in preference to ‘standards’ because it captured the concept more fully and accurately in the context of student teacher supervision.

Student teachers are concerned with the assessment standards, so they always talk to me about assessment standards	assessment standards		assessment criteria
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As with the student teacher responses, not all co-operating teacher and college supervisor responses could be readily coded in terms of process and focus, as illustrated in the next example.

There should be visits to the school by student teachers before the teaching practice semester to make plans together in advance	planning	student teacher	policy
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‘Policy’ was used here because it would require a change in the rules/policy to make this happen.

The next step was to put activity theory codes against each of the entries in each sheet. This was much more straightforward in most cases, the only real difficulty being in separating subjects and objects (student teacher, co-operating teacher and supervisor). Where the subject or object was the subject or object of the whole supervision team, the single word ‘subject’ or ‘object’ was used. Otherwise subjects were coded separately as subject ST, subject CT or subject CS .

Finally, filters were used again throughout all questionnaires to remove duplication and errors and finally to ensure that all coding was consistent and that there were no overlaps in main or subheadings of codes, although at the basic level there remained some overlap of words. This was left because it reflected the raw data. Once the whole coding frame had been reviewed and revised again, the codes were used to analyse transcripts of interviews and observations.

#### *Remaining steps in data analysis*

The data analysed thus far was reallocated under firstly the assigned activity theory headings and secondly the thematic headings, in each case keeping data from student teachers, co-operating teachers and college supervisors in separate sections of the spreadsheets. There ensued several attempts to write up the data analysis, firstly under the headings of the different subjects, then under thematic headings and subsequently under the activity theory headings. After long and careful consideration, the researcher decided to use a combination of activity theory headings and themes,

where the themes were not adequately encompassed by activity theory. The write-up by category of subject was largely rejected on the basis that the activity itself was the unit of analysis.

Both the co-operating teacher and supervisor responses generated some additional categories in terms of their particular perspective, work and roles. One example is given below. This is clearly a wider perspective than the student teacher alone and the aim of developing the team links with other responses from the same co-operating teacher which indicate he is trying to develop a team to carry out the supervision processes of student teacher and developing SEN teaching in the school more generally.

## Appendix 5 Approvals and permissions

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH



Graduate School of Education

### Certificate of ethical research approval

#### STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS

You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/> and view the School's statement on the 'Student Documents' web site.

**READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER** (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Mogbel Alenizi

Your student no: 550022515

Return address for this certificate: 26 Adelphi Street, Netherthorpe, Sheffield, S6 3DX.

Degree/Programme of Study: New Route PhD

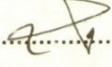
Project Supervisor(s): Dr. Nigel Skinner  
Dr. Keith Postlethwaite  
Dr. Hazel Lawson

Your email address: maa215@ex.ac.uk

Tel: 07577482421

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: .....  ..... date: 01/05/2012

**NB** For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must **not be included** in your work. It can be kept for your records.

## Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 550022515

Title of your project:

**Investigation into the Supervisory Practices in the Teaching Practice of Student Teachers of Special Educational Needs in Saudi Arabia: Different Perspectives**

**Brief description of your research project:**

The proposed study aims to (1) explore the different ways in which Saudi pre-service teachers of Special Educational Needs are supervised in their teaching practice in terms of investigating (a) the principals in charge of supervising Saudi pre-service teachers in the teaching practice (b) the used supervisory practices at schools and (c) the evaluation practices used, (2) explore the views of the supervisors at SEN schools and at SEN Department at university as well as the student-teachers concerning these supervisory practices at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) teaching practice context. The study will be carried out within the interpretive research paradigm because multiple realities are involved. This proposed study will be informed by the Activity Theory to help develop the analysis of these supervisory practices. In line with this, case study methodology will be adopted to explore an in-depth case of a leading Faculty of Education in Saudi Arabia where student teachers are based and then progressively focusing on some schools where these student teachers are practising teaching. To fulfil this, a questionnaire will be administered to one hundred secondary school SEN pre-service teachers. In-depth interviews will be carried out with 14 student teachers, and 7 university lecturers who act as teacher-mentors and supervisor-inspectors. In addition, semi-structured observation will take place in the form of four days at some schools to observe how the supervisory practices are taking place.

**Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):**

The participants of this study will be one hundred Saudi SEN student teachers at a leading Faculty of Education, and seven school supervisors as well as seven university supervisors. These supervisors will be selected according to two criteria: purposiveness and accessibility (Silverman, 2001). In other words, the students will be participating in a B.A. Degree in Special Educational Needs at the Faculty of Education at the time the study is being conducted. Both school and university supervisors will be in charge of mentoring and supervising Saudi SEN student teachers at schools. The sample of the study will consist of both male and female student teachers. As for the supervisors, the researcher will make use of the faculty available, whether male or female. The students will share some common characteristics as they will be in their early twenties, from the same Saudi culture, but with different demographic data, and will be starting their first year in teaching practice at the different schools in Saudi Arabia. Both students and supervisors will be asked to fill in the questionnaire. Regarding the semi-structured interviews, fourteen student teachers and seven school supervisors and seven university supervisors will be interviewed. In addition, the researcher will attend schools where SEN student-teachers are practising their teaching to conduct semi-structured observation sessions.

**Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs)** a blank consent form can be downloaded from the SELL student access on-line documents:

In line with BERA ethical guidelines (2004), educational research carried with it ethical concerns and every effort should be made to avoid causing any harm, loss or detriment to participants. Firstly, permission will be sought from the Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct the research at different schools, and then form a leading faculty of education in Saudi Arabia that will be involved and also from all participants individually to ensure they are willing to take part in the research. They will be given a consent form to read and sign to confirm their voluntary work in this study. Accordingly, participants will be informed that it is their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they wish to

do so. Moreover, they will be told the purpose of the research and how the findings will be used in the secondary use of research data.

There are important issues of privacy and confidentiality in this study. Whilst the researcher will assure participants that their answers will be coded so that they cannot be identified as individuals in the final thesis, the thesis supervisor may wish to access details to be confident of the authenticity of the findings. However, participants' real concerns are likely to arise from their situation: SEN pre-service teachers may be unwilling to make statements that they believe could endanger their marks or future employment; university lecturers, administrators and supervisor-inspectors have their own agendas and objectives and may be either unwilling or too willing to upset or blame each other. Besides, participants' names will be altered to maintain their confidentiality (Pring, 2000). Considerable sensitivity will be required by the researcher to uncover opinions that lie below the surface of conversations. Finally, the participants will be asked for permission to use quotations from their interviews.

**Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:**

Data will be collected in two stages at the second semester of the academic year 2010, which will be the first semester for Saudi SEN student teachers to practice their teaching. In this semester, students will be doing their teaching practice at schools. The procedures for this study will be as follows. First, students will be asked to fill in the questionnaire, which will be quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. Then, fourteen student teachers and seven school supervisors and seven university supervisors will be asked to volunteer to attend the semi-structured interviews in their free time. All interviews will be conducted in Arabic to give the research authenticity and trustworthiness, audio-taped, translated and transcribed. The major research aims will be used as guidelines for topic ordering and construction of categories (Radnor, 2001). I will ask the permission of both school supervisors and university supervisors to attend some sessions to observe their supervisory practices.

**Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):**

Research data will be stored in a secure place where I can access it in time of need. None of the participants will be harmed or identified in any way as their names will be changed.

**Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):**

There are some expected difficulties that may be encountered in this study. Firstly, getting the permission of the Saudi Ministry of Education and the involved Faculty of Education might include extensive administrative and bureaucratic procedures which might waste time. Getting a letter from the Ministry of Higher Education will facilitate these procedures. Secondly, some lecturers might be not free to attend the semi-structured interviews. I will arrange interviews with more lecturers to make up for any busy ones. Thirdly, some students might withdraw from the study unexpectedly. I have already chosen one hundred students to recover this. Another challenge faced by the researcher will be the logistical one of administrating questionnaires to fit in with the timetables of schools and colleges as well as organising the interviews in up to 20 different schools and scheduling all the interviews. This is made more complex by the fact that SEN pre-service teachers' week is split between attending university lectures and teaching practice in schools, and by the lengthy processes of obtaining permission to conduct research.

According to the Saudi cultural context, interviewing female supervisors whether at different schools or at university will be very difficult. Thus, I will ask a well-trained female researcher working at the same Faculty of Education to conduct the interviews for me. This will help me get better insightful and deep views of these participants rather than ignoring these participants at all.

The volume of data collected is expected to be high when the documentation is taken into account and so manipulation of the data is also likely to prove a challenge. However, the availability of resources in Saudi Arabia, either in the libraries or otherwise accessible may also prove to be a limiting factor, as may the requirement for extensive translation of findings from Arabic to English.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is almost no relevant research in Saudi Arabia in the area of supervisory practices that are carried out to support Saudi SEN student-teachers at Saudi schools and so it will be a challenge in itself. It will be an additional challenge to conduct the research in a way that does not offend any of the participants who themselves face considerable challenges and stress at this moment in the country's history and towards the end of an academic year when the pressures are directed to achieve results.

Quite apart from the logistical challenges, the financial resources and time available to the researcher are limited: time is limited by the period when teaching practice take place, however it was judged more useful and relevant to the changes taking place in education in Saudi Arabia to focus on SEN pre-service teachers who will be learning about teaching for the first time and therefore more open to new possibilities than to focus on in-service teachers whose ingrained ideas and habits would require unlearning before learning new ways. In an attempt to overcome these potential difficulties, the researcher will examine each problem, constraint and responsibility identified in the light of the options for improving the situation, thereby focusing on generating recommendations specific to the Saudi Arabian context which will enhance the usefulness of the research.





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



المملكة العربية السعودية  
وزارة التربية والتعليم  
الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم - منطقة الرياض  
بنيين

الرقم: ١١٢٩٧٤٨  
التاريخ: ١٤٢٨/٢/١٧  
المشروعات:

إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

بشأن: تسهيل مهمة باحث

المكرم مدير مدرسة الابتدائية وفقه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد :

بناء على تعميم معالي الوزير رقم ٥٥/٦١٠ وتاريخ ١٧/٩/١٤١٦هـ بشأن تفويض الإدارات العامة للتربية والتعليم بإصدار خطابات السماح للباحثين بإجراء البحوث والدراسات . تقدم إلينا الباحث / مقبل بن عايد العنزي (١٠٢٧١٨٦٤٣٤) - المبتعث لدراسة الدكتوراه بجامعة اكستر في بريطانيا - بطلب إجراء دراسة بعنوان: (( الأساليب الإشرافية المتبعة في التدريب الميداني للتربية الخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية )) وتتطلب الدراسة تطبيق أداة البحث على عينة من مديري ومعلمي المدارس الابتدائية الملحق بها برنامج التربية الخاصة ( الدمج ) بمدينة الرياض .

ونظراً لاكمال الأوراق المطلوبة نأمل تسهيل مهمة الباحث ، مع ملاحظة أن الباحث يتحمل كامل المسؤولية المتعلقة بمختلف جوانب البحث ولا يعني سماح الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم موافقتها بالضرورة على مشكلة البحث أو على الطرق والأساليب المستخدمة في دراستها ومعالجتها.

والله يحفظكم ويرعاكم ،،،

٣/١٢٨

مساعد المدير العام للشؤون التعليمية

د. محمد بن عبدالعزيز السديري

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