

Practicum lesson study: insights from a design-based research in English language teaching practicum

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1

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Abstract

Purpose – This study investigates the implementation of the Practicum Lesson Study (PLS) model, which is designed to be used by preservice teachers (PSTs), mentor teachers and advisors during school practicum.

Design/methodology/approach – Employing a design-based research (DBR) framework and a multiple case study design, the research in this study evaluated the PLS model through eight distinct cases across two phases of research. In both phases, the qualitative research explored the nature of the stages and steps followed in each case, providing detailed descriptions of the procedural arrangements, teaching sessions and discussion meetings. Views of the participants regarding their satisfaction levels towards the PLS model, its benefits and challenges were collected through semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire.

Findings – The results of the research highlighted significant benefits of the PLS model, such as self-reflection, peer reflection and collaborative practices. These processes notably enhanced PSTs' abilities to dynamically adjust teaching strategies based on real-time observations and feedback, effectively integrating suggestions from meetings with practical classroom experiences. However, the study also identified several challenges, such as managing diverse opinions and coping with information overload.

Research limitations/implications – Based on the comprehensive exploration of the PLS model, the study offers several implications for practitioners and suggestions for future research such as a closer examination of changes in beliefs and identity over time during PLS.

Originality/value – The study carries the significance of employing a DBR in the context of implementing LS during ELT school practicum.

Keywords Lesson study, Practicum, English language teaching, Practicum lesson study

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Teaching can be considered a three-step activity: planning, teaching and assessing. Yinger (1979) defines classroom time as “interactive teaching” and time spent alone (e.g. during recess) as “preactive teaching” when teachers contemplate their lessons. This reflection leads to planning, which Harmer (2001) describes as “art of combining a number of different elements into a coherent whole so that a lesson has an identity which students can recognize, work within, and react to” (p. 308). Planning a lesson involves setting goals, determining learner profiles, focusing on skills and language and selecting materials. While all teachers plan to some degree, experienced teachers may plan less; however, it is particularly beneficial for novice and preservice teachers (PSTs).

Views of scholars in the field of teacher education regarding how to train teachers are divided into two parts. While some advocate for *technicist* and *craft-oriented* techniques, others defend that more *research-based developmental* approaches should be used in teacher education (Larsen et al., 2018). While the supporters of the *technicist approach* point out the importance of the acquisition of critical craft skills (Gove, 2010), scholars who advocate the *research-based developmental approaches* state that the goal of teacher education should be to



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prepare student-teachers for lifelong learning by providing them with much more than a starter kit of technical abilities. For the supporters of the latter, “new teachers should be encouraged to build knowledge and abilities in this manner so that they can become both learner and context-responsive, and, therefore better prepared to deal creatively and effectively with the diversity of classrooms in real life” (Larsen *et al.*, 2018, p. 9).

Incorporating lesson study (LS hereafter) into PST education offers a structured framework for continuous improvement through reflective practice (Dudley, 2015). By actively engaging in reflective processes, PSTs critically evaluate their teaching methods and refine them based on collaborative feedback. This iterative process has been shown to cultivate reflective practitioners who are more aware of their instructional strategies and better prepared to adapt lessons to meet the diverse needs of their students (Angelini and Álvarez, 2018; Cajkler and Wood, 2015; Larsen *et al.*, 2018; Ousseini, 2019; Skott and Møller, 2017).

The context and literature review

Although LS has been known to be practiced more commonly among in-service teachers for professional development, its potential in teacher education has attracted attention due to its features such as observing mentors, collaborating in planning, constructive feedback and reflective thinking (Larsen *et al.*, 2018). Despite the growing number of studies, empirical research conducting LS in teacher education still receives relatively low attention (Schipper *et al.*, 2020). This is due to the fact that despite the immense potential, it still needs to be carefully tailored for contexts such as school practicum, which encompasses different dynamics than in-service teaching practices (Cajkler and Wood, 2015; Gurl, 2011; Larsen *et al.*, 2018; Leavy and Hourigan, 2016; Ousseini, 2019; Selen Kula and Demirci-Güler, 2021). Accordingly, this study examines the implementation of LS in the school practicum context by utilizing a design-based research (DBR) framework to address the necessities of its context.

The context of the study included the school practicum setting at the English Language Teaching (ELT hereafter) undergraduate program at a state university in Türkiye, where language teachers undergo a four-year program, with the curriculum set by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). The first two years focus on theoretical courses, followed by practical courses before PSTs begin their school practicum in the fourth year. The practicum spans 15 weeks per semester, totaling 90 h at a state school, with assignments to primary, secondary or high schools.

PSTs in Türkiye must submit a portfolio after their practicum, monitored by mentor teachers and advisors through observation and feedback. Though portfolio requirements vary, practicum experiences differ significantly across universities (Selen Kula and Demirci-Güler, 2021). Typically, PSTs work in groups of three to six, observing mentors and peers but mainly planning and teaching lessons independently. Reflection is mainly encouraged through self-evaluation forms in portfolios, with no officially recommended practices from faculties. The need for greater collaboration and reflection throughout the curriculum, including the practicum, has been highlighted in Türkiye for over a decade (Coşkun and Daloğlu, 2010; Karakaş, 2012; Karaman *et al.*, 2019).

In Türkiye, LS has primarily been studied with in-service teachers (Bayram and Bıkmaz, 2021; Uştuk and Çomoğlu, 2021) or in micro-teaching LS with PSTs (Coşkun, 2021). Few studies have applied LS within school practicum due to the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including mentor teachers, advisors and PSTs. Altınsoy (2020) and Yalçın-Arslan (2019) explored the traditional Japanese LS model in school practicum. Altınsoy (2020) closely followed the traditional model, with one group of six PSTs designing and teaching a lesson plan at five different schools. Yalçın-Arslan (2019) included mentor teachers in the lesson design process, forming three smaller groups and conducting the study at a single high school. The studies differed in mentor-teacher involvement, the number of schools and the size of PST groups. Additionally, data collection in these studies occurred before the 2018 curriculum changes by the CoHE in Türkiye, which impacted the practical component of school practicum.

The proposed practicum lesson study model

After reviewing the literature on LS in the school practicum context in Türkiye, the PLS model was developed to offer a structured and sustainable adaptation of LS for PSTs, mentor teachers and advisors. Key modifications were made to address operational challenges, such as logistical issues with visiting multiple schools and large group sizes, resulting in the foundation for the PLS model. PLS was created to address the challenges in implementing LS during practicum in Türkiye, where PSTs stay at a single state school for 15 weeks. Since practicum content doesn't involve visiting other schools, organizing LS across multiple schools complicates coordination and requires lengthy, bureaucratic approval from the ministry.

PLS ensures PSTs teach in familiar classrooms, avoiding logistical difficulties. The model promotes smaller groups, typically including two PSTs, a mentor and an academic advisor, to enhance collaboration. It redefines roles for active PST engagement, emphasizing shared responsibility in planning, teaching, observing and revising lessons. Unlike some LS models where PSTs only observe, PLS fosters ownership of the research lesson (Baldry and Foster, 2019). Mentors assist in planning and revisions, while advisors facilitate the process, preventing conflicts.

Critical components of PLS. As emphasized by Seleznyov (2018), any implementation of LS must identify some critical components. The critical components of PLS include identifying a specific focus for improvement rather than long-term goals, collaborative planning between PSTs and mentors and the teaching cycles that include post-lesson discussions with revising the lesson plan and implementing the plan to achieve an immediate result from the feedback received from the members. Accordingly, the critical components of PLS include

- (1) **Identifying a point of focus:** PLS shifts the focus from long-term goals to addressing specific needs or gaps in students' knowledge, identified through observation or mentor recommendations.
- (2) **Collaborative planning:** PSTs work closely with their mentors to develop lesson plans that address the identified focus area.
- (3) **Teaching and revising lessons:** Unlike traditional LS, where experienced teachers lead the lesson, PSTs teach the lesson and the plans are then revised based on post-lesson discussions.
- (4) **Post-lesson discussions:** PLS ensures that discussions focus on lesson effectiveness and student outcomes rather than critiquing the teaching abilities of the PSTs.
- (5) **Repeated cycles:** PLS incorporates iterative teaching cycles, where the same lesson is taught and revised, promoting continuous improvement.
- (6) **Outside expertise:** Mentors and advisors participate in planning and discussions.
- (7) **Mobilizing knowledge:** PLS emphasizes the importance of sharing the knowledge gained from the LS process. PSTs are encouraged to disseminate their findings through presentations, reports or peer-led events.

With these critical components laid out, the primary aim of this study was to develop and refine a model named PLS for school practicum and implement it in an ELT school practicum at a state university in Türkiye. Accordingly, this study sought to answer the following two research questions: "How does PLS take place during school practicum at the English Language Teaching B.A. program at a state university in Türkiye?" and "What are the views of the PSTs and mentor teachers towards benefits and challenges in implementing the PLS model?"

Methodology

The research process involved designing the model, testing it in Phase 1 and refining it based on participant feedback for reimplementation in Phase 2. This DBR approach combined

empirical investigation with practical solutions to educational challenges, aligning with the study's goals. Investigation of multiple case studies was used to conduct within- and cross-case comparisons, leading to model refinement.

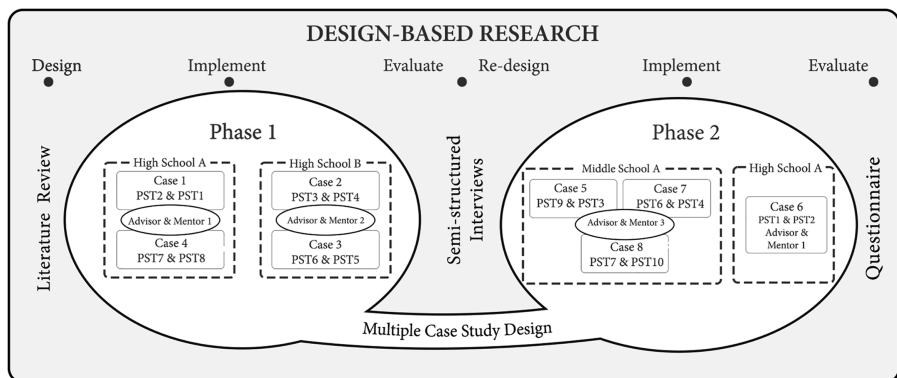
DBR follows nine principles emphasizing iterative, adaptive processes, continuous refinement, context sensitivity and the integration of theoretical and practical insights to enhance educational interventions (Wang and Hannafin, 2005). DBR is interventionist, process-oriented, utility-oriented and theory-oriented, focusing on designing and improving interventions in real-world settings (Barab and Squire, 2009; Van den Akker *et al.*, 2006). This approach was chosen to ensure the PLS model's rational and empirical implementation, highlighting the need for innovation in education (Macalister and Nation, 2020). Eight cases were analyzed across two phases, each involving PLS groups, with the multiple case study design investigating contemporary phenomena in depth within their real-world contexts (Yin, 2018). The research phases provided the context, with conclusions drawn holistically.

Research setting and participants

In the total of 8 cases, 10 preservice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and 3 in-service mentor teachers participated in LS implementations. All PSTs were enrolled in ELT bachelor's program at a state university in Türkiye, and their ages varied between 22 and 23. While six of the PSTs participated in both phases, only four of them participated in one phase of the DBR. The 3 mentor teachers, each with over 10 years of experience, participated in the following phases: Mentor 1 at High School A (with over 800 students) in both phases, Mentor 2 at High School B (an all-girls religious Imam Hatip School with over 200 students) took part in Phase 1 and Mentor 3 at Middle School A (over 800 students) participated in Phase 2.

Research procedures

DBR, depicted as the largest component in Figure 1, starts with a literature review and the initial draft (*design*) of the PLS guidebook (Çetin, 2022). In Phase 1 (*implement*), four cases took place across two schools. After implementation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the PSTs. Insights from these interviews (*evaluate*) led to a *re-design* (of the procedures and the guidebook) before conducting four additional cases in Phase 2 (*implement*), also at two schools with different mentors. The final Phase 2 step included a questionnaire (*evaluate*), concluding the research. The advisor, who is also the researcher, participated in all cases. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were integral to the case study design, as shown in the figure. In addition, the approval of the ethics committee



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Figure 1. A holistic view of the research design and procedures

from Middle East Technical University was obtained with the protocol number 0545-ODTUIAK-2022 before the research procedures started.

Data collection tools and analyses

Data for this research were collected from various sources such as observation notes and self- and peer-evaluation forms included in PSTs' practicum portfolios. Snapshots from these documents were used in presenting the findings (examples included in the figures). In addition, the semi-structured interviews conducted with PSTs at the end of Phase 1, along with expert opinions, led to revisions of the guidebook and procedures. At the end of Phase 2, PSTs responded to open-ended questions in an online questionnaire.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted one week after Phase 1 to gather PSTs' views on the process, benefits and challenges (some questions adapted from [Ayra, 2021](#)). In Phase 2, PSTs answered similar questions to confirm and explore new findings. Content analysis was used for materials such as lesson plans and evaluations, while interviews were coded inductively. The transcripts of the interviews were collaboratively coded by two experts in the field of language teaching, and intercoder agreement was ensured with a Kappa >0.90 and a mean percentage of 92.5% for the datasets on MAXQDA24 software ([Rädiker and Kuckartz, 2020](#)).

Findings

The findings of the study are organized into three sub-sections: the first two sub-sections aim to present the cases that address the first research question, while the third sub-section presents PSTs' views to answer the second research question.

Cases in phase 1

Each PST taught one lesson in four cases, totaling eight lessons, followed by post-lesson discussions in December 2022. Two cases were at High School B and two at High School A. The four cases proceeded at their own pace before the first teaching began, but all first and second teaching cycles, post-lesson discussions and final reflection meetings occurred in a single day but on different days. Discussion time varied from over four hours (Case 1) to 50 min (Case 3). Despite time differences, all groups completed lessons and meetings using their observation notes effectively.

The figure above includes seven snapshots from multiple documents used in Phase 1. For example, the advisor's notes (*Snapshot 1A*) in the first teaching in Case 1 include a potential threat to the flow of an activity. The snapshot highlights a pupil mistake (she is *changing* clothes), and it is discussed in the post-lesson discussion that followed:

[00:03:38 Advisor] Still, I think they answered nice here. But they used *-ing* here. I suggest that when they use *-ing*, you should immediately make a correction since we have simple present, general sample sentences in the samples. In the samples (on the board) do not ever use *-ing*, or gerund form. I get up or I get dressed . . . these are okay. But if a student says *getting* dressed, you should write this (on the board) as "get dressed".

...

[00:11:57 Mentor 1] . . . you also wrote down some of the words with *-ing*.

The advisor and mentor raised concerns about a potential threat, leading the group to agree on correcting it in the second teaching. In *Snapshot 1B*, this mistake recurred, and the PST addressed it using intonation and board writing for corrections. Additionally, *Snapshots 2A* and *2B* show that during first teaching in Case 2, pupils repeatedly used the phrase "but now" to compare old and current habits. The group then discussed incorporating this phrase into the activity:

[00:12:22 Advisor] Can I take a look at the worksheet? For example, in here, a pupil said “We go to beach every summer” and I heard she continued with “but now”.

Should we add this to the activity? Let’s ask PST4 and how did PST3 feel? Let’s also ask that.

[00:12:40 PST4] It would be nice to add to the activity.

[00:12:45 Advisor] . . . I mean, if the pupil could do “but now” it means they completely understood it.

After the exchange above, the group agreed to revise the activity and the worksheet to include “but now” in the sentences. Moreover, this addition to the plan was observed by the PSTs to be an improvement in the answers gathered from the pupils:

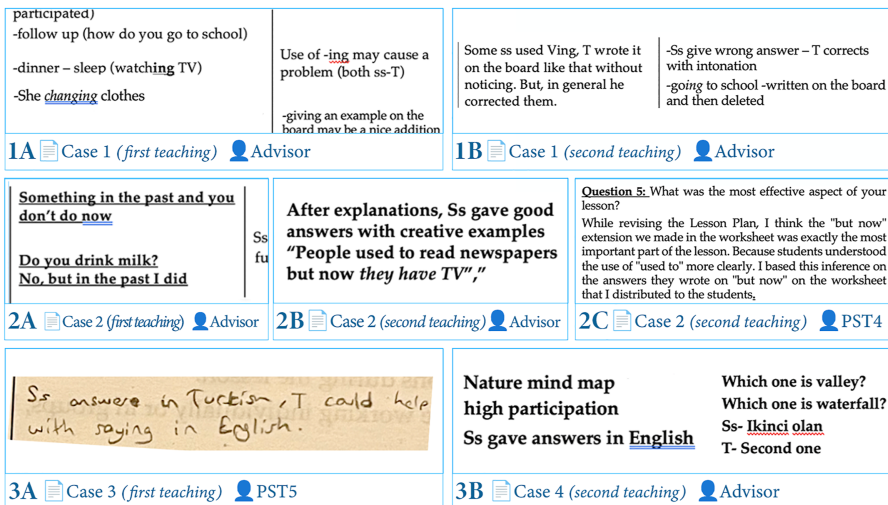
[00:02:43 Advisor] . . . The group of 5, you’ve done it again, it was nice. They gave answers. I remember . . . what was it . . . “People used to read newspapers but now they have TV” that was written (and read out loud) by a pupil.

[00:03:21 PST4] I was really proud there.

As seen in *Snapshot 2C* in *Figure 2*, PST4 highlighted that the post-lesson revision was crucial as it clarified the structure for pupils. In Case 3, where pupils frequently relied on their mother tongue and translated new language structures, PSTs struggled to shift the focus to English. *Snapshot 3A* shows that PST5 observed this dependency and suggested increasing English usage during the lesson. Throughout the semester, PSTs at High School B voiced concerns about translation and explicit grammar explanations. In Case 3, pupils habitually translated new vocabulary into Turkish. However, *Snapshot 3B* reveals that this issue was addressed in the second teaching session, where the PST reinforced the use of English by repeating vocabulary items in the target language.

Findings from the interviews

Immediately after the cases were finalized, individual semi-structured interviews were held with the PSTs. Along with their satisfaction towards the PLS model, they were inquired about



Source(s): Created by authors

Figure 2. Snapshots from multiple documents from cases in Phase 1

the benefits and challenges during the process. All PSTs who participated in the procedures expressed high satisfaction towards the model:

... Every stage went smoothly like clockwork. It all turned perfectly like a well-oiled machine, as if everything was going flawlessly. (PST1)

It's enjoyable, and for us, it hasn't been too demanding. I mean, we were already volunteers and willing. I don't think there's anything to be taken out. In my opinion, everything is good. (PST2)

Benefits of the PLS model

Collaborative practices. While explaining their views towards the model, the PSTs pointed out the benefits they have gained through participating. One of the most frequently reported benefits of the model was the collaboration established in conducting PLS. While one participant directly quoted "collaboration" as a benefit, others pointed out how they benefitted from working together and compared it to the times they teach alone.

For instance, I generated some ideas, got input from the mentor, collected those ideas, and this stage was both collaborative ... it provided the benefit of working together. Working with PST2 (the peer) provided collaborative working. (PST1)

In the interviews, the PSTs expressed that while collaborating, new ideas generated by the members of the group provided great benefits. The statements related to idea generation made by the PSTs during the interviews were related to preparing or revising a lesson plan. The benefits of the new ideas and perspectives of the group members was a topic expressed by the PSTs, as the following excerpts illustrate:

... everyone's opinion may be different. For example, in their classes, some teachers apply certain things excessively. Some teachers apply different things. My peer may also think differently. So, you'll get different thoughts, different perspectives. (PST7)

Different than the previous code, the coded segments included in this section were related to the feedback given and received by the group during the teaching and reflecting stages in cases. In the interviews, PSTs stated that the group benefitted from the feedback:

We create lesson plans and receive feedback ... We also get feedback from the teacher at school. These already contribute ... Seeing more details on top of that is more helpful in understanding certain things. (PST2)

Teaching a revised lesson. Another frequent code emerged from the interviews as teaching a revised lesson. Although teaching a revised plan is a natural part of PLS, when asked in the interviews, PSTs stated that the act of "teaching a revised plan" itself was a benefit. They explained how this benefited them:

I felt like mine went more smoothly ... felt like it went better. Because some changes were important. The changes we made were important. Especially in the worksheet, for example, if I had done the worksheet like Professor PST3, I would probably have struggled a lot. (PST4)

It was common view that teaching a revised plan was beneficial for the PSTs. They explained that it made the process easier as they were already going to teach the same topic. PSTs also stated that the revisions made after the first teaching were important, and he thought he could have struggled without the revisions.

Reflection. During the interview, PSTs were asked to recall back to the process of PLS. When asked about their own lesson, they gave explanations about how their teaching went and what changes occurred or could have occurred if they were not in the PLS group. These explanations showed that they still reflected on their own teaching even after the implementation of PLS:

... of course, it (PLS) creates awareness on a personal level as well ... I added it to the professional aspect because I thought of it professionally, I mean, I thought of reflection as a framework. (PST2)

Another code included under the reflection theme was peer reflection. Peer reflection refers to the act of a PST observing a peer's lesson, reflecting on the lesson during a group meeting after the teaching in order to give feedback and suggest a revision to the lesson plan. In this sense, many PSTs stated that they reflected on their peer's teaching:

Well, actually, I did (noted) it (observations) according to her. Like, "Can she teach (the activity) on time?", "How much did it take?", "What was the waiting time?", I tried to observe these more. (PST5)

Instructional development. In the interviews, PSTs stated that the benefit of the model was that it provided instructional development. Some participants directly used the term professional development, while others referred to learning how to teach a lesson and creating or improving a lesson plan:

It was very beneficial for me. It was very beneficial for my teaching development ... Both for my learning and teaching development. (PST1)

Benefits on pupils. One of the common topics reported by the PSTs was how PLS affected pupil learning. While some PSTs explained that they noticed an increase of participation in the classroom, others stated that their collaboration and reflection affected pupil learning:

PST1 says something during the break. If there is a similar activity that he mentioned for the second hour, I say, "Let me pay attention to this," actually, the pupils don't feel it, but it has an effect on them, of course, in a more indirect way. (PST2)

Challenges in conducting PLS

As seen in the previous themes and codes, the views of the PSTs were positive and they mostly expressed how they benefited from the model. Nevertheless, they also stated a few challenges in implementing PLS. The codes included in the challenges theme were information overload, being observed and timing.

Information overload

One of the challenges expressed in the interviews was information overload. This code included the segments related to thinking in too much detail, which could cause them to struggle to remember what was in the plan. Another important point raised in the interviews was thinking of anticipated pupil response:

... we prepared the lesson plan in 3 days, in a total of around 6 hours. That was very exhausting ... (PST3)

Being observed. A challenge stated by a participant was the experience of being observed. One of the participants, PST7, expressed that being observed, especially by the mentor teacher, made her feel tense:

I don't think the mentor teacher should be in the classroom. One of the factors affecting my performance, I attribute it to this because I get tense, especially during observations. I feel tense while being observed. (PST7)

Nevertheless, in the following conversations, we agreed that observation is a natural part of the practicum, and it is necessary for receiving feedback. PST7 also agreed that it is necessary, but it may affect performance. She also suggested videorecording the lesson to reflect on it; however, she decided that it would not be appropriate to do so without obtaining permissions. *Familiarity with the classroom.* One participant PST reported that being familiar with the classroom was a challenge during the practices:

I think.. I think sir, knowing the classroom is a little bit harder because there are some pupils who . . . when the mentor teacher is teaching, they talk but when we teach they do not talk much. And guessing what they will ask is hard.(PST1)

As PST1 commented, familiarity with the classroom posed a challenge where anticipating pupil response could be difficult, especially in some classrooms where, as PST1 explained, pupils could surprise the teachers with their interesting questions. PST1 also explained that sometimes they do not talk as much as they talk during the mentor teacher's lessons when they are teaching.

Timing. The most frequently reported challenge in the process of conducting PLS was timing. Some of the PSTs stated that their biggest concern was having more time to prepare. Although having more time was more of an external factor that was controlled by their decisions, they reported that it could improve the process.

. . . I think the time could have been a bit longer. Because after changing the lesson plan, I was a bit stunned. I said "Wait a minute. This changed, I need to work on it". The time could have been a bit longer. (PST4)

Similarly, while teaching a revised plan was seen as a benefit for the ones who taught second, it was seen as a disadvantage for the ones who taught first:

. . . but still, there's this issue. Because we think of too many activities, during the lesson, I often feel like, "What was the last thing in the lesson plan? Let me check." (PST2)

Suggestions made by the PSTs

In the interviews, PSTs were asked if they had any suggestions for the PLS model. The PSTs mostly explained that they were satisfied with the model, and they could not think of anything to change:

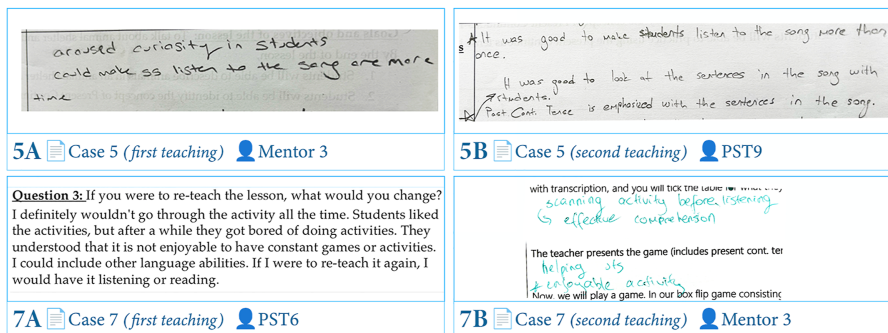
During observation, sir, I believe there should be a special place for this. During practicum . . . you know, we go for observation . . . for such things, there should be a special . . . There should be a task because I think the response from the pupils is an important matter (PST1)

PST1 recommended that a task could be added to their practicum for observing a specific aspect of teaching during the lessons in order to better observe pupil responses. This suggestion was considered in Phase 2.

Cases in phase 2

In Phase 2, procedures of the model were slightly adjusted in terms of timing. The findings from the previous phase, specifically PSTs' suggestions, led to a schedule, which allowed more timing between the procedures. Unlike the previous phase, the second teaching session in Phase 2 often occurred three days after the first one. Additionally, two new tasks were introduced to replace two of the 12 weekly reports in the PSTs' practicum portfolio. Task I for the PSTs involved profiling classroom English proficiency by analyzing exam results, consulting the mentor teacher and observing the class. Task II focused on assessing student motivation to learn English through discussions and written responses.

Similar to Phase 1, group members focused their observations and discussions on their plan. The notes in *Snapshots 5A and 5B* in [Figure 3](#), for example, shows how the members viewed increasing the time of playing the audio affected the flow of an activity. *Snapshot 7A* shows that PST6 noted that the plan could use more activities directed towards language abilities, and *Snapshot 7B* illustrates how this listening activity was viewed by the mentor in the second teaching.



Source(s): Created by authors

Figure 3. Snapshots from multiple documents in Phase 2

Discussion

Findings of this study revealed high satisfaction with the PLS model, particularly for its collaborative nature. For example, PST1 described it as a “well-oiled machine,” and PST8 saw it as similar to previous group work experiences. The PLS model was praised for its collaborative nature, refining teaching practices and immediate feedback, aligning with the findings of Ousseini (2019). Participants appreciated shared insights and problem-solving, enhancing their teaching strategies, a finding similar to Coşkun (2021), who conducted Micro-LS with PSTs.

PSTs reported that teaching a revised plan was beneficial. Although not the primary aim of PLS, this outcome was seen as an advantage. Some scholars warn that this benefit might lead participants to wrongly focus on the *pitfall* of creating a perfect plan, which can detract from the main goal of LS (Larsen *et al.*, 2018). Angelini and Alvarez (2018) term this the “perfect lesson utopia,” advising PSTs to avoid this mindset (p. 25). Hird *et al.* (2014) argue that improving lesson plans should not be viewed as a pitfall, as it can enhance pedagogical understanding even when lessons are not taught. Despite differing views, some PSTs in this study appreciated teaching a revised plan. In relation, some also reported this situation as challenging. Although teaching first or second might not be important for in-service teachers, data from this study suggest that PSTs might benefit from participating in PLS more than once to experience various circumstances. Reflection on their own and peers’ actions was highlighted as a key benefit, aligning with findings that LS promotes deep reflection and pedagogical improvement (Karadimitrou *et al.*, 2014; Leavy and Hourigan, 2016). Instructional development, though not directly observed, was noted by some PSTs as a benefit of discussions and revisions. Furthermore, two PSTs observed that PLS had indirect benefits on pupil learning.

One of the most frequently stated challenge, timing, significantly affected some cases in Phase 1. Procedural adjustments were made in Phase 2, including extending breaks between sessions to allow for more effective discussions and revisions. Some PSTs reported information overload, particularly in the planning stages. Gurl (2011) cautions that the heavy workload in LS can deter commitment, underscoring the need for clear communication about the demands of PLS. In this study, while this was challenging, it also contributed to richer discussions. Being observed during teaching was another concern, though PSTs recognized that this is a standard part of practicum. This reinforces the importance of emphasizing that PLS is a collaborative process rather than an evaluation of individual performance.

Conclusion

Over the last decade, scholars have been exploring LS in the context of teacher education. Many stated that LS in teacher education is in its infancy (Cajkler and Wood, 2015). This study

contributes to the literature by revealing how PLS unfolded itself in ELT practicum while showcasing the benefits and identifying the challenges during the process. In this study, the PLS model provided a framework for immediate feedback, which can enhance the effectiveness of feedback sessions during school practicum.

This study also suggests that teacher educators may benefit from incorporating the PLS model in their school practicum, as the procedural arrangements of PLS proved effective within the practicum setting. Teacher educators are encouraged to consider the timing challenges identified in this study and to provide training and preparation for PSTs before starting the PLS procedures.

Future research can explore strategies to manage information overload, reduce observation-related stress and ensure equitable benefits for all participants during PLS. Further studies can also focus on individual lived experiences to reveal the complexity of learning during PLS, similar to the work of Skott and Møller (2017). Additionally, studies may explore the formation of teacher identities within the collaborative PLS environment (Karaman and Edling, 2021).

Limitations

The study acknowledges several limitations that may have affected the findings. Although meeting protocols were encouraged in PLS, participants were free to discuss topics as they saw fit, which could have impacted the consistency of the data. The study did not specifically measure the participants' instructional development, and any perceived effects on instructional development reported in interviews should be interpreted with caution.

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