

Chapter 3

Exemplifying Formative Assessment Practices in the Field Through Case Study: Concepts, Issues, and Challenges

Christopher Dann

Edith Cowan University, Australia

Beverly Dann

University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia

ABSTRACT

Practicum experiences are central to preservice teacher programs worldwide and ideally represent the component that unites university learning with practical learning in the field. This chapter examines the feedback processes between one preservice teacher and the supervising teacher during a four-week practicum. The supervising teacher used an iPad® and App to collect video and associated data to support the provision of feedback on the preservice teacher's performance and practice. A case study approach was used and included pre- and post- interviews as well as analysis of data collected through the CeMeE App by the supervising teacher. The results indicated both the supervising teacher and preservice teacher were able to constructively use the video feedback process to support their reflective dialogue. Key issues for action and future research included the value of the innovative process of collecting evidence, delivering feedback to preservice teachers, and the alignment of evidence against the professional standards for teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter exemplifies the importance and process of formative assessment practices in preservice teacher education during practicums through the adoption of a case study approach. In doing so it responds to the results of the action research methods considered in Chapter 2 that identified the need to investigate the interactions that occur during school practicum placements between preservice teachers and their supervising teachers. It focuses on the feedback processes and dialogue between the preservice teacher and supervising teacher in the context of a four-week practicum, which followed the preservice teachers' in-class observation for one day per week for five weeks. The aim of the case study was to illuminate the current issues being faced by preservice teachers and their supervising teachers during practicum feedback and formative assessment at a time when high stakes final practicum assessment procedures are looming to be a significant consideration in Australia. Of note is that this has already been undertaken in the UK and the United States (Dearnley, Taylor, Laxton, Rinomhota, & Nkosana-Nyawata, 2013; Taylor et al., 2010).

Feedback in this study refers to the contribution to the learning process made by the inclusion of video-enabled technologies (such as iPads), along with written and verbal commentary to enhance the information provided to the learner, and in turn the supervisor/preservice teacher reflective dialogue. Feedback in this context is seen as leading to feed-forward to create a more impactful response that leads more directly to development of particular skills and knowledge (Duncan, 2007). As shown in Figure 1, this collection of data (evidence) is the first step (1) in a three-step interconnected process that the authors believe underpins the potential of the practicum to achieve its aim to scaffold the preservice teacher's learning and provide the best possible feedback to enhance their pedagogical understanding and improve performance. In Step two (2) this evidence is then sorted against the relevant professional standards for teachers. Here the key elements of quality teaching are described . . . [in terms of] what teachers are expected to know and be able to demonstrate during their final school placement in order to graduate (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011, p. 1). Preservice teachers are required to demonstrate that they meet these standards at the Graduate level.

Steps one (1) and two (2) of the feedback process are mostly independent actions. To complete the process, Step three (3), a collaborative action, involves

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