

# Becoming an EFL Teacher: A Re-Investigation of Student Teachers' Motivation

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## Abstract

The aim of the study reported in this paper was to explore the issues of motivation of student teachers before and after their two practicum blocks which were held in the third and final years of teacher training. Participants provided quantitative and qualitative data through questionnaires and in-depth interviews which were conducted at four time-points over two years: pre-practicum and post-practicum in the third and final years of studies. This study adopted mixed methods to collect data—questionnaires, in-depth interviews and weekly log entries. Results showed that the origins of student teachers' worries were originated from different aspects, of which some later became the sources of motivation. The four longitudinal qualitative cases herein demonstrate how student teachers sources of motivation change over time.

**Keywords:** EFL, student-teacher, motivation, practicum

## 1. Introduction

Felman-Nemser (2001) noted that teacher educators, policy makers, and employing authorities had for too long overlooked the motivations of people who intended to enter the field of education and insufficiently explored how motivation had shaped their aspirations for professional engagement and the trajectory of their career development. Ample studies found general sources of teacher motivation (e.g. Richardson & Watt, 2006; Schutz, Crowder & White, 2001; Younger, Brindley, Pedder & Hagger, 2004). The sources of teacher motivation included the teachers' perceived pressure at work (Pelletier, Seguin-Levesque & Legault, 2002), the achievement goal orientation for teachers' own learning (Nolen & Nicholls, 1994), and teachers' strategies for motivating students (Ames, 1992; Reeve, Deco & Ryan, 2004).

As for pre-service teachers, limited studies had been conducted and they found that the motivation of most pre-service teachers was altruistic, service-oriented and intrinsic as in the desire to work with children and adolescents (Alexander, Chant & Cox, 1994; Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Joseph & Green, 1986; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Moran, Kilpatrick, Abbott, Dallatt & McClune, 2001; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Tudhope, 1944; Valentine, 1934). None of these findings addressed the motivation of student teachers with regard to motivations' influence on practicum.

There has been abundance of research done on student teacher motivation. Not every individual study displays similar motivation but there are many motivations commonly displayed across studies. Previous studies were not conducted in similar settings; they were administered across a variety of participants by different methodologies in different social and cultural contexts based on diverse theoretical frameworks. With this problem, Sinclair (2008) listed 16 pieces of highly related studies on teacher education which were published between the years 1990-2006 and concluded in 2008 that there were 10 common motivation factors which had substantial impact on student teachers' choice of career. They were: 1) students of the teachers (e.g. Ferrell and Daniel, 1993; Richardson and Watt 2006), 2) altruism (e.g. Weiner, Swaeringen, Pagano and Obi, 1993; Yong, 1995), 3) influence of others, (e.g. Serow, Eaker and Forrest, 1994) 4) perceived benefits of teaching (e.g. Serow, 1993), 5) 'calling' to teaching (e.g. Steigelbauer, 1992), 6) love of teaching (e.g. Serow et al, 1994), 7) nature of teaching work (Weiner et al, 1993), 8) desire for a career change (Richardson and Watt (2006), 9) perceived ease of teaching (e.g. Yong, 1995), and 10) status of teaching (e.g. Allard, Bransgrive, Cooper, Duncan and Mac, 1995). From the literature review Sinclair conducted, the most recent piece of study was published in 2006. This study reckons Sinclair's 10 common teacher motivations are representative, but the literature is rather outdated hence

the necessity to revisit these motivations, and a modified and more suitable framework for investigating student teachers' motivation to become teachers is needed.

In view of this problem, this study carried out a "two-step procedure" to remedy the research gap: 1) reviewed related studies on teacher motivation between the years 2001-2012 to substantiate the list of teacher motivation, 2) interviewed 4 participants to evaluate whether the categories Sinclair (2008) proposed aligned with their origins of motivation. If any of the categories were irrelevant, they would be removed from the list. With the participant interview comments and responses, this study developed a list of teacher motivations which would later serve as the theoretical framework for developing a questionnaire in order to outline how student teacher motivation changed over time (*See instrumentation*).

With Sinclair's (2008) literature review, further literature review was conducted in the past decade between 2002-2012 on student teacher motivation (see Table 1 for a list of student teacher motivation). Additional elements were added. They are workload at practicum school, pedagogical knowledge, English proficiency, appearance, student behaviour, conducting practicum at practicum schools, relationship with students, supporting teacher and teacher college supervisor.

Table 1. List of Student Teacher Motivation

<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Source</i>		
	<i>Sinclair (2008)</i>	<i>Student interview</i>	<i>Further literature review (2001-2012)</i>
Workload at practicum school	Perceived benefits of teaching	√	Kiziltepe, 2008; Lam & Yan, 2011; Leithwood & MaAdie, 2007; Whiteley & Richard, 2012)
Pedagogical knowledge	Love of subject or knowledge	√	Carson & Chase 2009; Lam & Yan 2011; Leithwood & McAdie, 2007; Ubani, 2012; Yu 2011)
English proficiency	--	√	Wati, 2011
Appearance	--	√	--
Student behaviour	altruism	√	Darling-Hammon & Young, 2002; Klassen, Chong, Huan, Wong, Kates & Hannok, 2008)
Conducting practicum at alma mater	Influence of others	√	--
Relationship with students	Love of teaching	√	Klassen et al, 2011; Ubani, 2012
Relationship with supporting teacher	Nature of teaching work	√	Klassen et al, 2011; Kocabas, 2009; Webb, Vulliamy, Hamalainen, Sarja, Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2004
Teacher college supervisor	Influence of others	√	Kocabas, 2009 Timmerman, 2009

## 2. Significance of Study

This study attempts to explain what motivates student teachers to become teachers. Outlining the motivations and identifying de-motivations of student teachers, contributing to becoming confident teachers will in turn lead to an ESL classroom with effective teaching and learning. Since there have been only few studies done on exploring why non-native English speaking student teachers decide to teach English, this study will be crucial and applicable to any educational discipline, given that what motivates student teachers at the early stage of teaching will have a long term significant influence on their teaching philosophy and future classroom practices. The interpretation and analysis of data will make contribution to knowledge on the impacts of practicum and

effectiveness and validity of teacher development programmes hence provide insights for government to revisit certain aspects of educational policy.

### 3. Research Questions

This study aims to explore the following research questions:

RQ1: What motivates/demotivates student teachers to become teachers after their first practicum?

RQ2: To what extent do the motivations of student teachers differ over the two years?

### 4. Methodology

#### 4.1 Design

The aim of this study is to explore the motivational sources of student teachers to become teachers. This study will adopt mixed method to investigate what motivates/demotivates student teachers to become teachers. A questionnaire was designed in this study based on previous literature, studies and data collected from student interviews. After the questionnaire was piloted, student teachers (N=33) completed the same questionnaire first before they started the first practicum and then upon returning from their first practicum in order to ascertain changes in motivation to become teachers. Pre-practicum and post-practicum interviews were also conducted with 4 randomly chosen respondents to elicit further details on the quantitative data collected, as well as to fill any gaps in understanding. Student teachers were encouraged to write weekly log journals to record teaching experiences during practicum for reflection. Same data collection procedures were conducted for the second practicum block in the following year. With the repeated data collection methods, the researcher would be able to describe student teachers' motivational change in a longitudinal manner. The overall design of the entire study is presented in Figure 1.

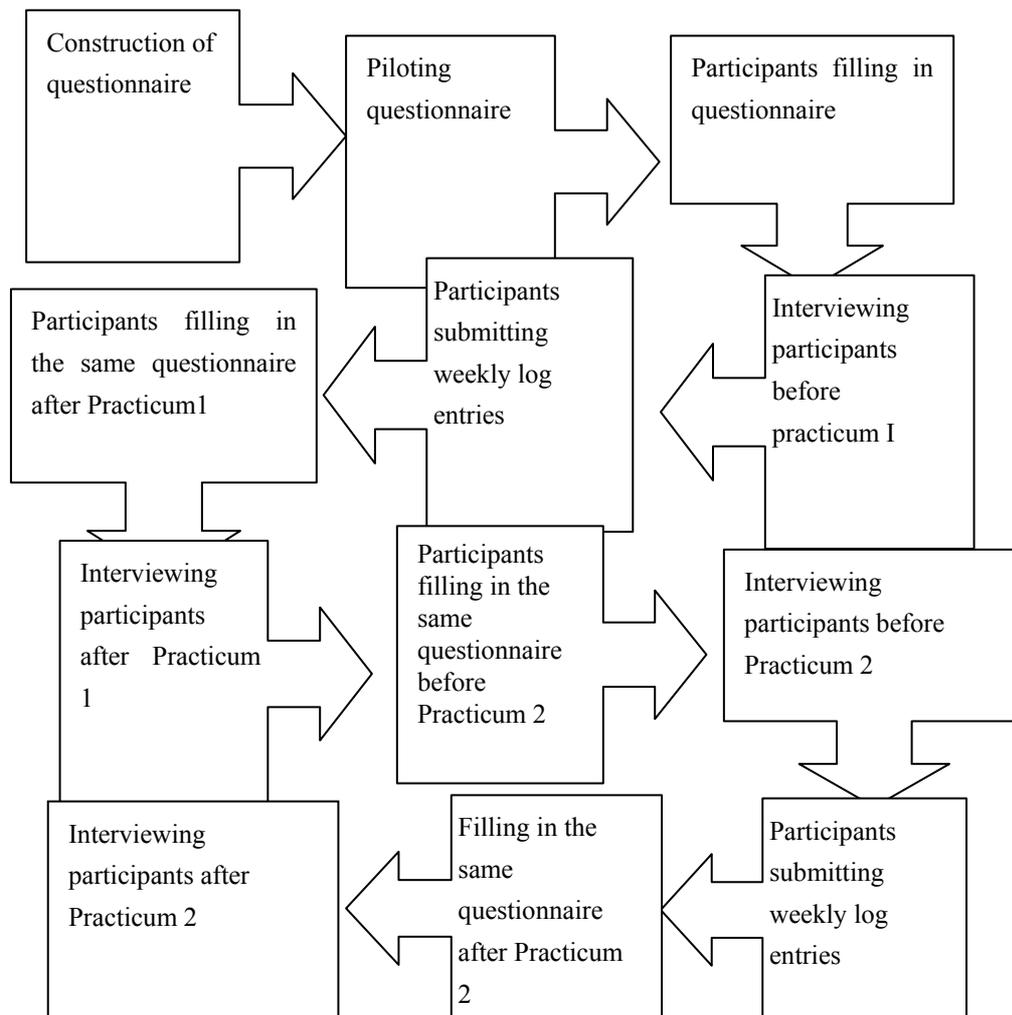


Figure 1. Workflow of Research Design

#### 4.2 Procedures

After the construction of the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out before the final questionnaire was set. Following the pilot study, all participants (N=33) were invited to answer the questionnaire, to be completed in the lecture hall, where the supervising researcher read the questionnaire's instructions aloud. Participants were assured that the information they provided would only serve the purpose of this study. Respondents were reminded that their participation was completely voluntary and that all data collected would remain confidential. Informed consent forms were also distributed. Thirty minutes were allocated to complete the questionnaire, with additional time given upon request.

The second part of the study required participants to be interviewed. As Kvale (1996:11) indicated, “The use of the interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulatable, with data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversation (cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001: 248). Cohen et al (2001:265) also stated “interviews enable participants... to discuss their interpretations of the world... and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view.” Interviews with the respondents were conducted in a small meeting room at the participants’ university, where the researcher first thanked participants for joining the study, then stated the purpose and manner of the interviews. Respondents were also reminded that the interview would be tape-recorded, and that their responses would remain confidential. The four participants were briefed on the purpose and the procedures of the study. Interviews were conducted one month before the commencement of practicum 1. Participants were then given a USB to record their weekly log entries which was to be returned during the post-practicum interview. The post teaching interviews were conducted within one week upon the completion of practicum to avoid any memory lapses.

#### 4.3 Participants

In this study there were a total of 33 participants of whom 4 were chosen as longitudinal case studies. The researcher sent an email to a class of 33 student teachers who were in the third year of studies (4 years in total) and explained the purpose of the study and invited them all to participate in the study—filling in questionnaire before and after their first and second practicum blocks. In order to capture the widest range of student teachers profiles, four participants (N=4) were randomly chosen and invited to join this study. They were: Wendy, Candice, Desmond and John (Pseudonyms). They were all third year English major students studying at a teacher college in 2010 (See Table 2 for demographic, linguistic and cultural background).

Table 2. Profiles of Participants

	<i>Wendy</i>	<i>Candice</i>	<i>Desmond</i>	<i>John</i>
Age	22	22	23	23
Gender	F	F	M	M
Place of birth	Hong Kong	Mainland China	Hong Kong	Hong Kong
First language	Cantonese	Putonghua	Cantonese	Cantonese
Second language	English	English	English	English
Alma mater attended	EMI	CMI	CMI	EMI
IELTS overall	7	6	6	7
GPA	3.34	2.98	2.22	3.28
Periods give in Practicum 1	10	8	8	10
Classes to be taught in Practicum 1	2	1	1	2
Periods give in Practicum 2	10	10	10	10
Classes to be taught in Practicum 2	2	2	2	2
Known to supporting teacher	No	No	No	No

#### 4.4 Teacher Training Programme

The teacher training is a 4-year bachelor programme. During the four years of studies, student teachers are given two blocks of teaching practice. In the third year, students are required to participate in their first practicum block for 6 consecutive weeks, in which they would be placed in their own alma mater, teaching 8-10 lessons per week (30 lessons for regular in-service teachers). Apart from teaching, they would be required to attend all school-related duties like staff meeting, sports day, conduct extra-curricular activities and so on. In their final year of studies, the content of practicum would be the same as Practicum 1 but last longer—8 weeks. During the two practicum blocks, students' teaching would be observed and assessed formally by their supervisor from the teacher college twice for each block and once informally by the supporting teacher. Students were also required to write lesson plans, develop teaching materials, and compile a teaching portfolio upon the completion of each practicum block.

#### 4.5 Context of Practicum Schools

The practicum schools were all the student teachers' own alma maters—a school context which they were all familiar with—in order to minimise level of anxiety. Each class had approximately 30 students. Each class had 8-10 English lessons a week. The original English teacher of the class which was given to the student teacher would act as the student teacher's supporting teacher whose roles were to provide pedagogical support and advice to the student teacher during practicum. During the second block practice, student teachers were assigned to another class and the number of teaching periods were increased by 10-20%. Similarly, a supporting teacher acted as their mentors.

#### 4.6 Instrumentation

##### 4.6.1 Questionnaire

In view of the need for a broad-based investigation, it is believed that a questionnaire will collect sufficiently-reliable data to capture student teachers' view on what motivates and demotivates them to become teachers before and after the two respective practicum blocks over two years as questionnaire reduces bias and is less intrusive. A questionnaire based on a five-point rating scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) was set for a group of English education major university students (N=33) to outline their motivation to become teachers before and after the two practicum blocks. The motivation items were listed based on Sinclair's (2008) list of student motivations, participant in-depth interview data and further literature review in the past decade. In the questionnaire, three statements were designed under each motivation to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire. Examples of each motivation can be referred to in Table 3. Students completed the questionnaire and were invited to comment on its language and content. Appropriate changes were made during the pilot study.

Table 3. Questionnaire Items of Student Teacher Motivation

<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Questionnaire statement</i>
Workload at practicum school	The workload at the practicum school is/was fair.
Pedagogical knowledge	I am confident in using a suitable teaching method to teach my students.
English proficiency	I am confident in my English proficiency.
Appearance	I am confident in my teacher's image.
Student behaviour	I don't/didn't have problems in handling student behavior in class.
Conducting practicum at alma mater	I look forward to /enjoyed teaching at my alma mater.
Relationship with students	Having a good relationship with my students will boost/boosted my confidence in teaching.
Relationship with supporting teacher	I look forward to/enjoyed working with my supporting teacher.
Teacher college supervisor	Assessment from supervisor will not affect/affected my decision to become a teacher.

##### 4.6.2 Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with 4 student teachers because interviews allowed the researcher to explore detailed information about their thoughts on teacher motivation. Interviews in this study were also used to

provide context to questionnaire data, offering a more complete picture of their motivation to become teachers. Since each student teacher would be interviewed 4 times over the two-year-study, the rules and procedures that guided the implementation of the interviews were developed in order to ensure consistency between interviews, and thus increase the reliability of the findings. Interviews with the participants were conducted in the teacher college they attended. They were given the freedom to choose between responding in Cantonese (their first language) or English- their second language. All student teachers chose to speak in English. Any reference to the student teachers would be disguised by the adoption of a pseudonym.

#### 4.6.3 Weekly Log Entry

In order to be sensitive to and respectful of the psychological concerns of the student teachers and at the same time gain insights into their motivations to become teachers, this study also asked student teachers to write a weekly log journal about their teaching experiences which helped to capture the fluidity of the student teachers' psychological concern during practicum which motivate or demotivate them to become a teacher. Plummer (1983) identified three major strategies of diary method: 1) unstructured written accounts, 2) semi-structured diaries which are used to report key events, feelings and emotions, and 3) a structured one which are for listing events with little commentary. Diaries can also provide a researcher an additional access to record activities and emotions of participants in the absence of the researcher. Since the aim of this study is to outline and explore student teachers motivation to become teachers, this study adopted semi-structured approach of which prompts were pre-loaded in USBs so that participants could record their entries. The prompts provided to the participants were: 1) Were there any positive experiences this week which enhanced your desire to become a teacher? Give details. 2) Were there any negative experiences this week which held your desire back in becoming a teacher? Give details. In sum, the use of triangulation of data collection methods (questionnaire, in-depth interviews and weekly log entry) were adopted in order to capture the fluidity nature of student teacher motivation and enhance reliability of the research design and results.

### 4.7 *Statistical Analysis and Procedures*

#### 4.7.1 Questionnaire

In order to distinguish what motivates and demotivates students to become teachers, all questionnaires were anonymously coded for further data analysis. To address research questions and conduct meaningful comparison in order to see how motivation changed over time, data analysis included several procedures: 1) using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to project descriptive data for both the first and second pre-practicum questionnaires (2 sets of data). 2) using t-test to compare both pre- and post-first and second practicum questionnaires (4 sets of data). 3) using t-test to compare the first post-practicum questionnaires and pre-practicum of the second practicum. 4) Using t-test to compare second practicum's pre and post practicum questionnaires. To decide which motivational factor is more significantly influential in affecting students' motivation to become teachers, mean scores and standard deviation were calculated. Inferential statistics, that is paired sample *t*-test in an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also used to determine if there is any significant differences between the sources of motivation at different time points. The significance level was set at  $p < 0.05$ . Since multiple comparisons were to be made within the same dataset, the probability of observing a sizable difference in one of the comparisons increases with the number of comparisons made. To control Type I error, the significance level after Bonferroni adjustments was set to  $p < 0.001$  ( $0.05/50$ ). This adjustment controls very tightly for false positives.

#### 4.7.2 Reliability and Internal Consistency of Questionnaire

A reliability test on the 27-item questionnaire was run to test if there is an internal consistency of all the items set. Reliability coefficient (Cronbach alphas) for the motivational components was high, with an alpha value of 0.852, which means the internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire was high. To observe to what degree the phenomenon is present in the population, the effect-size calculation is used. The effect size is used to express the magnitude of a difference in means in standard deviation units. Standardized effect sizes are obtained by removing the effect of the metric, allowing for comparison of results across studies when different metrics are used to measure dependent variables. The Pearson *r* value is 0.874 which shows there is a positive relationship between variables.

#### 4.7.3 Interviews and Weekly Log Entries

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in an attempt to better understand student teachers responses regarding their motivation to become teachers. Qualitative data was obtained in English, as students were all fluent. All data was then transcribed for coding and the data analyzed qualitatively and thematically. All analyses of the

data (from individual participant teachers as well as across participant teachers) followed the thematic approach in order to discover overarching themes that might emerge from the data (Daly, Kellehear & Gliksman, 1997). The process involves the identification of themes through “careful reading and re-reading of the data” (Rice & Ezzy, 1999, p. 258). This is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes can be categorized for analysis.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 What Motivates/Demotivates Student Teachers to Become Teachers after Their First Practicum?

This study found that the sources which further motivated or demotivated student-teachers to become teachers before and during practicum were different. Table 4 and 5 summarise the descriptive means of results. Student teachers found workload from serving schools, pedagogy used in class, student behavioural problems, their own English proficiency, own appearance, working at own alma maters, relationships with students, cooperating with supporting teachers and assessment from supervisor were the worries they had before the first practicum. After the first practicum, students’ sources of motivation were changed. They found only workload from serving schools, pedagogy used in class, and student behavioural problems were the only sources of demotivation for them to become teachers. Also, they no longer worried about their own English proficiency, own appearance, working at own alma maters, relationship with students, cooperating with supporting teachers and assessment from supervisor, which in fact had become sources of motivation to become teachers.

Table 4. Descriptive Means of Student Teacher Motivation

	<i>Pre Practicum I</i>		<i>Post Practicum I</i>		<i>Changes (↑ or ↓)</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Workload at practicum school	1.22	0.38	1.86	0.46	↑
Pedagogical knowledge	2.02	2.33	2.44	1.38	↑
English proficiency	1.14	1.66	1.25	0.58	↑
Appearance	1.98	3.38	2.98	1.02	↓
Student behaviour	2.02	3.23	3.10	1.20	↓
Conducting practicum at alma mater	2.86	1.56	4.06	1.24	↓
Relationship with students	2.98	1.52	4.38	1.02	↓
Relationship with supporting teacher	3.06	3.02	4.22	1.31	↓
Teacher college supervisor	3.44	1.88	4.27	1.42	↓

Table 5. Comparison of Descriptive Data Results

	<i>Pre TP I</i>		<i>Post TP I</i>		<i>Pre TP II</i>		<i>Post TP II</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Motivation								
Workload at practicum school	1.22	0.38	1.86	0.46	1.32	0.89	1.46	0.72
Pedagogical knowledge	2.02	2.33	2.44	1.38	2.32	1.23	2.40	1.36
English proficiency	1.14	1.66	1.25	0.58	1.82	2.36	2.18	2.18
Appearance	1.98	3.38	2.98	1.02	2.88	1.22	3.02	1.23
Student behaviour	2.02	3.23	3.10	1.20	3.06	1.27	2.84	0.88
Conducting practicum at alma mater	2.86	1.56	4.06	1.24	4.18	1.39	4.12	0.96
Relationship with students	2.98	1.52	4.38	1.02	4.89	1.20	4.42	0.86
Relationship with supporting teacher	3.06	3.02	4.22	1.31	4.02	1.48	4.34	1.39
Workload at practicum school	3.44	1.88	4.27	1.42	4.12	1.76	4.58	1.68

### 5.1.1 Demotivations-Workload from Serving Schools

Qualitative data collected from interviews and weekly log entries also echoed the results found from the questionnaires. All participants expressed their concern over workload at school before the commencement of practicum. They indicated that the heavy workload from school, both from teaching and administration, made them wonder whether they would be able to be teachers or not. Of the four participants, Candice pointed out that it was the assignment marking and administrative work which made them hesitate to become teachers and their worries were even more after the practicum. Candice described,

“Marking students’ exercise books. Sometimes I have hesitation when marking their work...students may not be willing to read my comments if they are not useful.... I am also worried about the quantity as well as the quality. However, the quality is the most important. I mark students’ work slowly because I would like to give them useful feedback. The quantity is also a problem.”

### 5.1.2 Demotivations- Pedagogy and Student Behavioural Problems

While participants were concerned with the heavy workload at school, some were also concerned whether they were able to handle the job well before the practicum. Self-efficacy was rather low before the practicum. The sources for the low self-efficacy were *pedagogy* and *student behavioural problems*. Wendy talked of her worries over pedagogy because her own educational background seemed not to be able to equip her with the necessary skills to cater for her students’ learning style,

“I thought that traditional assessment has had bad impact on me because I only had to memorize knowledge in order to succeed in exams. There were not many opportunities for me to develop critical thinking skills so it might be difficult for me to discuss current affairs with the students. Also, my pedagogy might not be effective. I preferred teacher-talk but my students might find it monotonous.”

Apart from relationship with supporting teachers, students’ misbehaviour inside and outside class was also found to be an influential factor. As John described in his weekly log entry,

“Their misbehaviour demotivated me. I’ve never imagined that students nowadays can be so naughty.” Wendy also mentioned in the post practicum interview that, “One student in a remedial class after class really frustrated me. I let her go at 5pm but she didn't go home until 8pm. The parent complained to my supporting teacher why I didn't let her daughter go home earlier without realizing it was her daughter who was lying. Student misbehaviour this way was very frustrating. I said to myself then, she would not be the first one nor the last one who would lie to me. What should I do? I am not sure how I should cope with them.”

In sum, all the above three aspects consistently affected student teachers motivation to become teachers which were both tested before and after the first practicum.

### 5.1.3 Change of Demotivations To Motivations

Before the first practicum, students were worried about their English proficiency, own appearance, working at own alma maters, relationships with students, cooperating with supporting teachers and assessment from supervisor. However, after the first practicum, their perspectives were changed.

1) English proficiency. English proficiency was one of the motivational sources which had been changed from demotivations to motivation. John displayed his change of motivation in the interview and his log entry,

“There is room for improvement in my oral English... I am not confident to project myself in front of forty students and I am weak at phonetics....My second week of teaching...I found my English wasn't as poor as I thought...knowing how to teach and caring for student genuinely is more important...”

2) Appearance. From the interview data, Desmond mostly worried about his young-looking face and appearance. In the interview, he said,

“Perhaps I don't not have much self-confidence... because I have a lot of pimples... also I was cynical... um... I had no confidence in people and myself.” Then his weekly log entry, “Appearance is important for teachers...but I found students do not respect a teacher because of their looks, but whether the teachers care for them...”

After the practicum, John and Desmond did not worry about their English proficiency nor appearance as much as before because they found what made teaching more important.

3) Working at own alma maters. Desmond explained how his negative experiences with teachers influenced him in the pre-practicum interview,

“Actually I dreamt of being a teacher since I was a kid. I wanted to be a teacher when I was in secondary school because my secondary school teachers taught badly. They could not cater for my needs at all... .” He then

described his experiences during the post practicum interview, “I guess I was wrong about my teachers before, now that I had worked with them and understood the perspective of my previous teachers. They now have my full respect and I had developed a very strong sense of belonging to my alma mater.”

4) Working with supporting teachers. All participants stated that positive experiences with supporting teachers also influenced their decision to become a teacher although they all once worried about working with them. Support from the practicum school was particularly true to John’s case after the practicum,

“The environment was good and the school campus was big. The school knew I need more freedom and space to develop myself, so I was not arranged to sit in the staff room. Instead, I was arranged to sit in a room in which teachers could take a rest or have conferences. A lot of teachers would come and chat with me in a non-threatening environment. I really enjoyed working in a school with such freedom.”

5) Assessment from practicum supervisor. Support from supervisor from teacher’s college also ensured student-teachers’ choice of taking up teaching as their career was the right decision. Wendy stated,

“My supervisor was fantastic as she gave us a lot of advice and told us her expectations before TP. Therefore, we were clear about what she expected during her visit. We simply followed her advice... My workload in the TP was heavy. And she revised our lesson plan repeatedly and gave us much advice on our PowerPoint. Her suggestions were useful.” John also mentioned similar situations in his weekly log, “My supervisor is a very prominent professor in the field of ELT. I was very surprised that he looked at my lesson plan very carefully and gave me very constructive advice and feedback. The feedback was my blind spot which I had never thought of. Without his support, I would not be able to develop such level of confidence”.

6) Relationships with students. The rapport which developed between students and the student teachers was reported to be another important motivation which enhanced participants’ motivation to become a teacher. Desmond explained in the post practicum interview,

“I learnt the ways of having a harmonious relationship with the students... That is, I can foster my relationship with students outside the classroom then I can take control of them in class. Having a good relationship with the students made teaching meaningful.”

### 5.2 To What Extent do the Motivations of Student Teachers Differ Over the Two Years?

Results of this study confirmed student teacher’s motivation was changed over the two years. Table 6 shows a comparison of descriptive data of the two years’ pre- and post-practicum. Results showed that workload, pedagogy and student behavior were consistently the demotivations for student teachers as their means were all low (below 3.00) throughout the two years, while worries over working at own alma maters, relationships with students, supporting teachers and supervisor were gradually eased after the first practicum and consistently stayed as positive motivations since their mean scores were high in general (over 4.00) throughout the two years. However, the negative effect of English proficiency and appearance seemed to have eased after the first practicum. Student teachers saw these two factors neutral as the mean scores were around 3.00. It is hence believed that English proficiency and appearance did not place any negative nor positive effect on their motivation to become teachers.

To further understand the meaning of these descriptive data, it is necessary to identify how each of these motivations changed over time and see whether there are significant differences. Hence, paired sample t-test results ascertained whether they were significantly different at different time points (see Figure 2).

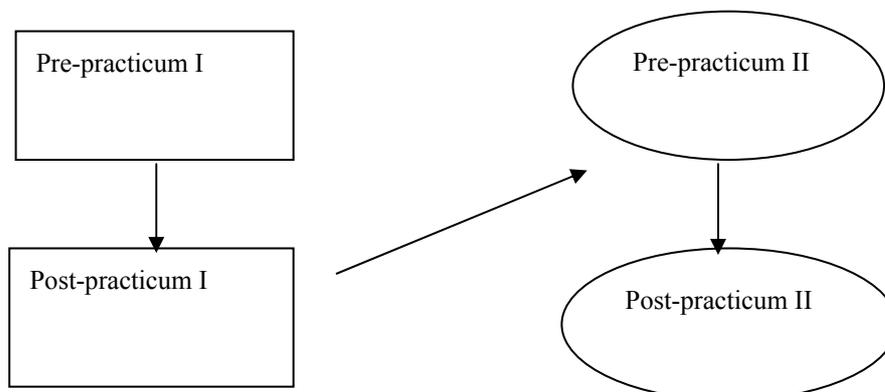


Figure 2. t-test Comparisons at Different Time Points

Table 6 shows the summary of the t-test results of each motivation to be compared at different meaningful time points.

Table 6. Summary of t-test Results of Student Teachers' Motivation to Become Teachers

<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Time point</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Workload at practicum school	Pre TP I	1.22	0.38	1.62	NS
	Post TP I	1.86	0.46		
	Post TP I	1.86	0.46	1.55	NS
	Pre TP II	1.32	0.89		
	Pre TP II	1.32	0.89	1.41	NS
	Post TP II	1.46	0.72		
Pedagogical knowledge	Pre TP I	2.02	2.33	2.31	NS
	Post TP I	2.44	1.38		
	Post TP I	2.44	1.38	2.35	NS
	Pre TP II	2.32	1.23		
	Pre TP II	2.32	1.23	2.36	NS
	Post TP II	2.40	1.36		
English proficiency	Pre TP I	1.98	1.66	1.19	$p<0.001$
	Post TP I	2.98	0.58		
	Post TP I	2.98	0.58	1.62	NS
	Pre TP II	2.88	2.36		
	Pre TP II	2.88	2.36	2.04	NS
	Post TP II	3.02	2.18		
Appearance	Pre TP I	2.02	3.38	2.66	$p<0.001$
	Post TP I	3.10	1.02		
	Post TP I	3.10	1.02	2.90	NS
	Pre TP II	3.06	1.22		
	Pre TP II	3.06	1.22	2.92	NS
	Post TP II	2.84	1.23		
Student behaviour	Pre TP I	2.02	3.23	2.67	$p<0.001$
	Post TP I	3.23	1.20		
	Post TP I	3.23	1.20	3.04	NS
	Pre TP II	3.10	1.27		
	Pre TP II	3.10	1.27	2.98	$p<0.001$
	Post TP II	1.20	0.88		
Conducting practicum at alma mater	Pre TP I	2.86	1.56	3.68	$p<0.001$
	Post TP I	4.06	1.24		
	Post TP I	4.06	1.24	4.12	NS
	Pre TP II	4.18	1.39		
	Pre TP II	4.18	1.39	1.14	NS
	Post TP II	4.12	0.96		
Relationship with students	Pre TP I	2.98	1.52	3.99	$p<0.001$
	Post TP I	4.38	1.02		

	Post TP I	4.38	1.02	4.66	NS
	Pre TP II	4.89	1.20		
	Pre TP II	4.89	1.20	4.72	NS
	Post TP II	4.42	0.86		
Relationship with supporting teachers	Pre TP I	3.06	3.02	3.83	$p<0.001$
	Post TP I	4.22	1.31		
	Post TP I	4.22	1.31	4.16	NS
	Pre TP II	4.02	1.48		
	Pre TP II	4.02	1.48	4.21	NS
	Post TP II	4.34	1.39		
Teacher college supervisor	Pre TP I	3.44	1.88	3.68	$p<0.001$
	Post TP I	4.27	1.42		
	Post TP I	4.27	1.42	4.12	NS
	Pre TP II	4.12	1.76		
	Pre TP II	4.12	1.76	4.36	NS
	Post TP II	4.58	1.68		

Results found that workload, pedagogy and student behaviour had no significant difference, even at different time points over two years. As Candice weekly log entries reported,

“I don’t like marking so much meaningless students works. Why dictation? Why quizzes all the time? I don’t know whether these are good for students. I wish I could do something more genuinely useful for students’ daily lives... I doubt the meaning of homework, I doubt my supporting teacher’s way of teaching... really.”

However, the rest of the motivations were both found to be significantly different between pre-practicum I and post practicum I which indicated that student teachers’ perceptions towards the rest of the motivations were changed—from negative to neutral (English proficiency and appearance) or positive (working at own alma maters, relationship with students, supporting teachers and supervisor). Talking about relationships with students, student teachers were generally all positive after the first practicum. John had a representative view in the post practicum interview,

“I guess I was wrong about students...I thought they were all very spoiled and hard to control but I was wrong. Once I saw them grow, answer my questions....At the moment, I was convinced that this is the meaning of education.”

However, after the second practicum, student teachers had a drastic motivation change from positive to negative. Desmond explained the reasons in the post practicum interview,

“I was so disappointed by this group of students. They were the low achievers of the form....They skipped class, always late for class, slept through the whole lessons...they were all 100% uninterested in English learning. I didn’t know how to handle them....I felt so terrible.”

As for conducting practicum at own alma maters, student teachers all indicated they only had worries before the first practicum but the worries were all eased after the first practicum. They enjoyed working at their own alma maters because they could serve as the students’ older brothers and sisters. As Wendy shared,

“I was a bit worried about going back to my school because I didn’t know how it would feel like to be my own teachers’ colleagues...but in fact I was so glad that I could serve at my own mother school. I felt so at ease and students all knew I studied there before. They treated me like a big sister...and my own teachers were so supportive. I would share my funny experiences I had at school with my students...like how we used to call teachers names....working at my own alma maters gave me an advantage that “I belong here!”

Having a good relationship with the supporting teachers was also an important motivation for student teachers to become teachers. Before the first practicum, student teachers were not so sure how the relationship with supporting teachers would impact on their motivation to become teachers. After the first practicum, student teachers were all very positive about the support provided by the supporting teachers. As Wendy shared her experiences with her own supporting teacher,

“My supporting teacher is a very supportive teacher. She gave me tips on how to handle her class, what motivates them, what doesn’t. What they were weak at and what their strengths are. More importantly, she always suggests ways for me to improve my lessons and teaching materials. She always spotted my blind spots in teaching.”

Student teachers were once neutral about how much teacher college supervisor can place positive impact on their motivation to become teachers. After the second practicum, their interview responses explained how supervisors could place positive impact on their motivation. Candice retold her story which she mentioned in her weekly log entry,

“Everyone told me Dr Biggs was a very strict supervisor before the first practicum, not until I met him in person on my first supervised visit...I had to say that his genuine advice was very inspirational which affected my teaching philosophy a lot. He told me to “teach the students! Don’t teach the lesson plan!” I was so shocked...I even wrote this on my facebook status and my weekly log entry !”

## 6. Discussion and Implications

In this study, student teachers’ self-efficacy before the first practicum was found to be low. They perceived their work ability to be low because of the heavy workload, both from administration and marking. These findings echoed another study (OECD, 2005) because the actual work experiences of teachers had become more complex and demanding. The worries over workload were two-fold: 1) Student teachers could not anticipate because they had not experienced any authentic teaching situations. As Bandura (1986) described, unless people believe they can produce desired outcomes, they have little incentive to act and perform and this is influenced by different environmental, personal and social determinants. As Volet and Jarvela (2001) explained, students have to cope with their own emotional and cognitive demands and conflicts, as well as with social settings and environmental cues in any learning situation. That is, student teachers have to regulate their emotional and motivational learning processes in a new working environment – practicum (Boekaerts, 1996; Boekaerts, Pintrich & Zeidner 2000; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994; Winne & Hadwin, 1998). 2) The fundamental problems in education, i.e. large class sizes, high-stake public examinations, and great learner diversity in class. To deal with these problems, government level’s intervention is needed and inevitable. On programme level, what teacher trainers can do to help student teachers better prepare themselves is to expose students to more authentic teaching situations. For example, student teachers could be attached to a school since year one to observe the daily routine of a teacher and later assist with teaching. This would provide student teachers with a clear picture of what teaching in an authentic situation is like. Additionally, they would also be able to anticipate and prepare themselves for the upcoming challenges. Teacher trainers may also invite in-service teachers to share their work experiences with the pre-service teachers so as to ease their worries, clear their queries and enhance their confidence in teaching.

When teacher trainers identify possible in-service teachers to share their work experience, they can also suggest that in-service teachers give insights into what approach student teachers should take when they are collaborating with their supporting teachers at the practicum school. This would be fundamentally important since the relationship with the supporting teacher was identified by participants in this study as one of the key demotivations that made them reconsider whether they should be a teacher or not. The different expectations held by the two parties were perhaps the major reason why student teachers found it difficult to handle the relationship with the supporting teachers before and during practicum. However, at the same time, a supportive supporting teacher would serve as a motivator for student teachers to become a teacher.

Self-efficacy was also found to be rather low before the practicum. The sources for the low self-efficacy were *pedagogy* and *English proficiency*. Since student teachers had not had the opportunity to try the methods they had learnt in teacher training, it is easy to understand their low level of self-efficacy. To rectify this, micro-teaching sessions would be useful in helping student teachers develop self-confidence when conducting a lesson. It would also be effective in learning how to deliver an effective lesson using good language of instruction. Micro-teaching has been proven to be an effective means in helping student teachers envision and anticipate what may happen in their future teaching (Sabahattin, 2010).

With the commencement of the practicum, the sources of motivation and demotivation shifted. This study found students’ misbehaviour could be devastating for a student teacher. However, having and being able to develop a rapport with the students during practicum enhanced student teachers’ motivation to become teachers. Similar results were found in other studies. Having good relationships with students was considered by student teachers as part of the social contribution they could make to the society (Crow, Levine & Nager, 1990; OEDC, 2005). To develop a good rapport with students, it is believed that equipping student teachers’ with classroom management skills will help them minimize conflicts with students when they misbehave in class. Therefore, giving more

emphasis to classroom management training will subsequently enhance their motivation to become a teacher.

Apart from academic support, student teachers also stated that support given by the practicum school as well as from the supervisor of the teacher college during practicum were the main sources which enhanced their motivation to become teachers. That is, support given to student teachers boosted their confidence as well as their desire to improve all aspects related to being a professional teacher. Other studies also found the same results (e.g., Hutchison, Follman, Sumpter & Bodner, 2006).

The last source of motivation which helped student teachers to be more motivated in becoming a teacher was their own mastery experiences with teachers and in their alma maters. It was found that past experiences had a great influence on their expectations of practicum. The results of this study echoed those in the past (Bandura, 1997; Lent, Brown, Gover and Nijjer, 1996). As Schutz et al (2001) explained, the decision to teach was often evoked because of one's own schooling. If student teachers had positive experiences with their own teachers as well as with the schools, they tended to be more motivated to become a teacher. If this is the case, then what teacher trainers can do is to get student teachers to reflect on the positive experiences they had with their own teachers and ask them to view the negative experiences with teachers or alma maters from a different perspective. Having done so, student teachers would learn to appreciate and take things positively even if they had negative experiences in the past which might normally affect their motivation to become a teacher.

## 7. Conclusion

To sum up, student teachers form their motivation by selecting and interpreting information from several sources before and during practicum. Some were evident before the practicum but those sources which de/motivated did not seem important to the student teachers anymore after the commencement of the practicum. Before the practicum, student teachers were informed by emotional and psychological states such as their perceived abilities in dealing with workload as well as teaching and pedagogy which determined their motivation. Upon the commencement of the practicum, student teachers focus shifted to the interpersonal level. The positive sources of motivation were found in the social encouragements that they received from supporting teachers, practicum schools, students, and supervisors from teacher colleges. These social interactions provided evaluative feedback, judgment and appraisal about their teaching performance. The last source of motivation was found in their own mastery experiences. That is, their own experiences with teachers and in their alma maters was of great influence on their motivation to become teachers.

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