

The Emotional Experiences of United Arab Emirates EFL Student Teachers during the
Practicum

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the emotional experiences, challenges and coping strategies experienced by EFL student teachers during their practicum. The sample consisted of 16 pre-service teachers: 6 males and 10 females. Data collection methods included focus groups interviews, in-depth semi-structured individual interviews and critical reflective documents. Interpretation of data indicated that participants experienced a wide range of positive and negative emotions, mainly focused around areas related to their classroom practices, language proficiency, professional knowledge and support received during their practicum. Challenges faced emerged within the same context and indicated the need for a reorganization of the teaching education programme and a clarification of the roles and responsibilities held by the stakeholders involved in the practicum (i.e. student teacher, college supervisor, school principal and class mentor).

The coping strategies utilized showed that participants employed few positive effective approaches, whereas passivity, in reactions to the challenges encountered, shaped most of the other strategies used. This passivity in responding to practicum challenges necessitates the development of student teachers' interpersonal and emotional intelligence skills. The findings also show an urgent need for more coordination and collaboration between the college and the schools of training.

This study, being the first of its kind in the Gulf region and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), contributes to a better understanding of student teachers' emotions during the practicum and highlights areas which need reconsideration by policy makers, educators and curriculum designers at the micro and macro levels of teacher education programmes.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Rationale for the Study

Teachers have been considered the main agents for change by many educators and educational researchers (Hargreaves, Lieberman and Fullan, 2010). Almost all kinds of educational reforms have focused on quality teaching and learning processes. Therefore, any calls for the raising of students' achievement standards and academic levels have brought about plans and projects for teachers' professional development and growth. As such, many studies in teacher education literature have examined teachers' lives and teacher education from different perspectives (Kwo, 2012; Galton and MacBeath, 2008; Zembylas, 2005; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2012).

A large number of studies have addressed the quality of teachers; their knowledge, skills and competences (Goodson, 2013; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Kagan, 1992; Dunham, 1992; Keay, 2005; Lambert and McCarthy, 2006; Thompson, 2005; Hayes, 2006). Furthermore, starting from the very first step in teacher education preparation programmes, research in literature has delved into issues that focused upon teachers' external lives. Therefore, studies about teachers' roles, teachers' learning/teaching styles, professional growth, and teachers' knowledge and competence have been also reflected in literature. Teachers' inner lives, in contrast, have only recently been considered an essential aspect that needs to be examined (Goodson, 2013).

Research has also investigated teachers' concerns, stress, beliefs and attitudes, and more recently, teachers' feelings and emotions. However, only a few studies (Leithwood and Beatty, 2008; Schutz and Zembylas, 2009; Zembylas, 2009) have focused on teachers' emotions and their impact on teachers' professional lives, learning processes and commitment to the teaching profession. Teachers' perceptions, knowledge and beliefs have been the focus of other studies that have grouped them into constructs or models (Betoretta and Artiga, 2004; Kemper and Kwan, 2001). These studies, and many others, have considered teachers as the essential factors in the teaching–learning

process and have assumed that teachers are accountable agents playing major roles in promoting change. In other words, teachers have been viewed as responsible individuals who are able to act and behave according to norms, theories and their own thoughts.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In light of the above discussion, it is my understanding that ample research has examined the effectiveness of teacher education programmes and teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards teaching, especially in Science and Mathematics (Swars, Daane, and Giesen, 2006 ; Gresham, 2008; Bursal, 2010). Some research studies have also claimed that teacher preparation programmes had little or no influence on student teachers' practices, beliefs or attitudes (Thomas and Pedersen, 2003). Within this compilation of studies, student teachers' emotions have been the least researched area. Although some studies have explored emotions in education and the roles they play in negatively or positively affecting teachers' lives and working environments, only a few studies have examined emotion in teacher preparation programmes. That is to say, even though emotions have been examined from different perspectives, there is a dearth of literature delving into the emotions of pre-service students and their impact on their learning and commitment to the teaching profession.

While many studies investigated teacher preparation programmes in relation to their effectiveness and relevance to student teachers' knowledge, beliefs and interests, this study was conducted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to examine Emirati EFL student teachers' emotions in a practicum experience that they completed, in their teacher training college, as part of their education programme requirements. At the end of this programme, those student teachers would be able to hold teaching positions in elementary schools, where they are expected to teach three major subjects: English, Mathematics and Science.

Practicum experience is considered by those prospective teachers the most challenging element in their teacher education preparation programme. It creates a sense of uncertainty about their roles as teachers and their new teaching responsibilities (Rozelle and Wilson, 2012; Denhere, Ngobeli, and Kutame, 2012). Their perceptions of the teaching profession are affected by how well they perform in their field experience, what and how positive/negative feedback they receive from their mentor teachers, class teachers, school principals or students. Therefore, the essence of helping student teachers recognize any resulting positive emotions and overcome any probable challenges or negative emotions is by closely exploring these kinds of emotional reactions they show during and after their practicum training.

In other words, examining the types of emotions student teachers express as they reflect on them after having completed their field experience would provide teacher educators with a better understanding of the difficulties their student teachers encounter from different perspectives. It would also offer a better insight into how those trainees teach. To put it differently, being aware of student teachers' mixed emotions during and after the practicum experience would probably 1) help teacher educators work out ways in which student teachers' worries and concerns about their learning, competence, self-doubts or commitment to the teaching profession can be dealt with professionally and, to an extent, psychologically, and 2) contribute to the enhancement of teacher education preparation programmes in general, and EFL pre-service student teachers' courses in particular.

The motivation for exploring student teachers' emotions emerged initially from my personal and professional concern as a teacher educator. Emotions occupy almost all aspects of people's lives, and teachers are no exception. Our emotions play vital roles in determining our decisions, actions and reactions. As teachers, emotions lie at the heart of teaching and learning. It is undeniable that teachers' emotions have direct and immediate influence on students and teachers themselves (Zembylas and Schultz, 2009; Schutz and Perkun, 2007). Teachers may feel 'happy' when a lazy student makes

progress after some guidance and support. They may look 'sad' for the whole day or even more if told about one of their students' parents' divorce. They may experience all kinds of emotions; love, care, support, frustration or anger, in one class because this is human. They are at all times in direct communication with the term 'different'. In other words, they work in an environment that involves stakeholders of different backgrounds and races, different personalities, religions or cultures. They work in a very complex combination of communities; starting with the classroom, the staff room, the school and all through the outside larger social community including parents, neighbours, friends and many others.

The case with student teachers can be, more or less, more complicated and confusing due to the lack of experience and exposure to real life encounters. This study is, therefore, ultimately designed to explore the mixture of emotions EFL student teachers undergo within the practical field experience having to teach three major subjects in English, and the influence these emotions, positive or negative, may have on their learning and the way they cope with the challenges of the teaching profession.

1.3 Significance of the study

Until now, according to my knowledge, no research study has examined EFL student teachers' emotional experiences in a practicum where three subjects are to be taught in English in the Arab world. Thus, I hope that this study will shed light on many issues that the findings may indicate and which consequently affect all those involved in the educational process in the tertiary education in general, and the UAE teacher training education programmes in particular. The results of the study, therefore, would contribute mainly to a better understanding of the human and professional aspects of the practicum where communication among student teachers' lecturers, mentors, supervisors and school principals is essential. The findings should also raise the awareness of policy makers, at a higher level, to the significance of such relationships and their impact on the learning–teaching process. Hence, the findings would be of help to the teacher education programmes, both at the micro and macro levels.

Educational plans in the UAE Ministry of Education and Education Councils, so far, are conceived with more focus on educational objectives and outcomes. Little or no concern has been allocated in the strategic plans to the non-native EFL pre-service teachers' emotions and feelings. In addition, in English language teaching there is a paucity of data regarding how non-native EFL student teachers cope with the challenges of the practicum experience (Farrell, 2007), not to mention teaching not only English as a subject, but also Mathematics and Science via the medium of English.

There is a considerable gap, in fact, between the ways EFL student teachers view and experience their prospective teaching challenges, including roles and responsibilities and the way it has been planned for and, to an extent, imposed on them in the working environment. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to address this gap and raise the awareness of those concerned in the educational teaching-learning processes of the importance of emotions in polishing EFL non-native pre-service teachers' knowledge, skills and understanding of the real teaching world. In addition, the study endeavours to shed more light on the urgent need to understand EFL pre-service teachers' emotional experiences in the different stages of their practicum period, so that practical and effective actions might be taken to help them overcome any frustrations or undesirable negative effects on their learning or commitment to the prospective role expected by them. The study is designed to identify the challenges that Emirati EFL student teachers may experience in an educational environment that had not been examined, in the teacher education literature in the Arab world, and in particular the Arabian Gulf region, until commencement of this research study.

I hope, therefore, that the findings inspire educational policy decision makers and educators to better understand non-native EFL student teachers' emotions, which entails a crucial need to connect their theoretical learning experience in the college to the practical field experience and the probable complexity of teaching three content subjects through a second language. Thus, with these goals, the present study would

greatly contribute to the teacher education literature in general and to teacher education in the UAE in particular.

Finally, I hope that the study initiates a greater appreciation of the EFL non-native student teachers' emotions and feelings and recognition of the challenging mixture of emotions they experience besides the burdens they bring with them as student teachers, who are constantly on the spot, playing a double role: the student and the classroom teacher.

1.4 Research Questions

The present study aims at eliciting answers to the main key question: 'What are the UAE EFL student teachers' emotional experiences in the practicum?' This major question will be explored by examining the following questions:

- What are student teachers' emotional experiences in the practicum?
- What are the major challenges that student teachers encounter in the practicum?
- How do student teachers cope with the daily challenges and events in the practicum?

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The present study consists of seven chapters. Chapter one has presented the rationale on which the whole study was based, the suggested contribution that it would provide to teacher education programmes, the research questions and the organization of the thesis.

Chapter two outlines the background context of the study profiling the socio-economic status of the UAE and the educational system. Focus here is on primary and higher education systems and the reforms undertaken in these areas. The chapter also introduces the teacher education college in which this study was conducted.

Chapter three is a review of relevant literature on the most common theories of emotions in general and research studies on teachers' emotions. The chapter will also highlight in detail Weiner's (1986-2006) 'Attribution Theory of Motivation and Emotion' and Fredrickson's (2001-2009) 'The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotion', which seem to be connected to the way student teachers view their emotions and their perceptions of the challenges they face during the practicum. The discussion then reviews relevant literature on emotions in educational contexts and is followed by a section on emotions on student teachers' literature, including research studies on the internship period with specific emphasis on pre-service teachers' concerns and interests in the practicum experience. The chapter concludes with a discussion concerning emotions in the ESL/EFL student teaching education.

Chapter four presents a detailed discussion of this research study methodological framework. It begins with the theoretical perspective on which the study was based and a justification for selecting the qualitative exploratory interpretive research approach. This is followed by stating the research questions, a detailed description of the research methods adopted and the rationale that necessitates making a decision regarding selection at every stage of the study. It also shows how data was collected, transcribed and analyzed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical considerations and an account of the limitations of the study.

Chapter five demonstrates a full detailed report on the significant findings of the study. These findings are presented in sections corresponding to each research question of the study, as stated in section 1.4 in this chapter.

The thesis continues with chapter six which presents a discussion of the key findings of the study and concludes with chapter seven which deals with the implications those findings may hold for all parties involved in the teacher education field. In addition, it demonstrates the major contributions this study has added to the existing literature on EFL non-native student teaching education. And finally, the chapter raises questions that might call for further research and expansion of the research study scope.

Chapter Two

The Background

This chapter has three goals: (1) to provide relevant background information on the socio-economic context in which this study was conducted, and (2) to present an overview of the education in the UAE; and (3) to give a brief about the local students' English language proficiency level.

2.1 Socio-economic status in the UAE

United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven emirates that was united and became one independent country in 1971. Since that date, the UAE has witnessed tremendous overall changes that included vital and complex economic, technological, social, educational and political sectors.

In an attempt to keep pace with the economic and social developments, the UAE has made significant efforts to recruit expatriate expertise and professionals who have the knowledge, capacities, experience and skills needed. By hiring foreign workforce to work in the government and private sectors, the UAE has endeavored to ensure cutting-edge developments and improvements. To this end, the country has fostered international linkages and connections with a number of international firms, associations, and educational institutions. This massive and challenging exposure to the expatriate expertise has brought about a variety of reforms in different fields which has consequently led to "far greater number of foreign workers, both skilled and unskilled, entering the work force and assuming semi-permanent residence" (Davidson, 2005, p.144).

As efforts have been expanded to diversify the UAE labor, the inflow continued in huge numbers leaving the "indigenous local a minority in their own country and, as most would agree, rendering them totally reliant on the millions of foreigners who have built and continue to build the UAE" (Davidson, 2005, pp.144-145). This reliance on the foreign expertise increased and included almost all sectors in the country. Zajda, Daun

and Saha (2008) state that expatriate workers in the UAE have occupied managerial and non-managerial positions in the local firms, companies and educational organizations and have carried out both professional and manual labor.

Although the UAE rulers and business leaders strive to cope with the changing world's requirements, they have become aware of the need for the UAE labor to compete with the foreign expertise. To that end, the country has undertaken the new strategy of employing Emiratis in different executive positions. Yet, reports have not shown a huge number of nationals in the government sectors, and more "foreign workers have been hired to fill a wide variety of jobs, from simple construction tasks to marine zoology research" (King, 2008, p.50).

Furthermore, there has been an imbalance in the number of Emiratis who work in the two main sectors in the country - the public and the private. This disparity results from the fact that most locals prefer to work in governmental fields where salaries are far higher than those paid in the private sectors.

2.1.2 Emiratisation

To ensure a reasonable balance between the public and the private sectors from one hand and the foreign and local workforce on the other, the UAE has taken several measures. 'Emiratisation', as one of the most significant actions, has been implemented. This procedure has been intended to provide "much-needed employment for nationals... [and] to build the nation's knowledge economy and to ensure that UAE nationals serve as the key drivers of economic growth and development" (Al Abed et al, 2008, p.218). However, surveys investigating the reasons impacting the low percentage of UAE citizens working in the country's different sections have reported several factors including "perceptions of the sector, remuneration and work practices" (Al Abed et al, 2008, 218).

The need to overcome this low number of UAE locals participating in the public and private sectors has resulted in organizations being founded to support strategies that

strive to generate appropriate employment opportunities and job cultural awareness in the local society. Abu Dhabi Council for Emiratisation and The Emirates National Development Programme, for example, aim at “training nationals for the labor market in accordance with market demand, at the same time building partnership with UAE private sector firms for recruitment and long-term retention of nationals” (UAE Yearbook, 2008, p.218). Within a short span of time, the UAE has achieved remarkable progress in different fields which resulted in opening its doors to foreign investments and trade and allowed its economy to be self-reliant, diversified and blooming.

2.1.3 UAE local society

As far as the local society is concerned, “Islam, coupled with a tribal heritage, form the basis of a stable social structure in the United Arab Emirates, enabling its people to meet the human challenges posed by the unprecedented economic transformation that has taken place over the past 30 or so years” (Al Abed, Hellyer and Vine, 2005, p.227). Regardless of the massive changes that the country has experienced at all levels, Emirati society is still very much regulated by traditions, values and social norms. For instance, it is still prohibited and viewed as anti-social conduct for males and females to socially interact without closely attached familial relationships. The family is still the core around which all members gather, depend on and follow its rules, which have been constructed mainly according to the teachings of Islam, the local society and culture guidelines.

Part of this societal impact on the new generation is reflected on the percentage of females participating in the labor force. Although the rate has grown by almost 10% recently, many educated women are still unemployed; partly as they are searching for a women-only working environment (Bristol-Rhys, 2010). Therefore, regulated and led by traditional norms, a considerable number of Emirati families still do not allow their daughters to enroll in any educational programme if the college or university which runs this programme does not provide gender-segregated classrooms or campuses. A

number of published unemployment reports indicate that the rate of unemployed Emirati women is the highest in the UAE population (Salem, 2011)

2.1.4 Education in the UAE

Since 1971, education in the UAE has blossomed offering free educational opportunities to all local male and female students from kindergarten to university. Primary and preparatory levels until grade nine are compulsory for Emirati nationals. There is also another private sector which admits local as well as resident students from different nationalities. Emirati students can also pursue higher education in the country or abroad fully funded by the government.

To keep up with the socio-economic challenges facing the country, the global situation, and the new advances in education, the UAE has made huge efforts to implement educational reforms that match the fast pace of change all over the world. These reforms have focused on the “creation of a comprehensive system that applies world-class standards and expertise in line with the federal strategy” (Al Abed et al, 2008, p.230).

2.1.5 Public and Private Sectors

As an inevitable result of the high percentage of expatriates living and working in the country, there are a large number of private schools that offer expatriates education which ensures that certain nationalities’ culture, values and curriculum are preserved.

Whether public or private, the federal policy emphasizes the need to improve the students’ performance, knowledge and skills to be in line with universal and societal standards. The government, however, has directed its efforts towards the public sector on the basis that the twenty-first century students should be independent learners and skillfully trained and prepared for the job market. To that end, several initiatives have been taken to improve education in the public schools and many changes have been

made for this purpose. The governmental plan “incorporates the education of information technology, eradication of computer literacy, preserving social values and ethics, promoting traditional values among the youth” (Ministry of Education, 2013).

2.1.6 English as medium of instruction

The new educational structure, as mentioned above, has brought about reforms and policies at different levels. English speaking teachers, for instance, have been recruited from countries like Australia, Canada, U.S.A. and the UK and were placed in primary and secondary schools. Those teachers have either worked directly in the public schools or in collaboration with other Arabic speaking teachers (including Emirati female and male English language teachers). The purpose is to enhance the use of English language in schools and expose Emirati students to direct communication with native/native-like speakers of English.

Such a new policy of enhancing the use of English language (EMI) in primary through secondary schools implies, as Troudi (2009, p.199) states, that “English has been associated with growth and modernization and even presented as a condition for development and an active role in the global competitive market”. Consequently, Arabic, the mother tongue of Emiratis, will not be encouraged in classrooms as means of communication. Alternatively, the employment of ‘content and language integrated learning’ (CLIL) was set as one new policy that should serve the purpose of promoting English (L2) as the medium of instruction. This change entails using English for the teaching of Math and Science in the public schools.

Driven by the global market and ideological forces, the EMI policy has thus been expanded to include some zones in the UAE including the primary schools in Abu Dhabi, the capital. This implementation of EMI has not passed without considerably affecting students’ cognitive abilities. Students who have been learning school subjects in their mother tongue (L1), with little exposure to English, will lack the confidence to

communicate in a tertiary education context where English (L2) is the medium of instruction and communication. The case here, as Troudi (2009) affirms, specifically within the UAE context, is deemed to negatively impact the Emirati learners and “certainly disadvantage students with little or no proficiency in English” (p.210).

2.1.7 Tertiary Education in the UAE

Due to the vast changes in the Arab region and the whole world, the future success of the UAE depends on educated citizens who hold quality higher education degrees. In fact, the globalization forces with their huge rapid impact on all sectors all over the world have necessitated that UAE nationals possess a wide range of skills, competencies and up-to-date knowledge that should keep them in harmony with the new and challenging twenty-first century requirements.

UAE has agreed to UNESCO’s ‘Education for All’ mandate established in 1990 which entails “access to primary education, achieve gender equality, improve quality of education provision, reduce adult literacy, and provide early childhood care” (National Qualification Authority, p.8, 2013). More than 40% of Emirati students attend private schools many of which offer foreign language education “geared towards expatriate communities, usually preserving the culture and following the curriculum of the students’ countries of origin” (UAE interact online, nd).

In 2003, in line with this thrust for higher education improvement, the Office of Higher Education Policy and Planning for federal institutions within the Ministry of Education was established. This office endeavored to develop a strategic plan entitled ‘Educating the Next Generation of Emiratis’. The goals stated in this plan focused on providing access and appropriate educational opportunities for all Emiratis and high quality education that should contribute to the economic development of the country (Fox, Mourtada-Sabah and Al-Mutawa, 2008).

This interest in improving and developing the tertiary education sector has arisen from the UAE policy makers' and educational educators' awareness of the fact that quality of education is vital for the future of the nation. Hence, any attempt to improve the higher education sector has developed based on the belief that "a system that does not meet internationally accepted standards of quality in its staffing, in its programmes, in instructional technology and in its graduates - will not serve society well" (Fox, Mourtada-Sabah and Al-Mutawa, 2008, p. 119).

Towards all these challenging goals, most colleges and tertiary education departments include a practical part in their programmes called 'internship' or 'practicum'. The main purpose of the practicum is to facilitate and support students' learning experience by making this real-life field training a prerequisite for graduation. This practical training is usually a period of between ten and fifteen weeks; where students are exposed to real-life situations and working environment that require them to act and respond to different situations and solve problems, if any. Students are placed in mostly public primary and preparatory schools where they need to apply the theoretical knowledge they learnt in their courses to the real school environment.

2.1.8 Students' English language proficiency level

While preparing students for the job market, another issue has to be considered and emphasized; namely students' English language skills and competencies. It has been noted that "a large number of students are not ready to work at the college level. Scores on the CEPA (Common Educational Proficiency Assessment) test show that far too many students do not have the necessary competencies in English to undertake college-level work" (Fox, Mourtada-Sabah and Al-Mutawa, 2008, 119). Another recent study by Troudi and Jendli (2011) has shown that the participants in their study were in need of better preparation in their early years of schooling that could help them cope with the roles and tasks expected by them at the tertiary stage.

2.2 The Emirate of Abu-Dhabi

In Abu Dhabi, where the present study was conducted, the emirate's local reforms have expanded and developed into a diversification of schools that aims at achieving quality education, ongoing educational opportunities, and improved curricula that enhance students' skills and capacities. Within this range of infrastructure changes, a number of schools' types emerged: the 'Model school programme', "Public-Private Partnership" (PPP), 'Al Ghad Schools', and the 'New Model School'.

Having conducted a review of the old school curricula, Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) has decided to adopt new standards for teaching in all these new types of schools. English language literacy has been considered the first mandate among the numerous changes. This decision reflected the government rulers' and educational leaders' recognition of the urgent need to cope with the rapidly changing world driven by the international language of business, technology and economy diversification. Students, therefore, need to improve their performances, knowledge and English language skills and be well prepared for the job market and the global challenges.

In addition, governmental surveys had been administered about students' competency levels that resulted in reports indicating that a large number of students who complete their high school education do not have the language skills and competencies required to enroll in any higher education course or programme. One of the most significant findings that those reports referred to was the large number of instances found where students need to complete a one or two-year foundation or remedial programme to make up for this lack of skills (Collins, 2011). These huge numbers of below average students have imposed massive loads on the government budgets and necessitated prompt and practical actions.

As a result, ADEC has drawn up a long-term strategic plan in which strong support has been given to enable public schools to obtain reputable positions among international and well-ranked universities. Complementary to this plan, ADEC has started to recruit native English language speaking teachers from Canada, US, UK, New Zealand and

Australia. Considerable and strong emphasis has been given to Math, Science and English language and the teachers who teach or will teach these three subjects.

Consistent with these decisions, the new models of schools initiated and mentioned above have started the implementation of English language in Math and Science from grades K-5. Native English speakers are to teach these subjects in coordination with the local or expatriate teachers who teach these subjects in Arabic. In some schools where this new strategy has been piloted, two teachers can be present in the classroom; the native speaker teacher and the local or expatriate. Each of the two teachers should support the other by clarifying or explaining what students may seem not to understand.

Likewise, another recent decision has been made about high school students in grades 10-12. ADEC states that this step aims “at seeing pupils graduating with equal proficiency in English and Arabic” (Khalaf, 2009, p.1). Obviously, teaching Math and Science to high school students, who have been studying these two subjects in Arabic for nearly 9 or 10 years, has brought about a number of complex and challenging concerns. One of the prominent issues that have been debated was that many teachers who teach Math and Science in schools do not have the English proficiency required to teach those two subjects in English. In this respect, ADEC has indicated that “less than 10 per cent of the tested English teachers across all state schools in Abu Dhabi met the minimum standards of English proficiency” (Khalaf, 2009, p.1).

To successfully implement the initiative of teaching Math and Science proposed, ADEC has endeavored to train existing teachers in the schools and provide them with the required skills and proficiencies through a series of professional development courses during regular school days and holidays. It has also imposed a university-level teacher training certification course for all teachers in Abu Dhabi public schools (Al Abed et al, 2008). Furthermore, efforts have been expanded to include the involvement of a new established higher education institution: Emirates College for Advanced Education (ECAE). This new college was opened in 2007 in response to the numerous educational reforms proposed by ADEC. ECAE, in line with ADEC’s objectives, provides

professional development courses and teaching qualifications for teachers in the government schools. The college has been also considered unique in the Arab region for the teacher education programme it runs, which prepares students to major in three subjects at a time: Math, Science and English, and graduate to be teachers of these subjects for grades 1-5 in the primary schools.

Although ADEC has prompted the coordination and participation of all parties involved in the new educational reforms to make the initiatives a success, the local society characterized by many local educational leaders, officials and parents has perceived these actions of enforcing the English language in Math and Science as an “external intervention that will erode the cultural and national identity of students” (Ahmed, 2010, p.1).

Some federals and officials, for example, have drafted a law to protect the Arabic language against the “foreign influences-particularly from the increasing prevalence of English in both public and private spheres of use” (Salama, 2010, pp.1-2). The drafted law has also appealed for Arabic to be used instead of English in all official correspondences and different aspects of life. Within the suggestions of this drafted law, students who do not have language proficiency that qualifies them for a college or university level should be admitted and provided with other learning opportunities that use Arabic as the means of instruction. Consequently, the teaching of Math and Science in English proposed by ADEC has been denied and an alternative has been recommended. It has been suggested that foreign curricula should be revised to “ensure they are compatible with Emirati values and that teachers at schools in the pilot programme are Emiratis” (Salama, 2010, p.3).

In fact, ADEC’s reforms and initiatives have been accepted in the educational environment by many local educators, teachers, school principals or parents. However, the new science and math teaching strategy has been the most debated. To illustrate, if students are expected to be bilingual, their teachers are expected to be bilingual, too. This challenging concept of bilingualism has not been welcomed by many national

teachers. In Abu Dhabi public schools, due to the implementation of the 'Emiratisation' strategy, most primary school teachers are Emirati. With the application of ADEC's initiative to teach math and science in English, the piloted programme has required that international teachers in classrooms be alongside local teachers. These changes have brought with them several concerns to the local teachers. For instance, local teachers seemed to be worried about their classroom performance, annual evaluation and above all, the criteria on which this evaluation is based.

Both local and expatriate teachers are thus faced with enormous challenges: changing curricula, pedagogy, teaching methods, parents' constant complaints of their children's inability to cope with the new way of learning, and the number of training hours required compared to their teaching loads and family responsibilities. For these reasons, and many others, foreign as well as local teachers have shown a tendency to leave their job, but a large number still prefer to stay for their own reasons (Dhal, 2013).

2.2.1 Emirates College for Advanced Education (ECAE)

Among the established higher education colleges and universities in the UAE, Emirates College for Advanced Education is a new, unique teacher education college in terms of the programmes it runs and the quality of students it prepares. It has been selected by ADEC as a partner to train and qualify the new generation of Emiratis to teach in ADEC primary schools. It has also been chosen as a centre for providing professional development courses to the in-service teachers in the public schools.

ECAE mainly runs three programmes: Foundation, Bachelor in Education (BEd) and the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). Students who have completed their high school and joined the foundation programme study, in a one-year full-time course, three main subjects: English, mathematics and science in addition to introductory courses in information and communication technology (ICT). The BEd is a four-year full-time programme that prepares and qualifies Emirati students to be future teachers in the UAE primary schools; majoring in English, mathematics and science. The programme

mainly focuses on linking theoretical knowledge to its practical application in the real-life educational fields. The practicum is the core of the whole programme and it provides students with guidance and supervision by the college faculty advisors and teacher mentors. The third programme; the PGDE, is a one-year full-time course or part-time equivalent that provides a Diploma degree for holders of bachelor's degrees or similar school-education certificates. The three courses run by ECAE are underpinned by educational objectives, course materials and facilities that are consistent with ADEC's policy and strategic plan of educational development.

Obviously, the BEd programme is the most essential among these three courses at the college, having 'practicum' as its core component. ECAE's policy document states that it is through the practicum experience that student teachers develop essential professional knowledge of people, of themselves, and knowledge of self-control and interpersonal skills (Emirates College for Advanced Education practicum III handbook, 2012). The ECAE practicum handbook states that training is a learning opportunity that offers student teachers with communication skills that contribute to the individual's personal growth in terms of solving problems, developing a sense of collegiality with other teachers and enhancing their own values and principles.

Students start their practical experience in the teaching environment from practicum one in their first year through four, the graduation year. Through this period, students are systematically supervised, observed and mentored by specialized faculty members in the college. This unique experience that exposes student teachers to real-life teaching in the primary schools from year one is what has distinguished ECAE from other colleges and universities in the UAE. ECAE policy document has defined in detail essential roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the practicum; namely the head of practicum, faculty advisors, teacher mentors, school practicum coordinators, school principals and partnership schools.

The practicum experience is a ten-week internship in which student teachers should be able to implement their theoretical knowledge and demonstrate their competencies and

skills in teaching, using materials, planning for their lessons and managing their classrooms as future teachers. The main objective of the third year practicum III, BEd3, for example, is “for students to establish a strong foundation in the teaching, learning and assessment cycle. Students will plan, implement, assess, evaluate and reflect on lessons implemented in English, Mathematics and Science...with reference to ADEC’s curriculum documents” (Emirates College for Advanced Education practicum III handbook, 2012, p.3) which requires the use of English as the medium of instruction. To this end, as a complementary element, ECAE “provides opportunities for student teachers to apply for a number of practical educational experiences outside the UAE” (Emirates College for Advanced Education practicum III handbook, 2012, p.3). However, participation in any international programme necessitates that the student teacher shows an outstanding level of success in his/her internship period prior to the international learning opportunity.

In brief, this chapter presented an overview of education in the UAE with more emphasis on the emirate of Abu Dhabi, the capital. It also introduced ECAE, the teacher education college in which the present study was conducted. Although the UAE has strived to offer a comprehensive education to its citizens, the reality is “that in a country where the national population is overwhelmingly youthful, it is imperative that the educational system is reformed to produce employable national graduates” (Vine, 2009, 224).

Chapter Three

Literature review

This study explores the emotionality of teachers which is at the heart of the teaching processes. This chapter reviews the literature on emotions, considering various theories and models. The first section reviews emotions and theories that have been developed from multiple perspectives, with particular reference to the 'attribution theory of motivation and emotion' and the 'positive emotion theory'. In section two, an overview is presented to highlight the research that has investigated emotions in educational contexts. Section three reviews relevant research studies that have been conducted in relation to student teachers' concerns and emotions. This section addresses the area of emotion in the second language learning and teaching processes and examines the available literature in the area of EFL pre-service teaching and emotions in the United Arab Emirates context.

3.1 Theories of emotion

Emotions are multifaceted feelings that connect one's cognitive structures to their emotions, thinking and actions (Ekman and Davidson, 1994). It is that strange feeling that emotions create and keep one wondering what is meant when the word "emotions" is used to describe a feeling, an event or an action. They seem strange because, as Goldie (2003, p.123) states, "expressive behaviour can come to seem strange if one dwells on it, rather in the way a familiar word can come to seem strange if intensely looked at on the page". A good number of theories have been developed to investigate human emotions, how they arise, what causes certain negative or positive emotions, what comes first: thinking or acting in certain emotional events, and how constructive or destructive emotions can be.

In fact, theories of emotions date back to ancient times with philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, as well as Spinoza, Descartes and others (Damasio, 2003, Berman and Berman, 2012). Since then, theories of emotions have embarked on

more empirical-driven research, which cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive due to the complexity of the human nature and the emotions it embraces. Apart from theories, Shields (2002) believes that “we are all experts on emotion- we used them to influence others before we could talk, we have been thinking about what they are and what they mean ever since we could reason, and we have all at one time or another wished fervently that we could better understand and manage them” (p. 4). Elster (1999) confirms that emotions are essential for one to live and they absolutely matter because “if we did not have them nothing else would matter. Creatures without emotion would have no reason for living, nor for that matter, for committing suicide...Emotions are the stuff of life. Emotions are the most important bond or glue that links us together” (p.403). More recently, Berman and Berman (2012) affirm that regardless of the fact that all emotions can be negative or positive, they can “affect judgment and how we express ourselves,...[therefore] people need to be aware of their emotions and know how they affect their judgment, behaviour, and communication” (p.40).

Due to this intricacy, copious literature has approached emotions from a wide range of perspectives in areas that include philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, socio-psychology, educational psychology, applied psychology, anthropology, linguistics and history. Since it is not the aim of this paper to provide a historical overview of theories on emotion or a detailed explanation of their nature, this chapter will only provide a brief view of the theories of emotions, highlighting the cultural-social and cognitive theoretical perspectives. The chapter will also focus on emotion in education, including research studies on teachers’ and student teachers’ emotions. Informed by Weiner’s (1986) ‘Attribution theory of motivation and emotion’ and Fredrickson’s (2001) ‘Broaden-and Build’ theory of positive emotion, this chapter also presents an explanation of these two perspectives in relation to their implementations in educational contexts.

To start, it is of significance to state that there has not been a consensus or consistency on any definition of emotions due to the variety of approaches and difficulty in approving one definition rather than the other, a matter which has been evidently argued in the literature. Kleinginna and Kleinginna (2005), for example, collected 90 definitions of emotions. Kagan (2007) stresses this difficulty in defining emotions and posits that “any proposed definition [of emotion] is unlikely to escape controversy or be permanently correct” (p.20). Similarly, there is no agreement in the literature on one classification of different emotions. Terms like ‘emotion’, ‘feelings’, ‘affect’ or ‘sentiment’ are used identically in research to cover the same phenomena (Barbalet, 2001; Weiner, 1992; Solomon, 2007).

Emotions are defined as states of positive or negative experiential quality (Weiner, 1992), they “are feelings connected to ideas, perception, and cognitions, and to the social and cultural contexts in which it makes sense to have those feelings and ideas” (Miller, 1997, p. 8), they “can mediate the individual’s capacity to adapt or respond to a variety of experiences” (DeGangi, 2012, p. 59), and they are “intentional psychological states...[that] involve feelings” (Deonna and Scherer, 2010, p.45). In addition, emotions have three main components: a) ‘cognitions’ that appraise events as good or bad, positive or negative, b) ‘actions’ or decisions made as a result of the initial appraisal, and c) ‘feelings’, viewed as post actions outcomes (Kalat, 2012).

Likewise, in terms of emotions classification, various attempts have been made to classify the range of human emotions. Plutchik (1991), for example, investigated what has been called primary emotions. His list considered the emotions of anger, fear, joy, sadness, disgust, expectation, surprise, and acceptance. Darwin (2008) has extended the list and included grief, anxiety, joy, love, sympathy, hatred, disgust, guilt, surprise, fear, pride, terror, shame, shyness, and despair. Similarly, in their book ‘A general theory of emotions and social life’, TenHouten and TenHouten (2008) present a comprehensive description of a wide range of forty-six emotions in

details. Nevertheless, these different classifications may raise more questions than they can answer. It is not clear how emotions like guilt, regret, shame and embarrassment, for instance, can be systematically distinguished or defined (Thamm, 2006).

It is crucial at this point to mention that the greatest attention among all these types of emotions has been given to the negative ones; namely anger, anxiety, fear and guilt (Denzin, 2009b). However, recent research on emotions invokes the assumption that all human emotional experiences involve elements of positive or negative emotions, which may or may not last, and affect an individual's personal world. Moreover, any emotional experience that an individual undergoes or lives, results in states of reflection, cognition, feeling and interpretation (Denzin, 2009b).

Because human emotions are subtle and sophisticated in nature, theories of emotion have been compliant with a wide range of categorization. The standard categorization of emotions has grouped theories in terms of context. The theoretical perspectives of these contexts can be in the region of four types: 1) evolutionary 'Darwinian'; 2) early experience 'Freudian'; 3) cognitive appraisal; and 4) cultural-social. All of these perspectives have provided extensive insight into the nature of emotion. However, the present study is mainly concerned with the last two; namely the cognitive appraisal and the social perceptions of emotion. This choice is based on the researcher's belief that teaching and learning processes can never be in isolation of appraisal of events or recurring emotional moments. Therefore, it was felt that these two would best fit into educational contexts, where opportunities of interacting and communicating with others from different cultures or social backgrounds are inevitable.

3.1.1 Evolutionary perspective of emotions

This theory hypothesizes that human emotions are primarily an individual's genetic heritage, through which all emotional responses are transferred. That is to say, "we

are programmed to respond emotionally and that is no accident” (Fineman, 2003, p.9). According to this postulation, human emotions were developed over a period of time (i.e. a generation) and their genetic residue brought about the mixture of the present emotions and feelings human beings experience in their daily lives (Brandon, 1990, Lazarus, 1991). This perspective of emotion is dated back to Charles Darwin’s two monumental works, “The expressions of emotions in man and animal”, first published in 1872 and “The origin of species” published in 1859. The fundamental theme of Darwin’s theory is the strong emphasis on the descent of human beings from other forms of life, and the common shared characteristics between humans and non-humans (i.e. animals). In this sense, Darwin’s evolutionary theory stressed the significance of common facial expressions of emotions existing in both humans and animals, of which wonder, curiosity, imitation, attention, memory, reasoning, and sense of beauty were the most emphasized (Lazarus, 1991). A number of researchers (e.g. Paul Ekman, Joseph LeDoux, and more recently Antonio Damasio) have developed this evolutionary perception of emotions and extended their research to areas that included the brain and neurological advances.

3.1.2. ‘Freudian’ early experience perspective

This view of emotions was mainly proposed by Sigmund Freud. Current human emotions, according to this theory, are shaped by emotions of the near or far past (i.e. yesterday, last year/years). An individual can live the same feelings of an old experience without being able to realize the ‘how’ and ‘when’ of these feelings, because “the original feelings are so buried and deep seated” (Fineman, 2003, p.11). Painful, shocking, or fearful events in an individual’s childhood would still exist in the deep memory, and would accompany and guide that individual’s emotional reactions through the rest of his/her life, as if they are present. However, those early experiences with those emotional reactions are usually beyond the person’s consciousness. Obviously, the inference one may make about the validity of this

theory is that a person's present life is imprisoned in his/her past. Yet, it is not the purpose of this study to further analyze this theory or to test the validity of its controversial supposition.

3.1.3. The cognitive appraisal theory

This theoretical perspective of emotions contends that emotions occur as a result of manipulating information generated in a situation or event. This manipulation is a cognitive process. Therefore, it is believed that emotions and thoughts are inseparable (Nussbaum, 1994, Weiner, 2006). Thus, the subjective incorporation of an individual's emotional experience is highly emphasized. In addition, any cognitive activity, according to this theory, can be conscious or unconscious and can also be judgmental. This judgment is called the cognitive appraisal. This means, that emotions capture the fact that intentionality is part of any emotional action or behaviour (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Forgas, 2001). Thagard (2010, p. 98) asserts that "emotions are judgments about the extent to which a perceived situation accomplishes a person's goals". Thus, situations may contribute to someone's happiness or sadness when they match or impede his/her accomplishments of certain goals.

Lazarus'(1991) cognitive perspective of emotions states that when emotions occur, they undergo three processes in order: 1) cognitive appraisal of an event; 2) physiological changes triggered by the event (e.g. increased heart beat) which will lead to; 3) an action taken by the individual who feels the emotion, as he/she appraises it, and reacts accordingly. For example, if Sally sees a scorpion in her room, she will a) cognitively assess the danger of the scorpion in the room; b) her assessment will trigger a sense of fear that may increase the adrenaline pumped into her blood. Consequently, this physical change brings about c) a specific reaction that may take the form of screaming, crying or running away.

To put it simply, emotions, from a cognitive appraisal perspective, are controlled by the cognitive process that results in subsequent actions and reactions taken by an individual who has encountered a certain event. This means that any emotion experienced or expressed in a provisional situation cannot be perceived without an element of appraisal. As a result, reactions towards events vary due to the diversity of patterns appraisals may have. However, this over-intellectualizing of emotions has been criticized by many theorists, who faulted this cognitive perception of emotions because they believed that emotions are faster than the appraisal process (Zajonc, 1980; Robinson, 2005; Prinz, 2004). Although both assumptions (i.e. cognitive appraisal and theorists' critique) about the relation between emotions and cognition may be true, Lazarus (1991, pp.6-7) affirms that "emotion cannot be divorced from cognition, motivation, adaptation, and physiological activity. When we react with an emotion, especially a strong one, every fiber of our being is likely to be engaged - our attention and thoughts, our needs and desires, and even our bodies". In addition, one of the main educational psychologists, Weiner (1986) has proposed another approach to the cognitive appraisal theory, which examines how individuals interpret their failures and successes. Later in this chapter, an overview of Weiner's (1986) 'attribution theory of motivation and emotion' and its implications in educational contexts will be examined.

3.1.4. The cultural-social perspective of emotion

Emotions, as socially perceived, are the products of an individual's mind, culture and society. Social interactions trigger certain emotional reactions which are centered in the person's social world. Cultural-social theories of emotions are interactional, relational and sociological. Kemper, (1981, p. 339) states that "different outcomes in power and status relations instigate different physiological processes which are in turn related to different emotion". Denzin (2009b, p.26) believes that authors of the cultural-social theories "posit a direct causal relation between the perception of an exciting social fact or social situation, internal bodily reactions, and overt behaviours,

which are labeled, inhibited, or disguised in terms of social, relational, ritual and structural factors, as well as by emotional rules and cultural-sexual ideologies”.

In short, emotions according to this theoretical perspective are social facts which are situated in society. All sentimental and emotional attitudes experienced by individuals are ways through which they act, think or interact out of their consciousness. In other words, individuals’ emotions are forced on them socially and culturally, rather than being self-created. Yet, society and culture highly influence individuals’ emotions and contribute to the “creation, transmission, mediation, learning, expression and understanding of [those] emotions” (Connor, 2007, p.30).

With regard to teachers, Zembylas (2011, p.32) affirms that “different understandings of emotions have produced conceptually and methodologically different approaches to the study of emotions in teaching”. The socio-cultural perspective, as mentioned above, posits that emotions are constructed socially or culturally. That is to say, teachers’ emotions are conceptualized within the societal norms and cultural dynamics. Teachers’ emotions will be shaped according to the situations they experience and their reactions will consequently be constructed. Acknowledging this perspective, it is expected that teachers will interact with people in various discourses (e.g. students, parents, school principals or peers). The socially and culturally produced practices are the outcome of other affecting elements such as power and one’s ideologies of communication. In other words, teachers’ emotions and reactions to certain situations in their daily routine will be directly influenced by their educational environment (i.e. the school).

3.1.5. Attribution theory of motivation and emotion

Attribution theory as a field of investigation had its roots in research originated by Fritz Heider in 1958. This theory was then developed by other researchers such as Harold Kelley 1973 and Bernard Weiner, (1985, 1986, 1992, and 2006). However, Weiner’s (1986) attribution theory has made its own contribution by linking the

individual's motivation to his/her emotions in contexts of achievement. Therefore, Weiner's (1986) theory of motivation and emotion has become the 'framework of choice' within educational psychology which can be considered a 'thought-emotion-action sequence' whereby, unlike other theories of attribution, the "causal thoughts determine feelings and feelings, in turn, guide behaviour" is more complete and comprehensive (Graham and Williams, 2009, p.22).

Although a number of theories have addressed emotions from different perspectives, as discussed above, the present study is mainly informed by Weiner's (1986) attribution theory of motivation and emotion, which is one of the fundamental paradigms in social psychology. This theory focuses on how individuals attribute the cause of an event or a situation. People, according to this theory, are in constant search for reasons to explain why certain events occurred in a certain way. In other words, Weiner's theory is concerned with the elemental dimensions that people use to interpret and understand their failure and success (Child, 2007). Graham and Williams (2009) claim that "much of the practical significance of attribution theory resides in its usefulness for understanding real-world motivational concerns that unfold every day in school settings, concerns such as emotional reactions to success and failure, self-esteem maintenance, and acceptance or rejection by peers" (p.11).

Weiner's theory posits that individuals are "likely to explain outcomes and events in their lives that are perceived as novel or important" (Albert and Luzzo, 1999, p. 433). A student who has passed his exam successfully, for example, will not take a lot of time reflecting on the causes that contributed to his success. In contrast, failing a school exam can be negatively attributed to the teachers' teaching strategies, bad luck or lack of time. Turner (2002) viewed attribution processes as part of sanctioning. If negative sanctions are attributed to the self, then negative emotions may be experienced such as anger, fear or sadness. Likewise, positive sanctions attributed to the self or others result in positive emotions like happiness or pride.

Negative emotions are usually the outcomes of a confrontation between people's expectations and negative unexpected events (Weiner, 2006).

A three-dimensional taxonomy formulates the core of the 'Attribution Theory of Motivation and Emotion': locus, stability and controllability. These are defined as follows:

- a) Locus: is related to determining the location of the cause. This cause can be external (situational) such as a task or luck, or internal (dispositional) to the person such as ability or effort. Whether external or internal, the cause is thought to be influential in the way it contributes to how an individual perceives his/her feeling of self-esteem or self-efficacy (Turner, 2002). If, for example, an individual attributes his/her success to internal factors, this individual's self-esteem and self-efficacy will be underpinned by a sense of pride. In contrast, if failure is attributed to an internal factor, self-esteem will be diminished; leading to a negative impact on self-efficacy.
- b) Stability: is the second dimension in the theory that focuses on the individual's perception that the cause of an event or situation will continue over a period of time. In this sense, causes can be constant or varying over time. Linked with the first dimension, the locus, an individual's ability (aptitude) is unchangeable (stable) and this stability results in a relatively fixed aptitude for a task, whereas one's efforts are inconstant and may vary from one situation to another in terms of efforts exerted and subsequent feelings.
- c) Controllability: is the third and last factor which is concerned with an individual's active involvement in controlling the cause. In this case, "efforts is (sic) controllable because individuals are believed to be responsible for how hard they try. In contrast, aptitude and luck are generally perceived to be beyond personal control" (Graham, 1991, p.7). Therefore, emotions such as anger, frustration, or shame may arise at a certain event as a result of failing to achieve a task,

whereas pride and enthusiasm may come to light if success is attributed to one's own abilities. Hence, an individual's expectancies and enormity of emotions are influenced by the way he/she deems stability of causes which in turn will trigger specific motivated behaviour (Weiner et al, 1982).

In addition, diverse causal attributions raise qualitatively disparate emotional experiences, and according to Weiner (1985), perceived causality is not the same among individuals and they are even dissimilar within an individual over a period of time and across situations.

Weiner (2006) situates the attribution theory of motivation and emotion within educational contexts. He mentions several metaphors used in literature to describe classrooms and schools (e.g. temples of learning, marketplace of ideas). Bernard Weiner viewed the classroom or school as 'a courtroom' where everyone's (i.e. student, teacher, school principal) behaviour and reactions are influenced by their perceptions of this courtroom. For instance, "a student considering the classroom as a courtroom is apt to be motivated by the avoidance of punishment" (Weiner, 2006, p.163). Conversely, a student guided by the school's or the classroom's metaphor as 'a temple of learning' will be directed by a desire to learn and understand. Judging it as a successful theory, a number of studies have adopted Weiner's (1985, 1986, 2006) attribution theory of motivation and emotion in educational contexts (Graham, 2004; Li, 2004; Jarvela, 2011; Smart, 2009).

Since, as the discussion above has shown, Weiner's (1986) attribution theory of motivation and emotion addresses causal attributions to events, it was felt that, for the purpose of the present study, incorporating another recent theory emphasizing the relation between perceiving events and the impact they have on an individual's motivation and emotion, would be enlightening. Hence, a brief discussion of Fredrickson's (2001, 2004 and 2009) positive theory of emotion, instigated in the positive psychology field, is addressed in the following paragraphs. It is important at this stage, however, to mention that 'motivation' is not intended to be part of this

paper's discussion, as it comprises a vast body of literature being an independent area. The fact that it is linked to students' achievement in research highlights its importance and influence on students' emotions.

3.1.6. The Broaden-and-Build theory of positive emotion

It is taken for granted that humans live with two sides to their lives - a positive and a negative one. At times where we feel tempted to focus on our negative side, positive psychology emphasizes that this part is only one aspect of the human, and focus should be given to "the other side - that which is good and strong in humankind and in our environs, along with ways to nurture and sustain these assets and resources" (Snyder and Lopez, 2007, p.9). Being aware of our weaknesses and attempting to improve or change them is not recognized any more in positive psychology as the best way for self growth and learning. Rather, to work on our strengths and utilize them appropriately is more effective (Fredrickson, 2009; Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran, 2010).

Within the field of positive psychology, Fredrickson (2001) has developed a new theoretical framework that accentuated positive emotions: "The broaden-and-build' theory. Fredrickson's theory postulates that "experiences of positive emotions broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires, which in turn serves to build their enduring personal sources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources" (Fredrickson, 2001, p.218). An overview of literature on emotion has shown that positive emotions have gained a relative recognition in terms of attention compared to negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2004).

It is thought that literature which has examined positive emotions has not extensively highlighted the responses to those emotions. In other words, Fredrickson believes that action tendencies connected with certain emotions "have been [generally] associated with physical reactions to negative emotions...whereas human reactions

to positive emotions often are more cognitive than physical” (Snyder and Lopez, 2007, p.133). Emotions like anger, fear or disgust, for example, are usually linked with urges to attack, escape and expel, whereas a positive emotion like joy is associated with inactive pleasure and purposeless activation. In contrast, in Fredrickson’s model, an emotion like joy “creates the urge to play, push the limits and be creative; urges evident not only in social and physical behaviour, but also in intellectual and artistic behaviour” (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1369).

Recently, Fredrickson (2009) asserts that soft and ephemeral delightful states can change a person’s mind and body in a way that subsequently transforms his/her life into its best situation. Positive emotions, in other words, trigger one’s desire to change. Fredrickson’s ‘broaden-and-build’ model of positive emotions, in its simplest definition, is an invitation to people to be open and flexible to a wider range of options and perceptions in their lives. This broad flexibility will in turn “help people to discover and build survival-promoting personal resources” (Fredrickson and Kurtz, 2011, p.35).

Positive psychology, as a relatively newly embraced approach in education, has built upon the common concept of schools being the most essential factor impacting the child’s development (Furlong, 2009). Schools’ main task is to provide students with the basic skills that contribute to the positive development of their interpersonal or intrapersonal skills. Fredrickson’s model has recently been implemented in a number of studies in education (Smart, 2009; Lopez, 2011).

Although all these theories might look different as they approach emotions from widely differing standpoints, and associate them to multiple origins, they occasionally overlap and sometimes congregate due to the complicated nature of human emotion. Nevertheless, none of these theories deny the fact that emotions are crucial in our lives and that they significantly affect the decisions that we make and the choices of our actions (Damasio, 2003).

Recently, emotions have been explored from another perspective where human cognition and emotion are blended to construct what has been termed 'Emotional Intelligence'. Although this term, EI, has been attributed to different psychologists (e.g. Bradberry and Greaves, 2010; Greenspan, 1989; Salovey and Mayer, 1990), it has gained popularity following Daniel Goleman's publication of *Emotional Intelligence* (1995, 2011). Goleman's model prioritizes five capabilities that an individual is born with and can improve in the search for better performance. Those domains include self-awareness (knowing your emotions), self-control (managing your emotions), social skill (managing other people's emotions), empathy (understanding and dealing with other people's emotions) and motivation (motivating one's self).

Thus, learning to reason events and behaviour, understanding our own feelings, being able to control them, understanding how to use them with others, understanding the others' feelings and being able to deal with them are all skills that an individual can develop within Goleman's emotional intelligence model. Raddawi and Troudi (2014, p. 175) state that "integrating emotional literacy in school curricula brings positive changes as children learn to maneuver their emotions and improve their academic performance while society can witness a decline in hostile behaviour".

3.2. Emotions in educational contexts

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, considerable research has been conducted on human emotion and its philosophical, physiological, psychological or sociological associations and impacts on an individual's life. Yet, it is only recently that the focus has tended to include emotions in educational contexts as an area of investigation. A number of studies have problematized this absence of attention to teachers' emotions and feelings in their work places (Hargreaves, 2001; Leithwood and Beatty, 2008; Beatty and Brew, 2004; Schultz and Pekrun, 2007; Osterman, 2010). Hargreaves (2001), for example, emphasized the importance of emotions in a

teacher's life and its immediate effects on his/her self, communications and teaching environments. This interest in teacher's emotions, as Hargreaves (2001) points out, springs from the fact that teaching "is an emotional practice...a form of emotional labor [and that] teachers' emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes and their ability to achieve those purposes" (p.838).

This dearth of research into teachers' emotions has been justified by two reasons: "recency of the emotional revolution in psychology and American's beliefs about emotions" (Sutton and Wheatley, 2003, p.328). It has been thought that describing a person as being emotional is equivalent to being irrational (Solomon, 2008; Scherer, Wallbott and Summerfield, 2010). The power of reason over human emotions has been exaggerated to the extent where one metaphor to describe the relation between the two "has been the metaphor of master and slave, with the wisdom of reason firmly in control and the dangerous impulses of emotion safely suppressed, channeled, or (ideally) in harmony with reason" (Solomon, 2008, p.3). Rebuffing this distinction between reason and emotion, Solomon (2008, p.243) asserts that "we experience thoughts. And many if not most human emotions involve thoughts. Thus I would insist that we include *thoughts* as essential ingredients in human emotional experience. Angry thoughts, tender thoughts, humiliating thoughts, are often the most palpable manifestations of anger, love, and shame, respectively". This disconnect between reason and emotion for a long time has resulted in a lack of research regarding emotions in education in general and teachers' emotions in particular, as researchers who are support this position may refrain from investigating teachers' or other workers' emotions.

However, since interest in emotions in the field of education has emerged, research has approached this area from different perspectives, yet without a methodical or direct indication to emotions. For example, a number of studies have examined teachers' professional, personal or social lives with no detailed reference to their emotions in their working environments (Graham, 1984; Woods and Jeffrey, 1998;

Adams, 2002). Aspects of teachers' concerns, anxieties, stress and burnout have become common in literature (Zembylas, 1998, 2002; Goodson, 1992; Nias, 1989; Alfi et al, 2004; Swennen et al, 2004; Capel, 2001; Murray-Harvey et al, 2000; Cooper and Travers, 2012). Yet, with well-known books like the 'Handbook of Research on Teacher Education' (Sikula et al, 1996), only two chapters referred to teachers' personal dispositions. Richardson (1996) focuses on teachers' beliefs and attitudes in one of the chapters, while identity and personal meaning are addressed in the second chapter by Carter and Doyle (1996). In other words, emotions, as the core of teachers' professional and social lives, have not been addressed.

An overview of literature regarding teachers' emotions has demonstrated the researchers' interests in shedding light on areas that have immediate impact on teachers' working lives. There have been studies, for instance, that investigated teachers' job satisfaction and retention and their influence on teachers' survival, commitment or quitting their teaching careers (Carlyle and Woods, 2002; Evans, 1997; Shen 1997, Cockburn, 2000). The question of investigation in such studies was not mainly about teachers' emotions. Rather, it was about finding and understanding reasons or factors that keep teachers in their professions. Emotions such as stress, frustration, burnout, anxiety, anger or caring have been the focus of numerous research studies (e.g. Galton and McBeath, 2008; Wilson et al, 2003; Sutton and Conway, 2002; Zembylas, 2009; Cockburn, 1996).

A growing body of literature has examined teachers' stress and occasionally connected it to educational reforms and restructuring of educational systems (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Dunham, 1992; Hiebert, 1985; Keay, 2005; Lambert and McCarthy, 2006; Thompson, 2005; Hayes, 2006; Kyriacou, 2000; Carlyle and Woods, 2002). When researchers such as Hargreaves (1994), for instance, investigated the teachers' negative emotions of stress and burnout, they questioned the role of schools and policy makers in perpetuating these emotions. Paying

attention to these emotions once they occur or are noticed is essential in preventing unfavourable results that may affect teachers' professional lives and their students.

More recent research on teachers' stress has maintained the focus of previous research and emphasized the inevitability of the need to educate teachers how to manage their stress, and the essential role of schools in rendering assistance to the teachers in ways that would contribute to keeping them well-balanced, more resilient and committed to their jobs (Galton and MacBeath, 2008; Hanif, 2010; Anderson, 2010; Vanslyke-Briggs, 2010; Kyriacou, 2011; Langan-Fox and Cooper, 2011; Rogers; 2011).

Likewise, anger and anxiety have been examined in experienced and novice teachers (Graham, 1984; Wilson et al, 2003). It has been reported, for instance, that teachers' anger could be the result of mismatches between the teachers' expectations and the students' interactions, or when parents, school administration or policy makers overuse their power in the teachers' classrooms including their control of lesson plans, teaching techniques or curricula. Moreover, examples where teachers were able to manage and control their anger have been also discussed (Roulston et al, 2003; Sutton and Conway, 2002). Teachers in those examples were reported as good at dealing with their anger where they utilized different techniques to overcome their feeling of rage. Their strategies included taking action such as changing the setting where anger took place, adapting or changing their attitudes and behaviour towards the annoying event or simply by seeking assistance.

Due to the ever-changing nature of education, there were attempts in research to examine teachers' emotions in contexts where educational reforms were inevitable and teachers' adoption and adaptation to them were mandatory (Hargreaves, 1997; Jeffrey and Woods, 1996; Van den Berg; 2002; Kelchtermans, 2005; Van Veen and Slegers, 2006; Schutz and Zembylas, 2009). Research investigating the impact of educational reforms on teachers' emotions pointed out that teachers' voices, in any proposed educational changes, were ignored by most policy makers, curriculum

planners, and school change experts. Van Veen and Slegers (2006, p.240) deem that “while teacher involvement and commitment are currently hot issues in most reforms, teachers must still - in most cases - implement something that was created by others, developed by special committees, presented at workshops, designed by experts, and so forth”. Teachers’ responses to those reforms, however, ranged, as research studies reported, from happiness, satisfaction, frustration, loss to resistance (Hargreaves, 1994, Hargreaves, Liberman and Fullan, 2010). Within the same context of educational change and teachers’ emotions, some researchers have argued that most of the research conducted has emphasized teachers’ cognitions over emotion, assuming that cognition strongly affects individuals’ behaviour (Schutz and Zembylas, 2009).

As one might glean from the previous discussion, most research on emotions in educational contexts lacks the theoretical framework that may help demystify the mixture of emotions teachers experience and connect them to the working environment and emergent motives. Besides, what is probably missing in the majority of these studies is a systematic detailed account of teachers’ emotions and the role they play in their professional lives and work. However, realizing teachers’ emotions to be a key factor in their professional lives, more recent studies highlighted the importance of understanding teachers’ emotions, recognising their influence on the success of the teacher and the achievement of students in academic contexts (Schutz and Pekrun, 2007; Schutz and Zembylas, 2009, Zembylas, 2005; Day and Lee, 2011).

Schutz and Zembylas’ (2009) book *Advances in teacher emotion*, for example, has drawn on a considerable area of literature of the current research on teachers’ emotions, emphasizing the fact that teaching is more than pedagogy, performance or student achievement. Teaching, in its simplest definition, is a human interpersonal profession that involves a great deal of emotional experiences. Denzin (2009a) affirms that “emotions are felt as lived-performances, staged in classrooms,

hallways, playgrounds. In these spaces, teachers and students, as moral agents, enact the felt emotions of rage, love, shame, desire, despair, empowerment” (p.v). Schutz and Zembylas have presented a solid base of information on the influence of teachers’ emotions on the whole educational system. Research studies here provide the reader with a holistic picture of teacher emotions as perceived by well-known scholars in the fields of education and other disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, or cultural studies. All the chapters compiled in the book highlight a number of critical issues that have been rarely considered or totally overlooked in the earlier literature on teacher emotions. For instance, they have brought to light the effective role emotions play in supporting teachers’ well-being. Day and Qing (2009) call attention, in their paper, to the crucial responsibility of school principals, teacher educators and policy makers in attending to teachers’ sense of well-being. They believe that “where teachers’ well-being is threatened or not supported, it is likely that their ability to identify, work with and, where appropriate, moderate background, primary and social emotions is impaired” (p.19).

Given that previous studies in the literature on teachers’ emotions have tried to understand those emotions in educational contexts, an overview of student teachers’ (pre-service) emotions within the teacher education programmes has revealed a lack of knowledge regarding the mixture of emotions student teachers may live in and experience during their learning and teaching process. The following section presents an overview of research conducted on student teachers’ issues in general, and studies that examined student teachers’ emotions in the practicum (field experience).

3.3 Emotion in Student teacher literature

Since teachers have proved to be the most effective and vital components in the teaching-learning process for ages, most teacher education preparation programmes have focused on teachers and their development. Teacher education institutes, therefore, plan and organize their courses to shape and polish prospective

teachers' knowledge, skills and competence. However, teaching is not only about content knowledge and pedagogy. It is also about the emotional practice of teaching accompanied with content knowledge and pedagogical skills.

Research on teacher emotions, as discussed in the previous section, lacks depth, theoretical frameworks and connectivity among the teachers' emotions, professional lives, and the impact those emotions have on their working environments. It is not surprising then that student teachers' emotions during their field training, as prospective teachers, are the least researched. Yet, research has investigated a range of practicum-related (internship) issues and concerns, in addition to a few studies that have recently surfaced with student teachers' emotional experience as their research focus (Meyer, 2009). Understanding student teachers' emotions during the practicum period, as Meyer (2009) acknowledges, "captures a part of the histories that teachers bring to their careers and classrooms" (p.74).

Practicum, field experience, internship, or, as it is sometimes called, the placements, are major requirements student teachers need to go through before graduation and then being allocated to schools as qualified school teachers. It is believed that such educational preparation programmes should build teachers of high quality who will lead learners to successful educational outcomes in any educational reform (Darling-Hammond and Berry, 1998). Hence, the main purpose of teacher education, as might be presumed, is to produce effective and well qualified teachers (George et al, 2000).

To this end, practicum programmes have been integrated into teacher education courses as one of the most vital and critical components (Hill and Brodin, 2004) through which student teachers can experience teaching in real classes. That is to say, during the practicum, student teachers are expected to replace the class teacher for a certain period of time (probably weeks or months) and practice what they have learnt and acquired in their college or university courses. Their roles include the implementation of a variety of pedagogical and theoretical concepts that

they have learnt from their college coursework. In addition, they apply the instructional and managerial skills that they have previously acquired, and learn how to critically observe other teachers' teaching practices and consequently conceptualize the new learning contexts (Kennedy, 2006). Student teachers' training is a critical stage where the prospective teacher "has the potential to be explicitly mentored and monitored into a professional role" (Meyer, 2009, p.80).

In the actual classroom environment time, student teachers are supposed to gain new experience, knowledge and skills that will shape their teaching practices in schools and facilitate their future journey. They are supposed to learn how to teach, what to teach, what methods and teaching techniques to use at certain times. They learn how to manage their classrooms and their students' behaviour by accommodating the variety of learning styles, individual capacities and physical conditions. In short, student teachers need to learn the art of teaching, as Shulman (1986) attests.

During the field experience, student teachers work in real teaching environments. Therefore, it is expected that they will confront a range of demanding experiences that may lead to stressful reactions. The school environment, together with other factors such as the college mentors, school supervisors, class teachers and students themselves may become sources of concerns to student teachers rather than facilitators of learning opportunities. In this context, Black-Branch and Lamont (1998, p.183) affirm that "teaching is considered to be among the professions in which employees are subject to high level of stress...and is capable of exposing student teachers to situations that are similarly, if not more, stressful than those experienced by practicing teachers".

However among all these sources of stress, the primary origin of worries for pre-service teachers might arise as a result of the dual role they perform during their teaching experience as both students and novice teachers. This duality of roles creates a situation of uncertainty and worry. They need to learn how to cope with the

new responsibilities required by each role, and also learn how to adopt or adapt accordingly to various situations.

In fact, due to the sensitive and critical nature of practicum, considerable research in literature has been conducted to investigate areas like student teachers' learning experience, concerns, anxieties or stress (Alfi et al, 2004; Swennen et al, 2004; Capel, 2001; Murray-Harvey et al 2000; Capel, 1997; Celik, 2008).

Research studies indicate that student teachers' main concerns emerge from "instructional proficiency, uncertainty about their exact function in the classroom, and fear of evaluation" (Harwell and Moore, 2010, p.1). In the same vein, teacher educators believe that stress can be a major component that impacts pre-service teachers' behaviour and consequently affects their effectiveness, performance and competence. Stress can also influence the student teachers' pupils during their teaching practice, and as a result those pupils' achievement levels and performances may be negatively affected by their teachers' stressful teaching (Murray-Harvey et al, 2000; Payne and Manning, 1990).

Similarly, Fontana and Abouserie (1993) assert that stress is a serious problem which is hard to define, as it may range from only words such as 'tension' or 'pressure' to complicated psychological or physiological reactions towards specific stimuli. This complexity emerges from the demanding nature of situations or events that require that an individual responds to certain encountered problems. In this context, student teachers' stress rises from the need to respond to and resolve specific problems during their practicum teaching experience.

As is the case in teacher stress studies, a strong body of research has scrutinized pre-service teachers' sources of stress from different perspectives and classified them under categories in relation to variables such as gender, age, anxiety, peers, evaluation or length of the practicum experience (Murray-Harvey et al, 2000; Swennen et al, 2004; Smith and Lev-Ari, 2005; Talvitie et al 2000).

Looking into student teachers' sources of stress can contribute to a better understanding of the multiple stages that trainees go through while transferring from one stage to another during their teaching practice as students and novice teachers at the same time. In other words, being aware of the different stressful aspects that engulf the student teachers' practicum period may provide teacher educators with insights into what is missing in the pre-service teachers' learning cycle including knowledge, skills, pedagogy or theories (Meyer, 2009).

Furthermore, examining student teachers' stress, which is at the heart of teaching, can be useful in providing teacher educators with visions as to how to help trainees overcome their weakness, uncertainty and lack of self-confidence. It may also improve teacher education programmes by requiring teacher educators to take precautions to support, promote and enhance trainees' learning and their involvement in real teaching settings and teaching environments.

The concerns of student teachers' is another thoroughly explored area in teacher education research literature (Fuller, 1969; Harwell and Moore, 2010; Poulou, 2007; Cakmak, 2008; Conway and Clark, 2003). Fuller (1969) believed that student teachers experience three stages of concern during their teaching practice. Their adequacy in the classroom is the prominent concern. Then, their teaching practice comes with various issues and thirdly, their ability to accommodate their pupils' individual differences, interests and needs. Conway and Clark (2003) echo Fuller (1969) and believe that such concerns move respectively from being about self to concerns about the tasks assigned to student teachers during their teaching practices and finally to concerns towards pupils and matters related to their behaviours and individual capacities.

Practicum-related concerns occupy a large area of literature (Murray-Harvey et al, 2000; Liaw, 2009; Brandt, 2006; Atay, 2007; DaSilva, 2005; Main and Hammond, 2008). Interest in investigating pre-service teachers' worries and concerns stems from the multiplicity of variables that affect the teaching-learning process during the

field experience. Trainees' personalities, social or educational backgrounds, ages and gender vary and consequently their concerns, interests, expectations or problems differ, especially when working in diverse contexts and settings

Studies that examined student teachers' concerns have shown that the trainees' initial concerns in their practicum were focused on their inability to control their students and manage their classrooms (Kagan, 1992; Peters, 2008; Cakmak, 2008). A number of research studies, however, have shown that other challenging sources of concerns for pre-service teachers in their practicum have ranged from their concern about matching the theoretical part of the process studied in their colleges with the practical real experience, performance ability, amount of work, teaching strategies, to evaluation and task preparations (Harwell and Moore, 2010; Farrell, 2007, Boz, 2008). Those concerns as Dunn and Rakes (2010) point out do not only relate to the cognitive side of the student teachers, but also to the emotional level of thinking.

Within the context of teaching English as a foreign language, many studies have reported student teachers' concerns in their practicum experience. Those concerns were focused on areas that might be considered challenging for all student teachers from different disciplines (i.e. classroom management, teaching strategies, performance and the use of L2 to teach).

In fact, understanding these concerns and making efforts to improve teaching practices require reflection on the part of the trainees. This critical stage of reflection helps the student teachers polish their professionalism and contribute to a better understanding of self and personal teaching practices (Thurlow Long and Stuart, 2004). Educational researchers, however, assert that pre-service teachers' learning in the practicum is a multi-tasking complicated process (Calderhead, 1991; Goodman, 1986). This complexity of learning evolves from the student teachers' involvement in various dimensions during the field experience which entails, as Dobbins (1996, p. 16) affirms, being attentive to the "affective and cognitive

demands of the experience". Unless trainees are aware of the complexity of the learning process, their reflection on their teaching practices may not be authentic.

It is noticeable from the above review of practicum-related research studies that student teachers' practicum experiences have been examined from a variety of perspectives and with special regard to the trainees' concerns, stress or worries. Undoubtedly, understanding these concerns and their sources contributes to better understanding of the nature of the practicum and the stressful aspects that may hinder student teachers' learning. However, it should be stressed at this point that though these concerns, worries and stress might in one way or another relate to individuals' emotions, they are not mutually interchangeable.

In 'Stress and Emotions,' Lazarus (2006) presents a clear distinction between stress and emotions. Three types of stress are defined: harm/loss, threat and challenge. The appraisal associated with each one of these types of stress, as Lazarus claims, is different. The harm/loss type of stress results from damage that has already occurred, while threat has to deal with harm or loss that has not taken place yet. The third type of stress 'challenge' consists of "the sensibility that, although difficulties stand in the way of gain, they can be overcome with verve, persistence and self-confidence" (Lazarus, 2006, p.33). Nevertheless, Lazarus affirms that even though stress seems complicated with these three subdivisions, it is much simpler than the concept of emotions. This is because "stress tells us relatively little about the details of a person's struggle to adapt. Emotion, conversely, includes at least 15 different varieties, greatly increasing the richness of what can be said about a person's adaptational struggle" (Lazarus, 2006, p.33).

Parallel to the rapid changes that education has witnessed, and is still witnessing, all over the world, a call has been issued to prepare student teachers of English language according to high quality standards that would enable those student teachers to cope with the career awaiting for them (Larsen-Freeman and Manderson, 2011; Lu, 2002; Wertheimer and Honigsfeld, 2000). Consequently, it is

imperative to investigate pre-service teachers' concerns and challenges in terms of English language teaching and learning as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), especially in countries where English is used as a foreign or second language. As discussed earlier in this chapter, educational change and reform affects teachers' professional and work lives. In the student teaching programmes, however, pre-service teachers have to cope with and adapt to two sources of challenges: learning as students in their institutions (i.e. pedagogy, teaching strategies) and teaching in schools as prospective teachers.

The most significant source of stress and challenge, probably, for EFL/ESL university students of different disciplines in general and pre-service teachers in the practicum is the use of the English language as the medium of instruction (EMI). In recent years, linguists have made attempts to examine EFL/ESL teachers' beliefs about the educational pedagogy and teaching practices (Borg and Phipps, 2009). More recently, in their study in a UAE context, Troudi and Jendli (2011, p.39) confirm that "the salient challenges [of the participants] were linked to English language proficiency and the kind of academic skills required to perform well in an EMI environment".

In addition, student teachers are required to link the theoretical knowledge they have learnt in their college/university courses to the real field practice in schools (Stewart, 2004; Liu, 2005). Research on EFL/ESL pre-service teachers has examined a variety of issues including challenges in the practicum (Tuzel and Ackan, 2009), learning how to teach (Fives, 2003; Johnson, 1994), teaching in a complex social environment (e.g. students, teachers, mentors, school principals, parents) that necessitates immediate interaction with a multiple mixture of people (Farrell, 2003; Liou, 2001), perceptions and attitudes towards learning and teaching (Street, 2003), motivation (Kyriacou and Kobori, 1998), knowledge and subject matter (Nelson and Harper, 2006) and beliefs about language learning and acquisition (Busch, 2010).

Tuzel and Ackan (2009), for example, have investigated non-native pre-service English language teachers' practicum challenges in their language classrooms. The findings of the study indicate that "the common difficulties the student teachers encounter related to certain grammatical structures, explaining unknown words to students, modifying language according to students' level, and authenticity of the classroom language" (p.271). In terms of their participants' emotions in the practicum, the study referred to a decrease in self-confidence and anxiety on the part of the pre-service teachers in areas that included "Vocabulary, adjusting language to the students' level, using classroom language and knowledge of grammar" (Tuzel and Ackan, 2009, p.282). Although this reference to emotions was one of the findings, no further explanation or theoretical perspective was provided for a better understanding of these two resulting emotions and their impact on the participants' learning and teaching processes.

Research into learning to teach English as a second or foreign language, for example, has debated the impact of the practicum experience on pre-service teachers' previous beliefs and knowledge (Tarone and Allwright, 2005). When students start their teaching practices (practicum) in schools, they bring with them their own preconceptions about teaching since they were pupils behind their desks observing their teachers, regardless of what they have learnt in their teacher education programmes. Consequently, their professional knowledge, pedagogy and their growth as teachers are polished by their theoretical background and personal beliefs (Britzman, 2003).

An overview of research of student teaching and the role of emotions in shaping the student teachers' identity, knowledge, pedagogy and experience indicates that this area of research is still in its infancy. Wilson (2005) starts the first page of her book 'Supporting Teachers, Supporting Pupils' with a title defining teaching as 'The emotional business.' She states in her introduction that the 'biggest failure' in student teaching programmes has been not preparing pre-service teachers for the emotional

pressures that the teaching profession holds in it, nor for the relevance of their emotional responses to their accompanying behaviour and reactions.

Wilson's claim confirms the rationale behind conducting the present study. An overview of teacher education literature within the context in which this study was carried out, namely the UAE, indicated a dearth of literature regarding EFL/ESL teachers' or student teachers' emotions and feelings. To the best of my knowledge, issues investigated in EFL pre-service teaching included little or no reference to student teachers' emotions and feelings. For instance, perceptions of the Emirati student teachers of the 'Other', namely Europe and Europeans, have been investigated by Kostoulas-Makrakis (2005). AL-Mekhlafi (2007) conducted a study to examine the perceptions of UAE prospective EFL teachers' of their English language competencies gained during their TEFL programme. Al-Mekhlafi's study looked at Emirati pre-service teachers' views in relation to the "acquisition of: 1) necessary language competencies; 2) cultural, literary competencies; 3) linguistic competencies and; 4) whether or not the TEFL programme has provided them with adequate coursework in the above areas" (2007, p.1). Beatty and her colleagues (2009) have sought different ways to promote a culture of reading among EFL student teachers and Emiratis.

Therefore, I hope that this study would contribute to teacher education literature in general, and student teachers in particular, by filling the huge gap currently existing, and presenting a better understanding of pre-service teachers' emotions in their practical training experience. The study's findings may be of interest to all educators involved in the teacher education teaching/learning processes as well.

3.4 Conclusion

Drawing on Weiner's (1985) attribution theory of motivation and emotion and in light of Fredrickson's (2001) 'broaden-and-build' theory of positive emotions, the present study aims to explore student teachers' emotional experiences in their practicum. The study is also inspired by the assumption that recent research of emotions has invoked: that all

human emotional experiences involve elements of positive or negative emotions that may or may not last and affect an individual's personal world. In addition, as Denzin (2009b) asserts, any individual's emotional experience results in states of reflection, cognition, feeling and interpretation.

With regard to the present study, the student teachers' emotional experiences in the practicum will vary from one trainee to another, or even within one student teacher depending upon how they perceive the challenges they encounter at the time of their field practice. In relation to the attribution theory of motivation and emotion and its propositions, student teachers' beliefs about the challenges encountered in the practicum can be caused by external, stable or uncontrollable factors which may trigger a variety of emotions. Consequently, different participants will live, experience and respond differently to probably the same situations, an issue which adds to the contribution of the findings this study provides.

On the basis of these assumptions, the way student teachers attribute and perceive causes of challenges encountered in their practicum determines the subsequent magnitude of emotion experienced; positive or negative. These positive or negative emotions, as can be elicited from Fredrickson's (2001) model of positive emotions, may affect the student teacher's learning and commitment to the prospective teaching profession. Weiner (1986) emphasized the importance of causal dimensions in relation to an individual's outcomes (successes or failures) in academic achievement situations. This theory focuses on the workplace as an 'achievement oriented environment' that allows for a variety of situations entailing a range of cognitive processes on the part of the individual, who is in search for causes of events and possible ways that facilitate achievement of goals in that environment. In this sense, trainees attributing outcomes of encountered events to certain causes will be engaged in analyzing those outcomes, which are perceived as unexpected, or challenging (Wong and Weiner, 1981).

To conclude, I hope that the findings of the present study inspire student teachers, teacher educators, policy makers and curriculum developers and we all share Ciaccio's

(2004) message that says “if you are used to reacting negatively to most new situations...then teaching is likely to become an arduous task” (p. 24).

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

As profusely stated in the literature review, 'emotions' is a debatable human area out of which a set of interrelated questions have been formulated and which has engendered a diversity of theories, perspectives and models. Apparently, the human nature of emotion is very complicated due to the heterogeneity of societies in which individuals group up, conceptualize and formulate their personalities, beliefs, attitudes and cultural perceptions. In other words, an individual's mixture of emotions is the product of intricate social interactions and communications with his/her surrounding environment.

At a narrower level, in order to better understand how student teachers, as individuals who live in one society, interact and respond to certain situations and events, differently or similarly, in particular teaching/learning contexts, it is crucial to select an appropriate research methodology that provides a better understanding of those pre-service teachers' emotional reactions. A proper methodology helps in exploring the ways in which the mixture of emotions experienced by those student teachers may affect their lives at different levels in their practicum period. Examples may include taking decisions or responding to provisional crisis.

As can be noticed from the literature review, many studies have tackled 'emotions' from a variety of perspectives for which researchers have utilized multiple research methodologies that support their research questions. As far as this study is concerned, the main focus is to examine the emotional experiences of student teachers after they have completed a period of field practice in primary schools, and to closely understand how the mixture of emotions they have experienced may affect their learning and commitment to the teaching profession. To this end, it is clear that approaching this complex area of human nature would not fit within the rigidity of the positivistic paradigm. What can best serve this diversification imposed by human complexity is a qualitative exploratory approach which informs the present study.

This chapter begins by outlining the interpretive approach that guided the methodology of this study. Next, section 2 will identify the research questions that lead the investigation process. Section 3, will provide an explanation of the research design and the logic behind which lies the selection of each research method. In addition, as part of providing a justification for choosing the site of the study, the chapter will include a brief profile of the higher education institution from which the participants came (details have previously mentioned in chapter 2), and a definition of the participants' background. Section 4 will outline the approach that was adopted for data analysis. Section 5 will provide a summary of ethical considerations that have been found of relevance to the present study. And finally, section 6 will highlight some of the limitations that relate to the decisions made about the design of the study and that necessitate further research.

4.1 Theoretical Perspective

It is essential that a researcher describes his/her chosen methodology within the frame of the philosophical stance underpinning that methodology (Crotty, 1998). Clarifying the theoretical perspective contextualizes the research study and provides the rationale for investigating the problem in question.

4.1.1 Interpretive exploratory approach

The preceding chapters have focused on the assumptions that inform the broader theoretical frame for the present study, the main purpose and the background context from which the rationale for conducting this research emerges; namely filling the gap in teacher education literature in general, and more specifically, to establish a cornerstone position in the UAE teacher education programme literature. Therefore, the strength of this study is underpinned by my belief that student teachers' emotions, according to the best of my knowledge, have been rarely investigated in the UAE teacher education contexts.

Having in mind the complex nature of human emotions, it is essential that the philosophical stance taken by the researcher and its appropriateness to the present study research questions and design be justified.

At the level of research methodology, this study is guided by the philosophical assumption dealing with the nature of social reality (ontology) and the way knowledge is perceived and obtained (epistemology). The interpretive exploratory approach is thought to be the most relevant to the nature of the present research study's questions for many reasons.

Firstly, in this study I hope to explore the pre-service teachers' emotional experiences in their practicum and the effects the daily exposure to challenging situations and events has on their emotions. The intricacy of human emotions cannot lend themselves to the rigidity of scientific experimental investigations. Merriam (2009) believes that researchers who employ qualitative research want to understand "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 14). Secondly, individuals' emotions are not identical even if they exist in equal environmental circumstances. In addition, an individual's own emotions may vary in density and intensity within one specific situation. Not to mention that even researchers carrying out qualitative inquiries (i.e. interpretive) experience a range of emotions while conducting their research.

Hays and Singh (2012, vii) recall their own emotional experience as researchers asserting that "at times we were confused, surprised, frustrated, hopeful, hopeless, saddened, and ultimately inspired, we investigated phenomenon from a qualitative approach". It is only when the researcher shows his/her trust and care towards the participants in their research that those participants feel encouraged to tap into their own emotions in more depth. Likewise, Tillmann-Healy and Kiesninger (2001, p.104) voice their emotional experience as qualitative researchers emphasizing the fact that they were "so immersed in the other's life world, each of us wrote "from the gut," through fury, pain, and ambivalence".

It is unavoidable, then, that this multiplicity of emotions necessitates the existence of multiple realities perceived by the participants, as well as multiple meanings of the experiences they lived. To access and understand this variation in the participants' emotions, the researcher needs to establish a human communication channel to interact with the individuals involved in the study. In other words, for a better knowledge of the social reality, an interaction between the participants and the researcher needs to be wisely and carefully established. Careful closeness to research participants results in bridging the distance and creating trustworthy research-wise relationship (Hays & Singh, 2012). Crotty (1998, p.42) states that "... all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world".

Embracing all the above critical issues and linking them with a relevant educational research methodology, the most appropriate viable approach to obtain data from the participants of the present study would be through adopting an interpretive exploratory approach. At this point it is important to highlight prominent features of interpretive exploratory methodology in relation to the aims of the current study.

Firstly, the present study's main concern is to 'explore' the student teachers' emotional experiences in challenging school situations during the practicum. In other words, adopting the interpretive exploratory approach, the researcher is seeking better understanding of the participants' emerging emotions in those situations rather than being involved in an 'explanatory' process.

Secondly, the knowledge and meaning that underpin interpretive research seek their roots in the participants' own words and lived experiences. The researcher's task, therefore, is to examine knowledge and meanings as brought and voiced by the participants. That is to say, the researcher is open to multidimensional understanding of meanings, which is not intended to be verified. Rather, what is meant is adding meaning to the researcher's interpretations (Frost, 2011).

4.2 Research questions

As discussed earlier, the main questions of the present study are guided by the post-structural perspective of emotions which assumes that individuals are involved in social and cultural contexts that impose webs of power relations and norms. This multiplicity in existing environments allows or prevents the constitution of certain emotions. In more specific terms, the questions of the present research study were formulated to facilitate the exploration of student-teachers' emotional experiences in a certain context in search of a better understanding of their emotions in that period and the effect they leave on their learning and commitment, all the while controlled by a mixture of educational, societal, cultural and sometimes political factors. Thus, the questions are as follows:

- What are student teachers' emotional experiences in the practicum?
- What are the major challenges that student teachers encounter in the practicum?
- How do student teachers cope with daily challenges and events in the practicum?

4.3 Research design

Each research study is unique in its own planning, design and the approach which guides it, and it would be impossible in any research area to have one-size fits all research design. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.73) assert that "there is no single blueprint for planning research". This uniqueness of a single research project arises from the fact that every project has its own issues, constraints and problems that together form the rationale for selecting one research design rather than another.

With regard to the present study, three basic concerns were critical in formulating its research design. These considerations were: (1) determining a feasible and accessible site; (2) selecting the sample population; and (3) selecting appropriate data collection tools. It was highly important to decide where the study would be conducted, who would be able to participate and how the study would be best put into action. The following

sections provide an account of the rationale for making a decision at each of these critical phases.

4.3.1 Determining a feasible and accessible site

Before conducting any research project, it is a vital preliminary concern to decide where to carry out the study. It is a seemingly straightforward task that can be performed by collecting a list of probable sites and then making a choice of one of them. However, to choose from a list of suggested sites is in itself problematic. Although the research area, in this case 'emotion', might be of interest to a large population involved in teacher education programmes, feasibility and ensuring accessibility are not straightforward. Many questions arise at this stage: which site (higher education institution) would best be fitted into the research questions? Which one is the most feasible and accessible? Is one site sufficient as a representative sample or are more considered necessary? Is a range of colleges and universities preferred or is just one college or university adequate? Do colleges and universities teach the same subjects in their teacher education programmes, the same practicum periods and the same school grade levels?

The key to all of these worrying questions was addressing feasibility and accessibility. Since most existing education colleges or universities run different teacher education programmes, and the college where this study was conducted is well-known for its uniqueness among colleges in the country for the special teacher education programme it runs, it seemed the most pertinent decision to make at that stage was to choose that single college. Issues of feasibility and accessibility were not a barrier since I currently work there as a faculty member. Although generalization of findings would not be possible, they would still formulate a strong and new basis for understanding the student teachers' emotions, whose experience in the practicum is exceptional compared to other colleges and universities in the country, and the influence the mixture of emotions they go through on their learning and commitment to the teaching profession in the future.

This decision about the site proved to be reasonable and convenient for several reasons. First, in terms of feasibility and accessibility as mentioned above, the college was the working environment where I, as a researcher, and the participants exist on a daily basis for five days a week. Second, in terms of time, the participants were available in those five days and could be called or invited for a formal or informal conversation any time at their convenience. Third, in terms of teacher education programmes run, this college is the only higher education institution in the United Arab Emirates that prepares students to be primary school teachers majoring in three subjects at a time; English, Mathematics and Science. In addition, it is the only place in the country where student teachers start their field training from year one until year four, the year of graduation. Fourth, this college, as many other colleges in the region, admits only local students according to their CEPA or IELTS exam scores, where English is the only medium of instruction.

The main challenging constraint, however, in terms of the site from a physical point of view was the difficulty in finding a comfortable and quiet place to meet the participants. The college, unfortunately, had no sound-isolation system in most of its departments and classes, and that affected the schedule to be planned to meet the participants when less noise or more privacy and confidentiality could be assured.

4.3.2 Selecting the sample population

Having made the decision about the research site, the next difficult decision to make was to identify the students who would be the representative sample of the study. As mentioned above, practicum is an essential requirement of the college's teacher education programme which starts from year one. Clearly, it needed a more specific aim of the study to choose one group of students rather than the other. The college's first cohort of future teachers has not yet graduated. Thus, the first group of student teachers who have completed three practicum periods up to the time this study started were the third year Bachelor of Education students (BEd 3). I first considered the new cohort in the college (BEd 1) as they had already completed a one or two-year

foundation programme to improve their English language skills. However, student teachers in practicum 1 are not supposed to teach, rather they are engaged in observing the school life and the class teacher so that they get a better understanding about the teaching-learning processes taking place in the educational environment. The practicum 1 requirements made the exclusion of BEd 1 students from the study easy as their experience in the practicum did not fit with the main aim of the study in exploring the mixture of emotions that arises while being actively involved in real teaching. In other words, the student teachers' professional experience in BEd1 had not been sufficiently polished to enable them to reflect upon their challenges inside the classroom.

The exclusion includes BEd 2 pre-service teachers as well for two reasons. Firstly, the activities carried out by student teachers in their practicum were not enough to reflect the tasks and the actual roles of the teacher during the teaching process. That is to say, the experience of teaching was limited to the preparation of some parts of the lessons (e.g. the warming up or wrap-up of a lesson), critical observation of the teaching in the class and reflecting on what they have learned later. Secondly, the student teachers in practicum 2 were required to reflect on only those times they taught parts of a lesson, which means that the teaching experience and reflection process did not include a full class teaching. Students' lack of practicing this task of reflective writing would have interfered with the results of the study.

Excluding BEd 1 and BEd 2 student teachers from the study made the selection of BEd 3 cohort the only viable option. In practicum 3, students have already completed three years of practical training in schools, including a year 3 practicum where they have been treated as real future teachers in the college and in the schools where they were assigned for their training - and even by the media and college advertisements. The college has always introduced this group of students to the educational environments and local society as the first group of UAE teachers majoring in teaching three subjects in English in primary schools: English, Science and Mathematics. Most of the college's

representatives of students in the media, conferences or educational exhibitions are from the BEd 3 cohort. Although other students from other cohorts may frequently participate in those activities, the focus has always been on the year three pre-service teachers who are approaching the graduation year to be soon in the real teaching environment among other beginning or experienced teachers.

In addition to the above, it is important to mention that BEd 3 student teachers had already taught in real classrooms, met other teachers and worked with them, met their students' parents and talked to them about their children's academic level, participated in most of the school activities starting from attending the morning school assembly where some of them had to participate in the school broadcasting programme and even been present in the school principal's meetings with the school teachers. In short, this cohort of students (BEd3) had experienced what real teaching means from different aspects and, therefore, it was assumed that they had encountered a variety of challenging situations or problem-solving events where a mixture of emotions might have been dealt with and consequently affected their learning and commitment to the teaching profession.

At this stage, the other critical decision to make was whether to explore student teachers' emotional experiences before starting their practicum 3, during practicum, or post practicum. Since the present study is informed by an interpretive approach, it seemed highly appropriate to probe into the emotional experiences of the participants after having completed their practical requirements and engage them in a reflective process through the entire stages of the study for a better understanding of their feelings in their practicum experience. This decision was backed up by three other concerns: (1) due to time constraints and teaching responsibilities in the college, it was impossible to observe the student teachers on a regular basis or even have them available in the college to interview or talk to them, (2) investigating the student teachers' emotional experiences after the practicum means involving them in a reflective process. This reflection task is an essential requirement of the BEd3 course

which might indicate the student's ability to reminisce about past events and feelings and comment on them. And finally, (3) students, as everyone could notice in the college, were very worried about their practicum performance and graduation year because of the rigid graduation condition for a student to graduate with a band 6.5 in the IELTS exam. All BEd 3 students (168 students, including the only 6 male students) were informed about the present study major aims and research questions. The process of selection will be explained later in this chapter.

4.4 Research methods

4.4.1. Selecting appropriate data collection tools

The next important stage at this level of research design was to properly select the most practical and feasible tools of data collection that would ensure sufficient information about the participants' emotional experience caused by challenges they may have encountered in the practicum was revealed. To that end, three methods were selected that seemed integrated and complementary in providing data for the research. These are: (1) focus group interviews; (2) individual in-depth semi-structured interviews; and (3) critical incident method. The rationale that underpins the selection of these tools is as follows.

Taking into consideration the very complicated nature of emotions and the exploratory interpretive approach of the present study, it seemed obvious that there could be no better way of understanding the participants' emotional experiences than simply talking to them and providing them with the opportunity to reflect on and freely express the different kinds of emotion still living within them after completing their third practicum period. It was felt that the use of these three data collection tools would be the most appropriate and feasible research methods to secure the aims stated by the research questions. Therefore, the decision on selecting these three tools was justified as follows.

First, group interviews seemed to be the most appropriate tool to adopt especially in terms of gaining a deeper collective understanding of the broader shared experience among participants. It would also help in pairing and piecing together the mutual views and discussions which bring about a clearer vision of the participants' prevailing situations at a certain stage of their practicum experience. More importantly, "focus group participants engage in thoughtful discussion and may actually influence one another" (Kleiber, 2004, p.89). On a more practical level, focus group interviews save time by bringing forward in-depth information that can be used to support other research methods of data collection. Finally, focus group interviews seemed to be the easiest among the other two research methods selected for this present study in terms of setting up, administration and the inconvenience or disruption they may have caused the college, where both the researcher and the student teachers work and study. Later in the following section, a description of the interview protocol and the way it was devised and administered will be discussed in detail. One crucial point to mention at the level of research design is the emergent issues found in the focus group discussions. The findings greatly affected the direction of the other chosen research methods; the individual in-depth interviews and the critical incident method. It also substantiated the fact that the use of other research methods to support those findings was mandatory.

Equally imperative was the individual interviewing method. It is obvious that interviewing the participants face-to-face allows the researcher to probe into the research questions more freely and deeply; asking as much clarifying questions as necessary for additional information. Added to that, individual interviews were essential to triangulate the data and add more strength and depth to the findings. Kvale (2007, p.13) confirms that "the research interview is an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between two people". The knowledge gained, therefore, is the product of the interaction which brings with it new results with different interviewees. For this reason, it seemed that adopting individual semi-structured in-depth interviews was the most reasonable method that backed up the focus group interviews and the critical incident research methods. Using semi-structured interviews allows for flexibility in asking the questions

with “sensitivity to the developing conversational structure” (Gibson and Brown, 2009, p.87).

The third research method selected (and one which proved to be of equal importance to the other two) was the critical incident method. The selection of this valuable research method was based on Serrat’s (2010, p. 1) belief that “critical incidents can be harvested to provide a rich, personal perspective of life that facilitates understanding of the issues and obstacles people face every now and then and illuminates avenues for improvement (or replication if outcomes are effective)”. As a qualitative data collection method, it is well-suited to the purpose of the present study. It mainly focuses on understanding a real-world phenomenon which has been less researched or known about. Critical incidents are viewed as “particular events or occurrences that might typify or illuminate very starkly a particular feature of a teacher’s behaviour or teaching style” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.404).

This method is of essence as it compels individuals to stop and think of their lived experiences and re-examine their responses and reactions to certain situations that may have affected their professional learning. In short, it seemed that the critical incident method fitted well in the overall research design of the present study and integrated appropriately with the other research methods as it served the assumption stated by Serrat that “At heart, all incidents pertain to matters such as culture, knowledge, competence, relationships, beliefs, emotions, communication, or treatment” (Serrat, 2010, p.2).

Thus far, the discussions have pinpointed the major concerns that contributed to the finalization of the design of the present research study. The next step is to explain in some detail how this study was made viable through devising and administering the data collection tools, the strategy followed in selecting the study’s population and the data analysis process.

4.4.2 Profile of the sample population

There are currently around 300 students enrolled in the Foundation and Bachelor of Education programmes. All of the students are UAE nationals, daughters or sons of nationals or whose spouses are national citizens. Only six of those students are males, the rest are females. Their ages range between 19-23 years old.

For the purpose of this study, six BEd 3 male students and ten female students out of 168 in the BEd 3 chose voluntarily to join the study. One of the male students was married with two children and three of the female students were married, all with 2-3 children. Both the male and female group of students had already completed a two-year foundation course to improve their English language skills and all of them had completed a three-year practicum experience at different primary schools in Abu-Dhabi, the capital or its outlying schools which they chose themselves for reasons of proximity to their residence. Three of the students, one male and two females can be described as conservative in terms of Islam, the prevailing religion in the UAE. In other words, they may feel shy and embarrassed in front of the other sex and tend to avoid immediate contact with their counterparts in activities and events that may take place in the college or in any other outside extracurricular events. For privacy and confidentiality reasons, the 16 participants were given pseudonyms as follows: Salem, Muhammad, Saif, Hassan, Bader and Ali for the males and Ayesha, Amal, Sara, Huda, Asma, Budoor, Shamsa, Warda, Alyia and Anood for the females.

For convenience and feasibility of conveying the information, all the interviews and the critical incident writings took place in Arabic, as both the researcher and the students are native speakers of this language. In addition, the main aim of the present study was to explore student teachers emotions and, though their English language proficiency might have affected their emotions, it was not in the mind of the researcher to use it in the interviews or the student teachers' writing, as this might have confused the participants and distorted the findings. Giving the participants the freedom to use their own native language was a source of comfort, as they indicated in the interviews, and it enabled them to easily express their practicum experience and their feelings without that fear of getting stuck at a certain point because of the lack of language expressions.

In the following sections, a more detailed description is provided on how the sampling strategy of the population was refined in relation to the three research methods of data collection.

4.4.3. Administering of the focus group interviews

Having made the decision on selecting the focus group interviews as the initial data collection tool, the next step entailed formulating the items of the interviews in a way that would match the research design and help the researcher touch upon themes for further investigation using the other research methods. The administration of the group interviews included five phases: (1) practicality and brainstorming phase; (2) construction of questions; (3) piloting phase; (4) sampling phase; and (5) administering the focus groups interviews.

- **Practicality and brainstorming: phase (1)**

The starting point was to examine the research questions carefully and break down the main themes into smaller questionable parts to be the basis for the focus group interviews. It was not an easy task at this stage to reduce the three major research stated questions into researchable items that can be examined and explored in the group interviews. The task involved exhausting stages of writing and re-writing, adding and deleting, refining and editing, accepting and rejecting. Nevertheless, the good part about all of that challenging time was the individual brainstorming which commenced from the literature review and the relevant studies that have dealt with student teachers and emotion in education. The ample readings and scholarly studies finally triggered the areas that seemed of high relevance to the research questions.

At another level, brainstorming with a professional colleague proved to be helpful and fruitful in reducing the heap of ideas jotted down on various papers into more practical and researchable tidy, organized and logical themes. In addition, informal talks and discussions with students from all cohorts in the college confirmed that the research study was of interest to many student teachers and faculty members.

All the opinions, suggestions and feedback contributed eventually to the emergence of a clearer and more specific vision about the next step. The two most important considerations, however, were to achieve a balance among all the themes and subthemes at the interviews and to set the questions within a suitable time framework. It was then decided that the construction phase should focus on the three basic categories:

- (i) challenges in the practicum
- (ii) emotional experiences in the practicum
- (iii) and strategies of adaptation to the challenges

- **Construction of questions: phase (2)**

Having identified the main themes of relevance to the research questions, the next step was to construct practical and effective questions that would help the researcher obtain detailed and relevant information. The major concern at this stage was to construct questions that would encourage participants to voice their concerns, views and experiences easily on the three issues in question as planned for in the previous phase: (i) challenges in the practicum (ii) emotional experiences in the practicum, and (iii) strategies of adaptation to the challenges. In a broad sense, the questions revolve around those three themes in a form of questions such as:

- What challenges do students in teacher education programme encounter in the practicum?
- What positive feelings can you talk about in the practicum? Give examples of actual situations.
- What negative feelings can you talk about in the practicum? Give examples of actual situations.
- What strategies did you use to adapt to/make use of the challenges?

- **Piloting: phase (3)**

Having constructed the main themes and questions of the focus group interviews, it was essential to test their effectiveness and practicality, appropriateness of questions and to identify areas that needed edition, deletion or addition. However, due to time constraints, as explained in the sampling phase, it seemed the most appropriate decision to revise the questions with one professional colleague who is an expert in qualitative research and who, in addition to her international research, had also conducted three research studies in the college with the students. As focus group interview was one of her data collection tools in those studies, it was relatively easy for her to predict how operational the questions would be with BEd 3 students. She was also aware of the nature of the area of the study (emotion), because we shared and exchanged many ideas before the start of this study. The feedback about the questions was positive with one suggestion about the number of questions. There were 14 questions for the participants to answer. After discussions, editing and re-editing, the questions were reduced to 10. Nothing was suggested about the wording of the questions in terms of clarity, graduation in difficulty or depth.

- **Sampling: phase (4)**

The purpose of starting with group interviews was to have an insight into the wider picture of BEd 3 students' practicum emotional experiences with all the challenges and difficulties they face. Bearing in mind that the total number of this cohort was only 168, it was necessary to think of an effective strategy that would help identify the students who would participate in each focus group. Taking into consideration that small number of students, it was then viewed as sufficient to establish three focus groups: two female groups of five interviewees each and one group of the six male participants. However, it is necessary to mention that getting access to the students for the selection process was not as easy as it may appear for two reasons.

Firstly, by the time I received the college research committee's approval to conduct the study in the college and select students as a sample population, the students' preparation for their projects as part of the final semester assessment had started. Although many students showed a desire to volunteer for the interviews, as they initially

indicated in informal talks, getting them actually involved in the focus group interviews was a real struggle.

As a formal step, I needed to be present personally in each section of the seven BEd3 classes to briefly introduce the research study and its major goal, and ask for students who wished to participate to fill in a form with their information and e-mails for later contact. It would have been easier to e-mail all the BEd3 students with a short description of the study and ask for responses prior to identifying the students to be interviewed. But due to the critical time the students were passing through (exam preparation), it was assumed that many students may not be inclined to respond and take being involved in a research project seriously.

The male section was the first among all sections to respond showing full agreement to participate. All six students seemed eager to share their stories in the practicum. One of them justified his happiness saying: "we've finally got someone to care about our feelings". With this consensus from the six male students, the first focus group was set up, but merging them with any of the female groups was impossible, due to the gender-segregation policy adopted by the college.

Of the six female sections left, a total number of 40 students showed interest in participating in the study after the briefing session introduced to them in their classes. All 40 students were e-mailed with a short description about the study and a request to confirm their willingness to be part of the study. 36 students responded with their approval to participate. Since the decision had been made to run two female focus groups interviews, another decision had to be made to randomly select 10 students from the 36 names available. To that end, the 36 students' names were written on strips of paper and carefully folded. One of my colleagues was asked to randomly pick 10 names. Four of my students to whom I had taught English language skills in the second semester, were among the ten names. It is important at this point to mention that I was not involved in any aspect of the practicum programmes of the three running cohorts in the college: BEd 1, BEd2, and BEd3.

Even though students spent their practicum period at completely different separate schools from each other, it was felt more convenient to distribute my four students equally in the two focus groups and not to keep them as one separate focus group.

Having set the three focus groups, the second constraint was finding a suitable time when all of the students of each group could meet and talk. At times where a place, date and time were planned, some of the students texted (sms) or e-mailed me at the last minute to apologize for not being able to come due to newly developed requirements for the college projects that they needed to complete. That happened three to four times before a time and place were eventually agreed upon by all students in the three focus groups.

With regard to the main aim of the study and those constraints, it seemed that those three focus groups of 16 participants were a fairly representative sample when supported by individual in-depth interviews and critical incident essays.

- **Administration of focus groups interviews: phase (5)**

In any focus group interview, it is important for the moderator to facilitate the discussions and know how to get everyone involved and when to intervene to get the discourse back to its main focus. As some of my professional colleagues had research experience with students in the Bachelor of Education programme in the college, I was advised to follow a one-to-one group interviewing questions. This entails asking the same question to each participant separately allowing others to listen without interruption, but making it possible to comment or further explain any of their ideas after all participants have finished their views on that question. Some experts in qualitative research methods in the college stated that in their previous research studies that were carried out with focus group interviewing being one of their primary research tools, collective discussions proved to be of less beneficial value than a respondent moderator focus groups. Some participants in the groups, as they reported, were passive listeners and talked only with prompts. To avoid falling into the same trap, the one-to-one interview was adopted and respondents were asked to respond to the moderator's

questions equally thereby allowing everyone in the group to share their views and experiences.

All focus groups interviews took place in my office, which was spacious enough to set up tables and chairs in a “horseshoe” position with the moderator’s place at the open end of that horseshoe. Each focus group session lasted between 60-90 minutes. Refreshments, tissues and blank papers with pencils were put on each participant’s table, and a recorder was put in a small table in the middle. All interviewees were encouraged to talk freely and frankly about their emotional experiences and the challenges that their practicum period had raised. Participants were given the option to break when they felt the need to, something which interestingly never happened in any of the three groups. There was a need some time during the interview to pull back the discussions to its main focus as participants seemed highly motivated to share every single issue they experienced or noticed in their practicum, or even from their past experiences in their own high or primary school days.

It was obvious during the focus group interviews that the student teachers wanted to talk for more than the time allotted for the interviews. Most of them expressed their desire to volunteer for similar research studies if this would guarantee that their voices and views reached the ears of those in charge of planning teacher education courses. It is worth mentioning at this point that the respondent moderator focus groups were not as rigid as they may appear. Interaction and comments among the respondents were allowed frequently where they proved to be relevant and rich. All recordings were transcribed and coded immediately. At all stages of the interviews, respondents were given time to recheck their answers, delete, justify or clarify their thoughts or ideas.

4.4.4. In-depth individual interviews

Having completed the three focus group interviews, it was felt that in-depth individual interviews would be the most viable research method to be used to further explore the emerging issues and concerns. Viewing the focus groups data, it seemed that further

probing into the same three areas of concern (i.e. practicum challenges, emotional experiences and adaptation strategies to challenges) which were also highlighted in the participants answers, were the most significant areas to emphasize in the individual interviews. Thus, in broad terms, the in-depth individual interviews revolved around these three areas with reference to sub-themes mentioned occasionally by most participants such as: a) impact of college learning on student teachers' practicum; b) impact of emotional experiences on commitment to teaching profession; and c) impact of emotional experience on self.

The 16 participants were interviewed individually at times of their convenience. Each interview typically lasted between 40-50 minutes. All interviewees were encouraged to talk freely and to express their feelings and ideas frankly. At times, it was necessary to ask the respondents to justify their answers or to provide more details about the examples they used. The students themselves showed enthusiasm talking about their feelings, yet many of them felt confused and unable to express exactly the emotion (s) they experienced at a certain event because, as one of them reported "no one asked or cared about my feelings before". Yet, all participants were eager to talk and share almost everything they encountered in the practicum.

After gaining the interviewees' permission, all interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded as soon as possible so they were still fresh in their mind and themes were categorized according to their frequent occurrence. After each interview, respondents were given ample time to check their answers and the freedom to delete or edit any of them.

4.4.5 Critical incident technique

Eventually, the third method that seemed the most appropriate to support the focus group and in-depth interviews was the critical incident technique. Adopting Kain's view, it was felt that this qualitative tool fits well into the exploratory nature of the present study because "Unlike participant observation activities, which require focused, long-term field experiences, the critical incident technique allows researchers to access the

perspectives of many research participants through one of the most accessible human discourse avenues, the narrative: "Tell me about..." (Kain, 2004, p.78).

In this stage, all student teachers were e-mailed and asked to report in details two examples of their practicum experience; one positive and one negative. Questions in the e-mail were as follows:

Positive event

- 1) Think of a time when you experienced positive feelings in your practicum.
- 2) Tell me what you did that made you feel positive.

Negative event

- 1) Think of a time when you experienced negative feelings in your practicum.
- 2) Tell me what you did that made you feel negative.

A third question was included to explore the participants' emotions:

- 3) Do you think it is important for you as a student teacher to share your feelings with someone? Why/why not?

Sixteen e-mails were received from respondents. Three of them were returned to three participants because they were not clear and difficult to understand. The participants used their colloquial (Gulf) Arabic that included some of the cultural terms which were not clear to me. The three participants had to re-write their reflections and send them again.

As I am bilingual, all data was transcribed and translated into English by myself. However, for verification reasons, all the translated scripts together with the original Arabic data were given to another bilingual colleague for further examination and revision of any probable misunderstood terms.

4.5 Data analysis

Data collection and analysis were simultaneously carried out as Merriam (2009) suggests. Reflection was the major process taking place in all stages of analysis. Every participant had interesting information to share and all notes taken during the interviews were kept in my notebook for further interpretation and association with the data collected.

All interviews, focus groups and individual, were immediately transcribed, as mentioned earlier in this chapter (See appendix A for samples). The monumental amount of data was thoroughly examined in an attempt to make sense of the whole information gathered. Reading the entire set of data, together with the notes taken, provides a sense of comprehensiveness and connectivity (Hatch, 2010).

Although I was familiar with the context of the study from the beginning, it was essential before starting any kind of analysis to keep open to emerging themes during the segmenting and coding process of data. As Berg (2009, p.320) advises, I tried to “look for similarities and dissimilarities- patterns in the data”. Having my research questions in mind, the iterative reading of my data and notes helped me write my own interpretations within the thematic context of the study.

Rather than taking one interpretation, I was reflecting all the time during the transcription process and kept asking questions of relevance to reality. To begin coding my data, I started with types of emotions mentioned by participants which had basis in literature discussed earlier in chapter three. The emerging data revealed copious emotions such as happiness, enthusiasm, disappointment, sadness, fear, pride, frustration, anger, and many others. It was a tedious attempt to analyze data according to the codes noted. Certain emotions recurred in situations which in many occasions did not have a common base with all or most of the participants. Analyzing data then according to emotions as primary codes could consequently lead to a boring account of repetitive emotional experiences with different situations. For example, a participant expressed ‘happiness’ while teaching children, another participant expressed happiness when being able to establish good relationships with parents while yet another participant talked about happy moments as a result of receiving feedback from his/her mentor teacher. In addition, some coded emotions like love, excitement and irritation had to be excluded because there was not enough data to support them. Therefore, a decision was made to read the transcribed data again and start a new coding process. Changing the coding approach, I looked for similar situations that all or most participants went through in their practicum and highlighted the emotions experienced in

those situations. Looking for similarities and relationships I was following Maxwell (2005) who suggests that such an approach allows a researcher to have a better idea of the 'coherent whole'. This time the resulting codes provided a better sense of data. Creswell (2007) believes that constant comparison of data will help a researcher develop and saturate the emerging categories. Thus, continuous comparison of events, incidents and emotions that occurred during the practicum allowed for categorization of data under a number of themes. A situation that took place in the classroom with relation to classroom management, for instance, could be associated with emotions like anger, happiness, confidence, fear or frustration. Those situations and the accompanied emotions were then put into categories which represent the participants' practicum experiences, challenges and the coping strategies they employed. The types of emotions were then classified within each category as positive or negative emotions. One essential step before starting the interpretation process was allowing for participants' and professional colleague's checking as explained earlier in this chapter.

4.6 Ethical considerations

The present study strived to assure the basic ethical considerations required for any educational research study. These considerations include: 1) respect of individuals' dignity; 2) clarity of the study's main topic and purpose; 3) voluntary participation; 4) privacy and confidentiality of all participants at all levels of the study; and 5) safety of participants from any possible harm as a result of their participation in the study. I made all possible effort to ensure that all of those ethical considerations were strictly adhered to at all times. To this end, three essential actions were taken.

As a mandatory procedure, a certificate of ethical research approval was sought from the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of education at the University of Exeter (see appendix B), in addition to an approval of the Research Ethics Committee in the higher education college where the study was carried out.

The purpose of the study was clearly explained to all participants at every stage and procedure taken during the study. Before the focus group and individual interviews, for instance, all participants were informed of the main objectives of the study, importance

of their contribution, and the way their responses (data) would be analyzed and reported. All the information and instructions were given in Arabic, the mother tongue of both the participants and the researcher. Consent forms were distributed to the student teachers and clarification of all statements was checked by the researcher before being signed and approved by the participants (See appendix C).

Student teachers' names and information were confidential at all stages of the study. All the interview recordings were kept safe, and all real names of participants were replaced with pseudonyms in the write up stage.

It is said that educational qualitative research is emotional by nature (Gilbert, 2001) and this may raise ethical questions about choosing the research methods, analyzing data or relationship with the participants. At this point, it is of significance to mention that, as an ESL and EFL instructor and supervisor, I have been involved in the English teaching process for 16 years until the time this study was implemented, in the United Arab Emirates and my home country.

Although learning and knowing more about my students' interests, learning concerns or emotions are always top priorities when planning or implementing my teaching strategies, in this current study my major aim was to explore a broader layer of students (i.e. BEd 3) who are viewed by educators, society and college as prospective teachers. This group of students had to complete a three-year mandatory requirement for graduation: the practicum in addition to one final fourth year training. It is important to say here, that I, the researcher, was not a part of this field experience programme at any level when the present study was conducted, nor were any of the participants my students for the academic year when the study was carried out. Hence, if any claim is to be made about my personal agenda, the only agenda that I would stress here is of the desire to understand better the very complicated set of emotions experienced by pre-service teachers in their practicum and the probable impact associated with those emotions in terms of student teachers' learning and teaching processes, as college students and prospective teachers.

It is hoped, therefore, through this study, that the findings will add to teacher educators' and policy makers' understanding of a critical issue, rarely taken into consideration when planning teacher education courses; namely pre-service teachers' emotions in the practicum.

For all the above reasons, I am confident that the present study was strictly conducted according to the ethical principles required by research ethics parameters. All data were managed and kept safe carefully and password-protected in files on my computer and on an external hard disk. This includes the audio files, in addition to hard copies of the same files.

4.6.1. Trustworthiness

Unlike the positivistic approach which is verified by the validity and reliability of the quantitative research, qualitative interpretive research is judged valid and reliable by using different terms. Lincoln and Guba (1985) were among the first researchers to evaluate the trustworthiness of qualitative research according to four main terms: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

To ensure trustworthiness of this study I utilized the following methods:

4.6.2. Credibility

It is important that the researcher maintains internal validity to his/her research, which means ensuring a match between reality and the findings (Merriam, 2009). Taking the fact that qualitative research deals with multiple realities, another tool from reality itself is needed to verify the findings obtained are credible. One strategy that helps researchers assess their findings is 'triangulation'. Four types of triangulation are suggested by Merriam (2009): multiple methods, multiple theories, multiple sources of data, and multiple investigators. For the purpose of this study, I relied on the multiple sources of data as follows:

- Cross-checking and comparison of data: I kept cross-checking my data and comparing the results obtained from different resources. All interviews scripts

(individual and focus groups) were examined carefully and cross-checked and compared with the critical incident documents. Perspectives of the same participants were also cross-checked and compared in the three main sources of data (i.e. focus-group, individual interview and the critical incident reflection).

- Random sampling: all students involved in the BEd3 year in the college were informed about the study and its main purposes. Students were told that participation was on a voluntary basis. Having had their agreement, female respondents were chosen randomly on equal chances of participation. All male students sent their written consent to participate via e-mails and signed agreement on hard copies.
- Respondent check: for validation purposes, responses to interview questions, as transcribed, were shared with the participants to avoid any misinterpretation of the data. Maxwell (2005, p.111) believes that member check is “The single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed”. All participants were given the opportunity to check their responses, editing, deleting or adding information they thought relevant. This validation process provides “as accurately as possible, a real representation of the students’ opinions” (Troudi and Jendli, 2011, p.31).
- Peer review: at different stages I had to ask a professional colleague to check some of my data. One of my colleagues, who specializes in qualitative research, checked my interview questions and examined some of my findings. Checking with a peer helped me make decisions determining how reasonable my initial findings were. The feedback I received confirmed the validation of the data collection tools I utilized in this study and the way my transcripts were analyzed and coded.
- Reflexivity: reflecting on myself as an educator and my involvement in this research study enabled me to avoid bias as much as possible. Being a teacher

myself made it necessary to clarify my position in the college and the relationships with the participants. This clarification would help the readers better understand the process by which I reached my interpretation of the data and clear up any ambiguity about the explanation of the findings.

4.6.3. Transferability

Generalizability, the term used in quantitative research, is replaced by another term in qualitative research called '*Transferability*' as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Transferability refers to the possibility of applying the findings of one context to similar situations (Major and Savin-Baden, 2010). Although this study is exploratory in nature, I took the responsibility as a researcher to provide much rich and valid data so that other researchers can benefit from other similar contexts. Providing detailed information about the participants' backgrounds, the context in which this present study was conducted and evidence from the participants' responses, represented in the quotes used, leads to a better understanding of the case in question and highlights areas for further research and investigation.

4.7. Limitations of the study

It is known that an exploratory study reveals more information the more a researcher goes deeper into it. Many issues may emerge during the research process or at the writing up stage. As far as the present study is concerned, three areas were identified as limitations that necessitate further future research.

One significant concern is the time constraint in relation to the nature of emotions and the participants involved in the study. To illustrate, collecting data took place two months after students had completed their practicum period. Though student teachers looked enthusiastic about recalling their actual emotions at particular events during the interviews, it would have added richer knowledge had data been collected during real teaching, learning or any other provisional situations. On the other hand, this study focused only on the pre-service teachers' emotional experiences in the practicum, an issue which is thought of as one point of strength due to the lack of literature that

addresses this area. However, involving other voices such as the students' college mentors, supervisors, or class teachers could have broadened the scope of the study adding invaluable data to the teacher education literature.

Although this study did not set out to raise gender issues, including such an element in future research may show valuable data that may affect the results and add more comprehensive understanding to the emotional experiences of both male and female student teachers in their practicum period.

Chapter Five

Results

The main purpose of the present study was to explore the student teachers' emotional experiences and the challenges they had faced during their third year practicum at the time of conducting the present study. This chapter aims at providing a synthesis of the findings in an attempt to link the data obtained to the research questions stated in chapter one. The findings present a description of the 16 pre-service teachers' emotional experiences, the challenges they had to deal with during their field training and the coping strategies students used to overcome those challenges. All those findings were based on the emerging themes defined during a thorough analysis of the in-depth individual interviews, focus groups and the critical incident reflective documents.

The chapter consists of three sections. Section 5.1 will report student teachers' types of emotions and feelings experienced during their practicum. Section 5.2 will demonstrate the challenges faced by the student teachers during their practicum. Section 5.3 will give an account of the coping strategies adopted by the student teachers to handle practicum challenges.

5.1 Student teachers' emotional experiences

Results obtained from all student teachers' responses show that all trainees experienced a wide range of emotions and feelings during their last practicum. One of the participants said: " I was just like a rainbow of emotions...though this may look very optimistic, but what I meant was that the amount of emotions I experienced at one time during my practicum was so confusing" (Budoor, a 3rd year student teacher).

The participants of the study were willing to share and talk at length about their emotional experience, the times they struggled to understand the incidents and situations they encountered, their failures in analyzing or even responding properly to some of them and their successes at other times to deal with them. Ayesha, for

example, commented on her happiness when she was praised by one of her students' mothers by saying: " I was extremely happy, but was unable to decide what to do or how to respond. I wanted to show my happiness but I didn't want the mother to think I was too excited and gave her the impression that I was rarely praised"

The range of emotions the student teachers talked about and shared in this study reflected their perceptions and evaluation of their practicum experience until the end of their third year training- just one year before their final practicum which is a mandatory requirement for graduation.

During the interviews and the focus group discussions, the student teachers stressed many times that they were surprised by certain questions about their emotions. They, as most of the students emphasized, never thought that talking about their emotions mattered. Their learning at the college included elements on teaching and learning strategies, but never were their emotions mentioned, as they claimed. The practicum for them was a learning experience and they have seemingly excluded their feelings from that learning opportunity. The field training was perceived by most of them as a challenge to prove one's competence as a prospective teacher rather than a time to know and learn about their feelings and how to manage or interpret them.

Responses to the first research question: "What are the student teachers' emotional experiences during the practicum?" from the three focus groups, 16 in-depth interviews and 16 critical incident reflections were reviewed, analyzed and organized into two major categories: the positive emotions and the negative emotions. Those emotions were then allocated into the eight most important themes and sub-themes.

The positive emotional experiences of the participants during their field training demonstrated a wide range of emotions that were used reciprocally. Student teachers' responses included expressions that boosted emotions like pride, happiness, excitement, enthusiasm, confidence, optimism, satisfaction, delightedness, joy, gratitude and thankfulness. The resulting emotions were mostly connected to contexts

where participants celebrated their successes and achievements from different perspectives. Those contexts were categorized in three main themes: professional learning, support and assistance and self-awareness.

In contrast, the student teachers' negative emotional experience during their practicum revealed a broader range of negative feelings. Analysis of data obtained from the three research tools of the present study indicated that those emotions recurred on almost a daily basis. Participants' responses included emotions like fear, terror, panic, frustration, disappointment, sadness, discomfort, anxiety, shock, worry, hatred, confusion, anger, lack of confidence and helplessness. Those negative emotions were associated with a variety of incidents and situations. The three themes that emerged from those situations were mainly: student behaviour management, teacher as a role-model and teaching responsibility. Both categories; the positive and negative emotional experiences, will be explained in the following sections.

5.1.1 Positive Emotional Experience

1) Professional learning

Results provided by student teachers from all three research tools showed that the participants were aware that their practicum was an opportunity to learn and gain more experience as prospective teachers. The data indicated that most of the participants developed a sense of professional learning in different teaching areas during their field training. Emotions that they expressed during the interviews and focus groups in addition to those situations they mentioned in their critical incident reflections showed a mixture of 'happy' feelings. It seems they were able to realize their growth and the way their professional self was being constructed. Student teachers' professional learning was categorized into three sub-themes; classroom practices, rapport with students and communication with parents. Positive emotions included happiness, excitement, enthusiasm, confidence, optimism, satisfaction, delightedness and joy.

- **Classroom practices**

All participants experienced a new understanding of classroom practices during their practicum. For most of them it was one of the fundamental challenges, as it will be explained later in this chapter, which provoked negative feelings at different times. Nevertheless, the same participants expressed a mixture of 'happy' feelings while teaching in their classrooms.

Asma wrote in her critical incident reflection:

When I was in the practicum, the class teacher and I had a meeting to discuss the classroom management issues. We were trying to find possible ways that would help us manage the class properly and keep the students interested, quiet, and having fun. What we decided at the end was to take a big sheet of white cartoon to the class. We asked all students to write on this sheet things that would keep them focused, enjoying and calm in the class. We thought that by sharing this action with the students we would be able to manage their behaviour easily in the class. And 'Yes', it worked!... Actually, I was full of happiness and satisfaction, because that decision had helped me keep the class calm and less noisy. I also felt confident of my abilities to manage the class in the future.

Asma's happiness and satisfaction seemed to result from her confidence in her abilities as a teacher and from her class mentor's support. Her use of the pronoun 'We' seemed to refer, indirectly, to her feeling of equality with the class teacher, even though she was still a student teacher. Salem, a male student, also echoed those happy feelings regarding his classroom management techniques. He wrote in his reflection:

The students were not paying attention or listening to the mentor teacher during his lesson. So, I asked his permission to try something that I thought may help

the teacher continue the lesson with less noise and more attention. The teacher kindly gave me the permission. The whole class was a mess. I just stood in front of the class and said nothing. I looked at the students silently until everyone looked at me. Some students told their peers that I was there and that they needed to pay attention to me. That took almost two minutes until the whole class became quiet and everyone was looking at me. Then I continued the lesson and the mentor teacher seemed amazed by the way I could manage the students. Frankly speaking, I, myself, was amazed. I couldn't imagine that I would be able to do that. At that moment I felt so happy and proud of myself.

Likewise, during the interview, Alyia was very happy talking about her classroom teaching practices. She was fully aware of the big responsibility teaching as a profession holds on her, yet she was determined to develop her skills and improve her performance. She said:

I wanted to be a successful teacher. As a trainee I am very pleased to teach and be face to face with 25 children in each of my three classes for five weeks. It was a hard job...I was undergoing personal difficulties as it was the start of my pregnancy, but I was very much satisfied with my performance regardless of the problems I faced during that time. I feel delighted about being there in the classroom...teaching kids, making mistakes and learning from them.

Ali, Hassan and Badr, all male student teachers, have also experienced equal happiness while teaching in their classrooms, although they would mention later how challenging it was for them to cope with such challenges.

It seems that those happy feelings that many trainees had experienced resulted from their ability to manage, to an extent, their students' behaviours and interact with them effectively. The same trainees, however, at different times of the data collection stage, expressed a contrasting feeling of "unhappiness" towards challenges that impeded their

progress and learning process during their practicum. But due to the complexity of teaching as a profession, those contradictory feelings are inevitable.

- **Rapport with students**

All participants realized that interpersonal relationships in the classroom with their children are integral components of their teaching. Results from the three research tools used show that 11 students out of 16 commented on their positive relationship with their students. The participants seemed to be able to understand their students' needs and as a result avoid possible emergent trouble. Some examples are:

Amal said during the interview:

I always prefer a barrier that should be there between anybody and me. I don't like someone to talk very closely to me...the case was different with those kids I taught. I felt so happy to teach them. They respected me and I think they loved me because I was kind to them.

Likewise, Mohammad expressed his happiness about the good relationship he was able to establish with his students. During the focus group discussion he said:

I felt extremely happy when I noticed that my students interacted with me and understood the lesson, even though I used Arabic to make my task easier. In fact, using Arabic saved my time and helped me create a great relationship with my students. I could feel their respect and love for me. I was really happy.

Sara was also very happy to establish a good relationship with her students from the first day in her practicum. She said in her interview:

I cannot tell you how happy I felt when I was able during my practicum to understand my students' needs, abilities and interests. Students loved and trusted me from the first day. I was full of happiness from head to toe.

Badr, like the majority of participants, seemed to pride himself and his personality on achieving a good relationship with his students. The ability to establish a rapport with the students seemed to have a positive impact on their attitude to teaching, regardless of the challenging nature of the practicum as they viewed it.

- **Communication with parents**

Results obtained from the critical incidents show that few participants in this study expressed positive emotions towards having had parents involved in their children's educational pursuit at school, although those participants were working in schools on a temporary basis. Student teachers who talked about positive feelings perceived their ability to communicate with parents as one of their successful achievements. Hassan, for example, expressed his happiness as he felt appreciated by his student's mother. Hassan wrote in his critical incident reflection:

In one of the parents' meetings, I was in charge of grade one students...Suddenly; one of the students' mothers approached me and started asking me about her child and his academic level. That little talk with the mother made me happy for the whole day. I couldn't believe that I was able to put a smile on the mother's face as she left the meeting thanking me for that good news that I told about her child.

Equally, Amal shared happy feelings regarding her ability to communicate with one of her children's mothers. She wrote in her reflection:

I felt really happy. It was my first contact with one of my students' parents. I felt enthusiastic about becoming a teacher and being in touch with students and their parents. I know it is not always easy to deal with parents, but at that time when the mother talked to me, I felt confident telling her about her son and the little I knew about the improvement he was making in the class.

Other participants talked about happy emotions because they were praised by their students' parents and received positive feedback about their performance and teaching practices.

It is clear that the positive parent-teacher student relationship had a significant impact on the participants' self-confidence and the way they estimated their abilities. It seemed that parents' involvement in the teaching-learning process during the pre-service teachers' practicum and the positive feedback they provided had fostered the student teacher-student relationship and contributed to a better self-image for the trainees. In addition, it is noticeable that parents were probably viewed as one of the reasons for stress during the practicum, and a success in socializing with them seemed to lessen the burdens on their shoulders and improve their communication skills.

2) Support and assistance

The data provided by the participants in the individual interviews and focus groups indicated that the emotions of happiness, gratitude and thankfulness were experienced by few participants. Those student teachers appreciated the support they received from their country, from their college in terms of the curriculum and courses it offered to them, and from the school they were assigned to during their practicum.

- **Country support and assistance**

Results obtained from the focus groups discussions showed that only two student teachers appreciated the different kinds of support they received from their country's educational system represented by the free education they were offered and the privileges they receive once they entered the college. Such privileges, as perceived by the participants, include receiving free laptops, stipends, and free accommodation for those whose residences are in remote areas. Those feelings of gratefulness and thankfulness occurred frequently, as the two participants expressed in the interviews, whenever they went to their classes to teach children and realize the facilities the government has made available for the students to learn and be better citizens. Saif said:

Honestly, helping my country and paying it back for all the great facilities it provided for us during our educational journey was my main reason to be a teacher. This feeling never left me during the practicum. Wherever I go and whenever I look at children behind their desks...I really feel grateful for all that my country gave to me.

Similarly, Mohammad shared the same feeling of gratitude towards his country's support. He said:

I felt that the least I could do to pay my country back for all the great things I got during my studies was to show gratitude. It's not a business-like issue. It's rather a big 'Thank you' to all that I had. I now have my own laptop and a very good stipend. It is because of that great support I received from my country that I am here now, a student teacher and a prospective teacher. I couldn't ignore this fact during the practicum...everything there...the children, the books, the beautiful conditioned classes...everything...was there and I couldn't but feel thankful.

- **College support and assistance:**

Results obtained from the individual interviews and the focus groups indicated that little or no reference was made to the support that student teachers received from the college during their practicum. This lack of emotional support in particular, seemed to be one of the challenges they faced, as will be discussed later in this chapter. However, a few participants felt thankful to their college and to the pedagogical knowledge they gained from the courses they took once they joined the teacher education programme. Alyia said during her interview:

They [her college teachers] knew that I have the ability to lecture or to write. I got constant psychological support from them. It's because of their support that I could survive the practicum and I am very thankful for all the help they provided.

Similarly, Hassan shared the same feeling of thankfulness to the college support and to the positive feedback he used to receive from his college supervisor. He said in his interview:

The college did its best. They [the college supervisors] used to visit us in schools and ask about us. They observed our classes and gave feedback. They used to talk to our class mentors to give us some support.

Although she did not articulate a word of gratitude to the college, Warda, a further participant, seemed to be happy with the support she got from the college during her practicum. She said in her interview:

There was a complete interest from the college. They [college supervisors] used to visit us twice or three times a week to observe our progress. They used to attend our classes and follow up our performance...and give us feedback about what to do and what to avoid.

It is clear that those participants were alert to the fact that support from their college, the place where they learned and studied various theories and teaching techniques, was of considerable importance. Their responses reflected their readiness to learn from the practicum and make sense of their theoretical learning in their classrooms. In addition, those feelings of gratitude pointed out the need for colleges to make a better effort to bridge the gap between student teachers and their college supervisors.

- **School support**

Findings obtained from the three research tools showed that only one participant was satisfied with the support she received from the school she worked in during her practicum. Although Ayesha, one of the participants, talked differently in her critical incident reflection and seemed unhappy about the lack of school support, she said in her interview “The school spared no effort [to help me]. Both administration and teachers were supportive”.

Ayesha, and all other participants, talked at length about the lack of support they received from their schools during their training. More details about the reasons for this will be discussed later in this chapter.

3) Self-awareness

Results obtained from the individual interviews only indicated that all participants experienced happy feelings and expressed varying beliefs and experiences about teaching and learning during their practicum. Their responses showed positive signs towards their 'selves'. The field training seemed to bring to their consciousness different kinds of emotions that increased the sense of self. The classroom and the school for them were emotional work places where they experienced individual appraisals and attributions of various events and situations. Although participants did not talk at length about their self-awareness, most of them compared their 'selves' before and after their last field training. They have realized a remarkable change, as some of them reported, in the way they talked, behaved or responded to certain events. During his interview, Saif commented on his learning about 'himself' during the practicum saying:

Nowadays, if I face any problem, even with my father, mother, sisters and brothers, I try to understand that problem first. Previously, I used to depend on only one way of thinking...now I try to look at it [the problem] from different perspectives; I even pretend to be at the students' ages. I was not sure before that I, Saif, can solve my own problems. I'm happy about that.

Ayesha reiterated what Saif and others said about their self-awareness confirming that she is a decent good person and that during the practicum she "learned not to trust all people", but she is happy for one reason as she said:

I learned how to collaborate with my friends and colleagues. I can explain the lesson efficiently. I have no problem with that. I learnt to be patient. I learnt how to form and polish my professional personality...one which is respected by all students. It's exciting to discover this just before being there...in schools as a real teacher.

Asma confirmed that at the end of her practicum experience she felt self-satisfied compared to her preceding early practicum. Some other participants realized that teaching is "not only knowing about the subject we teach...it is also about learning

about one's self, other teachers, other people, who work with you and students", said Budoor. For many of the student teachers, knowing and learning about their strengths and weaknesses during the practicum empowered their teaching and helped them to slightly adjust to certain situations. It is in a sense developing self-control skills which Raddawi and Troudi (2014, p.181) view as "crucial in creating a positive climate in the classroom as it allows teachers to moderate their negative and positive emotions". Warda, for instance, was aware of her weakness and confirmed that:

I learnt how to be dedicated, how to love what I was doing and how to face my problems. I know I have some weaknesses [laughing] mainly being inactive sometimes, but I also know I can develop and learn better how to behave and how to improve.

Shamsa realized that organization was the key to success and felt happy about developing her organizational as well as communication skills during the practicum. She said in her interview:

I discovered that I should be a well-organized teacher to succeed in my practicum and in my future career...previously, I was not organized, even in my studies at the college. I used to let everything go its course per se. And I also discovered that being diplomatic always works [smiling]...I never showed my anger to the school principal and I learnt how to deal with all bosses diplomatically.

Other participants share similar views about their 'discoveries' regarding their 'selves'. They expressed their happiness towards realizations that were mainly about the need to develop their ability to control their reactions to negative events and incidents. Many of the interviewees expressed their happiness towards becoming 'more tolerant' than before in terms of punishing their students or 'more strict' when students misbehaved. It is clear that self-awareness reflected an advanced thinking skill on the part of the participants. Their responses, however, seemed to be contradictory as findings from the three research data collection tools showed. The focus group interviews seemed to affect the way they responded to certain questions. The contrasting side of their

answers appeared clearly in their individual interviews and critical incidents documents. Nevertheless, this contradiction is probably due to the student teachers' lack of experience and inability to understand and interpret their emotions at certain situations and incidents. The amazement most of the participants showed during the interviews when asked about their emotional experience reflected their need to know more about themselves and their emotions. Their inability to partially understand their feelings would likely justify their failure, most of the time, to cope effectively with the challenges they encountered during their practicum, as will be shown later. Therefore, promoting student teachers' self-awareness within an integrated emotional intelligence course seems to be urgent in the UAE teacher education programmes, although it "requires patience, persistence and tact and most importantly teachers to be equipped with these skills" (Raddawi and Troudi, 2014, P.182).

5.1.2 Negative Emotional Experience

Results provided by all participants in the individual interviews, focus groups discussions and critical incidents reflections showed a wide range of negative feelings in three main areas: student behaviour management, teacher as a role model and teaching responsibility. Feelings experienced included fear, terror, panic, frustration, disappointment, sadness, discomfort, anxiety, shock, worry, hatred, confusion, anger, lack of confidence and helplessness.

1) Student behaviour management

All participants, as the data indicated, experienced negative emotions in various student behaviour management issues. Themes related to those negative emotions and experienced by all the trainees focused on two main areas: teaching special needs

students and failure to provide emotional support. Feelings expressed included fear, terror, panic, scare, frustration, sadness and disappointment.

- **Teaching special needs students**

All of the 16 student teachers, as the results showed, reported negative feelings towards teaching special needs students in their classrooms. They considered teaching students with different special needs as one of the most negative features in their practicum. However, only four participants expressed feelings of sadness and disappointment about their experience with special needs students whereas others identified teaching such group of students as one of the most challenging tasks, as will be explained later in this chapter.

Alyia talked sadly during her interview about her inability to teach students with special needs. She said:

I didn't face any difficulties in teaching students by using all the strategies we learnt. But I wasn't able at all to deal with the Special Needs [with a stress on the two words] students. I was very sad...really sad...I faced five students of special needs in one classroom! I didn't know whether I gave them enough attention or I just distributed a general focus over all the students!...I don't think it was challenging, but I could say it was difficult for me to differentiate between the normal students and the special needs and to be fair with both of them and still keep the same pace to cover the lesson.

This sad feeling and other similar negative emotions were shared by three other interviewees, who talked at different occasions about their happiness towards establishing good rapport with their students. However, lacking the knowledge and experience in teaching and dealing with special needs children affected them negatively and affected their learning experience as well.

Sara, for example, expressed more than sad feelings. She was scared of teaching students with special needs and she felt the urgent need to learn more about them and

to gain more knowledge about dealing with this group of children. For her, it is not only important to know how many special needs students a teacher may have in her classroom. Rather, it is how to teach them all well without feeling helpless. She identified different student behaviour issues at which she felt scared and helpless. She said in her interview:

I need to learn more about different ways that I can use to deal with aggressive, silent, hyperactive or special needs children, because this group of students was the scariest for me... And for sure I want to learn how to teach students with autism. I felt helpless in my class once because I didn't know how to simplify the lesson to a child with autism. Although I was sympathetic with these students, their presence in my class scared me. I didn't have enough experience on how to deal with them and unless I get this experience, I'm afraid I may quit teaching.

It was obvious that the participants' sad feelings towards their failure or inability to deal with special needs children stemmed from the fact that their college-based course did not include a module about the pedagogy of special education, at least for the last three years of the student teachers' practicum. On different occasions, students mentioned their ability to implement a variety of teaching strategies and techniques that they studied at their college. Therefore, their negative emotions can be understood as a normal result of not having the same learning opportunity that could have eased the tension they experienced during their practicum. Teaching special needs children is stated as one of the biggest challenges most trainees had to face during their practicum. More examples and justifications will be discussed later in this chapter.

- **Failure to provide emotional support**

Although it was only stressed by one participant, the emphasis that this participant gave to his sad feelings in the focus group discussion made it has to be mentioned. Saif looked very sad when he shared his story about one of his students during the practicum. His inability to support that student emotionally and educationally seemed to negatively affect his practicum experience. Saif said:

It was not easy for me to understand every child's psychological needs or problems. One of my students was the only son for his parents; the other's parents were divorced and many in the class were special needs students and so on. I myself needed someone to take care of at many times during the practicum. I felt really sad...very sad indeed that I couldn't provide my students...all of them...the love and care they were expecting [deep sigh]...I still feel sad for letting my students down.

Saif, like many other participants, realized the importance of establishing good rapport with students and supporting them intellectually and emotionally. But he was the only one among the 16 participants who expressed his sadness in public. Others who felt that need for emotional support were more conservative during the interviews and focus groups and expressed all their emotional needs in writing, as will be presented later in this chapter. Probably Saif, unlike other participants, was open to share every little story about his practicum even though this might have given the impression that he was a weak man. It is part of the Arab culture that males should not show or talk about their weaknesses, especially in terms of emotions as they are always viewed by their societies to be symbols of rationality, strength, power and safety. Saif's response also indicated the need for emotional support, which all student teachers seemed to lack and yet were prepared to write about in their critical incident reflections.

2) Teacher as a role model

Student teachers' responses gathered from the three research data collection tools indicated that the perception of the teacher as a role model had been influenced by many factors including family, society, friends or media. It seemed that the absence of a positive teacher image during their school years has shaped student teachers' negative perception of teachers in general and primary school ones in particular.

Feelings towards their image as teachers and other teachers' images intermingled during the practicum experience. The most obvious emotions revealed during the individual and focus groups interviews, together with the written critical incident

reflections, were those negative emotions of fear, anxiety, confusion, discomfort and frustration.

Student teachers' responses shed light on the difficulty faced by them in dealing with the transitional state from being an observing student into a practicing teacher. The efforts needed to adjust to that newly appointed position were, most of the time, accompanied by negative feelings towards the self-image. The participants' lack of experience worried them and probably contributed to the tension they had to deal with during their practicum. The results obtained from the participants' responses showed their fear of the image that would stay long in their students' memory or those they worked with (i.e. the school principals, their peers, school teachers or others). They also talked about the absence or lack of positive and competent examples of teachers in their memoirs.

Saif, in his interview, said:

The teacher's image nowadays is not at all good. It is really very pessimistic to think so, but I could see during the practicum that the teachers there were more experienced and qualified than me and yet they were not viewed as good teachers or competent ones. Some teachers there didn't have this much passion for teaching and you could see why their students did not trust them. I felt scared all the days during the practicum...of how my students would look at and think of me!

Other participants shared the same view with Saif and expressed their feelings of fear towards their images as teachers and the way they might be viewed by their students in the long run.

Anood said during her interview:

I wasn't psychologically ready to be a teacher...the school was a co-education one and it was chaos. Naturally, I am a quick-tempered person who loses nerves and I might even beat or do anything else. That was what terrified me towards teaching profession and the way my students may see me in future.

Ali and other male participants also expressed their fear about the way their students would view them. It was obvious that previous early experiences of the self in confrontation with other teachers' images had negatively affected their feelings towards themselves during the practicum. Ayesha, for instance, in her reflective critical paper, wrote:

I will never forget that teacher's aggressive response towards my request to use the resources room to help her prepare for one of her planned lessons. I really wanted to show her that I have good ideas too that I can share with her...I didn't know why she decided to take that awful side and I didn't understand her constant aggression and unprofessional reactions...what was felt then was more than words could describe...the image of that teacher was engraved in my memory and I was always scared...thinking of my ability to impress my students in the future and set a good example of a professional and a good teacher.

It seemed for Ayesha that the model of teachers that the student teachers encountered had made a negative impression and resulted in frustrating dispositions and attitudes towards the teaching profession. The previous image of a good teacher that some of the participants tried to show in their practicum seemed to be met with mostly school or classroom barriers which affected their perspectives, teaching and their relationship with their students and others.

3) Teaching responsibility

Results obtained from students' responses to the three main research questions showed that all participants shared a strong mixed feeling of anxiety towards the responsibility of teaching. Although it can be understood as anxiety of commitment to the teaching profession rather than fearing to teach where most of the participants expressed feelings fear, anxiety, confusion, discomfort and frustration, those mixed feelings were accompanied by strong desires to become responsible teachers. The

participants expressed their fear of taking the lead in the classrooms at different stages. Their fears, as their responses revealed, were mainly directed towards their students' learning rather than fears of the teaching pedagogies of the subjects they may teach in the future. However, their view of their own self-awareness and the constant desire to impress their students in the practicum with positive images as future teachers is a mixture of feelings experienced by most participants. This can be viewed as positive social maturity which entails an understanding of the complexity of the teaching profession and the challenges the professional identity of a teacher may encounter within a society.

Hassan said during the focus group discussion:

It is a great responsibility for one to be in charge of a generation of youngsters. I am not competent enough yet to teach three subjects. It will be a disaster to teach them wrong information or wrong language. I feel scared of hurting those children the same way I was hurt by some of my teachers.

Ali, a further participant, reiterated Hassan's feelings and said during the focus group interview:

Just like Hassan, I feel scared of this profession because it is not like any other profession. I am a builder, but unlike any builder...I'm not building a factory or a company. I'm building a huge generation of brains, hearts, morals, values and principles...I'm building using my own knowledge and unless this knowledge is solid and useful, the whole generation would fall down!

Likewise, Huda and others shared the same strong sense of fear towards teaching. All student teachers' responses showed wisdom in the way teaching is perceived. They all felt that teaching is not only about raising students' academic standards nor about teaching predetermined lesson plans. They were aware that teaching consists of more than one component that should contribute to fostering children's learning and prosperity. Huda said in her interview:

I felt scared of teaching during the practicum...I felt scared of the big responsibility awaiting for me in the near future. Although I am normally a positive

person, I was scared because I always thought of my students and the amount of knowledge they would learn from me. I always wondered if I will be able to create an attractive and conducive learning environment for them all the time...I don't really know...I love teaching but...There is always a 'but' in serious matters!

Teaching is viewed as a complex profession, as all participants commented. It involves matters of minds and hearts. Student teachers, as their responses showed, recognized the fact that teaching requires more than a passion to teach or mastery of teaching strategies or techniques. This fear of teaching and the high sense of accountability is probably due to the student teachers' personal experiences themselves in their previous years of studies. The absence of the positive role model teacher, as the previous finding revealed, also seemed to negatively affect their sense of responsibility and commitment towards teaching.

5.2. Challenges that student teachers face during the practicum

Teaching is a demanding complex job. It can be a positive and enriching experience or a negative and frustrating one. All student teachers in this study found their practicum experience quite challenging in different ways. It was not only the teaching itself, as most of them reported. It was rather those stressful requirements related to their evaluation at the end of their training, the adjustment needed to work in a new environment other than the college classroom and the desire to prove themselves competent and qualified in front of multiple evaluators (e.g. classroom teacher, students, college supervisor, school principal, parents, etc). All those sources of pressure necessitated hard work which was accompanied by a mixture of feelings and confused emotions.

Data collected from the trainees' responses during the interviews (focus group and individual) and critical incident reflections revealed a range of positive and negative emotions towards a variety of challenges reported during their practicum. Interestingly, when asked about the challenges they encountered during the practicum, most of the participants declared a desire to be teachers and showed a sense of commitment to the

teaching profession, although they talked at length about their fear of the teaching responsibility and the commitment it requires at other stages at the study.

One significant finding among other results was that the majority of the trainees, faced by challenging situations during their training period, showed a willingness to quit the job of teaching in the future if they were unable to adapt to the surrounding new demanding environment.

Challenges that emerged from student teachers' responses were categorized under five themes: low language proficiency, content knowledge, theory-practice gap, lack of support, and personal traits.

5.2.1. Low language proficiency

The most challenging aspect of the practicum, as reported by all of the participants, was their low English language proficiency. It was difficult for them to try to instruct their students via the English language in three subject matters (i.e. English, Math and Science). The low proficiency all participants talked about focused on the lack of vocabulary, low reading and writing skills, grammar and spelling mistakes, and inability to impart knowledge.

Most student teachers reported their low English language skills as a barrier to their progress in their practicum. Arabic, their first language, was always used to bridge the gap between what they aimed to teach and what was missing. Troudi (2009) summarizes this dilemma of adding to the cognitive burden of the student who has to study in a language other than his/her mother tongue (Arabic in this context) and asserts that "opting for a policy of EMI will certainly disadvantage students with little or no proficiency in English...For many students the burden of having to study content subjects in an alien language can be detrimental" (pp.210-211). Ali confirmed during the focus group discussion this fear of using English:

I always feel scared when I want to teach Math or Science in English. It is not the content; rather it is which language and terminology you are using. I used Arabic

most of the time during the practicum and it worked well...far better than when I taught in English.

Saif echoed Ali during the same focus group discussion and stated that:

I suffer from a weakness in grammar and lack of practice to improve...I can't even write a letter in one word without double checking all the time...I know I have many grammatical and spelling mistakes and this scares me...but whenever I'm in class I try to use a simple language that would not cause me any embarrassment in front of my students or mentor teacher.

Most of the student teachers were scared of their frequent grammatical errors and the corrections they needed to make while they were teaching. It seemed that the idea of being evaluated by others who saw and observed them resulted in more mistakes and more confusion. Students study all their modules in English in the college, yet their fear of using the wrong language impeded their learning as prospective teachers. Hassan said during his individual interview:

My weak point at English is reading...Reading only is my concern. Arabs in general are weak at reading, probably because we don't read much as we don't like reading. I myself don't like reading, frankly speaking. If I want to read, I read only selective articles in newspapers...I do not think I'll make any progress if I do not read to improve my grammar. It's really shameful when I am always corrected by my mentor teacher in the class...for only simple and silly mistakes.

Although Hassan and other participants blame themselves for the lack of reading skills which affects their teaching, it is probable that they were not given sufficient feedback in their college-based courses as to how to improve their reading skills and avoid making the same grammatical mistakes. It is also possible that this lack in language proficiency is not real. Being observed by their mentor teachers and students most of the time caused the participants much confusion and fear. That is to say, it seems that a mixture of negative feelings arise when English and Arabic are in conflict with each other. Some participants think that apart from their low proficiency level in English, the problem lies in having to use English in front of others. Being on the spot and having to be observed

and evaluated on performance and language issues can add to the level of anxiety a student teacher feels. Ayesha, for instance, said during her interview:

The most problematic aspect is grammar; I suffer from it a lot. When I am talking to someone I cannot speak well, but while I am speaking to myself I produce good English, especially when I am about to go to bed. I don't know the reason! May be because I always fear being corrected...vocabulary is another story! ...I am extremely scared.

Well-prepared student teachers should be able to take the practicum experience as a source for enhancing their college learning and improving their language and teaching skills. The responses of the participants reflected the amount of stress they felt due to the lack of language proficiency and mastery. It seems also stressful to the student teachers to be assessed and evaluated where their language skills were not improved. Their failed attempts to improve their recurring grammatical mistakes indicated the need to include an element of positive and constructive feedback in their college-based courses. This lack of language proficiency reported by most of the participants has resulted in feelings of anxiety, anger and frustration towards imparting the wrong knowledge to students. Asma, for example, said in her interview:

It would be difficult for me to teach the kids without mastering the language. I feel anxious and angry whenever I fail to teach my students the right piece of information because I don't know the right word or terminology...I cannot tell you how many times I felt frustrated in the class because I couldn't give the right word to my students.

It seems that most student teachers had experienced a negative feeling about their language proficiency; however, one of them, Alyia, was able to accept this challenge and she insisted on turning those failing attempts to correct her grammatical mistakes into positive opportunities to learn. She was fully aware of the fact that she was not a native speaker of the English language and that was why she had experienced a mixture of positive and negative feelings about making mistakes and learning from them. Alyia said in her interview:

I am very pleased to teach the three subjects in English. I have the will and persistence to teach them in English although it is not my first language. There is a sort of fear towards that issue...So, if I am not competent, my teaching won't be accurate...I am in need of being linguistically trained well so that I can build my students right. I am going to teach science, and mathematics in English...I do believe that I should personally improve my English and should not depend only on my study at the college...I must strengthen my competence in teaching three subjects in English. I admit there is fear, but I have great determination for challenging the difficulties.

This lack of language proficiency can probably be attributed to other external factors like low level of English learning at early years in schools. Some participants were dissatisfied with the English language classes they had when they were in their primary, preparatory and secondary schools. Their teachers at those times, as some participants perceived them, were not well-qualified to teach English. The trainees seemed to struggle, as students, from difficulties in learning the language and lacked the correct guidance or support. In addition, they had negative images about their own English teachers which consequently affected their willingness to make any attempts to improve or develop their language skills. The following set of participants' responses, mostly obtained from the focus group discussions, reflected how frustrated some trainees felt about the quality of English language learning they had when they were still students in their schools.

Mohammad said:

I think, what I have learnt about English from my previous 14 years was all about "What is your favorite hobby?"[laughing sarcastically]...that was almost the only topic I learnt in all my stages of study- primary, preparatory until secondary...this is really sad...I was unlucky with my teachers...the teachers' inability to improve my language frustrated me a lot and I think it was one reason why I cannot do well now.

Saif seemed to directly blame his teachers for his current low language proficiency. He said:

I admit my poor English language skills, but it is not only my fault...all my teachers in the previous school years were not good enough or well-qualified to teach or help me improve my English language skills.

Similarly, Salem talked angrily about his English teachers while he was still a student at schools. He believed that his current low language proficiency was attributed to the absence of good role model teachers and the poor quality of teaching. Sara also hated that feeling of helplessness, during the practicum, when she tried to use a simple word and she could not remember or didn't know it. She attributed this lack of vocabulary to the wrong techniques her previous teachers used to employ in their teaching in her early years of study. She stated in her interview:

Sometimes I misuse words in English because I try to translate their meanings into Arabic first then use them, as my teachers used to ask us to do when I was in my high school...I always used Arabic when I felt stuck and thought that was the right and easiest way to teach...but I always hated when I realized that my poor English was just because my teachers did not help me improve my vocabulary or learn in a better way.

5.2.2. Content knowledge

Though it may be expected that student teachers would have studied sufficient content knowledge courses before their field training, most trainees in the current research study revealed different negative feelings towards the lack of content knowledge they have gained from their college-based courses. Although many of them showed positive emotions towards their teaching experience and their ability to establish a positive relationship with their students, the lack of knowledge in the three subject matters imposed a lot of stress on them during their training period.

Responses obtained from the three research tools indicated that most of the participants attributed their inability to impart knowledge to students, apart from their low language proficiency, to a) a lack of content knowledge required at certain stages of

their teaching; b) a mismatch between curriculum and the local environment; and c) a mismatch between the high standards expected in the curricula and the reality of the students' low proficiency level in the primary schools.

- **Lack of content knowledge**

All the participants believed that a well-prepared teacher should have the pedagogical and content knowledge that facilitate, rather than hinder, students' learning. Most of the trainees admitted that sufficient knowledge of the subject taught should have had a less stressful impact on their performance and instruction in the classroom. Amal said in her interview:

Every subject is a big challenge by itself...then to teach three subjects in English is a nightmare. My problem is always facing people...and with this lack of language proficiency and content knowledge I feel so scared. It was disappointed to me in many of my classes during the practicum to feel that I did not have enough information about what I was supposed to teach. I think I have learnt enough of mathematics in the college but not of science and English. Therefore, I taught more mathematics lessons than other subjects to avoid feeling frustrated.

It seems that Amal, like many of her peers, attributed the lack of content knowledge to the courses she studied at her college. For teachers to be able to scaffold their students' learning, they need to provide them with the correct knowledge and tools to help them relate to that learning. Participants in this study indicated that their lack of content knowledge in the three subject matters was the most challenging component of their practicum. Their biggest fear, as many of them reported, was that of being asked questions by their students to which they did not have the answers. They were afraid to be pushed beyond their limits and face their students with frustration. Warda, in her interview, expressed this fear and said:

I'm optimistic about that situation as I will be able to teach them [the students] the three subjects in English...But, on the other hand, I am anxious about my ability to convey my message especially when I do not have enough information...how would the students comprehend what I would be teaching?...I always question

myself and my ability to perform this in a right way. I am scared because I know teaching is not only about the way we teach, it is also about what we teach.

Student teachers' fear of their inability to impart knowledge can be partially justifiable if the college-based course preparation activities were not sufficient, as some of them indicated. Yet, this lack of content knowledge can probably be attributed to participants' unwillingness to improve their reading skills. Most of the trainees when they talked about their low language proficiency mentioned poor reading skills among their weaknesses. Without this command of the subject knowledge, negative feelings are apt to rise from time to time. Badr, for example, said during the focus group discussion:

I'm not sure about my ability to teach three content subjects in English. I'm sure of my ability to teach those subjects excellently in Arabic, but not in English...Knowing all about the scientific and mathematical terminologies is not easy at all. I feel scared when I think that I might be asked a difficult question by a student who is just in grade two or three! I know I should read more and more but reading itself is a burden!

Huda and many other participants expressed the same negative feelings towards the lack of content knowledge they believed to be challenging.

Student teachers' responses may simply mean that being a well-prepared pre-service teacher means having sufficient content knowledge to teach the primary school grades. Most of the trainees expressed their satisfaction about the teaching techniques they learnt in their college-based courses but without being able to implement those techniques with the correct pedagogical practices and subject knowledge required, it would be a challenge to face.

Interestingly, no participant mentioned a challenge in teaching an interdisciplinary curriculum. They were talking about difficulty in teaching Mathematics, Science or English separately. In other words, none of the trainees mentioned that a teacher should have sufficient content knowledge that would allow a smooth transition among those three subjects taught in one session.

- **Mismatch between curriculum and local environment**

All student teachers perceived teaching as appropriateness of the curriculum to the local environment in which this curriculum is to be taught. At the earlier stages of the interviews, many participants expressed their satisfaction towards mastering the teaching methods and techniques. But they were frequently challenged by the content they were required to teach. They believed that the science curriculum for example, was inappropriate to their country's environmental and natural features. It created a challenge for them to teach scientific items they themselves were not familiar with or which they were lacking in knowledge. Their feelings ranged from frustration and anger to confusion and anxiety. They were unable to teach the material which looked unfamiliar to them. Mohammad said in this regard during the focus group interview:

I noticed that the class teacher was wasting a lot of time trying to explain to the students the concept of four seasons. He tried hard to tell them about the snow and the rain and the students had no clue about what he was saying...it is irrelevant to them...I myself would not feel comfortable teaching something I am not familiar with...well, it is nice to know about those seasons but it would have been more useful if he only taught them the two main seasons they were familiar with; summer and autumn, then at upper stages they could learn about the other two: winter and spring.

Many other participants shared Mohammad's view about the mismatch between the curriculum and the local environment. They were able to vary their activities and adjust to the content they were required to teach, but they could not hide their feelings of discomfort when they needed to teach what, for them, was inappropriate or irrelevant to the primary grade students. It seemed that most of the trainees found it challenging to adhere to the teaching scope they were framed in during the practicum. Most of them associated their frustration to the fact that they had no voice in adapting the teaching materials in hand. They were aware that some adjustments or adaptation to the content may facilitate students' learning and comprehension. However, the demands of the

practicum and the way they were instructed to teach seemed to be disappointing to many of them. Saif said during the focus group interview:

I knew some materials and lessons were inappropriate...they even did not relate to our culture or environment...like the four seasons in science or the special occasions that we needed to teach in the English lesson...I did not understand why I should teach a grade two child about the polar bear at the time he was not yet familiar, may be, with the camel! I really felt disappointed because I had no voice during the practicum...no one paid attention to us as trainees or even future teachers...I had many creative ideas that would have made understanding easier to students but no one cared.

Although those comments by the trainees addressed the mismatch between the content and the local environment, it is clear that they highlight a significant issue of concern. It seemed that none of the participants had been given the freedom to teach more relevant content to their pupils, nor were they given the autonomy of being in charge of their students' learning. Consequently, the negative feelings they experienced at different times of their practicum and the effect they had on the participants' coping strategies seemed to be justifiable.

- **Curriculum vs. students' level**

Most participants talked about another curriculum challenge which they encountered during their teaching practice. This challenge was represented by the low language proficiency of the trainees' students. Most student teachers talked about a mismatch between what they needed to teach and their students' literacy skills. The low level of the students seemed to be one of the stressful factors most trainees had to encounter during their practicum. Amal looked very angry in her interview when she talked about the low level of students she had to teach in her class:

Before I joined this college I had in mind that I would teach one subject only...when I was in the practicum I had to teach three subjects to grade two students whose English was very poor...teaching is a commitment and to teach

students science, math and English using English was very challenging...some of my students did not know how to hold a pencil in their hands, others did not go to a KG class before school...I felt angry and anxious...no one would listen to you there...they expect you to be a teacher who has solutions for all problems.

All student teachers were aware that their evaluation was based on how well they perform in their classrooms. They were anxious and confused because their expectations of their students contradicted with reality. They believed that a good teacher is someone who can accommodate his/her students' learning interests and abilities, but it seemed all their learning was challenged by the fact that their students' proficiency level was low. Saif wrote in his critical incident reflection:

I noticed that some of the students in the model school were only admitted to classes because they were the school principal's relatives or friends' children. A number of students were too low in their academic level to be admitted to a model school...But I think what made me really sad was that those students were taken to the wrong place which didn't pay attention to their academic level and the high standard content they needed to learn...it was challenging and very frustrating to me.

It seemed that student teachers' dispositions to teaching were positive but probably not positive enough to help overcome different challenges during their practicum from time to time. Their expectations of students, curriculum and teaching in general were tested frequently. The lack of experience they had at the time of their training contributed to their negative feelings. Therefore, their attributions to the reasons for their negative feelings fell mostly to external factors rather than the self. They were likely to perceive their negative feelings and their causes from one perspective only, which resulted in negative emotions at different intervals in their training practice.

5.2.3 Theory-Practice Gap

Data obtained from the participants' responses in the interviews, focus groups and critical incidents reflections indicated dissatisfaction about the gap they felt between the theory and practice they faced during their training. It is a common practice in all field training to encourage trainees to initiate attempts that would combine theory learnt at their educational institutions to the real practices in their assigned classrooms.

All student teachers in this study seemed to have negative feelings towards the theoretical aspects of the teacher education programme and the practical reality they had to encounter. Their perception of a well-prepared practicum course revolved around the integral role both, theory and practice, play in supporting and enhancing their learning and teaching experience.

It seemed that student teachers were unable to deal with the discrepancies they faced in the field. The findings of this study indicated that all students reported a mismatch between the instruction they had in their college-based courses and what was taking place in the classroom. Their ability to reflect on the conflicting aspects during the practicum focused on issues of gender, classroom management, lesson planning, student learning styles, student behaviour and the rewarding techniques of their students in the class. Anood commented on this gap she experienced during her practicum by saying:

It is very disappointing to take very big doses of theories in education and then go to the field to suffer from serious side effects (a loud laugh)...reality is completely another different world. I think, it depends more on experience rather than books.

Most of the other participants shared Anood's view in a variety of aspects that they were challenged by in their classrooms. Amal commented on her experience teaching primary school boys saying:

I never felt comfortable teaching the boys, even if they were only kids. They were my biggest challenge during the practicum. Girls are quieter and more obedient...boys never listen...they do not want to learn. None of the theories that

I learnt in my courses worked with them. The college did not teach us how to teach boys and how to teach girls separately and many times I felt angry because I could not control them.

The ability of student teachers to reflect on their teaching and compare their learning with the actual teaching may be a sign of willingness to teach and improve, but it seemed that their inability to adapt to the challenging classroom situations, as they perceived them, hindered their learning and created negative feelings towards the knowledge they gained from their college-based courses.

Another major challenge, as can be understood from Anood's words, is related to the cultural and societal roles assumed by females in the UAE society. Classroom teaching is viewed as the most convenient profession for a female teacher, regardless of the gender to be taught. Although part of the problem seems to lie in the gap between the college-based courses and reality, the societal, cultural and traditional barriers contribute to a mixture of feelings that interfere with the student teacher perceptions of the teaching profession.

Furthermore, all participants experienced negative emotions in their classroom management skills. Findings obtained from their responses in the three data sets revealed emotions of anger, anxiety, confusion, frustration and sadness associated mostly with their inability to control their students' behaviour and adapt to their students' learning styles. Alyia said in her interview:

Theory is something and real life is something else...I had a hyperactive student girl. She could hardly sit on her chair to the extent that made me write on the board that: I swear if she moved again I would expel her out of the classroom! None of the classroom management theories I learnt worked...I tried to silence her over half an hour. I was very tired of her. She distracted my students' attention. Finally, I asked her to leave the class although I was sad to do that...but I swore and I had to do it. She left the classroom. I thought she was at the door, but when I opened it she wasn't there. Instead she was playing at the

school back garden...it seemed she wasn't interested in the whole issue and I felt very disappointed.

Alyia's reaction to her student's misbehaviour indicated how deeply her inability to handle the situation in a more tolerant and appropriate way influenced her as a teacher. As data showed, it seemed that no matter what theories student teachers had learnt in their courses, whenever they encountered a challenging situation they preferred to avoid implementing any learnt possible method and acted in the easiest way that would allow them to continue their teaching without any other trouble.

The data found on classroom environment issues indicated that most of the trainees preferred their own solutions rather than those learnt and practiced in their college. They believed that learning by doing is the best approach that may contribute to their professional growth as future teachers. Huda wrote in her critical incident reflection:

I noticed that one of the girls...was not paying attention and kept hurting her peers with her pencils. I felt so uncomfortable about her behaviour but I was unsure how to react to the situation...I looked at her, I showed her a threatening eye, I raised my voice to draw her attention, I walked by her so that she might stop what she was doing...I tried many things very hard, as I learnt them in the college, but in vain...until I finally lost control and screamed loudly calling her name! she was scared and looking me into the eyes...I didn't expect that I may lose my self-control that badly with only a grade two child...but deep in my heart I still feel sad and angry at myself...I was worried and anxious...too worried.

Huda's reaction and other trainees' responses to similar students' behaviour indicated that they understood 'management' as something done to students to control them rather than working with them to facilitate their learning. This understanding of the concept of behaviour management may be attributed to the trainees' lack of experience and their conservative Arab culture. They have grown up in a society with the premise that when an adult speaks, others should listen and never interrupt. It is also likely that the student teachers were unable to define what appropriate behaviour could be with regard to the age group they were teaching.

Disruptions in classrooms and negative emotions towards them were reiterated in most of the participants' responses. The usual claim was that students were hard to control and their behaviour was aggressive. None of the participants, however, attributed their lack of establishing a positive classroom environment to their lack of experience or ineffective approaches of implementing the theories they had learnt in their college-based courses. Saif, for example, said in his interview, commenting on his students' bad behaviour in the classroom:

I need fewer students in the class...I will understand them individually... The student is a mirror of his family in the class. If his parents do not give any interest to their child, why will I be accountable for his failure in school? He will waste my time.

Likewise, Warda said in her interview:

I faced difficulties that were very challenging to me because I was not convinced by the validity of those theories I learnt...and I assumed that the practical aspect of teaching at schools was more beneficial...The students are not in the same level. Some students are weak at writing and reading, while others suffer from physical handicaps which in turn affect their socialization and movement and my ability to manage their behaviour in the class. Other students are autistic and it is very difficult to deal with them.

Badr, unlike other participants, seemed to be able to reflect on his own teaching practice and realize that part of his students' disruptive behaviour was linked to his lack of experience and lesson preparation. He wrote, describing a negative incident that affected him during the practicum:

One of the most negative situations in my practicum was always when I became very nervous and unable to control my anger...I had a feeling of frustration, then fear, followed by another scary feeling of disability! It took me a long time to turn on the computer and get the video ready for class. ...I had that feeling of guilt

that what happened was because of lack of good lesson planning...may be this is something I need to work on and try to improve in the future.

It was obvious that most participants expected their students to listen to them and follow their instructions without acting disruptively or interrupting the process of the lesson plan they had to teach. They had that sense that students had come to their schools equipped with values of respect, discipline and manners. But it seemed that most trainees' stressful feelings can be attributed to the lack of knowledge of the content of theories they had learnt in their college-based courses and their readiness to adapt their preconceptions of classroom and student behaviour management.

5.2.4 Lack of support

Data from the three research tools revealed that one source of anxiety and negative feelings for some of the trainees was the lack of support they had from their college, school and class mentor. They repeatedly mentioned that their experience in the practicum was challenging and that the amount of support they received from the learning community they worked in was not enough. A range of negative feelings arose during the participants' training journey and it seemed that those feelings played an essential role in affecting their sense of commitment to the teaching profession and classroom performance.

- **Lack of emotional support: I wanted to scream out**

Most of the participants believed that getting the support from college during their practicum was essential. They needed guidance and help with a variety of aspects in their school and classrooms, as they mentioned. All of them stated that their college learning should have been supported by theoretical as well as practical help. In other words, they expected their college to provide them with three kinds of support: emotional support, well-designed courses with available resources, and manageable tasks and activities.

The need for emotional support from college was a theme that emerged mainly in all participants' critical incident reflections as a response to the question: Do you think it is

important for you as a student teacher to share your feelings with someone? Why/ why not? Asma wrote in response to this:

Of course, I need to share my feelings. At times I felt I wanted to scream out of anger and it was really disappointing not to find or trust anyone to talk to. I wished so many times that our teacher education programme, would have an element of, what should I call it, may be, advisory or consultancy courses? I'm not sure, but I'm sure that if I find someone who can listen to me and who I can share my tears with without feeling embarrassed, or even screams of joy, this would help me solve problems or overcome a lot of possible obstacles during the practicum and in my future life as a teacher.

Budoor shared Asma's opinion:

We [student teachers] all passed through similar situations and almost all of us reacted similarly; either by feeling more anger or more confusion. I would love to share my feelings and moments of frustration with someone older than me. I wish if I could have shared my practicum feelings with a teacher or an advisor...but fear of being misunderstood or not well evaluated at the end of practicum prevented me from talking to any of the teachers in the college, even my college supervisor who was supposed to be there to help and support.

It is clear that such responses of the participants reflected the link, perceived by all trainees, between the process of thinking and learning and emotional support one receives. It seems that they associate, indirectly, their inability to face some challenging situations during their practicum to the lack of emotional support they felt they needed. It is also probable that student teachers missed that close relationship with their teachers or college supervisors during their practicum. Therefore, once faced by a difficult situation it is the college to blame not them.

Anood stated clearly that she would refrain from sharing her negative feelings out of fear that others, including her teachers, may perceive those feelings as a sign of weakness. She stated:

I undoubtedly need someone to share my feelings with. I had passed through difficult situations in the practicum and the hardest of it was not to find the right person to talk to or get advice from... My focus at that time was my practicum final evaluation, and every time I had the feeling to go to any teacher, mentor or friend I felt scared because I thought that would affect my grade in a way or another. I honestly did not feel secured sharing my feelings, especially the sad ones; because I thought people or teachers would negatively judge me as a future teacher...The college should work harder, I think, to gain our trust and help us improve in a healthy way.

Student teachers seemed to realize how complex the process of teaching and learning was and they expected someone to be there for them to guide and provide solutions for their emergent situations. Like Asma and Amal, other participants believed that for them to improve their skills and teaching practices, the emotional support they expected from their college could have helped them overcome a number of obstacles that hindered their progress.

It is clear that student teachers viewed the emotional college support they expected as an essential component of their practicum which, had it been attained, would have contributed to building trust and enriching the teaching experiences of the student teachers. It is also clear that the trainees were able to reflect on their teaching and realize that their practicum was a mixture of positive and negative feelings which could have been improved or enhanced with more support. Moreover, since all student teachers lack teaching experience, it was not surprising to find, as shown from their responses, that they always attributed their negative feelings to external rather than internal factors such as the lack of emotional support.

- **Insufficient content: I know they will not work**

In addition to the lack of emotional support, student teachers also expressed a mixture of positive and negative feelings towards their college-based courses. Most of them agreed on the validity and relevance of some of what they have studied in their college compared to the actual training, apart from the gap between theory and practice mentioned earlier in this chapter. However, many of them expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of knowledge in certain content areas which were challenging for them. Saif commented on the courses he studied in his college by saying:

What I need is to teach and gain experience by myself...the college does not teach me everything...the theories I learnt are not pertinent to the time and place I live in...there might be situations...or a situation only...where I need to use them...but I know they will not work and I need to use my own knowledge of my environment...sometimes the college overemphasizes one theory and when you go and see the real life...it is completely another world.

This response and other trainees' similar statements can be associated to the previous discussed negative feelings experienced by most of the participants when they encountered challenges that revealed a gap between theories learnt and actual classroom practices. It is clear, however, that even though various causes of stress during the practicum were overlapping, student teachers constantly blame other parts for their failures. In other words, taking the fact that the college courses did not help them adapt to real life situations during the practicum, the student teachers did not seem to make sufficient efforts to review the theories they learnt in an attempt to adjust them to their classroom needs.

Ayesha showed a partial satisfaction towards her learning in the college and thought that the support she received in terms of content and courses learnt was not sufficient to help her overcome the challenges she faced during her practicum. She said in her interview:

I tried to apply what we learnt in the college to the actual field, especially what I learnt from the 'human development' course...I learnt how to wrap up a lesson,

but I did not learn perfectly well how to employ a warm-up activity...I learnt many things...I cannot deny that we have been taught many good things, but there were some topics that I studied after I came back from the practicum and thought it was the wrong time to learn them...like the assessment of students...I was asked to assess my students and at that time I had no idea how to do this well...It was challenging and the college did not support me enough then.

- **Many tasks to complete...and no support**

Another aspect of the college lack of support, as perceived by many trainees was the load of tasks and practicum requirements they had to complete within a rigid timeline. Most student teachers expressed negative feelings towards the lack of collaboration provided by their college during their training. They believed that part of the college courses' requirements were irrelevant and consumed their time for no significant benefit. Those requirements seemed to add more pressure to student teachers and contribute to more discomforting relationship with their college. Hassan commented on the amount of work he had to worry about during his practicum and said in his interview:

Frankly, some topics we learnt don't deserve even to be evaluated...such as the story sack project. The college exaggerated such projects on the expense of other more important courses, like the special needs course...I was challenged by this group of the students in my practicum and I had no idea of how to teach them...the story sack project I wasted most of my time in and the stress of deadlines submission had no value during my practicum...there was not enough time to complete the projects and I was disappointed and angry by the college's unwillingness to change the deadlines or sympathize with us.

Shamsa reiterated similar negative feelings and commented on the lack of support she received in terms of the practicum load that was assigned to her compared to the lack of time she had. She said during her interview:

Some college assignments did not allow us to sit with the students and improve our rapport techniques with them...when we complained form the school

administration treatment to us we had no positive response from the college...we had no rights during the practicum...many tasks to complete, deadlines, stress and no support or sympathy from the college..I was really very angry by the way our college treated us.

Other student teachers expressed more negative feelings towards the lack of support they received from the college and even attributed their unsuccessful attempts to perform well in the practicum to the amount of tasks and activities assigned to them and the lack of time provided by the college to complete them. Amal, for example, said in her interview:

The practicum itself was limited...the pressure of the projects and assignments did not give us an opportunity to perform well...we were working hard to get an 'A' in irrelevant projects that impeded our progress in the practicum and were of less or even no benefit to our learning.

Student teachers' responses revealed the unexpected effect of the demanding practicum requirements on their emotions and consequently on their performance during the practicum. It was clear that the workloads they had to cope with deprived them of the opportunity to turn their experience into a learning opportunity and would affect, as further findings will present, their ability to cope with the amount of challenges they encountered during their training period. Their attempts to explain their failure or inability to perform or achieve their expected roles seemed to focus on 'the other', whether it was the college, the school or any other external factor within their learning environment. However, this culpability directed at the college might be a sign that the teacher education programme of this college needs to be reorganized and structured in a way that would pave the way for more communication between student teachers and their supervisors, and allow student teachers to give voice to their needs and interests for better performance and teaching practices.

- **Lack of School support**

Data obtained from student teachers' responses in the three data sets indicated that all participants expressed negative feelings towards the lack of support they received from the schools they worked in during their practicum. For most of the trainees, the collaboration they expected from their schools and the treatment they had in reality was challenging and frustrating. Their success or attempts to succeed as teachers in the schools were frequently related to their relationship with their schools and their efforts were unappreciated, unacknowledged or exploited.

Alyia, for example, thought that her school administration used her as a trainee to cover other teachers' classes, a thing that she perceived as unfair. She was fully aware of her role as a student teacher but was frustrated by the amount of other demanding tasks that she had to complete in her practicum. She said in her interview:

How could we teach classes we were not designated for and subjects which we hadn't prepared? I was always asked to cover the classes as a substitute teacher. I don't know whether it was exploitation. I am a student under training who has got many other responsibilities besides teaching. I had to submit a weekly assignment to my college supervisor. There were more than four situations where I was asked to teach grade one while I was designated to teach grade three...that was unfair.

Saif echoed Alia and talked about his school in a sense that made him look frustrated by the way his school treated him during his practicum. For him, the school administration lacked the control over its students' bad behaviour and put the blame on the teachers only. He said in his interview:

A negative and hard situation which I always remember is the naughty students. The students at the school didn't respect their teachers. Probably the reasons originate from the teachers, the administration or the parents...The students were extremely hyperactive. The principal seldom came to school for the first two weeks. It was headache; you couldn't know whom to refer to when you needed...and if noise was there or misbehaviour it was you to blame...the school was not cooperative at all.

Those comments and many other similar ones about the lack of school support suggested the importance of participants' needs to feel appreciated and acknowledged by their school. For Saif and others, it was expected that the school should take part in adjusting students' behaviour and should cooperate with the teacher for better results. In addition, the trainees' ability to reflect on their practicum and reach this conclusion about their schools and the claim that they were not cooperative enough pointed out the vital role played by the school culture and its impact on a teacher's classroom teaching and performance.

For Ayesha and other female participants it was that collegial social sense that they missed in their schools and which created challenging situations for them during their practicum. It was obvious that for those trainees the school was a place of communication and social interaction. They expected to be treated as teachers or prospective teachers, rather than pre-service teachers or trainees. Some of the participants seemed to experience a more frustrating practicum and talked about situations where they were not treated professionally and appropriately by teachers in the schools, supervisors or school administration. Anood, for instance, talked angrily during the focus group discussion about the English supervisor of her school and the way she treated her during her field training period. She said:

The supervisor of English teachers in my school was a native speaker of English and she was so arrogant. She used to talk to us as if we were her servants. She never helped us or facilitated our tasks there. She always made sarcastic comments on the way we speak English. That was very insulting indeed and hard to overcome every day and what made it worse was the school administration...no one cared or seemed to be interested!

This lack of school support seemed to be perceived differently by all participants but the fact that all of them mentioned it is quite significant.

In fact, it seems that what the student teachers experienced during their practicum reflected their need to be treated as professional teachers rather than trainees. Although all student teachers seemed to be aware of their roles as trainees during

training practice, most of them expressed the need to feel their importance to their schools and to be worked with as future teachers who would be part of those schools, not as helpers or 'servants', as some of them noted. In addition, for many of them the lack of school support was represented in the lack of teaching resources in those schools or the unwillingness of the school administration or teachers to provide the trainees with the materials needed for their classroom teaching.

It seemed that the lack of school resources had intensified some of the participants' teaching loads and aroused negative feelings towards their schools. Achieving the learning outcomes in a classroom depends on using the appropriate resources and teaching materials. Yet, the student teachers' ability to reflect on their own practice indicated their awareness of the necessity for a teacher to be well-prepared for emergent classroom situations and be able to find alternatives for critical provisional incidents.

Salem, a further participant, echoed his peers and believed that the lack of resources in his school and the unwillingness of the administration to support his teaching was his biggest obstacle during his practicum. He said:

I learnt about many creative and interesting activities that should facilitate students' learning... but I was always frustrated by the lack of resources in the school I taught in; especially when I wanted to use the science lab for an experiment or the computer lab for any other task. I do not know how I will develop my teaching in the future in such a disappointing environment.

- **Mentor teacher : A high wall of barriers**

Most student teachers, as the findings in the focus group discussions indicated, expressed a general feeling of frustration about the lack of support they received from their classroom teachers. Therefore, a question on the relationship with their class mentors was included in the individual interviews. The majority of the participants believed that their class mentor teacher should have supported their learning and

teaching processes in a more effective way. For some of them, the experience with their mentor teachers was not helpful enough to polish their college-based learning and enhance their teaching skills.

The main theme that most of the participants referred to in their responses, oral or written, on the lack of the class teacher's support was mainly an issue of the mentor teachers' professionalism, as perceived by the trainees. They talked about their negative feelings during the practicum and their ineffective relationships with their class teachers. That relationship, for many of them, was characterized by a sense of inferiority, aggressiveness, lack of trust and lack of leadership skills on the part of the mentor teachers. The following set of quotes from the student teachers' responses indicated the sense of dissatisfaction with their class mentors' support.

Hassan, in his interview, talked about the lack of trust between him and his class mentor during the practicum and the lesson he learnt from him at that time. He said:

I could not trust my class mentor during my practicum...Never...Once I decided to depend on him...he promised to prepare everything. But by the time I entered the class, I discovered that he had forgotten to prepare the required materials although I contacted him at night and talked to him about the topic of my lesson...I was very angry and frustrated, but that incident taught me to prepare the materials myself and the lesson plans and never trust him again...but I expected the class mentor to be more professional and serious.

Amal echoed Hassan and talked about this sense of lost trust between her and her class mentor. She said during the focus group discussion:

My mentor teacher was not clear about her instructions [to me]. I was always worried about her comments. She was too critical about my teaching. She pretended that she wanted to help me, she never said a good thing about my teaching...and I never trusted her or her fake smile!

Likewise, other participants talked during the focus group discussions about their class mentors and used phrases like "...[she] seemed careless and never have set any discipline rules", as Budoor said or, "my mentor was unkind to me, she even told me that my presence in her class was unwelcomed", as Aysha commented. And a student teacher like Sara seemed deeply frustrated by the way her class mentor treated her. She said:

My mentor teacher was not cooperative at all. She had built a high wall of barriers between her and me and refused to let me in. I tried my best to get closer to her because I wanted to learn, but she was really a source of disappointment...she simply used to ignore my questions as if I was nothing!

It seems that this conflict and the lack of trust, as perceived by most participants, resulted in creating more challenges to the student teachers' learning and teaching process during their practicum. It was obvious that the professional knowledge student teachers hoped to construct in their classrooms was faced probably by an ambiguity of roles by the student teachers and the class mentors alike. In addition, it seemed from the trainees' responses that they expected their class teachers to know instinctively what skills they needed to improve or what aspect of their teaching they wanted to polish. And the class teachers seemed not to be well-informed about the trainees' roles and the tasks they had to complete as part of their practicum.

On the other hand, some other participants referred to the absence of their voices in having the freedom to choose their mentor teachers. They believed that those who cared about their learning and progress in teaching always spoke about experience, grasping knowledge and application of theories in real teaching situations. However, in reality, they were confronted by negative responses to their needs and relationships of power that created more tension and absence of transparency. This dualism, as perceived by most of the student teachers, requires an exploration of the missing links in the teacher education programme which should contribute to a better and more effective learning/teaching environment during the practicum.

5.2.5 Personal traits

Data obtained from the focus groups and individual interviews, together with the critical incidents revealed that all student teachers were challenged in their classroom by various personal issues during their practicum. They were aware that part of the challenges which they faced was attributed to personal traits. Those personal traits, together with the lack of support they received from their college, school and class mentors seemed to affect their experience negatively but temporarily, as some of them stated. Data found in their responses revealed two principal elements related to the participants' personal traits; namely time management skills and lack of self-confidence. The latter trait was attributed to two main reasons: being observed and being evaluated.

- **I was never successful in managing my time**

Most of the participants felt that time management skills had led to the highest level of stress over all during their practicum. Although few of them attributed this stress to the lack of support they received from their college and the loads that were added to them in their schools, the majority of the trainees believed that time management is a challenging skill that they need to improve to be successful teachers. Participants felt the need to learn how to plan well for their lessons and improve their teaching as well. They were aware that trying something different every time they failed to manage their time was an essential skill to learn and work on improving.

Asma said in her interview:

There were times when I needed to work on two huge things simultaneously... the college project and the lesson preparations of the next day! It was very stressful indeed and it needed a lot of efforts, time and nerves during the practicum and I think this is a serious problem if I do not solve it soon.

Asma and many of her peers were able to reflect on their own practices and admit to the weaknesses that needed to be improved. They were aware of the demanding but essential need to learn how to manage their time for better performance and evaluation.

Shamsa said in her interview, for example:

I am not satisfied with my performance because I needed to acquire more time-management skills; specially in my classroom... although I feel that part of this task should be provided by college and well-prepared workshops, I also know that I should work on this myself and work hard to overcome this problem.

Badr echoed Shamsa and said during the focus group discussion:

I studied many courses and took exams and answered theoretical questions about classroom and the skill of managing time and I always got good grades...but in reality, I was faced with actual situations where I felt helpless and sometimes at loss...I thought my inability to manage my time well is my weakest personal aspect.

It seemed from their responses that all of them were able to realize the weakest aspect in their teaching/learning journey. They were able to take responsibility for their time-management problem and while few of them attributed it to external factors, as mentioned above, the majority of them insist they will work on improving the skill of managing their time.

- **Lack of self-confidence: nervous, anxious, uptight and confused.**

All student teachers in the present study reported a lack of confidence at different times during their practicum at the time they were supposed to gain autonomy and learn independently. They were vulnerable to a range of criticism which was challenging and most of the time frustrating. The trainees were on the spot where they were expected to face students and class mentors, to be evaluated by college supervisors and to be visited by school principals, teachers or parents. Unless the trainee has the minimum of self-confidence, such an experience may either undermine or heighten this self-confidence. Anood attributed her lack of confidence to the lack of knowledge she had in Mathematics and English as well as her resentment towards those two subjects. She said in her interview:

I have no option to choose which subject to teach. I do not like English and Math and if you ask me: what is the sum of 1+1? I would take a calculator to solve it to avoid thinking... I never felt confident teaching those two subjects, not because

they are difficult, but because I do not trust myself teaching them...I will never tell my students in the future how much I hate those subjects because they will not trust my teaching then.

Ayesha also believes that her capabilities as a teacher of three subjects are not sufficient enough and that would simply increase her lack of trust in her teaching. She said in her interview:

Frankly, I have no intention to teach after graduation and as the Arabic axiom runs "God bless the one who is aware of his potentials"...I might be a teacher assistant but I cannot be responsible for teaching subjects I do not trust myself in...at the time everyone expects me to be full of confidence and knowledge!

As responsibility and tasks increased during the practicum, student teachers' self-confidence seemed to decrease. It is probably due to their lack of experience or, as some of them stated; it could be attributed to personality features. Amal, for example, said during her interview:

My problem was that I only took what I learnt from my college. I never tried to search for further information from other resources to improve myself and my self-confidence. If only I work harder, then my confidence may increase...I know this.

Likewise, Sara talked during her interview about her self-confidence and considered it one of the biggest challenges during her practicum. She believed that her fear was that of facing others or being observed by a native speaker of English rather than a fear of the teaching experience. She said:

I always felt nervous, anxious, uptight and confused. I tried many times to control my fears...and usually at the beginning of the lesson I felt more stressful than in the middle or at the end of it...but I hated it when I made a spelling mistake and the Western teacher would rush to the blackboard in front of the students to erase it and write the correct word...I know she was a native speaker of English and I could not feel confident when she was there to watch and take notes of me!

It may seem that different sources had triggered student teachers' lack of self-confidence during their practicum, but it is also probable that the trainees needed gradual exposure to teaching loads in addition to a preparation of facing challenges; including teaching in front of others. The individuality of the participants, however, varies and two of them looked outgoing and ready to accept the challenge of the likely lack of self-confidence regardless of the amount of knowledge they have, language proficiency or number of observers in their classrooms. Warda, said during her interview:

Although I did not like that fear and lack of confidence I had in front of my class mentor I was sure she was more experienced and that was her language...I was the one who needed to work harder to improve myself to gain better confidence.

Likewise, Hassan wrote in his critical incident paper:

In one of the frequent parents' meetings, I was in charge of grade one students. At that time I had all the official documents and exam papers of the students in that class. I was scared of being asked questions by the parents, watched by the school principal and other teachers...I was not confident enough to face them all with the right answers...However, I decided to face it and be brave...I had a little talk with one of the mothers whose praise of me made me happy for the whole day.

It is clear that the student teachers' days during the practicum have significant impact on building their self-confidence and enhancing their positive individuality traits. They were able to reflect on their practices and realize that self-confidence is a skill that they need to enhance by more practice and willingness to change. In addition, the trainees were aware that socialization with others in the school environment was an essential factor that would contribute to building more confidence and self-trust. The positive attitude that both Hassan and Warda, for example, expressed towards developing their self-confidence revealed a sense of responsibility that can be nurtured for better future results.

5.3. Student teachers' coping strategies during practicum

It was obvious from the above responses that all trainees were subject to various stressors and challenges-conflict in expectations, low language proficiency, lack of content knowledge, lack of support, time and others that they had to face as part of their demanding teaching training. It seemed that those participants were unprepared to face unexpected and overwhelming extra tasks and school requirements that affected their progress during their practicum and resulted in relatively negative relationships between the three groups: the college, school and the classroom, including the students and the class mentor. It seemed that student teachers put most of the blame on those groups for different reasons and for many of them they considered them the causes of problems.

All student teachers, as findings indicated in their responses, felt they were not ready to try many new tasks as practicing teachers in their practicum. They talked about the challenging transition from being student teachers at their college into practicing teachers in actual classrooms and teaching environments. Their lack of experience contributed significantly to their inability to make decisions sometimes or to react appropriately to certain school or classroom incidents. However, a few of them showed a willingness to improve their skills and enhance their teaching practices while the majority preferred to use traditional or improvised strategies to cope with emergent incidents rather than theory-based solutions.

Their responses during the focus groups interviews did not show much depth about what strategies or approaches those trainees used to cope with the challenging situations during their practicum. More details were sought during the individual interviews and the critical incident reflective documents. Results indicated that all student teachers' problems during their practicum brought about difficulty in coping with the emotional and behavioural impacts caused by the incidents they encountered, although few of them seemed to be more willing to learn from the challenges and adjust to new situations.

Findings that emerged under what can be called ‘student teachers’ survival coping strategies’ were categorized into two main themes: effective coping strategies and passive coping strategies.

5.3.1 Effective coping strategies

Analysis of the individual interviews and critical incidents revealed that student teachers in this study employed limited effective coping strategies. Those strategies allowed them to face their challenges and helped them continue their practicum with reduced stress and constraints.

The effective coping strategies reported by a few participants seemed to help them keep emotionally balanced and able to adapt to the demanding requirements until the end of their practicum. Those strategies included two major approaches: religious devotion, which is an essential element of their Islamic religion, and sharing with others.

- **Religious devotion**

Religion is considered to be the cornerstone of a Muslim’s identity regardless of their Islamic background, devout commitment or adherence to the teaching of Islam. Most participants’ responses signified an unmanifested piety which seemed to determine their fear of taking responsibility in teaching the children while they still need more experience and more practice. However, this religious devotion was only stated explicitly by three student teachers, who expressed positive responses to the challenges they faced during their practicum and associated this positivity to their trust in God and strong faith. They believed that their faith would help them overcome all future difficulties as this life, including teaching, is just a test that one should work hard to pass so as to please God.

Warda, one of those positive participants, said in her interview:

I am an ambitious person and my ambition is to graduate from the college and improve my skills...Yes, I met many obstacles...my English was very low, I did not know how to write a good essay in the college, I did not spell some words correctly...but I know this life is not that easy and I trust that my God will never let

me down if I work hard and I will...Alhamdulillah [Thanks be to God] my faith is strong and I know that all those obstacles will fade away in the future.

Similarly, Ayesha confirmed that her faith was the only coping strategy she employed to overcome all the challenges she encountered during her practicum. She believed that her strength and steadfastness in the face of those challenging incidents were the result of her full trust that God only tests her faith and patience to reward her later. She said during the focus group discussion:

I am very confident of myself and I dare talk about my low language proficiency. I wanted to make the best of the practicum...no one was born as an expert...many times I invited the college supervisor or my peers to attend my class and feedback to me...I know that Allah [God] will always be there to help and support. We are always tested in our life in a way or another and that practicum was the biggest challenge that I have no doubt I will pass successfully.

Hassan also echoed the two participants and talked with a very confident tone about his trust in God and his willingness to continue his hard work in the future. He said during his interview:

I felt anger and fear many times...I always asked myself: why am I teaching and exposing myself for such a huge responsibility?...but I always thought that it was a test of faith by God. I was there in the schools for a predestined mission...I was sure...always sure...that God wanted to teach me something...patience probably...and by this faith I worked and I did my best to learn and survive...I will always do.

This conceptualization of religion and faith seemed to affect those three participants positively as it enabled them to realize their weaknesses and helped them keep willing to improve and learn from all emergent incidents. It is also clear that this knowledge and trust in God encompassed their beliefs and transferred it into a positive attitude together with a greater accountability and commitment towards their learning and prospective teaching career.

- **I am sure I will always have someone to talk to**

Findings from the critical incident reflections indicated that only two participants out of the 16 considered sharing their problems and challenges with others, the best coping strategy they employed during their practicum.

Hassan and Budoor believed that it was of significant value for them to talk to their peers or friends about the problems they encountered during their teaching training. It seemed necessary for them to adjust to the demanding situations. This adjustment, as they stated, would not have taken place without the support they received from those with whom they shared their stories. It was obvious that sharing with others helped the two trainees to modify their beliefs and reinterpret the situations and direct them towards a more positive attitude.

Hassan wrote in his critical incident document:

I know I'm still a novice who needs a lot of advice and guidance. I'm also sure that a successful teacher is the one who learns from his mistakes and works hard to develop positive feelings and attitudes towards his learning and profession. Perhaps, I was lucky, regardless of the negative feelings that I had, to be a friend of the mentor teacher. He was always there to help, support and listen to my stories with their positive and negative impacts on me...I do admit that I still lack a lot of knowledge, communication skills and learning strategies, but I am sure I will always have someone to talk to and seek advice from.

Hassan's statement indicates that, unlike most of his peers, the class mentor's role had a considerable effect on his attitude to the practicum. It seemed that his mentor teacher helped him accommodate to the discomforting incidents that he had to face in his classroom and adapt to the challenging nature of the practicum, as most participants perceived it. In addition, it is notable that Hassan's personality, openness and disposition facilitated the class mentor's task and allowed for a smooth relationship and appropriate guidance. The way Hassan was able to realize his weak points and reflect honestly about them, helped him establish a positive relationship with his class mentor and work with him to improve his teaching while learning from the problems.

5.3.2. Passive coping strategies

The findings collected from the participants' responses, mainly from the individual interviews and critical incidents, revealed that the majority of the trainees made little or no attempt to understand or make sense of what was going on around them in the practicum. At the time only two participants showed positive reactions and willingness to cope with the emergent challenges; the rest expressed a passive need to adjust to those challenges and showed little interest in making efforts to try out possible solutions or adaptation approaches.

It appears that each one of those trainees holds a personal view about their abilities and a strong belief in the power of others who were in charge of taking decisions and seemed to create an obstacle to the participants' progress.

The coping strategies adopted by the student teachers in the face of the practicum challenges were grouped under three themes: escape, ignoring and submission.

- **Escape: since then I stopped using much English**

Data showed that some students were unable to make use of their previous knowledge and learnt practices within the existing reality and various difficult incidents. Their responses indicated that they were unable to adjust to their surroundings and play their roles effectively as student teachers. When they were faced with a problem they felt confused and unable to utilize the situation to their advantage and they only decided to escape from it.

Participants who employed an escape coping strategy seemed to cope well with most of the challenges they faced except the low language proficiency challenge. Although those participants mentioned a number of challenges they encountered during their practicum, none of them talked about the need to adapt to those situations and the only adjustment approach to their language proficiency was to use their first language, Arabic.

Hassan talked about using Arabic most of the time during his teaching training because he was convinced that using Arabic was the easiest way to impart knowledge and

lessen the amount of stress he felt due to low language proficiency. He said in his interview:

If I teach KG1- grade 5 students I will not feel comfortable all the time, though it is a very simple language that we need to use...but I know my vocabulary is limited and the easiest approach for me was to use Arabic...I knew that I was not qualified enough to use English all the time...and using Arabic saved my image in front of my students...to be honest...it was not professional to react that way...but I had no other option to continue my practicum.

It is obvious from Hassan's response that he was aware of his weakness in language but did not seem to employ any teaching technique that would have facilitated his students' learning. It is also clear that this participant, like many others, was not certain about the alternative way to respond to challenges. He was, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, among those few participants who talked about sharing their problems with peers and his class mentor. But it seemed that he was not willing enough to utilize the advice or guidance provided to him by those sources of support to better improve his learning path.

Likewise, the use of Arabic as an escape coping strategy was a recurring strategy in Ali's interview and critical incident reflection. He wrote in his reflection:

[during practicum] I was covered from head to toes with fear, confusion and worries...all those negative feelings were clearly seen by everyone there. I mean the students and the class mentor...I did a lot of spelling mistakes on the blackboard. The worst was that the class teacher treated me badly in front of the class and kept correcting my mistakes and asking students to copy the correct answers as he wrote them Not[with a stressing tone] as I did. It was the most horrible and the saddest time of my whole life...I felt I couldn't be a teacher...anyway, since then I stopped using much English...I used Arabic most of the time...I know it was a bad decision but until I gain my confidence again, that was the best strategy which helped me continue my practicum.

Ali's relationship with his class mentor seemed to negatively influence his teaching and learning process during the practicum. It is another sign of the significant role the class teachers may play in supporting and developing the student teachers' teaching and performance skills. It was demoralizing for Ali to be corrected in front of his students and thus lose their trust and his image as a good teacher as he said "I'll never be able to correct my bad image that my students would keep in their memories forever". This participant and others in this study seemed to lack the constructive feedback and criticism they hoped to get from their class teachers which may indicate a limited role played by those class mentors, or some of them, in assisting the student teachers' learning. It could also be a sign that those mentor teachers lacked experience in guiding or supporting student teachers.

Only one participant, Badr, mentioned the use of Arabic as an escaping strategy during the focus group discussion. He said:

That day, all my students were enthusiastic, very motivated and ready to learn. Yes, I used Arabic a lot that day and other days, but I was very happy to see them learning, playing and very interested in the lesson. I did not want to sacrifice the pleasure of seeing my students enjoying what I'm teaching them for the sake of language proficiency.

It is obvious that those student teachers who chose to adopt an escape coping strategy were able to reflect on their experience and employ an approach that, as they perceived it, was successful in saving time and helping their students learn more effectively. However, the lack of support they received during their practicum seemed to contribute considerably to their passivity in responding to emergent situations or probably to future possible similar incidents.

- **Ignoring the whole situation**

Reviewing student teachers' responses in their interviews and critical incidents reflections showed that some of them decided to ignore the whole situation or problem and continue their practicum regardless of the difficulty of the challenge. Those trainees seemed to have a strong belief that their practicum was a compulsory requirement to

graduate and therefore they were forced to overlook the problems they faced to complete it. They seemed to perceive no value in adapting to the emergent situations or looking for coping strategies that may have facilitated their learning in their practicum. Ayesha, for example, said:

[during practicum] I was alone in my classroom...I considered the class mentor to be invisible...there was no relationship between her and me of any kind...I simply decided to ignore her and do my best to learn by myself.

Ayesha also wrote in her critical reflection:

Unfortunately, that teacher could be anything but a teacher. She treated me as a rival not a trainee...whenever I entered that class, I could see her eyes and the sharp message she immediately sent to me about my unfavorable presence in her class...I always ignored those looks although I tried to break the ice by asking her questions...but she simply turned her back to me and never answered and I did the same!

It is clear that failing to establish an effective relationship with the class mentor was a recurring challenge for most of the student teachers. It is probable that the trainees lack the experience required to teach in actual classrooms. In contrast, the class mentors seemed not to support the student teachers with their experience and help them overcome possible classroom challenges. There was a missing link that both, the student teachers and the class mentors, failed to grasp and utilize effectively.

- **Submission**

Some other participants seemed to trust their existing knowledge and abilities. However, when they encountered a problem, they preferred not to take any action and follow the instructions given to them by any of the three poles of power; namely their college, school or class mentor. They believed that following the instructions and not arguing about provisional incidents or challenges would help them continue their practicum and overcome any possible obstacles. It was also clear that this submissiveness, as they perceived it, was the only way to comply with the demanding requirements and tasks of the practicum. Reviewing the participants' responses and

written statements reflected a sense of loneliness that accompanied their submissiveness approach. Huda, for example wrote:

I need someone to share my sorrow with because sometimes we exaggerate our sadness and disappointment...when I talk to people about my negative feelings I feel less stressful and more comfortable...I faced many problems during my training period but I preferred not to talk about them...it was useless to talk about them...you need to do what they asked you to do...no matter how challenging or difficult your task is...I honestly talked to no one from the college; teachers or peers.

Similarly, Saif shared the same sense of submissiveness and stated that the only way to pass his practicum was to complete all the tasks without complaining. He believed that talking about his problems would not change the situation or improve it. He wrote:

I don't like to share my feelings because I know that even if I share them, I'll not be able to change anything about them or the incidents that caused them...pain is pain and joy is joy and no one can live them as you do yourself...I only did what I was supposed to do without any argument.

None of the student teachers who reported passive coping strategies seemed to be willing to elaborate on more coping strategies or approaches. Their main interest seemed to be focused on completing the practicum and the tasks required without having to worry about alternatives that could have contributed to a more positive experience. The submissiveness and loneliness they expressed indicated the gap between their existing expectations and the actual teaching-learning school environment. Other participants who employed a similar submissive approach talked or wrote about the same attitude as their peers.

Anood, for example, associated her submissive approach to her fear of evaluation. She did not want to be underestimated as a student teacher and thought that asking for support or solutions would have a negative impact on her image as a future teacher. She wrote:

My focus at the time was my practicum final evaluation, and every time I had the feeling to go to a teacher, mentor or friend, I felt scared because I thought that would affect my grade in a way or another. I honestly did not feel secured sharing my feelings or troubles...I thought people or teachers would negatively judge me as a future teacher.

Obviously, student teachers revealed a sense of awareness of the challenging nature of practicum in general, and teaching in particular. However, it is noticeable that their stress or discomforting feelings during their practicum were a combination of external sources (e.g. class mentor) or internal personal disposition (e.g. lack of self-confidence or willingness to adapt). They perceived their practicum experience as a demanding requirement that mainly involves challenging tasks which had little impact on their progress and development as prospective teachers.

Clearly, the general picture that emerged from the coping strategies adopted by the student teachers in the present study is that there was little or no support provided to them by their college, school and the class mentor. This probably suggests that with more support and guidance, student teachers may perform more effectively during the practicum and adopt more positive attitudes towards themselves and their teaching experience.

The inability of most of them to adjust to the challenges encountered during their field training reflects the need for more efforts to be made by the teacher education programme they were involved in at the time of the data collection stage to bridge the gap between the trainees' existing expectations and the actual reality of the required tasks and activities.

5.4 Conclusion

It is clear from this study that the emotional experiences these student teachers had in their practicum are in many aspects similar to their peers in different contexts as the literature indicated. The concerns and worries, the positive feelings, the expectations and reality, the roles and responsibilities seemed to form their beliefs about the teaching profession and the teacher's image. However, this study may be distinguished from

other studies in the way those trainees faced provisional problems and reacted to challenges. In other words, when some challenges were inevitable, student teachers' responses varied but in many situations, as the data indicated, most of them were unable to match their prior knowledge and theoretical learning to real life situations and school-based applications. It was obvious that the student teachers were unable to realize the connectivity and effectiveness of their college learning to the applicable practices. This mismatch and inability to associate college learning to school teaching seems to affect the whole practicum experience for the trainees and creates negative feelings and passive responses as well as occasional celebrated positive emotions. It is also possible that the lack of experience in the training field has affected the student teachers' evaluations of the incidents they encountered and their attributions to the probable causes.

Based on those findings, teacher educators, curriculum designers and policy makers could re-consider teacher training programmes and acknowledge the significant influence emotions have on the shaping of the future teachers' learning, professional identity and commitment to the teaching profession. Related to those findings, student teachers need to be supported and guided at different levels. The next chapter will discuss those findings and the implications they have for all stake holders in the teacher education field.

Chapter Six

Discussion

"Some believe that we know exactly what needs to be done to prepare teachers to be knowledgeable, caring, well-skilled, culturally sensitive, technologically sophisticated, reflective, and highly effective practitioners" (Guskey, 2011, p.ix).

Chapter five of the thesis painted a picture of the emotional experiences, challenges and the coping strategies of the pre-service teachers during their practicum. This chapter outlines these findings within the context of the literature on teachers' emotions and EFL/ESL research studies. Implications, future research suggestions, limitations and the conclusion are presented in chapter seven.

The discussion of this chapter is divided into three sections according to the study's three major research questions.

6.1 Emotional experience

The literature, as chapter three in the present study discusses, is replete with studies on student teachers' practicum and its effectiveness in terms of preparation and pre-service teachers' learning outcomes. Teacher training programmes are planned and designed to prepare trainees to be effective classroom teachers, equipped with relevant content and pedagogical knowledge. The findings of this study, however, reveal a mixture of positive and negative emotions which seem to have an impact upon student teachers' learning and teaching experiences.

Although student teachers talked about positive feelings in a variety of situations during their practicum, it is obvious that the amount of stress they experienced, which resulted in negative emotions in a number of incidents, was mostly associated with the lack of support they expected to receive from their college and school; including the class mentors in those schools. Traditionally, in teacher education programmes the major focus of assessment is imposed on the student teachers' performance, pedagogical and

content knowledge. Little or no attention is paid to prospective teachers' emotions and feelings and the negative or positive effects those feelings have on their teaching/learning experience during the practicum. Similar to other studies, this study shows that student teachers struggle during their field training to cope with the huge amount of tasks and responsibilities required by them (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2012; Hanushek and Raymond, 2005). But probably the most significant matter that this study reveals is that of the stressful negative feelings experienced due to the demanding requirements associated with the practicum. Student teachers' negative as well as positive emotions have never been considered by the college or the schools, as the findings in chapter 5 indicate. The success or failure of the student teachers during their practicum depends mainly on their effectiveness as prospective teachers in terms of their teaching skills, performance and the knowledge gained and implemented. In other words, their affective qualities are not part of their teaching education course. The challenges they encountered impeded their learning and coping strategies have negatively affected the way they reacted to certain incidents, or sometimes gave rise to passivity rather than positivity. Nevertheless, the college and the schools seem to leave those feelings unattended and overlooked. Literature in teacher well-being and emotions assert that "the affective dimensions of teaching is, therefore, important, both because these dimensions reinforce the association between cognition and emotion and because they act as reminders to policy makers, teacher educators and school principals that "teacher effectiveness" is the product of the preparation and continuing support of both the head (cognition) and the heart (emotion)" (Day and Qing, 2009, p.17).

Emotions like anger, fear, frustration, disappointment and confusion, for instance, highlight the need for a sociological approach to student teachers' feelings. It is likely that those prospective teachers lacked the validation of their emotions during their learning experience, the practicum, which is perceived, as most of them reported, the most challenging element required for their graduation.

From the very start of this research study, student teachers showed their willingness to participate but expressed their surprise at having their emotions examined during their practicum. Their responses to the research questions and the various incidents they shared reflect the need for the emotional support that they lacked.

Research shows that pre-service teachers embark on a new stage in their professional lives, a transitional period where they move from the theoretical zone of learning into the practical workplace of teaching and learning together. This considerable change triggers feelings like doubt, fear, confusion or lack of self-confidence. Unless those pressures, associated with this crucial change in the lives of the student teachers, are understood by college teachers and supervisors, schools' principals, teachers or class mentors, student teachers alone may fail to achieve their practicum requirements and develop the sense of confidence expected in all areas of their teaching practices.

Although it can be one of the advantages in this study that the practicum period of the trainees starts from year one, a course element which should contribute to the shaping of student teachers' practices and professional knowledge, the amount of negative feelings expressed may be a sign for teacher educators to reconsider the nature of their teacher training programme. In other words, the length of the practicum does not seem to support the emotional needs of the trainees, nor decrease the amount of stressful feelings experienced. It is clear that, as Feiman-Nemser (2008) states, there is still much to learn about the individual needs of teachers and how they think, act or feel.

As this study found, BEd3 student teachers seemed to lack communication, encouragement or guidance support. Their images as trainees or prospective teachers were criticized frequently and, for some participants, it was insulting.

The participants of this study reported negative feelings towards the way they were treated by the school principals or the teachers. The collaborative environment seems to be missing in the schools where those trainees practiced their teaching. It looks to

them like teaching in isolation rather than teaching in a collaboration rich environment. There seems to be a need, as this study suggests, for teacher educators to align their courses with the sociocultural theories of learning which highlight the interpersonal dimension and contextual learning of learners.

The learners' professional knowledge, in this case the student teachers, is constructed during the practicum and therefore, it is heavily influenced by the social and cultural surroundings. The study supports Beck and Kosnik (2006, p. 8) in that many student teachers are willing to learn, are vibrant, and they have passion for teaching and pupils, yet "schooling is under siege, conditions for teachers are often frustrating and demeaning and the level of burnout is high".

Although it was not the aim of this study to include the theory of emotional intelligence, the findings indicate an urgent need for the teaching education programmes to prepare pre-service teachers emotionally as well as professionally. In other words, for teacher programmes to succeed in their quality teaching, prospective teachers need to acquire and develop interpersonal skills which should help them interact with, and respond to, certain challenging incidents effectively (Nelson et al, 2006).

Emotional intelligence skills would help pre-service teachers deal with the challenging situations they come across in less stressful ways. Hence, becoming emotionally intelligent student teachers should enhance self-esteem and confidence which result in more positive feelings and accountability towards unexpected challenges. Day and Qing (2009) claim that the emotional experiences of teachers in their schools and classrooms "may have short and long term consequences for how they feel about themselves and others and how they behave" (p.18). It is possible then that helping student teachers build upon their positive emotions would contribute to their sense of self-confidence and efficacy in addition to their wellbeing. Furthermore, positive emotions, like those experienced by participants in this study, if acknowledged by their college educators and those involved in their school environment, may help those pre-service teachers become "more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated and healthy individuals" (Fredrickson, 2004, p.1369).

Furthermore, it is obvious that the participants in this study have been exposed to the pressure of being evaluated according to performance, knowledge and teaching skills. All of those challenges together with other school environmental issues seem to have created conflicts with student teachers' preconceived expectations of the image of teaching and what it is to be a teacher. For many participants, the real field experience brings about all those negative feelings which are not always addressed in the best possible manner. For most student teachers in this research study, as discussed earlier, the communication links are missing with all those educators described in their student handbooks as supporters or facilitators.

Yost (2006) emphasized the fundamental role a school-based practicum plays in teacher education programmes. A successful programme according to Yost (2006) contributes to pre-service teachers' resilience and commitment to the teaching profession. The findings of the present study seem to have similar hypothetical results. To put it differently, although resilience or commitment were not the focus of the participants' talk, the incidents that they had to face, accompanied with the negative feelings they created, seem to cause more fearful attitudes towards teaching and commitment. Those negative feelings, as perceived by many student teachers, are associated with the lack of emotional support which seems to mean a lot to their progress and development in their practicum. Although all participants seemed to share relatively positive incidents during their practicum, their learning experiences echo Bullock's (2011) findings where "learning experiences are not always positive...the educational values held by teacher candidates going into their placements would eventually come into conflict with their lived experiences" (p.86).

6.2 Challenges

- **Class mentor-student teacher relationship**

A significant theme that emerged from the findings of this study is that of relationships. Although participants talked about and expressed their feelings towards different professional entities like college supervisors, school principals, class mentors or

students and parents, the complexity of their relationships with their class mentors seem to have the most considerable effect on their learning during their practicum.

Similar to Bullock's (2011) findings, this present study reveals that one major source of stress and negative feelings resulted from a failure to establish effective relationships with their class mentors. This conflict occurs where the relationship between teacher candidates and their associate teachers "can be characterized as a dynamic interplay between freedom candidates felt to enact their own pedagogies, the restrictions they felt to conform to their associate teachers' styles, and the extent to which their associate teachers modeled effective teaching pictures" (Bullock, 2011, p.75). Although it is not the purpose of this exploratory study to generalize, it seems that the findings share similarities with other larger scales studies. For example, 'David' in Bullock's (2011) study was the only student teacher who expressed his ability in having established a good relationship with his associate teacher. Likewise, 'Hassan' is the only participant in this present study among the 16 student teachers who seemed to have a friendly relationship with his class mentor. It is that positive spirit and collaboration between the student teacher and the class mentor which adds to the learning experience of both. In other words, the challenges the student teachers faced during the practicum could have been less stressful if the school and the college had worked on a mutual basis. Help, support and willingness to listen and guide contribute to a positive learning atmosphere in and outside the classroom.

Unlike David and Hassan, other participants expressed negative relationships with their mentors. Meyer (2009) reported similar findings in terms of the negative feelings the student teachers felt having to deal with their class mentors. Meyers' student teachers "commonly reported feeling anxious or frustrated by what they viewed as their mentor teachers' lack of trust because they could not assume instructional responsibility as quickly as they thought was possible" (p.81). Trust was missing between the pre-service teachers and their class mentors. This absence of trust created difficulties for both and resulted in ineffective communication and stressful reactions to certain incidents. It does not apparently look like a search for autonomy by the student teachers. It was rather a

search for learning opportunities within the mentorship framework. Furthermore, this lack of trust and failure to share the resulting feelings about it affected student teachers' learning and teaching experience during the practicum and seem to increase the sense of uncertainty about their ability to be effective prospective teachers. In other words, most participants in this study reported their fear of the teaching responsibility which is probably the result of failing to perceive good examples of teachers. On the other hand, class mentors seem not to make sufficient efforts to understand the student teachers' needs and lack of teaching skills.

Furthermore, it is likely that class mentors have not been well informed about their roles and responsibilities during the practicum and probably perceive the task of mentoring as fixing of student teachers' teaching problems rather than support and encouragement of trainees who lack experience. Their understanding of their roles probably lacks what Boreen et al (2009) emphasize in their book '*Mentoring beginning teachers*' as having "moved away from thinking that beginning teachers should mimic or copy the methods of experienced teachers. The emphasis now is on new teachers becoming reflective thinkers who explore their own individual teaching styles" (p.9)

Partly, this conflict can be also attributed to the criteria on which the relationship is primarily based. It is clear that the relationship between the trainees and their class mentors was based on administrative decisions rather than mutual choices. The student teachers' voices seemed to be overlooked and the whole task of mentoring seemed to turn into a fulfillment of a practicum obligation.

The findings of this study necessitate a reconsideration of the nature of the relationships between student teachers and their class mentors. This lack of communication and misunderstanding of roles seem to create more stressful emotions and barriers during the whole period of the student teachers' practicum. And though participants were able to express their positive or negative feelings towards their learning experience with their mentors, they seem to lack the emotional intelligence skills that might have helped them develop their instructional as well as problem-solving skills. It was likely that student

teachers misinterpreted the class mentors' lack of support due to their lack of experience in the teaching field.

Needless to say, student teachers in this study can be perceived as trainees who are fully aware of their emotions and the impact those emotions have on their professional identities, knowledge and learning experiences. Yet, the lack of cooperation between them and their class mentors seemed to contribute negatively to their progress and to complicate their instructional practices instead of improving them. Those findings are similar to Mann's and Tang's (2012), where "mentoring was seen as a compulsory duty rather than a self-selected professional development opportunity" (p.483).

In addition to this lack of trust and communication between the student teachers and the class mentor, the relationship seems to be threatened by other important issues regarding the trainees' low language proficiency and Abu Dhabi Education Council's (ADEC) EMI policy.

- **EMI: a threat or a privilege?**

Frequent frustrations and negative feelings towards inappropriate mastery of English language skills necessary for a teacher of three subjects; Mathematics, Science and English seem to be a serious issue in this study. The findings might be an alarm call for all educators involved in the designing, planning or teaching in the teacher education programmes.

Most of the pre-service teachers in this study have experienced problems in communication using the appropriate English language terminology or idiom in their teaching. The problem as perceived by those participants seems to be focused on the code-switching dilemma and the imparting of knowledge which is reported as insufficient. All of the trainees and their students are native speakers of Arabic. It was perplexing for most of them to use English as the medium of instruction in Mathematics and Science. Therefore, for some of them, using Arabic during teaching was perceived as one of the effective coping strategies for the language challenge. In addition, many participants regard the use of L1 in their teaching as a time-saving approach that facilitates their students' learning and contributes to better comprehension.

In second language teacher education it is essential that teachers develop a knowledge base that would help them succeed in their classrooms as teachers. Day (1993) claimed that the core knowledge base ESL teachers need to develop consists of four main elements: content knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge and support knowledge. Hence, teaching Mathematics, Science and English through English at any level requires a high standard of language proficiency. The teacher should be able to use the English language as a medium of instruction to teach students the subject, ask and answer questions, and write up teaching materials, exams or quizzes. The findings of the present study show that most participants' beliefs about their English language proficiency were not satisfactory. Their low language proficiency seemed to impede their progress during their practicum and create, for some of them, reluctance towards becoming prospective teachers. Those negative feelings seem to raise the question of validity towards adopting the using English as medium of instruction policy in the UAE primary schools.

In other words, while the UAE educational system in the primary schools seems to be predestined to be instructed in English, relevant competence of English language cannot be expected respectively without sufficient preparation of the pre-service teachers and reconsideration of the quality of teacher education programmes and the curriculum taught. As this present study shows, most of the trainees lack the confidence needed to use the English language in their classrooms. This present study echoes Baldauf and Kaplan (2005) and Gill (2006) who emphasize the adoption of a bottom-up policy in education for successful language education policies rather than top-down instructions. On the other hand, Auerbach (1993) argues that "the rationale used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor pedagogically sound" (p.9). Linguistic abilities of the learners in schools and student teachers are basic factors that need to be carefully considered at the planning level of teacher education programmes.

That is to say, to meet success in the EMI policy adopted by ADEC in this study, relevant decisions need to be made at different levels (e.g. curriculum, methods,

materials and resources and linguistic skills of the student teachers). Those pre-service teachers' feelings of anxiety and negative emotions towards the EMI need to be included in future decisions if success of implementation is the objective. The findings provide policy makers, curriculum designers and educators with insights into one of the major issues involved in higher education. In fact, the unsuccessful implementation of the EMI policy by many trainees during the practicum, as this study shows, indicates a considerable gap between the higher education curriculum and that of high schools.

Moreover, the participants expressed negative emotions towards the lack of content knowledge and their inability to impart the appropriate knowledge as a result of their low language proficiency. The combination of learning content area and language at the same time, as a recent study by Troudi (2009) confirms, can create cognitive burdens on the EFL learners. In addition, most research in foreign and second language teaching and learning has shown that the production of the learnt language can be hampered by emotions of anxiety and confusion (Hussain, Shahid & Zaman, 2011; Ohata, 2005; Liu & Zhang, 2010). The case with pre-service teachers can be more stressful and the level of anxiety can be higher due to many factors that necessitate their accomplishment of specific college requirements and school tasks during their practicum. Horwitz (1996) states that many non-native language teachers experience feelings of anxiety in their classrooms as it is always a matter of constant work on mastering language.

Furthermore, the negativity occasionally experienced and reported by the pre-service teachers, as discussed in the previous chapter, indicates obviously that the cause of those feelings was most of the time attributed to external factors, seemingly perceived as beyond the trainees' capabilities. To illustrate, the low language proficiency expressed by the trainees, for instance, is attributed to three main external factors; namely the previous early school ineffective teachers, college-based courses and the class mentors' observation and evaluation.

- **Early school learning**

Most of the student teachers in this study claimed that the English language classes they attended in their early school years had the most negative impact on their current low level English skills. The approach to learning English that their English language teachers followed seems ineffective and disengaging. Participants expressed their dissatisfaction towards the way they had to memorize some paragraphs to write an exam essay. They also commented on the repetition of certain learning themes such as "your favorite hobby". In addition, the absence of an effective English language teacher model seems to have influenced the trainees' self-confidence and efficacy in their classrooms. In other words, the way those English language teachers used to teaching English language to the trainees, with the use of Arabic most of the time, seems to contribute to the student teachers' fear of their practicum students having similar negative images of them.

Auerbach (1993) argues that "the rationale used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor pedagogically sound" (p.9). Interestingly, while student teachers believe that the use of Arabic in their classrooms facilitated their students' learning and saved their classroom time, they attributed their low language proficiency to ineffective teachers of English in their early schooling. Those teachers, as perceived by the trainees, depended heavily on Arabic as medium of instruction in the English classes. This contradictory perspective of language teaching and EMI calls for a reconsideration of the language learning environment of UAE students at all levels, starting from KG-12 grades. Carless (2008) argues that using L1 in the classroom "maintain students' attention, interest or involvement" (p.333) or in many cases to reinforce understanding of L2. However, it seems that the overuse of L1 by some teachers prohibits student teachers' acquisition of L2 and impacts their perceptions of effective language teacher's image. This is in line with Nation (2003) who argues that "a balanced approach is needed which sees a role for L1 but also recognizes the importance of maximizing L2 use in the classroom" (p.7).

In short, both English language teachers in schools and student teachers seem to share the same perception towards the use of L1 in L2 classes. It is possible that the EMI policy adopted by ADEC, as this study suggests, lacks the defining lines as to when and how an L1 is to be employed in the L2 classes. Similarly, the trainees' teacher training programme plays a significant role in raising the student teachers' awareness towards appropriate use of L1 in L2 classes. Most importantly, the EMI policy does not seem to limit the use of L1 in the L2 classes. The policy makers, curriculum designers and teacher educators need to develop a better understanding of the EFL teachers' language anxiety and adopt a clear balanced approach which limits, but not diminishes, the use of Arabic language in the English language classrooms.

- **College learning environment**

Similarly, the learning environment in the college English language classes does not seem to focus on the trainees' language skills. It is, rather, an emphasis on the content and pedagogical knowledge of the subjects taught. This knowledge, however, as most of the participants reported, lacks depth and relevance to real life situations, as will be discussed in the next section. Consequently, the lack of content knowledge together with low language proficiency result in feelings like anxiety or insecurity which may give rise to psychological barriers in any kind of communication. In this sense, Littlewood (1984, p.58) asserts that if this "anxiety rises above a certain level, it is an obstacle to the learning process".

The fact that most student teachers in this present study used their first language, Arabic, to some degree during their practicum is a significant finding. As discussed earlier, contrary to ADEC's policies and college rules that emphasize the use of English language exclusively as medium of instruction in the three subjects Mathematics, Science and English, most trainees used Arabic in teaching specific terminology or mathematical terms. Although it is not the purpose of this study to present statistics on

how frequently the participants used their L1 in their teaching, most of the trainees strongly believe that the use of L1 to teach Mathematics or Science saves time and facilitates their students' learning. For most of them the use of Arabic is justifiable and they attribute it to insufficient content knowledge and lack of vocabulary needed to explain certain topics and themes. In addition, many student teachers expressed their ability and willingness to implement new approaches to teaching and share creative ideas in their classrooms, but they expressed feelings of unhappiness at situations when their lack of language skills or content knowledge impeded their learning and teaching progress.

Similarly, but in a different setting, Wilkerson (2008) asserts that the participants, who were EFL instructors and native speakers of Spanish, used L1 in their English language classrooms because they believed it saves their time and reduces ambiguity. Wilkerson also found that one of the instructors used L1 most of the time to speak to and communicate with the students. It is probable that the use of L1 in the L2, Mathematics and Science classes by the participants of the current study is due to other factors as can be clearly understood from the trainees' responses to the research questions. In other words, student teachers talked about a number of worries and concerns among which are their images as prospective teachers, their students' low language level and themselves as speakers of Arabic. Therefore, it is possible that those student teachers do not consider using English as a medium of instruction a valuable tool when dealing with native speakers of Arabic like them. Viafara (2011) echoes the findings of this study. In a Spanish-English learning environment, Viafara's participants were Spanish EFL student teachers who spent sixteen weeks of their practicum in public schools. The results indicate that "because students [student teachers] often regard English as external or irrelevant to their own lives, speaking English with their pupils usually became a challenge" (p.62) and therefore they overcome such a challenge by using their first language. Furthermore, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, student teachers lived with worries about their students' perceptions of them. They experienced feelings of confusion and fear of being ridiculed by their students; an issue

that does not seem to be addressed by the college and the courses taught. The participants' perceptions of their abilities and level of competence in teaching three major subjects using English as means of instruction have led to a frequent arousal of negative emotions as has been previously discussed in chapter five.

Unlike those findings of this present study, Atay's (2007) results indicate that the participants experienced a positive attitude towards their self-efficacy as teachers of a foreign language (EFL) during their practicum. Most of Atay's pre-service teachers "indicated that teaching in the real classroom setting raised their awareness of their own classroom practices and language use, particularly their perceived weaknesses" (p.210). Moreover, Atay's participants' teaching-learning environment during the practicum can be viewed as less complicated than the current study's practicum field. For instance, Atay's trainees' awareness of their weaknesses and strengths in their English lessons "made some of them work hard to improve themselves. Some tape-recorded themselves, analyzed their own talk and focused on the issues which needed improvement and asked for help from university supervisors or from their CTs [cooperative teacher]" (Atay, 2007, p.214).

In the present study, however, the lack of support the participants received from their college and school is reported as one of the major challenges during their training. Not to mention the lack of communication between the trainees and their class mentors.

- **Beliefs and attitudes towards effective teaching**

Atay (2007) explored the change of efficacy of 78 fourth year pre-service teachers over their teaching period. The participants were student teachers at the English language teaching department in one of Istanbul's universities, Turkey. Similar to the findings of this study, Atay (2007) asserts that some pre-service teachers with low-efficacy scores "were highly disappointed with the teaching practices of their CTs indicating that they were not learning much from them" (p.211). They also complained of cooperative teachers' incompetency, power and lack of dialogue.

Obviously, student teachers' low language proficiency can be partly attributed to the external factors reported by the trainees as discussed above. The situation is similar to what Britzman (2003) commented on, using the term 'significant others' to refer to the professionals who should support the student teachers during their training and teaching-learning journey. Britzman (2003) seems to criticize some of those professionals for whom "the problem is with the student teacher who seems to be a wrong-headed idealist or cannot control a tendency to over-identify with the plight of her or his students and, consequently, under-identify with the authority of the school" (p.10). Nevertheless, the case of low language proficiency can be probably attributed to other personal internal factors of the participants.

Research on teacher belief, prior knowledge and attitudes has shown that prospective or beginning teachers hold certain beliefs about learning or teaching a language a long time before they start their teaching profession (Johnson, 1994; Flores, 2005; Kagan, 1992). Therefore, it is likely that those teachers previously form their anti/pro models of teaching and conceptualize what bad or good teaching is whenever they are in teaching-like situations. Research has also shown evidence where the shaped images of teaching and teachers during schooling affects student teachers' beliefs about their teaching profession and their attitudes towards their practicum (Brown, 2005; Johnson, 1994).

In other words, causes of low language proficiency seem to be viewed by the student teachers as stable factors affecting their progress and language skills improvement, whereas causes like hard work, effort or learning opportunities are rarely mentioned as contributing elements of success. This finding can be of significance to teacher educators in general and college supervisors and teachers in particular. Student teachers need to be guided through their practicum journey in creating a balance between their prior beliefs and reality. It is of importance that student teachers realize their weaknesses and strengths and attribute them to both external and internal factors. If failing to learn, improve or progress is frequently attributed to stable external factors,

then the pre-service teachers are likely to experience negative feelings of anxiety, anger, frustration or fear.

- **College-based course**

Another noteworthy finding of this study is the missing link between the content knowledge and pedagogy the pre-service teachers learn in their college-based courses and their low language proficiency. The teacher training college of this study is a learning environment where three content subjects need to be learned and mastered through the English language. Therefore, an attempt to connect the three cycles to the appropriate link (i.e. content knowledge, pedagogy and language) may need the attention of the educators, researchers and curriculum designers.

Most of the pre-service teachers participating in this study commented negatively on their inability to impart knowledge to their students for different reasons. Those reasons include the lack of content in terms of the three subject matters they are required to teach, the gap they experience between what they need to learn in their textbooks and what they need to teach in reality, in addition to the low language proficiency, discussed earlier in this chapter. Those negative emotions can be partially understood within Furner's and Kumar's (2007, p.185) perspectives where "a young person's ability and confidence to do mathematics and science is critical for their future success in our high-tech globally competitive age" but "if done properly, integration of math and science could bring together overlapping concepts and principles in a meaningful way and enrich the learning context" (p. 186).

Hudson and Tan (2007) explored the perceptions of Malaysian science student teachers towards their preparation to use EMI in their classrooms. The findings indicate that "these preservice teachers claimed that coursework delivered in English, including English-based assessments, allowed them to more effectively construct academic knowledge in the target language. Learning strategies such as Internet chatting and English-only days provided means for enhancing communicative competence" (p.7). The present study confirms the importance of integration in the teacher education programmes at two levels; namely the subjects and across subjects, which seems to be

lacking elements of connectivity. Furner and Kumar (2007) assert that “the integration of math and science encompasses a number of considerations, for example, teaching math entirely as a part of science, math as a language and tool for teaching science, or teaching science entirely as a part of math. Also, teachers' confidence level in teaching math and science needs to be addressed. In some instances, a math teacher may not feel prepared to teach science or vice versa...science teachers may not feel confident teaching all science disciplines” (p.187). Nevertheless, the complexity of integrating Mathematics and Science into the elementary school curriculum seems to form most of the negative emotions about student teachers' competence, in addition to the language element, which as this current study reveals, proved to be a major source of tension.

Moreover, to teach three subjects in English requires mastering many skills at one time (e.g. language of instruction, content knowledge and pedagogy). For teachers to be able to teach any subject, they need to know the subject in order to teach it well and help their students understand the content and be involved in all activities prepared for them. In other words, the pre-service-teachers' knowledge about the subjects they teach should be rich to an extent that makes them feel confident about 'How' and 'What' to teach. Therefore, lack of such confidence in the knowledge they have gained in their college courses will normally trigger feelings of fear, confusion or frustration. Moreover, when the student teachers master the content knowledge of the subjects they are required to teach, they may be able to accommodate their students' learning styles in terms of appropriateness of teaching methods and techniques. Rich understanding of the subject matters to be taught is crucial to the trainees and contributes to creativity in teaching and planning for better learning opportunities.

College-based courses, as the trainees commented, teach theoretical lessons effectively, yet no matter how prepared the student teacher is, he/she may face difficulty in delivering such lessons due to lack of knowledge in the subject matter or to a mismatch between what will be taught and reality. In addition, if confidence in teaching the subject is missing, then it is likely that the trainees will experience a mixture of negative feelings in and out of their classes. In the current research study the lack of

confidence some of the participants felt during their teaching may have unintentionally transferred to their students and led to certain behavioural problems or classroom management issues. In other words, the trainees' lived negative feelings in the classroom because of a lack of content knowledge may have affected their students' attitudes to learning and their involvement in the activities prepared for them.

That is, the knowledge of subjects student teachers need to teach is essential in facilitating the learning of the trainees' students and in building up the trainees' expertise in learning and teaching. If student teachers do not have a solid foundation in the three subjects they are expected to teach, this inevitably affects their performance as well as their students' reactions and engagement (Henderson and Rodrigues, 2008). As data collected has shown, the case in the present study seems to be a lack of what and 'how' to teach together. Adding the challenge of low language proficiency, the student teachers need to gain confidence in what they will teach so that their attitude towards their language skills changes.

Shulman (1986) affirms that effective mathematics teaching consists of two integral essential elements: mathematical content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Those two types of knowledge play a crucial role in shaping the students' minds and conceptual framework. If student teachers master one type of knowledge only, lack of confidence is likely to occur during teaching (McDuffy, 2004). Likewise, as far as student teachers are concerned, a number of studies in research discuss the relationship between science content and pedagogical knowledge (Roehrig and Luft, 2004; Henze et al, 2008; Heller et al, 2003; Nehm and Schonfeld, 2007). Most of these studies emphasize the importance of having a grasp of both types of knowledge for effective classroom teaching. However, the literature lacks studies that show the relationship between those two types of knowledge and low language proficiency.

The student teachers of this present study seem to be under pressure to promote English language skills, literacy development as well as teaching performance all at one time. This process is challenging by itself and requires a reconsideration of the subject instructional strategies adopted by the college-based courses. It also necessitates a

need to re-plan the English language skills courses taught. Student teachers need to develop their English language skills first and feel confident using them before they are taught how to develop the content or pedagogical knowledge of the subjects they will teach. Knowledge of subject matter requires integration of language elements in the college courses. However, low language proficiency of the student teachers may impede the progress of the whole learning/teaching process and result in a lack of confidence and a mixture of other negative emotions to be raised during teaching.

In other words, literacy in English language does not only refer to the four basic skills of any language: reading, writing, listening and speaking. It involves many other cognitive skills such as reasoning, predicting or analyzing. That is to say, unless student teachers feel comfortable using English language as the medium of instruction, not much can be expected from them at the performance or teaching level.

This present study has shown that all participants had little or no exposure to real English language content, written, spoken, heard or read, during their school years. It is known that English language proficiency requires effective engagement and participation in classroom activities, which seem to be missing. If therefore, Science and Mathematics are learnt through reasoning and other critical thinking skills, the student teachers will probably suffer learning or teaching those two subjects through English.

In fact, the findings of this study raise awareness of the need to reconsider the English-only policy adopted by Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) in all the elementary schools for the three subjects Mathematics, Science and English. This is supported by recent criticism by Troudi (2007, 2009) who has referred to the negative impact the EMI policy may have on the status and use of Arabic as a major language for academia in addition to the cognitive burden such a policy may have on the undergraduates' learning and performance.

If student teachers are not well-prepared in their English language classes, then their ability and confidence to teach Mathematics and Science in English are likely to decrease. Consequently, the trainees' ability to adjust the content they teach or adapt to curriculum themes they teach may add to their lack of confidence and give rise to

negative feelings towards the teaching process as a whole. It is important that student teachers learn 'how' and 'when' they can use their first language to assess their students' learning and help them understand the content meant to be taught. It is also essential that education policies do not emphasize the use of English language over proficiency, content and pedagogical knowledge.

- **Theory and practice conflict**

Having learnt certain educational theories in the college-based courses, it is essential that student teachers apply their learning to real life situations in the training field. Teacher education programmes emphasize the importance of maintaining a connection between theory and practice. For student teachers "learning how to think and act in ways that achieve one's intentions is difficult, particularly if knowledge is embedded in the practice itself" (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p.37). However, the findings of the present study show that there is a huge gap in this dichotomy (i.e. theory and practice); one finding that aligns with many research studies in teacher education literature. Britzman (2003, p.26), for example, notes that "enacted in every pedagogy are the tensions between knowing and being, thought and action, theory and practice, knowledge and experience, the technical and existential, the objective and the subjective".

The missing relationship between theory and practice, as this study shows, appeared in the participants' comments regarding what they believed to be a 'theory' and what they faced in their classrooms as practice. The trainees mentioned many incidents they experienced during their practicum where they felt confused, scared or frustrated because of their inability to match theoretical learning with real classroom situations. Examples of incidents mentioned included different environmental contexts, student behaviour problems or classroom management.

It is obvious that most of the student teachers' reactions to the challenges of implementation of theories learnt have led to utilization of their own prior knowledge and experience. In other words, faced by the classroom realities, some trainees believe that

applying theories or certain aspects of those theories is ineffective. It was evident that trainees rely more on their prior knowledge and experience rather than the learnt behaviour or course of strategies.

The student teachers seem to talk about living an incongruous relationship between what they have learnt in their teacher education programme and the new explored experience during their practicum. Although most of the participants expressed general positive comments about their college programme, some frustrations seem to be inevitable when faced with some challenging teaching/learning situations inside their classrooms. Obviously, the practicum has helped many of the trainees to try new ideas, reflect on their conflicting experiences and consider different teaching methods. That gap between the theoretical and practical aspects of learning, however, as many student teachers explained, gives the impression that a better understanding of the real teaching environments is in need of further research. In other words, according to many participants, the mixture of content knowledge and pedagogies learnt proved to be insufficient from a practical view.

As the early chapters have indicated, all student teachers articulated multiple tensions and negative feelings which they experienced in their field training. They expressed such negativity at times where they felt unable to implement the pedagogies learnt in line with what they experience in their classrooms. Therefore, it is essential that the college teacher training programme is planned in a way that enables the pre-service teachers to address their tensions, negative as well as positive feelings, and provide them with the skills needed to negotiate the inescapable issues associated with the mismatch between theory and practice. Goodlad (1990) contends that teacher education programmes should help teachers develop their problem-solving skills and utilize them effectively in adjusting or adapting to a change.

Within the same context, the college teacher education programme, as the findings of this study suggest, has to offer extensive courses associated with the problematic issues the student teachers had to encounter. Dealing with special needs children, for example, is an area of exceptionality for even specialists. If the lack of experience

student teachers have in all other areas of teaching is taken into consideration, then having to teach children who belong to this field can be very challenging. Student teachers have to be well prepared to deal with children's diversity and different learning abilities. They need to learn how to meet the special emotional needs of each individual in their classrooms and how to establish rapport with them. The more prepared the student teachers are to deal with special needs children, the more confident they are likely to feel about themselves and their teaching.

6.3. Coping strategies

The lack of confidence and other negative feelings student teachers have experienced during their practicum seem to considerably affect the way they have chosen to cope with the demanding tasks and challenges encountered. Choosing the least harmful strategy to adapt to a certain incident and complete the practicum safely was a priority. Obviously, many factors have contributed to the approaches, mostly passive, the trainees have adopted.

- **The effective teacher image is missing**

It was obvious that there was a sense of fear and frustration of varying degrees towards different aspects of teaching and teachers' personality. Many student teachers were occupied by that fear of replicating the early school patterns of behaviour their teachers used to act and socialize with. There was apparently a fear that their own images as future teachers would be negatively distorted due to a number of reasons such as low language proficiency, lack of content knowledge or inability to react appropriately to classroom provisional situations. Their success or failure in the practicum depends on how well they can face challenges or cope with them. Not surprisingly the ineffective images of those teachers who taught the trainees in their prior-to-college schools have characterized most of the participants' reactions and mirrored those fears in forms of escaping, passively following instructions or just ignoring the whole situations.

Although it is almost impossible to change the student teachers' perceptions of their teachers in previous years, it is essential that those prospective teachers explore new areas of teaching and be exposed to more positive examples of teachers during their

practicum. As discussed above, many participants expressed their dissatisfaction about their class mentors' relationship with them, the lack of support they received from the college or the schools and all of those and many other negative experiences during schooling or practicum time seem to contribute to an inability to read and interpret emergent situations and cope with them appropriately. A growing body of research proposed a relationship between one's self-efficacy and causal attribution (Garvis and Pendergast, 2011; Hsieh and Schallert, 2008).

Pre-service teachers may need to develop cultural awareness as well as that of their hidden potentials. The incidents mentioned, reactions and coping strategies adopted suggest the need for student teachers to be trained in facing and dealing with cultural challenges in the classroom that may exist because of the class mentors' cultural background and perceptions of practicum, assistance and responses expected. Likewise, more efforts are required by schools and colleges to raise the class mentors' awareness of the need to cooperate with student teachers and provide them with positive examples of teachers, teaching environments and learning environments. Weiner (2006) confirms that behaviour and future outcomes are determined by the expected future outcomes and emotional reactions of an individual.

In other words, if student teachers are helped and supported in raising their positive beliefs of external and internal attributions or at least to attain a balance between them, challenges and the way they are encountered are likely to be less stressful.

Moreover, student teachers' negative comments on the loads of teaching and practicum requirements they have to accomplish, together with the need to prove their capability and competence, reflect the amount of pressure those trainees have experienced. Consequently, their reactions, in most cases, lack depth. Student teachers seem to lack experience in knowing how to modify their actions/reactions according to the urgency of certain incidents. For example, using the L1 for many of them, most of the time, was the easiest coping strategy when they felt threatened by the low language proficiency, regardless of all the theories they have learnt and studied on differentiated learning or teaching techniques.

This is a significant finding as it demonstrates the urgent need for teacher education literature to focus more on research that relates to student teachers' prior knowledge and school experiences. Such research can contribute to a better understanding of trainees' reactions to the challenges encountered and problem-solving skills they need to improve. It is probable that knowing how student teachers construct their perceptions of teaching and effective teachers, and derive their strategies of coping with practicum difficulties will provide useful insights into the importance of those previous experiences in formulating the trainees' professional identities and their actions/reactions during their learning/teaching journey.

In fact, it is clear that the challenges the student teachers in this present study mentioned can be perceived as reflections of trainees' inexperience in bridging the gap between all the factors discussed above and their previously formulated perceptions of teaching and teachers. It also shows that the college-based course had little or no effect on their beliefs about teaching. While most of the student teachers talked about their aptitude to learning, love of teaching children, or willingness to prove themselves as competent teachers, this positive attitude did not seem to help them much in translating this positivity into action during their practicum, probably because they were surrounded by negativity of different sources during their field training. This finding is in line with Goodson (1992, p.147) who states that "University pre-service teacher preparation programmes are usually too short, too structured and too insensitive to individual needs and backgrounds to do anything but provide a thin overlay experience, one that usually does not meld with previous life experiences and beliefs about teaching". However, while it can be viewed as one of the privileges for the current study's participants to start their practicum from the first year in their education training programme, it is essential to consider all the above challenges and train student teachers in a way that facilitates their learning, enriches their knowledge and polishes their teaching and learning skills. Shindler (2010, p.337) states that: "having a generally positive attitude can potentially be rooted in a yes mind-set...the positive energy that we radiate will come back in some

form. The result is a positive effect on our lives, teaching and relationship within the school”.

To conclude, knowing how student teachers perceive their practicum learning experience and what they expect to face would help teacher educators design real life problem-solving situations that appeal to trainees, facilitate the adjustment of their internal dispositions and enhance their abilities to deal with stressful incidents during their training practice.

Chapter Seven

Implications

The discussion in chapter six has indicated that EFL pre-service teachers' emotional experiences are influenced by a number of major practicum elements which are primarily included in the college-based course to help polish the trainees' professional identity and enhance classroom performance.

7.1 Implications

- The significance of the present study is based on the gap in previous literature addressing EFL student teachers' emotional experiences. The findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge and support the findings of other studies in teacher education literature that emotions play a major role in affecting student teachers' learning and commitment to the teaching profession.

Interpersonal skills and academic performance of pre-service teachers should be addressed in the teacher education programmes. Such findings provide insight into how teacher training programmes and curricula could be reorganized and restructured to include elements of teaching that focus on student teachers' emotional intelligences as well as classroom effectiveness. Raddawi and Troudi (2014, p.183) assert that emotional intelligence "should be integrated in the teacher pre-service and in-service training to help create a positive climate in the classroom with less conflict and improved performance of both educator and student".

As noted earlier in the previous chapters, no attention is given in the practicum course to student teachers' emotions. The trainees are constantly in need of emotional support that they lacked during their training period. Their emotional state seems to influence their thinking during their teaching and in the way they respond to challenging incidents, both negatively and positively. Hence, elements of affect and teacher's emotions added

to the curriculum should enhance the student teachers' teaching experiences, motivate them and contribute to a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities in their practicum. Elements of criticality could probably be added to the college-based course where student teachers are encouraged to read research studies about other student teachers' challenges in different contexts and suggest ways of responding to certain educational incidents. Building upon student teachers' positive emotions would help them develop a repertoire of coping strategies that they can use when encountering stressful situations. Larrivee (2012, p.171) asserts that "deliberately cultivating positive emotions and appreciating "run-of-the-mill" daily events help people cope with their stress...positive emotions can have a lasting "undoing effect" on negative emotions". In this sense, Fredrickson (2001) stresses that positive emotions provide more options for action in stressful situations.

On the other hand, the findings associated with other stakeholders (e.g. class-mentors, college supervisors and school principals) point out a range of questions in terms of collaboration and coordination necessary for the success of the practicum. It is essential that all educators work together for better results. It is clear that communication links are missing at different levels: clarity of roles and responsibilities and the emotional element connecting all together. Class mentors, for example, should be prepared to receive the student teachers in their classrooms. However, it is equally important that their readiness and willingness to fulfill their tasks are considered. In other words, class mentors' emotional states are as essential in the training practice as those of student teachers. Mentors who work under pressure are likely to respond to student teachers' questions or concerns unpleasantly. Emotions play a key role in fostering effective relationships and those involved in the educational cycles are no exception. Teaching and learning can be positively promoted when positive relationships are established as part of the school-college socialization process, and not mostly based on a 'superior-subordinates' relations as Oplatka (2009) states.

The participants of this study are all Emirati speakers of Arabic, their mother tongue. The teaching of content knowledge subjects, therefore, via L1, Arabic, might be more effective. Implementing the EMI policy in primary or tertiary education does not necessarily bring about fluent speakers of English nor well-qualified content subject teachers, or student teachers as in this study. This finding necessitates a critical reconsideration of the imposed EMI education which does not seem to achieve the policy makers' objectives in teaching and learning through English as the only medium in classrooms.

One major theme emerging in this study is that imposing the EMI policy might be ineffective for two reasons. First, with low language proficiency of most of the participants in this study, it is obvious that mastering the content subject knowledge is a challenging cognitive burden which may delay rather than enhance the learning and teaching processes. Second, implementing the EMI approach may disadvantage many students who may have not grasped the basic language skills required for a tertiary level. Consequently, an issue of social inequality is raised where some students may have received their early education through English in private schools or abroad.

In his vision on the development of EFL education in the UAE, Troudi (2009) posits that countries like the UAE need “a solid English language curriculum, designed with clear and realistic objectives and reflecting sound knowledge of methodology, language pedagogy and appropriate materials” (p.210). Thus, the question to be asked is whether the EMI policy is effectively serving the needs of Emirati students and future student teachers.

7.2 Contribution of the study

This qualitative exploratory research study is an attempt to investigate student teachers' emotional experiences, challenges and the coping strategies they adopt during their practicum. The findings are of significance to the teacher education literature in general and the teacher training programme of the participating college, where the study was conducted, in particular.

Many researchers have discussed similar results about the practicum and the challenges or concerns that entail. The findings of this present study, however, add to the existing literature of teacher education in three significant ways.

1) The present study is the first of its kind in the Arabian Gulf and the UAE. Most previous research studies, as the review of literature has revealed, examined the pre-service teachers' experiences in the practicum. Yet, none of the studies, according to the best of my knowledge, has explored the student teachers' emotions in depth as this present study attempted to do within the context of non-native speakers of English who are majoring in three subjects; Mathematics, Science and English. A number of research studies conducted in practicum contexts have examined pre-service teachers who are native speakers of English where language might be the least barrier to teaching subjects like Math or Science. On the other hand, studies that examined similar types of participants (e.g. EFL/ESL student teachers) have focused on the concerns of those pre-service teachers from the language, the content knowledge or the pedagogy perspectives, but there was no clear connection between the mixture of feelings, emotions or concerns reported and the challenges and coping strategies adopted by the participants.

2) The study has revealed discrepancies between the theoretical aspect of teaching and the reality of the training field from a different perspective. No research has been found in the UAE within the same context of this study to highlight this theory-practice mismatch reported by the student teachers. It is, therefore, a call for curriculum designers and policy makers to reconsider the teacher education courses taught in order to avoid what the findings of this study reveal as a gap between the UAE local environment and the different cultural themes integrated into the primary school curriculum and textbooks.

3) The most important contribution of the current study is its focus on emotions. No study in the UAE or the Arabian Gulf countries, until the conduct of this study, has explored the mixture of emotions experienced and lived by student teachers during their

practicum and the impact those emotions have on the pre-service learning, teaching and progress as prospective teachers.

In fact, conducting this research study and being a teacher myself, has enlightened my knowledge of student teachers' emotions and feelings and the importance of those emotions in their and our lives. If teaching is nothing but a 'rainbow of emotions' , as one of the participants described it, then for all humanity, teachers' well-being should always be the focus of research and consideration for better understanding of the complex nature of teaching and sensitivity of emotions it triggers.

7.3 Issues for further research

Future research is needed to obtain more detailed information about student teachers' reactions to classroom situations. A possibility for improving this research study could be by observing participants during their own teaching practice in their classrooms. The post-observation discussion would then allow the student teachers to reflect on their lessons and share the surprises that might have happened as well as moments of achievement or disappointments. The supervisors can provide immediate feedback that would help the trainees realize their strengths and the teaching areas that need improvement. In addition, it would be helpful to share suggestions for better responses to unanticipated classroom situations.

Another possible area of research could be the impact of the classroom mentor's professional knowledge and experience on the student teachers' attitudes and readiness to challenges during the practicum.

Other perspectives of practicum challenges should be investigated. College supervisors, school teachers and principals and class mentors can be interviewed for a better understanding of student teachers' learning and emotional experiences in the practicum and for a more comprehensive picture of the nature of challenges pre-service teachers faced and talked about.

7.4 Final reflection

The whole doctoral thesis had implications on my teaching and learning journey. I was physically, psychological and emotionally involved in every stage of conducting this study. The struggle between being a researcher and a teacher was challenging. The ethics of research have polished the probable emotional biases and at times, put them off for later reflections and interpretations. It was only my positive emotions that kept me going in my research, regardless of the negativity that popped up from time to time. It was my enthusiasm, ambition, excitement about what I was doing which have given me the energy to continue the work. I shared the same mixtures of emotions with my participants, but it was always managed and guided by experience and desire to understand the other from a different perspective. My positive emotions, supported by similar positive feedback and care from my supervisor, friends and family confirmed my findings in that without emotional support; personal and interpersonal, success in life, and more specifically in teaching, can be only paid off when our attitudes to situations and challenges change and when our ambitions become the drive rather than the driven.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Samples of the data collection

1- Focus group interview: Sample quotes from Mohammad's focus group discussion

I think, what I have learnt about English from my previous 14 years was all about "What is your favorite hobby?" [laughing sarcastically]...that was almost the only topic I learnt in all my stages of study- primary, preparatory until secondary...this is really sad...I was unlucky with my teachers...the teachers' inability to improve my language frustrated me a lot and I think it was one reason why I cannot do well now.

I felt extremely happy when I noticed that my students interacted with me and understood the lesson, even though I used Arabic to make my task easier. In fact, using Arabic saved my time and helped me create a great relationship with my students. I could feel their respect and love for me. I was really happy.

I noticed that the class teacher was wasting a lot of time trying to explain to the students the concept of four seasons. He tried hard to tell them about the snow and the rain and the students had no clue about what he was saying...it is irrelevant to them...I myself would not feel comfortable teaching something I am not familiar with...well, it is nice to know about those seasons but it would have been more useful if he only taught them the two main seasons they were familiar with; summer and autumn, then at upper stages they could learn about the other two: winter and spring.

2- Interview transcript sample

This interview is an example of the interviews and major emergent themes that have been italicized and underlined.

I: represents the interviewer. A: is a pseudonym of the participant.

I: So, have you used English Language outside the college or school and how?

A: Yes, I use it mostly when I go shopping at malls, or when I chat with my family abroad. Sometimes I use some words in case of a provisional misunderstanding. I frequently mix Arabic with English in my daily talks because either I don't know the exact Arabic word or vice versa.

I: What is the skill in your English language that poses you a real upset when you become a teacher?

Sometimes I misuse words in English because I try to translate their meaning into Arabic first then use them. I many times tried to make the words simple to understand for my students by translating them into Arabic, but I think my weakness in vocabulary has caused me troubles most of the time. So I think, this lack of vocabulary is my weakest point and I hope it won't stay with me for too long, especially with three content subjects to teach.

I: English Language is the medium of instruction in your college, namely; science, mathematics and English itself. You will teach them in English. How do you feel towards using English during your practicum?

I feel optimistic about teaching in general and I'll do my best to help my students learn in the best way ever, even if I use Arabic with them. I can't hide my fears or worries about conveying my enthusiasm to my students with this vocabulary obstacle being there. I'm really worried about the way I will teach the students three subjects in English. I may help them improve better if I use Arabic. The English language will always be a source of disturbance. I will always feel scared that I'm using the wrong word, that I'm teaching my students the wrong piece of information which they will take with them for the rest of their lives. It's a real scary responsibility.

I: Could you describe a positive situation you've undergone during your practicum? Can you remember a positive situation regardless of its source: from teachers, students or administration that affected your emotions and feelings remarkably?

A: I experienced many positive feelings during the practicum. In one of my science lessons about 'Magnetic materials' I tried to take the whole class out of the studying

room to allow them practice finding materials that their magnets can attract. The class teacher didn't want to do this because she thought students might cause noise and it would be difficult to control them. I tried hard with her until she accepted and we all got out of the class with magnets in hands. Students were extremely happy and interactive. They loved the idea of getting out of the classroom. I could see the joy in their eyes and the happiness in their screams when they found something that their magnets attracted. I could hear them shouting "Hey, there! This WOOD chair doesn't like my magnet". I felt proud of myself because I got immediate feedback from my students and the class teacher. Everyone enjoyed the lesson. Yes, there was little noise, but joy and learning opportunities were there, too.

I: Do you remember your first reaction toward that situation where you felt that you're loved by your students?

A: I felt really proud and too self-confident. I trusted my abilities as a future teacher more. I felt motivated to complete my studies because I felt I could break that fixed traditional type of teaching, where students are stuck to their chairs most of the time and the teacher is the only moving body in the class.

I: OK, do you remember a negative situation that affected your emotions and feelings momentarily during the practicum?

A: At the start of the practicum, the agreement between my college and the school was that I would teach in my assigned school teacher's class (class mentor). I was supposed to help the class teacher in her lessons, preparation of the materials and giving a number of lessons during my training period. In the first few days, the Western class teacher treated me in a good way. But later, as if she realized that I was still a trainee, so she changed the way she used to talk to me 180 degrees. She stopped giving me advice, she talked to me unkindly, she didn't respond to my requests in using some materials from the resources room to plan my lessons with the excuse that "lessons should be given the way she prepared for them because she knew what best fitted her students". She didn't show any kind of cooperation. I felt really sad and frustrated because the way she thought and behaved was not the way I expected before I came to the school. She was keen on increasing the number of barriers between her and me. But the worst of all was when she wrote unfair comment on my evaluation sheet saying I was not cooperative and I lacked motivation. I got shocked and I reported to the school principal but that was too late, it was the end of the practicum and what hurt more that I didn't get enough support from the college. That incident turned my entire optimistic attitude towards teaching and teachers into pessimistic one. I felt upset of the teacher's negative attitude towards me as an Emirati.

I: Thanks for sharing this. Let's move to some other questions about your education in the college. You have learnt a lot of theories and strategies and methods at the college.

Do you feel satisfied about what you have learnt here compared to what you learnt during practicum?

A: 60-70 % I feel satisfied about my learning in the college. Well, I can't deny that I've learnt many useful strategies and techniques that helped me improve my teaching in the practicum. I learnt many theories and interesting techniques like 'learning by doing' and 'students' learning styles', I learnt that there are other ways of teaching rather than those traditional ones that we were taught by in our schools. I learnt that students would be more opt to learn when you engage them rather than ask them to listen, learn and drill. I learnt that teaching is more than a worksheet given to the students to give some time for the teacher to relax in the class. Yet, I didn't learn how to integrate the three subjects together in one session. How can I teach science and math using English and then use English as a main subject. I really feel I still need another 4- year course of teacher training to be able to do this. It's very scary but let's see how things work next year.

I: So did you feel comfortable about what you learned and applied during practicum?

A: To some extent. As I said before, I hope I would have learnt something about dealing with special needs children. I felt confused and unsure how to teach this group of students in my class in my three practicum training. I couldn't manage to teach them in a better way and I was sad and angry at the same time. I needed to be prepared to be in class with this group of special needs students.

I: You have studied many theories, and strategies in the college. Have you faced any difficulties in implementing these theories?

A: in my first practicum, yes. There was a big gap between what I theoretically learnt and what I practically did or faced in the classroom. Simply, not all theories can be applied in our environment. Our students and culture are different from the students and cultures of the authors of these theories. It was very stressful while struggling to apply one of the strategies I have learnt just to show my mentor teacher or college supervisor that I know them, but deep in heart I want to scream out of disappointment because I know our students need something different.

I: Give me examples, please.

A: to reward a grade 2 student by stars or candies never worked in my class. Even though according to theories they are children of grade two only, it would be impossible and very challenging to do so with students who use their Ipads in the classroom to save the new vocabulary. Our culture is different and unfortunately we always learn and teach things that can never suit us.

I: In general, how do you evaluate all what you learnt here including theories, in comparison with the field?

A: I feel satisfied about the way I learnt in the college, but not about the content I learnt. I don't think what I have learnt so far in science, math and English is sufficient enough for me to be a well-qualified teacher in the three major. Yes, in some subjects I've learnt from cutting-edge textbooks, but as I said before practice is completely different from theories. I needed to practice teaching in front of my college peers first so that I won't be scared to be in front of a class full of children. I needed to learn more about how to control my anger and sorrow and how to be able to count from 1-1000 before I think of punishing a child. I feel partially satisfied about my learning, but to be a teacher means that I need to be professional and well-prepared, and until now I'm not sure I am with these two qualities.

I: Are you satisfied about your performance during practicum?

A: Taken the amount of knowledge and applied, yes, I am satisfied because I know I did my best to improve my language and learn from my practicum experience. But I still feel sad for the weakness in my vocabulary that had impaired my progress and affected my performance in a number of lessons so that I had to use Arabic instead.

I: Now, I'll shift to another group of questions. Can you explain to me your feelings toward teaching these three subjects in English?

A: I felt nervous, anxious, and confused. I tried many times to control myself. Usually, at the beginning of a lesson I felt more stressful than in the middle or the end of it. But I really hated it when I made spelling mistakes and the Western teacher would rush to the blackboard in front of the students to erase it and write the correct word. Or, sometimes, she wouldn't mind interrupting my teaching while sitting at the back of the class to shout out the correct pronunciation of a word that I uttered or wrote. She was kind in many other aspects, but she always treated me with a sense of superiority. I mean, she knows, I don't know! Although I didn't like it that way, but I was sure that she was more experienced and I was the one who needed to work harder to improve. I strongly believe that English is not my native language and I'm better than other Western teachers for one main reason. I can speak Arabic and English and I can teach in both, but the class teacher, the English native speaker, cannot. I think more practice would increase my self-confidence and reduce my worries.

I: Do you consider your lack of English Language proficiency a real obstacle that may impair your commitment to your profession as a teacher?

A: No, I don't think so. I am a positive person in my life. With all those negative incidents that faced me during the practicum, I still believe that I can improve or at least do my best to improve. But if I fail, then I may think of another path, like business, because I loved it since I was in my high school. I got full support from my family to be a teacher but because it is a huge responsibility, I may quit it for my own goodness and the children's.

I: What would be the biggest source of fear once you start teaching?

A: It would be about everything..mmm....Evaluation, students' parents and the way they would talk to me if they spot any of my wrongly spelled words or if they ask me about a word that their children tell them about and it was wrongly used by me. I feel scared by just imagining one of these situations (a sigh...). The content and my qualification in any of the three majors is another horrible concern.

I: Besides language, do you believe there are other obstacles which might result abandoning the teaching profession?

A: Yes, of course. The way I was treated by the school administration was unpleasant at all. I expected to be welcomed as a future teacher and be provided with all facilities and resources that would help me make the best of my practicum. But from the first day, in all my three training years, the school principals treated us as home maids or helpers. They never talked to me or even my colleagues, as they told me, as teachers. They used to ask me sometimes to go and stay in one teacher's class, just like a baby sitter, because she had an appointment in the hospital, or to circulate a memo for other teachers or help the librarian carrying some new books for the library. That was insulting for me. Well, I don't mind helping and supporting other staff or teachers, but I need to feel like a teacher first not as one of the school cleaning staff. I was also worried of my image as a teacher

I: You experienced such emotions as scare, anxiety and tension and other negative feelings. Do you think that you will be able to overcome them in future and how?

A: Hopefully, I will be able to handle my future worries and concerns; otherwise it's much better for me and the children to quit this job (a laugh). Well, maybe the best thing for me would be just to ignore any similar negative incidents. It's not easy, but I'll work on myself and try to improve my weaknesses as much as I can and future will tell.

I: If we review the negative and positive emotions as a strip, can you count them? You mentioned anxiety, tension and fear.

A: I experienced feelings of confusion, delightedness, cordiality, enthusiasm, nervousness. I disliked that feeling of being observed and watched by many people like the class mentor, the students, the school principal and the college mentor. I always felt worried and I hated what is called 'deadlines'! I needed to rush to submit my lesson plans to my college mentor. It was unfair and too much. We didn't have science textbooks to follow. As a teacher, you have some guidelines and you need to prepare and plan your lessons according to the guidelines and topic objectives. But I also felt delighted and proud of myself when I observed a positive change in one or all of the students' academic level. I think the worst feeling that kept buzzing in my head was the class mentor's evaluation of my performance. She was always doubtful and she kept

correcting me in the class and I was always worried about the comments she would write in my evaluation report. She was not fair and because of her I missed two classes and I was about to drop the practicum. But I was convinced by my family and friends not to do so. She was not helpful, she never bothered to give me a hand when I taught her class and yet she wrote an unfair report. That was really frustrating.

I: You have experienced a mixture of positive and negative emotions. What skills do you think you need to learn to cope better with those emotions in the future?

A: I need to learn more about different ways that I can use to deal with aggressive, silent, hyperactive or special needs children, because this group of students was the most challenging for me. I need to learn how to help low achievers improve and how to encourage brilliant and talented students without underestimating their cleverness. And for sure I want to learn how to teach students with autism. I felt helpless in my class once because I didn't know how to simplify the lesson to a child with autism. Although I was sympathetic with these students, their presence in my class scared me. I didn't have enough experience on how to deal with them and unless I get this experience, I'm afraid I may quit teaching. Dealing with parents is very important. Every child is the world of his parents and I need to know how to pass convey bad news to parents about their child's misbehavior or low achievement. Otherwise, I'll be in trouble.

: Yes, that's also significant; it's the first one.

I: My final question is: What did (A) learn from (FA during the practicum)?

A: I learnt from (A) that she is a strong person with a strong will, but laziness controls part of my life and that's probably why I'm not improving in terms of vocabulary and spelling. Maybe I need to organize my priorities and be more responsible for my own learning. I also learnt that shouting at kids can never be a strategy in teaching. If they are crazy, they'll become crazier when you shout at them. So, patience. I think I need to learn how to become more patient and tolerant. I am a peaceful girl by nature and I love life and simplicity, but this practicum taught me how to sacrifice simplicity when it's misused. To be a flexible girl doesn't mean to accept being insulted by others. Well, maybe I need to be more open to life real challenges and more open to people. I never shared my feelings with anyone during the practicum. Everyone thought that everything was going well. But it was only because I don't like talking about my sadness or frustration because I think this may negatively affect my optimism. However, I discovered after the practicum that I was wrong, because sharing might have reduced the amount of stress I experienced at different situations.

I: Would you like to add anything about your experience during practicum?

A: it was challenging. It was a complete world of constant race with time. You rush to complete a lesson plan, you need to control the class and students and give your lesson within a specific time, you need to show you are qualified and competent within a five-

week time, and you need to submit your assignments according to deadlines (a sigh and a big laugh)... and you need to finish the interview and rush for a delicious lunch.
I: Thanks (A) for your time.

3- Critical incident reflection sample

- 1) Describe an event that you experienced during your last practicum and has had a positive impact on your feelings. Say why you thought that feeling was positive.

There are many events that I would like to talk and write about. But the one that most touched my feelings was with the school social worker. Boredom, confusion and frustration were my annoying partners since I started my last practicum. All of that confusion emerged into my life since I joined the college and were pushed to be a teacher. I honestly never had teaching among my dreams. However, I still remember that day. It was the fourth day of the first week in my practicum. At that day, we had to attend a meeting with the school social worker. During the meeting, I was not feeling comfortable and simply I had that feeling that I did not belong to that place. At the end of the meeting, the social worker approached me and kindly asked me if I have a sister who long time ago was a teacher. I answered with a 'yes'. Then my whole world looked different when she started telling me about my sister; naming her as the best example of a professional, honest and dedicated teacher. She kept talking about her and her good and kind relationships with everyone; the youngster and the adults. She also said that deep in her heart she always dreamt of becoming so lovable and dedicated like her. I couldn't express my pride; my happiness and my pleasure to hear such powerful and motivating words. It was as if I was waiting for something inspiring to trigger my enthusiasm and motivation. I couldn't imagine it would be my own lovely sister who maybe had never been appreciated by us, her other sisters and brothers, as that social worker did. It was just like a flash of willingness that I decided to keep forever. I made the decision immediately and promised myself to continue what my sister had started. I was just like a lost captain in the middle of a huge ocean, when suddenly he spotted an island and felt extremely secured.

- 2) Describe an event that you experienced during your last practicum and has had a negative impact on your feelings. Say why you thought that feeling was negative.

I had a very sad incident with one of the special needs children. She had a hearing problem and it was very difficult for me to explain the whole lesson to the class first and then go closer to her to say the same thing again. I felt frustrated and not confident enough to complete my practicum with this child in my class. I hadn't studied yet about similar cases in my college curriculum and I was unable to handle this issue successfully. I sought the class teacher's support and advice,

but still it was not enough for me to feel confident about my own teaching and the way I could solve similar problems.

- 3) Do you think it is important for you as a student teacher to share your feelings with someone? Why/why not?

I undoubtedly need someone to share my feelings with. I had passed through difficult situations in the practicum and the hardest of it was not to find the right person to talk to or get advice from. It was more disappointing to me than the incidents themselves not to be able to talk about them. My focus at that time was my practicum final evaluation, and every time I had the feeling to go to any teacher, mentor or friend I felt scared because I thought that would affect my grade in a way or another. I honestly did not feel secured sharing my feelings, especially the sad ones; because I thought people or teachers would negatively judge me as a future teacher. It was very stressful at time to keep that smile on my face to show confidence and high self-esteem while I'm really broken inside, scared, confused or frustrated. The college should work harder, I think, to gain our trust and help us improve in a healthy way.

Appendix B: University of Exeter Ethical research approval



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: Mouna Jamil Abou-Assali

Your student no: 570039724

Return address for this certificate:

United Arab Emirates
Abu Dhabi
Emirates College for Advanced Education
P.O.Box 126662

Degree/Programme of Study: Doctorate in Education In TESOL (EdD)

Project Supervisor(s): Dr.Salah Troudi

Your email address: ma355@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 00971508003824

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / 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:.....Mouna Abou-Assali.....date: 4th,Aug.2011

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.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 570039724

Title of your project:

Student teachers' emotional experience in the practicum in a UAE teacher education college

Brief description of your research project:

This is primarily an interpretive exploratory study that aims at investigating the impact of the practicum experience on the student teachers' emotions. A review of literature has shown dearth of studies on pre-service teachers' emotions and feelings, more specifically, in the United Arab Emirates context, where the study is conducted. Therefore, it is hoped that the study will fill the gap in literature and contribute to better understanding of student teachers' emotions. On the micro level, the findings may have implications for all members involved in teacher education programs, and to the policy makers and curriculum designers at the macro level. Data collection will be initially obtained via focus groups, individual interviews and critical incident technique.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

- Third year student teachers in a teacher education college in the UAE (Six male students and 10 female students).
- All students are UAE nationals
- All students completed a two-year foundation course (remedial program to improve English language skills) on admission
- Students' ages range between 19-23 years.
- All students have completed their first, second and third practicum periods as part of their teacher education program requirements.

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:

The researcher will make sure that all the participants in this study sign consent forms for their participation which will guarantee the participant's privacy and confidentiality. Participants will be also ensured the full freedom to withdraw from the study at any stage of the study without any possible penalty or deprivation of any advantages/benefits they have been previously entitled for.

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:

Three focus groups (5-6 participants each), individual interviews (16 interviews), and the critical incident technique (16 reflections) will be administered. Students will be interviewed at their convenience. All interviews will be recorded. Transcriptions of interviews will be then shared with each participant separately to ensure their confirmation of their responses. Students will be given the right to delete or edit any statements/responses they may perceive as undesirable or threatening.

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.):

- None

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):

None

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: August 2011 **until:** December 2011

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature) *Sally* **date:** 31/10/2011

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.

SELL unique approval reference: 211/12/10

Signed: *Sally Trench* **date:** 31/10/2011

.....
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/>

Appendix C: Consent form



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me

any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form

all information I give will be treated as confidential

the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

.....
(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher(s):.....

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

.....
OR

.....

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

