

## **A comparative library review of teaching practice and supervision practice between Malaysia and Australia**

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Teaching practice in Malaysia, also known as placement in Australia, is an essential “bridge” that connects theory and skills that student teachers learnt in the university to the real school context. Supervision is a powerful and important supportive mechanism to maximise the outcome of teaching practice. This paper aims to study the differences of teaching practice between Malaysia and Australia. Further, the differences of supervision practice between both countries is also been identified. The research methodology used for this study is library research on Malaysia and Australia teaching and supervision practices. Criteria of the supervision assessment that are implemented in Malaysia and Australia is compared to identify the gap between both countries on supervision practice. The purposes of teaching practice and supervision practice in both countries are discussed.

**Keywords:** Teaching practice, placement, student teacher, supervision, supervision practice.

### **Introduction**

A country’s accomplishment widely depends on the knowledge, skills and competencies of its citizen. Therefore, it is no astonishment that a country with the higher levels of education tend to enjoy better economic opulence. Thus, Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025 stated that in order to pursuit economic growth and development of Malaysia, education plays a vital part (Ministry of Education, 2014). Eleventh Malaysia Plan, 2016-2020, does emphasizing the same factor where Malaysia urgently need to prepare sufficient human capital who equipped with knowledge and skills, as well as ethics and morality to sustain and secure the economic progress (Economic Planning Unit, 2015).

Essentially, human capital growth depending on the quality of the teachers. Teacher act as a medium to transmits knowledge, shaping positive attitudes and nurturing constructive values among students. In the mid-1990s, a research carried out by Sanders and Rivers (1996) in the state of Tennessee, USA proved that the quality of a teacher is the key element to determine a student’s achievement. In the research, two eight-years-old average students were

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given different teachers, one with high-performing teacher and the other one with low-performing teacher. The result showed that within three years, the students' academic performance diverged by more than 50 percentile points. Similar studies which conducted in England, Dallas and Boston in USA found the similar results as well (Ministry of Education, Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025, p. 5-2).

To ensuring the excellent quality of teachers, teachers training institution plays a significant role. In Malaysia, two kind of public institutions – Higher Educations Institutions and Institute of Teacher Education are holding responsibility to offer teaching training programs. Sultan Idris Education University or known as *Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris* (UPSI) which established in 1922 is consider one of the oldest and well established higher education institution in Malaysia. In Australia, Deakin University is one of the teachers training institution that offers a broad range of education courses, which include early childhood, primary and secondary education, health and physical education and science teaching.

Teaching practice is one of the main criteria for all student teachers to fulfill before they are qualified to become a real teacher in both countries mentioned above. Teaching practice is a valuable experience where student teachers are exposed when they work in the real school context (Kiggundu, 2007). Nancy (2007) also stated that teaching practice plays a vital role to train any skilled teacher. Due to the urge of getting quality education, education stakeholders have raised their concern about the quality of teaching practice throughout the world (Nelson, 2007). Literatures also reviewed that student teachers are much concerned about their teaching practice as well (McBride, 1984; Wendt & Bain, 1989; Behets, 1990). Thus, education stakeholders should give a universal concern for teaching practice (Nelson, 2007).

This paper aims to study the differences of teaching and supervision practice between Malaysia and Australia. Deakin University in Australia was chosen to be the role model as Deakin University's Education and Training ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> in the world for University Subject Ranking by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings in 2014. (QS Quacquarelli Symonds Limited, 2015). The purposes of teaching practice were clearly identified at the beginning of the paper. The supervision practice in Malaysia and Australia has been acknowledged. Furthermore, the differences of teaching practice between Malaysia and Australia has been highlighted. Criteria of the supervision assessment for both countries have also been compared.

The significance of this research is to draw researcher's attention on the differences of teaching and supervision practices between Malaysia and Australia. This study targeted to broaden researchers' views to adapt or adopt teachers training practice of Australia in order to improve the teachers training programs that implementing in Malaysia.

## **Research method**

Library research is the research method that used for this paper. According to George (2008), library research "involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/ expert opinion on a research question; necessary component of every other research method at some point". Related information and data were extracted from various documents, mainly official website, government report, thesis and journals. By reviewing these literatures, the gap of analysis has been identified. There are few differences between Malaysia and Australia that required researcher's attention for further study. These documents are key elements as the proof and evidence of differences between Malaysia and Australia in term of teaching practice and supervision practice. This paper is a result of literature review,

document analysis and comparative analysis to identify the similarities and differences between practices in Malaysia and Australia.

## Findings

The finding of this study will be presented in 4 parts, which includes comparative on the purposes of teaching practice, supervision practice, teaching practice and supervision assessment criteria between Malaysia and Australia.

### The purposes of teaching practice in Malaysia and Australia

Before undergo teaching practice or placement, a guidebook or sufficient guidelines will be given to improve student understanding. Student teachers need to be physically and mentally prepared in order to accomplish the purposes of teaching practice. In Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia, *Pusat Latihan Mengajar dan Industri (PULAMI)* which means Teaching and industry training centre produced a guidebook named Sultan Idris Education University Teacher Practice Guidebook or *Buku Panduan Latihan Mengajar UPSI*, for all student teachers before they undergo their teaching practice in schools. Further information also can be obtained from the official webpage of Sultan Idris Education University, <http://praktikum.upsi.edu.my>. In Deakin University, Australia, an official website, <http://www.deakin.edu.au>, was created to facilitate student teachers who will undergo their placement (Deakin University, 2016). The web page title - Professional Experience, Deakin University provide all information regarding placement. In both documents mentioned above, the purposes of teaching practice in both countries has been identified as below:

Table 1. List of teaching practice purposes in Malaysia and Australia

No.	Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia	Deakin University, Australia
1.	Organise skills and knowledge into teaching and learning process.	Build strong foundations towards their chosen career, teaching profession.
2.	Apply skill and knowledge into the real school context.	Provides the essential links between theory and practise.
3.	Identify and evaluate problem in teaching and learning.	Partnership schools offer rich experiences and accept student teachers into teaching and learning communities.
4.	Presenting reflective and innovative thinking in teaching process.	A kind of assistantship to support student teachers.
5.	Showing teacher professional personality.	

Basically, the list of purposes of teaching practice or placement is shown in table 1, both emphasizes the teaching practice purposes as:

- a) Apply skills and knowledge which learned theoretically into the real school practise.
- b) Experience and identify the real teaching and learning problems in school communities.

## **The supervision practice in Malaysia and Australia**

Stock-ward and Javorek (2003) identified supervision plays an important role of the work of most student affairs professionals. Winston and Creamer (1997) defined supervision as a helping procedure designed to promote organizational goals, enhance personal and professional development as they work. Shupp and Arminio (2012) stated that supervision is a process that specially articulated to support employees (student teachers) to actualize the organization goals and enhance their leadership development while Eya and Leonard (2012) described supervision as any activity which assists teachers to accomplish both qualitative and quantitative instructional delivery.

Due to the fact that teaching practice is credited to the course of study in both countries, thus teaching practice must be assessed and supervised. In Deakin University, organisation or school is required to assign an industry supervisor (experience teacher) for the student during the placement. Industry supervisor holding responsible to carry out a performance evaluation during the student teachers' placement. Student teachers must manage their own workload, carry out required duties to meet continuous assessment requirements. At the same time, industry supervisor will support student teachers by guiding and enlighten them when they facing problem and need guidance. Besides, industry supervisor need to provide feedback on the student teacher's performance during placement which will be a part of the student's final mark for placement.

From Deakin University perspective, university responsible to assign an academic supervisor for each student teacher. The academic supervisor need to carry out their duty to supervise the student teacher as well. After the completion of the placement, student teachers must submit all pieces of assessment in the form of one portfolio within 4 weeks. As the completion of placement, a student will be awarded a mark that reflects their overall performance, both during their placement and for their portfolio. If the supervisors are not satisfied with the student teacher's performance and unable to fulfil all requirements during placement, the placement could be terminated and the student will be given a fail grade. (Deakin University, 2016).

In Sultan Idris Education University, a collaborative school is required to assigns a mentor teacher (also known as industry supervisor in Deakin University) for a student teacher during the teaching practice. Normally a mentor teacher must be an experience teacher, teaching in the related discipline more than three years. Mentor teacher is responsible to evaluate student teacher's performance during teaching practice. Besides supervise student teacher basic teaching routines like writing lesson plans and reflection, a mentor teacher need to carry out four times in-class supervision, observation and assessment. Each full supervision process including three procedures – pre-observation, teaching observation and post-observation. During the post-observation, mentor teacher and student teacher will discuss face to face about the strong points and weaknesses for the observed session. Mentor teacher will guide and supervises the student teacher to promote professional growth and enhance their teaching skills. The assessment done by mentor teacher will be recorded as one of a contributor on student teacher's final mark for teaching practice.

The supervisor lecturer (also known as academic supervisor in Deakin University) is assign by Sultan Idris Education University to supervise a student teacher. The supervisor lecturer responsible to support student teachers and enhance their professional development. During the early stage of teaching practice, supervisor lecturer will pay a social visit to school to discuss with the administrators and mentor teacher about the supervisory process. Supervisor lecturer also need to make sure the mentor teacher that assigned fully understand their responsible and duties. Supervisor lecturer need to facilitate the mentor teacher if they still have any doubt or unclear with the supervisory process. Additionally, supervisor lecturer

will meet the student teacher to concern about their condition, make sure they are healthy physically and mentally to complete the assigned tasks. Second and the third visit of the supervisor lecturer will focus on the in-class supervision, observation and assessment. The three-procedures supervision will be carried out, same as the mentor teacher. Supervisor lecturer also will guide and supervise student teacher to improve their performance, enhance instructional skills and fostering professional growth. The assessment of supervisor lecturer will contribute into the final marks for the student teacher as well.

Normally a supervisor lecturer will visit a student teacher for three times. Somehow, if there were a student who has potential to fail the teaching practice due to unsatisfactory performance, a special panel visitation will be carried out to determine the student's final grade (*Pusat Latihan Mengajar dan Industri*, PULAMI, 2013).

### Differences of teaching practice between Malaysia and Australia

Generally, Darling-Hammond (2006); Farrell (2008) and Ochieng'Ong'ondo and Borg (2011) agreed that the teaching practice is one of the most important supporting mechanism on student teacher's education. Thus, teaching practice is a main requirement or compulsory criteria to complete the degree of education programmes in both countries. In some way, they are still several differences of teaching practice in Malaysia and Australia.

Table 2. Differences of teaching practice in Malaysia and Australia

No.	Aspect	Malaysia	Australia
1.	Teaching practice/ placement duration	80 days	80-100 days
2.	In-school exposures before teaching practice / placement	X	✓
3.	Work placement / teaching practice special requirement/ permission	✓ (EPRD – which acknowledged teaching practice as an activity of education development)	✓ (WWCC- aims to protect children from physical and sexual harm)
4.	Global Experience Program	✓ (Malaysia, Canada, Nepal, Vanuatu and Switzerland)	✓ (Australia Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, and Philippine)

In Sultan Idris Education University, the student teachers required to undergo a sixteen-weeks, approximately 80 - days teaching practice during the seventh semester (*Pusat Latihan Mengajar dan Industri*, PULAMI, 2013) whereas placement in Deakin University requires ranged from 80 to 110-days supervised work experience in schools, depending on the course requirement.

In Deakin University, starting the first year, student teachers will benefit from several in-school exposures before they undergo their placement. In-school exposures are very important to prevent student teachers getting culture shock of working in real school environment during teaching practice. Additionally, it is essential to helps student teachers to understand the setting and the operation of school. Somehow, in Sultan Idris Education University, there are no in-school exposures for student teachers before they undergo their teaching practice.

In Australia, before a student teacher commencing placement in school, he or she is required to obtain an assessment notice known as a Working with Children Check (WWCC)

under Working with Children Act 2005 (Victoria) (State Government of Victoria., Working with Children Check, 2016). This act is directed by Department of Justice which acknowledge school experience placement as a ‘child-related work’. WWCC serve the main purpose to protect children from physical and sexual harm (State Government of Victoria., Working with Children Check, 2016).

In Malaysia, teaching practice for student teachers are arranged by the universities with the collaborative schools or institutes after they registered. University will help the student teachers to apply permit from Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD) under Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2016). This permit will then forward to related states’ and districts’ education department. The purpose of this permit is totally different from the aims of WWCC. EPRD acknowledge teaching practice as an education development programme, thus this education development activity need to be monitored by Ministry of Education. Perhaps, act such as WWCC should be implemented in Malaysia, not only to protect children’s safety but to give student teachers awareness about their duties and responsibilities.

In Deakin University, a student teacher is possible to gain professional teaching experience internationally through their Global Experience Programme. Student teachers can choose to teach in overseas such as Malaysia, Canada, Nepal, Vanuatu and Switzerland. This golden opportunity allows student teachers to sharpen their skills, broaden their perspectives and the most important gain an understanding of intercultural education (Deakin University 2017 Undergraduate Education, 2016). In Sultan Idris Education University, student teachers also have chance to participate teaching practice programme in overseas just like Deakin University. The duration of the teaching practice in overseas is short, just for 8 weeks. The destination of teaching practice in overseas is different from Deakin University. Student teachers in Sultan Idris Education University might have a chance to undergo their teaching practice in Australia, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei and Filipina.

### **Comparison of criteria of the supervision assessment in Malaysia and Australia**

In Australia, before a student teacher officially entered teaching profession, they must be accredited by Australian government under Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia. These standards and procedures listed out the requirements that an initial teacher education program must meet to be nationally accredited. Thus, the education program, assessment and supervision of Deakin University were specially designed to meet the requirements for accreditation. These standards evaluate based on an assessment of their impact which emphasize on two types of evidences: evidence of pre-service teacher performance which collected from within a program in relation to a pre-service teacher’s performance; and evidence of graduate outcomes which collected following completion of a program in relation to the achievements of a program’s graduates. (Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia- Standards and Procedures, 2015). Table 3 below shows the standards or criteria that an initial teacher in Australia should be acquired.

Table 3. Standards and criteria for Australian initial teachers

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
1	Know students and how they learn
2	Know the content and how to teach it
3	Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
4	Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
5	Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Standard	Criteria
6	Engage in professional learning
7	Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Based on the table 3, there are 7 standards that a student teacher need to be fulfilled in order to get the accreditation. Therefore, supervision assessments were carried out based on these criteria. There are 4 rating scale, 1- graduate, 2 - proficient, 3 - highly accomplished, 4 - lead. Standard 1 and 2 are assessments based on professional knowledge of a student teacher. Standard 3 until 5 are assessments based on professional practice whereas standard 6 and 7 are assessments based on their professional engagement.

In Malaysia, we don't have any national accreditation program for initial teacher. Each teacher training institution has their own standard on evaluation and supervision but all under monitor and supervision of Ministry of Higher Education. Table 4 below shows the Guidelines for Assessment and Supervision of Teaching Practice in Sultan Idris Education University.

Table 4. Guidelines for assessment and supervision of teaching practice

<b>Section A: Preparation</b>			
1.	Learning Objective		
2.	Planning	2.1	Content
		2.2	Strategy
		2.3	Creative and critical thinking skill/ language skills/ value
3.	Teaching and learning assessment		
<b>Section B: Progress</b>			
1.	Teaching induction		
2.	Teaching progress		
3.	Implementation	3.1	Strategy
		3.2	Creative and critical thinking skill/ language skills/ value
4.	Classroom management		
5.	Communication / Speaking		
6.	Objective achievement		
7.	Learning assessment		
8.	Mastery of contents		
9.	Student's involvement		
10.	Usage of teaching aids		
11.	Conclusion		
12.	Teaching and learning reflection		
<b>Section C: Attitude and personality</b>			
1.	Personal appearance and concern		
2.	Professional character and features		

Supervisor lecturer and mentor teacher will assess a student teacher based on the criteria listed in table 4. There are 5 rating scale, 1- very weak, 2 - weak, 3 - moderate, 4 - good, 5 - very good.

When under comparison, standards and criteria of assessment and supervision between Australia and Malaysia are almost the same, as shown in figure 1.

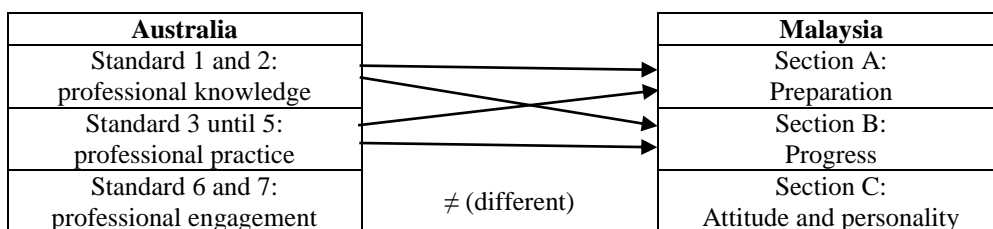


Figure 1. Comparison/ relationship of standards and criteria of assessment and supervision between Australia and Malaysia

Based on the Figure 1, standard 1 until 5 in Australia are almost the same with section A and B in Malaysia where they are emphasized on the in-class pedagogy and instructional function of the student teacher. The supervision modal that implementing in both countries is clinical supervision which Cogan (1973) defined that - a teacher will plan a set of procedures to improve classroom instruction which aim to improve teacher's performance.

Nevertheless, Standard 6 and 7 in Australia which emphasizes on professional engagement is different with Section C in Malaysia which emphasizes on attitude and personality. Professional engagement in Australia focus on how student teacher to engage in professional learning with colleagues to improve practice, meets professional ethics, engage with parents, professional teaching network and broader communities. Whereas in Malaysia, Section C more emphasizes on attitude and personality which evaluate a student teacher more towards the teacher professional attributes. Overall, Australia is more engage to develop a professional learning community through networking and collaborative learning among teachers. The relationship with the stakeholders mainly parents and carers also being their main concern.

### Recommendations

Based on this study, four recommendations can be made. First, time allocation for teaching practice should be prolong. According to Wong, Y. M., Mohd. Hassan Abdullah, Rosnidar Mansor and Syakirah Samsudin (2014), sixteen weeks are not adequate to achieve the teaching practice objectives comprehensively. Wong et. al (2014) in their document analysis, pointed that University of Queensland, University of Glasgow, National Institute of Education in Singapore and University of Hong Kong offer more than sixteen-weeks clinical experience for their student teachers.

Second, in-school exposures before teaching practice / placement should be introduced in Malaysia. Manzar-Abbas and Lu (2013) suggest that more phases of teacher pre-clinical experience are needed in order to fostering student teacher's professional development. University of Queensland, University of Glasgow, National Institute of Education in Singapore, and University of Hong Kong require their student teachers to undergo teacher pre-clinical experience almost once a year before their teaching practice. (Wong et. al, 2014).

Third, Malaysia should create an act or assessment similar with Working with Children Check (WWCC) in Australia. This precaution step can protect children safety and at the same time adding accountability and responsibility on the student teachers to perform even better. Fourth, gaining teaching experience in overseas during teaching practice should be encourage. This programme provide a platform for Malaysia's student teachers to reach out,



to learn about others country's education system which surely broaden their views and knowledge. Perhaps the student teachers might find the gaps between Malaysia and overseas, then propose a better teaching practice programme for Malaysia. Somehow, financial and cost for such programme should be the main concern unless government of Malaysia fully support in the programme. Fifth, criteria of assessment and supervision in Malaysia should include new elements such as assess student teacher professional learning network and relationship with the stakeholders. This is important to fostering professional learning culture and create a healthy relationship between stakeholders and educators.

## Conclusion

Based on the comparative analysis and literature reviewed in this study, four conclusions can be made. First, the purpose of the teaching practice in both countries can be concluded as apply skills and knowledge which learned theoretically into the real school practise at the same time experience and identify the real teaching and learning problems. Second, there are few differences of teaching practice that implementing in Malaysia and Australia. These differences should be highlighted as the gap of analysis to draw researcher's attention to improve Malaysia teaching practice. Third, for the supervision practice, both Malaysia and Australia assigned two supervisors to supervise and support student teacher's professional development. Fourth, criteria of the supervision assessment between Malaysia and Australia are almost the same, where both countries are using clinical supervision which emphasize on in-class supervision. But somehow, Australia did emphasize on the professional learning community and relationship with stakeholders.

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