KIM, SUNG-AE. Ph.D. Practicum Practices of 4-Year Early Childhood Education Teacher Preparation Programs: Results from a National Survey. (2021)
Directed by Drs. Karen M. La Paro & Catherine Scott-Little. 202 pp.

A practicum is a field experience that provides opportunities for preservice teachers to implement academic understanding and practical training in an authentic classroom environment. Though practicum experiences are one of the most common and crucial aspects of teacher preparation programs, there is limited research to promote understanding of practicum experiences across teacher preparation programs. This study examines practica in 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs across multiple states in the U.S.

Program representatives from 227 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs responded to an online survey regarding practica in the following areas: 1. criteria for practicum placement, 2. qualification of and support for cooperating teachers, 3. learning experiences during practica, and 4. supervision and evaluation of practica. Descriptive statistics and comparisons and associations with program characteristics were utilized to analyze the data.

Overall results suggested variability across various areas of practica. Criteria for placement settings and cooperating teachers varied across programs. Cooperating teachers' education qualification, work experience, and license requirements differed by the children's ages in the practicum classrooms. Observing children, planning and implementing activities were included across all programs as learning experiences provided during practica. There was great variation in evaluation tools and supervision methods across programs. Moreover, programs offered more practica in early elementary, kindergarten, and preschool classrooms than in infant and toddler. classrooms. Variations in practicum practices are discussed, including implications for teacher preparation programs and next steps for future research. This study provides an initial understanding of practicum practices in 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs and

serves as a foundation for future research that can further address early childhood field experiences.

PRACTICUM PRACTICES OF 4-YEAR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS: RESULTS FROM A NATIONAL SURVEY

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to

the Faculty of The Graduate School at

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro

2021

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DEDICATION

It took more than 2 years to prepare, 6 months to collect data, and 1 and half years to complete the dissertation. Most importantly, more than 6,810 minutes were spent responding to the survey from 227 teacher preparation programs across the US. I deeply thank the participants who dedicated valuable time to share their responses and perspectives. Without their participation, this work would not have been possible. I believe the 227 participants responded to the survey with the hope it would lead to better understanding of teacher preparation practices, better practicum experiences, and better support for preservice teachers in early childhood education. With the same hope, I would like to dedicate this work to early childhood teacher educators, preservice teachers, in-service teachers, and future researchers as we all work to improve our profession.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Sung-Ae Kim has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout this journey of learning, I looked forward to this moment when I could express my gratitude to the people around me. First, I deeply thank my advisors, Drs. Catherine Scott-Little and Karen La Paro, for their guidance, support, and understanding. It took quite a while for me to build my knowledge, adjust to the new context and culture, and grow as a learner and researcher. Throughout the processes, they provided constant support and encouragement. Dr. La Paro challenged me with numerous questions and perspectives. I was very lucky to learn from and work with her. I asked a lot of repeated and sometimes silly questions, but she responded to me with kindness and patience. Dr. Scott-Little was my first audience when I practiced my first presentation in graduate school and traveled with me for the conference. I felt great support in this journey through her encouraging words, messages, and smile. I think I am so lucky to have her as my advisor and learned a lot through her sincerity and respectful attitude. It was their dedication to their role as mentors that allowed me to complete this degree. I also thank my committee, Drs. Hestenes and Crosby. They were wise, open-minded, kind, thoughtful and I was honored and fortunate to have them as my committee members.

In addition, I would like to thank the Grady bunch. They became my American family who shared my happiness, sorrow, and concerns at any time. They always prepared my seat next to them. Thanks a lot for taking care of me and making me feel like one of your family members. Karen, thank you for our walks, listening to my story, and being my Genie. Joe, thanks for reading my writing, like you did for your girls.

I would like to thank my old friends Jin-Hyun, Sun-Jung, my dormitory friends, Ha-Sim, Jung-Eun, and Yun-Jung, and my cohort, Demi, Amanda, Amy, Neisha, Ebony, Kiki, Domonique, and Dilara. Thanks for being my emotional support.

I would like to thank my family for their prayers, encouragement, and support. Every afternoon, I was able to talk with my parents and share with them little happenings and reflections of the day. Simply seeing them via the Internet, provided me the energy to continue my work and allowed me to feel their support and hope. Thanks a lot for being my parents and thinking of me every day. Thank my brother, sister-in-law, and my cute nieces for their support. I am very grateful to have you all as my family.

Lastly, I would like to confess that all the honor belongs to Jesus. God, this is your grace, not me. Thanks to God for keeping my family safe and sound while I was physically away from them. I could feel you taking care of us.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The quality of education depends on the quality of the classroom environment. Teachers are one of the most important features of the classroom environment (American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education, 2010; Anderson, 2007; Gomez, Kagan, & Fox, 2015). A variety of research indicates that teachers can influence children's development (Birch & Ladd, 1998; LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007; McCormick & O'Connor, 2015). Effective early childhood teachers promote child development directly and indirectly, both in and outside of the classroom, and their roles influence not only children's immediate development but also in their future development (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002; NAEYC, 2020).

Teacher preparation programs have the great responsibility of preparing effective teachers and supporting their learning and understanding of child development, theory, and practices to apply in their future teaching, and providing experiences in an authentic context, namely the classroom environment (Baum & Korth, 2013; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Saracho, 2013; Sumrall et al., 2017). Among the various experiences that teacher preparation programs provide, the majority of graduates of these programs have reported the practicum as one of the crucial experiences in their teacher preparation experiences (Anderson, 2007; Zeichner, 2010).

Practica are field experiences that provide opportunities for preservice teachers to incorporate academic understanding and practical training in an authentic classroom environment (AACTE, 2010). The practicum is typically separate from and occurs before student teaching. Practicum experiences allow preservice teachers to experience and practice the complexities and dynamics of teaching while applying course content and being supervised by experienced teachers in the classroom context (Akyar, 2020; Saracho, 2013; Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020; O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007; Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014; Whitebook

et al., 2012). Through practicum experiences, preservice teachers can gain first-hand experience with children's development, including their individual developmental differences and needs, as well as diverse features of classrooms that different settings and contexts offer (AACTE, 2010; Beers, 2018; NAEYC, 2020).

An additional benefit of practicum experiences is that preservice teachers are generally supervised by experienced teachers and teacher educators (Aderibigbe, Gray, & Colucci-Gray, 2018; Akyar, 2020; Baum & Korth, 2013; Beers, 2018; Clarke & Mena, 2020). The supervision from cooperating teachers and teacher educators is important for preservice teachers in that it provides individualized and situated feedback and support for their development as teachers (Akyar, 2020; Dunst, Hamby, Howse, Wilkie, & Annas, 2020; NAEYC, 2020). This feedback and support during the practicum scaffold and promote preservice teachers' understanding, skills, and application of interactions in the classroom (NAEYC, 2020; Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014). Practicum experiences provide individualized opportunities for preservice teachers to reflect on their performance through the feedback they receive from professionals in the field and opportunities to practice their teaching skills in different contexts before they dive into professional teaching (Naidoo & Kirch, 2016; Ritblatt, Garrity, Longstreth, Hokoda, & Potter, 2013; Simons, Baeten, & Vanhees, 2020). By developing their competences and various teaching strategies through their high-quality practicum experiences, preservice teachers can better prepare for their future teaching profession (Akyar, 2020; Anderson, 2007; Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Hart, 2020).

Though practicum experiences are one of the most common, wide-spread, and crucial aspects of teacher preparation programs (Saracho, 2013; Zeichner, 2010), there is limited research to promote understanding of practicum experiences, such as the settings and/or

qualification requirements for practicum (Baum & Korth, 2013; Hobbs & Stovall, 2015; Sumrall et al., 2017). Moreover, practicum experiences are inconsistent and notably diverse across the United States (Beers, 2018; Gomez, Kagan, & Fox, 2015; Phillips, Austin, & Whitebook, 2016; Ritblatt, Garrity, Longstreth, Hokoda, & Potter, 2013; Saracho, 2013; Whitebook et al., 2012). This variation in field experiences has rarely been studied at a national level (Early & Winton, 2001; Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009; Ray, Bowman, & Robbins, 2006). To be more specific, the frequency, content, type, context, and criteria of practicum experiences in early childhood teacher preparation programs vary by states, programs, and institutional contexts (Hart, 2020; Whitebook et al., 2012). Further research is needed to understand these diverse characteristics and features of practicum experiences to help early childhood teacher preparation programs define and implement their practicum experiences.

Most research related to practicums has been based on single-context studies of individual teacher education programs (Clarke & Mena, 2020; Danyluk, Burns, Crawford, & Hill, 2020). This research is useful and provides a level of understanding, however, context-specific studies may not provide a broader and more comprehensive understanding of practicum experiences across a range of programs (Anderson, 2007; Yoon & Larkin, 2018). Moreover, early childhood teacher preparation programs do not have shared criteria or standards for classroom settings or cooperating teacher quality, types of student experiences, quality of supervision, or expectations of the roles and responsibilities of each individual who is involved in practicum experiences, such as cooperating teachers and university supervisors (Hart, 2020; Phillips, Austin, & Whitebook, 2016; Ritblatt, Garrity, Longstreth, Hokoda, & Potter, 2013).

This study describes practicum experiences in 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs across multiple states in the U.S. To be more specific, the characteristics of practicum

settings and experiences, criteria for the setting and the qualifications of cooperating teachers, preservice teachers' learning experiences, and features of supervision and feedback provided to preservice teachers will be described. This study will contribute to early childhood teacher preparation programs by allowing them to better understand current practicum experiences and informing future research that can lead to improvements in early childhood field experience.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This study uses Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as a theoretical framework. In his theory, Bronfenbrenner emphasized the importance of ecological contexts in understanding and studying human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). The initial ecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner, 1976) is used to describe the current study instead of the more recent bioecological model because this study focuses on the mesosystem and does not include data about individual (person) characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, motivation, professionalism, or self-efficacy. Moreover, the most critical and essential feature in the bioecological model is a proximal process. Although the proximal processes such as interactions or fit between cooperating teachers and preservice teachers, or university supervisors and preservice teachers are essential in the development of teachers, the current study does not measure these proximal processes and instead focuses on the program level (i.e., mesosystem) to examine current practices related to practicum experiences for early childhood preservice teachers. These are the reasons why this study applies Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory over his bioecological theory.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory could be symbolized as the "Russian Dolls; Matryoshka" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Humans are situated in multiple layers of structures, starting from the closest and most influential to the distant and less prominent (Bronfenbrenner, 1976; Roegman & Kolman, 2020). As the word ecology implies, Bronfenbrenner stressed the importance of the surrounding context in his ecological systems theory (Härkönen, 2001). Borrowing the terminology from Brim, Bronfenbrenner described

these multiple layers as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1976).

The microsystem is the immediate, innermost, face-to face, and instantly interactive setting where the human is situated while taking a particular role, such as student, peer, teacher, or parent (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Bronfenbrenner emphasized the microsystem among other systems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This is because though individuals are developing and shaped by multiple processes and through various systems, the shared values, norms, regulations, cultures, and expectations in their roles are often communicated through person-to-person interactions in their immediate settings, which are microsystems (Buchanan, 2020).

The mesosystem is a system of interrelated microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1976; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Thus, some researchers argue the mesosystem is a process rather than a system (Cassidy, Vardell, & Buell, 1995). Examples of mesosystems could be interactions among families, peers, or schools (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). If one considers a preservice teacher as the person at the center of the ecological model, the interaction between cooperating teachers and course instructors or the interaction between practicum settings and universities can be examples of a mesosystem. While many studies based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory have focused on microsystems, the research on the mesosystem has been less explored (Buchanan, 2020; Härkönen, 2001).

As an extension of the mesosystem, the exosystem embraces the formal and informal social structures that the individual is not directly part of, such as a child's parents' work environment, mass media, agencies of government or other social networks (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Influences of the exosystem can be indirect and slow because they do not involve direct interactions with the individual but can still be powerful.

The last layer of diverse systems is the macrosystem. The macrosystems is the overarching institution that influences the culture or subculture, such as economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems. The macrosystem includes perspectives, cultural norms, standards, and attitudes rather than concrete interactions (processes). Nevertheless, these abstract factors in the macrosystem influence subsystems and are manifested in more specific criteria or requirements in the subsystems, eventually shaping human interactions and experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). As the macrosystem influences the systems of culture, language, economy, or society, it is transferred from one generation to the next, working as the medium of socialization while penetrating through all the layers of the systems (Härkönen, 2001). In this sense, macrosystems reflect societal and cultural attitudes, beliefs, and ideals (Cassidy, Vardell, & Buell, 1995).

After proposing his initial ecological systems theory Bronfenbrenner added another system, the chronosystem, which is a little different from the other systems. The chronosystem addresses the dimension of time and process (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The chronosystem includes the impact of historical events on human development, such as the women's movement or the COVID-19 pandemic. The women's movement encouraged women's participation in the workforce, and women's participation was expanded into diverse professional fields. In the latter example, the COVID-19 pandemic is also a historical event that has changed human lifestyles. Meeting face-to-face has been discouraged, and this change has affected education, working conditions, and methods of communication. The chronosystem is embedded in other systems and influences individuals by shaping cultures, patterns of adjustment, and human beliefs (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Härkönen, 2001).

Though Bronfenbrenner emphasized the influence of the environment in human development, this does not mean that humans are dominated by environments. Bronfenbrenner also stressed that humans are active influences on their own development (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Bronfenbrenner's systems theory is about bidirectional interactions between humans and their environments, and reciprocal relationships are inherent in these interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Cassidy, Vardell, and Buell (1995) also pointed out reciprocal relationships and argued that the systems do not determine human development or personal characteristics. Rather, ecological systems theory describes the reciprocal process between human and environment as shaping and being shaped by each other (Buchanan, 2020). Rosa and Tudge (2013) also described that outside events can mediate a developmental process of individuals, and their systems can be impacted through these individuals' interpretation, motivation, and activeness.

Moreover, systems are interrelated. Thus, if one aspect of a system changes, it can affect the other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1976; Roegman & Kolman, 2020). For example, if a parent's work schedule changes, they may need to find different childcare where children can stay longer. In this case, the children may need to form new relationships with new teachers and peers. Through this section, general features of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as well as how each system is defined, and functions were discussed. All these systems work together to influence human development through different but connected roles. The following section will discuss how ecological systems theory has been applied to teacher preparation.

Application of the Ecological Systems Theory

The ecological systems theory has had an important impact on the field, as many studies in both human development and education have applied the initial ecological systems theory.

The majority of applications have focused on child development, placing the child in the center of the circles/systems and examining relationships within the microsystem. However, a variety of studies have focused on topics other than children's development, using the theory to study other forms of development and varying interactions. For example, studies examine how teacher preparation programs interact with upper levels of systems such as federal policy or regulations, or with subsystems such as administrators or instructors. Following are studies that are relative to early childhood teacher preparation programs and can be considered in examining interactive roles of teacher preparation programs while applying Bronfenbrenner's systems theory.

Cassidy, Vardell, and Buell (1995) put early childhood teachers in the circle of developmental systems by using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1976). Cassidy and her colleagues (1995) examined the critical barriers to teacher participation in and access to professional development systems from an early childhood classroom teacher's point of view. For example, lack of time and lack of financial resources could be barriers at the microsystem level and an imbalance between work and family duties when pursuing further education could be one of barriers at the mesosystem level (Cassidy, Vardell, & Buell, 1995). From the exo- and macrosystem levels, Cassidy and colleagues (1995) suggest that taking care of and educating young children has been undervalued in our society. While perceiving making actual "things" as productive work, caring for and educating young children have been perceived as reproductive work since industrialization (Cassidy, Vardell, & Buell, 1995). People tend to place instant and tangible outcomes above educational outcomes which need long term investment and sustained efforts. This undervaluing of early child education has impacted both the common cultural understandings as well as early childhood teachers. Accordingly, training for early childhood

teachers and improving professional abilities have been less emphasized both in our society and by early childhood teachers themselves.

Cassidy et al.'s study (1995) also pointed out that a barrier from one level of a system may transmit to the other levels of systems. For example, the barriers at the microsystem such as the low pay or lack of compensation for further education reflect the lowered value of teaching young children in our society at the macrosystem level. Nevertheless, while pointing out the fluidity and variability of the ecological model, Cassidy and her colleagues (1995) reminded early childhood teachers that they should be the center and driving force of the effort to improve the perception of the value of early childhood education and by being more active in their development.

Buchanan (2020) examined the role of university supervisors and cooperating teachers in field experiences by using ecological systems theory and institutional theory. Buchanan examined the working contexts, expected roles, and challenges of university supervisors and cooperating teachers at each system level as they support preservice teachers during field experiences. Instead of looking at the preservice teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor as triadic relationships, Buchanan (2020) interpreted them as separate dyadic relationships. Typically, preservice teachers communicate with university supervisors and cooperating teachers separately. Thus, interactions between university supervisors and cooperating teachers are likely to be a mesosystem. Buchanan also pointed out that cooperating teachers are situated in two different settings simultaneously, the K-12 system and the university. Preservice teachers also belong to the K-12 classroom during their field experience as well as their learning context, the university.

Like Buchanan (2020), Roegman and Kolman (2020) also see that cooperating teachers are situated in the context of a teacher preparation program and their current work setting simultaneously. Cooperating teachers not only teach children in the classroom, but also seek to promote the development of the preservice teachers who are placed in their classroom. When requirements, policies, and decisions are made from a teacher preparation program or the teacher's school, the ecological systems theory model explains the processes by which the changed requirements, policies, and decisions impact the cooperating teacher who is in the center of the circles (systems).

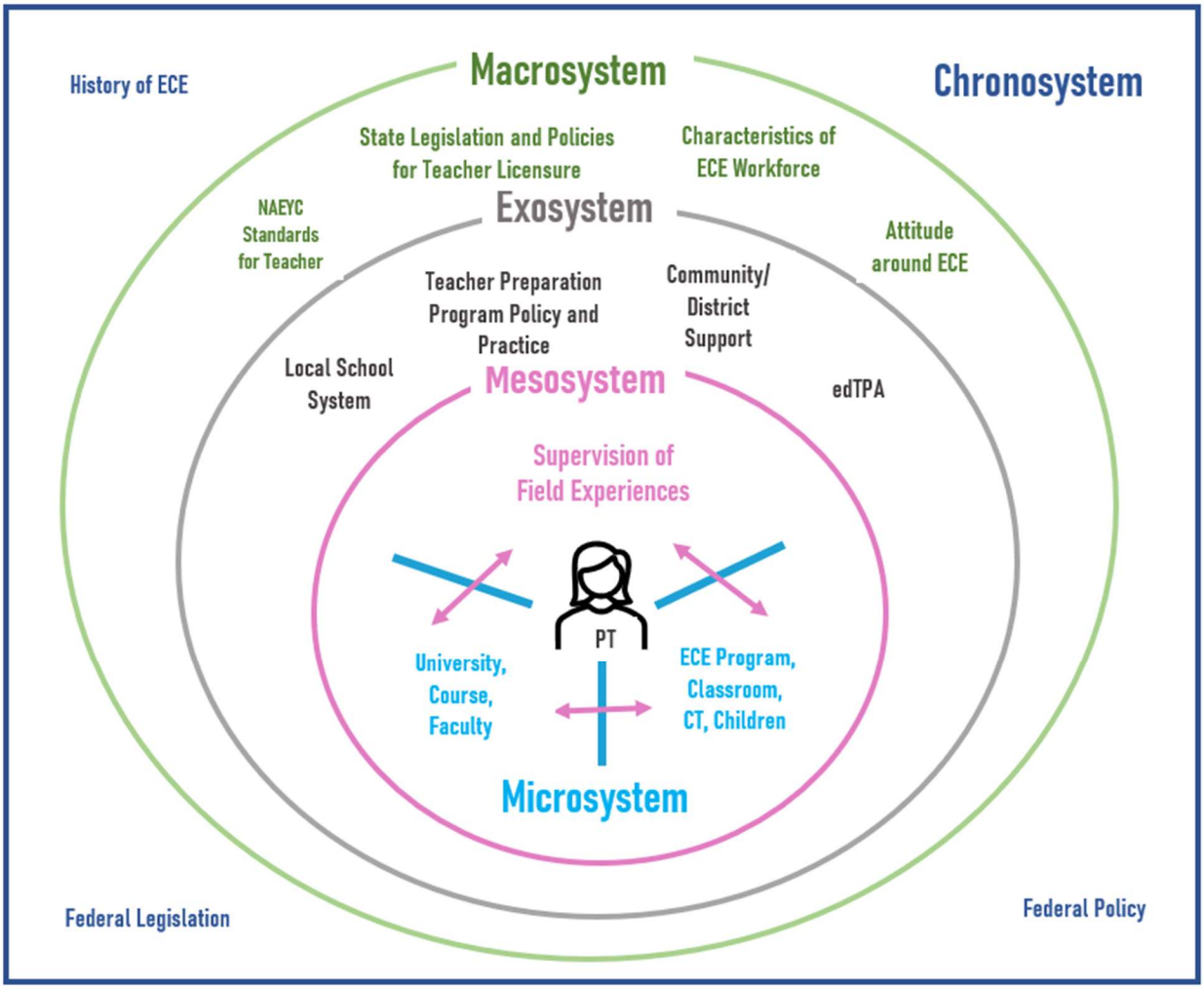
While navigating two different systems, cooperating teachers can be at the "cascading" levels within systems (e.g., affected by their schools' or teacher preparation programs', district, state, and federal policies or by the culture and norms of communities) (Roegman & Kolman, 2020). As they communicate with children, parents, colleagues, preservice teachers, administrators, and university supervisors, changes or influences are transmitted to different systems through the teachers. In these processes, cooperating teachers can experience "colliding" (e.g., conflict with their philosophy or conflict between two contexts) (Roegman & Kolman, 2020). An example of colliding can be teachers' disagreement with high accountability requirements from a new policy. Or when cooperating teachers and preservice teachers have different teaching styles or philosophies, they can conflict with each other within the same system. Lastly, Roegman and Kolman (2020) pointed out the cooperating teachers' "mediating" roles in their interactions. They can interpret new policies with their own lens and translate their interpretation to their preservice teachers through conversations. Cooperating teachers can also introduce the school context such as diversity of children and families, school climate, classroom culture, or community characteristics, and these can be the outcomes of cooperating teachers'

interpretations of their experiences and reflections. In addition, these "cascading, colliding, and mediating" interactions are dynamic, complex, and often occur simultaneously (Roegman & Kolman, 2020).

The Teacher Preparation Program Model

The teacher preparation program model that guides the current study applies Bronfenbrenner's' ecological systems theory. Figure 1 presents the teacher preparation program model. Since this model focuses on preservice teachers' development through diverse interactions during teacher preparation processes, individual preservice teachers are located in the center of the layered circles. Examples of relevant influences are provided for the different systems within the model, for the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem levels. All examples are critical to preservice teachers' experiences and development and work bidirectionally in the systems. Descriptions of examples which work in each of the systems will be described. Among diverse examples for the development of teacher preparation, content directly related to and examined for this study will be introduced.

Figure 1. The Teacher Preparation Program Model



Microsystem

In this teacher preparation program model, cooperating teachers and university supervisors are in the immediate circle (microsystem) as they continuously and directly interact with preservice teachers. Each preservice teacher's, cooperating teacher's, or university supervisor's gender, ethnicity, education level, working experiences, motivation, and/or professionalism are important factors when they interact with each other through courses and field experiences. Moreover, in the classroom, preservice teachers communicate with children so children are also within the preservice teachers' microsystem. As part of the microsystem,

characteristics of children and their families as well as features of classroom context can influence preservice teachers' development.

Though this study does not include preservice teachers' interactions with cooperating teachers or university supervisors, it includes some information about factors that can contribute to preservice teachers' interactions or experiences at the microsystem level. This study examines learning opportunities that preservice teachers can have during their practicum. However, the outcome of the learning experiences from individual preservice teachers' perspectives is not the focus of this study. Rather, this study examines types of learning opportunities and content areas that each teacher preparation program expects and designates during practicum.

To examine other examples related to the microsystem level, this study also includes information regarding the roles of cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and/or placement coordinators if they have these roles in the teacher preparation programs. Cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and/ or placement coordinators support preservice teachers' development during their practicum. They interact with each other for a certain period of time (typically, for one semester), though the interaction may or may not occur in the same settings or in person. This study includes questions regarding whether teacher preparation programs have roles such as university supervisors or placement coordinators, and if they have, what their roles are for supporting preservice teachers and their experiences during practica.

Mesosystem

In the teacher preparation program model, the interaction between the university and field placement sites is the mesosystem because they both work for the development of preservice teachers but represent different microsystems. Field placements are designed to give preservice teachers the opportunity to apply what they are learning at the university in classroom

experiences. Preservice teachers can incorporate and demonstrate their understanding and learning from their university training through observation, planning, and interactions with children in their field placement settings. Early childhood teacher preparation programs try to support field placement settings and cooperating teachers so that they are more likely to align with their goals and philosophies by providing information (i.e., guidelines), opportunities for professional development (i.e., inviting cooperating teachers to the orientation or workshop), and supervision (i.e., mentoring, training). The roles of teacher preparation programs also include recruitment of the field placement settings and cooperating teachers. They also consist of continuous communication processes within the settings that share with and/or train cooperating teachers about the program's goals and expected cooperating teachers' roles and responsibilities.

This study includes information related to practicum supervision, another aspect of a mesosystem. Supervision is an ongoing interaction that occurs between university and practicum settings for supporting preservice teachers' development while (ideally) pursuing unified philosophies and goals. This study includes information on practices related to supervision, such as who from the university is involved in supervising practicums, the cooperating teacher's roles in supervision, the modes and frequencies of communication, topics of communication between cooperating teachers and university supervisors/ placement coordinators, and tools used for evaluation.

Exosystem

Though the components of the exosystem may not have direct interaction with the preservice teacher, the exosystem reflects the cultural and political features of the macrosystem while interacting with the mesosystem. Individual teacher preparation programs do not exist on their own. State requirements for teacher licensure and accreditation requirements must be

considered as each teacher preparation program reflects its own mission, beliefs, and goals regarding quality teacher preparation. Reflecting and communicating with these cultural, political, legislative, and social perspectives and restrictions, teacher preparation programs develop their policies, criteria, and practices for specifying their goals. These policies and practices reflect the teacher preparation program's exosystem.

Moreover, the school system is also an important factor at the exosystem level. Preservice teachers' field experiences are implemented within the context of public and private schools and childcare centers. Even though preservice teachers do not necessarily communicate with the leaders of these systems during their field experiences, their experiences are influenced by them. These schools and centers belong to the local school systems, and these school systems follow and reflect the federal or state education standards.

In addition, communities and districts support teacher preparation programs both directly and indirectly. Some communities or districts support teacher preparation by being involved in the assignment of field experiences, recruitment of cooperating teachers and placement settings, or encouragement of schools and childcare centers to participate as field experience placement settings. Eventually, teachers who fulfill their degree requirements and field experiences can serve children and families in and for their communities, so they also may be actively involved with teacher preparation programs.

The exosystem also includes edTPA. edTPA (educative Teacher Performance Assessment) is a performance based national assessment for measuring preservice teachers' readiness and effectiveness in teaching. Preservice teachers who seek teaching licenses must pass edTPA in their subject area to obtain their initial teaching license certificates. Since its beginning in Fall 2013, edTPA has grown to over 954 teacher preparation programs across 41 states and the

District of Columbia in the United States (updated 2021, http://edtpa.aacte.org/state-policy). edTPA reflects national standards of teacher requirements and the characteristics of state licensure. At the same time, guidelines of edTPA are aligned with curricula of teacher preparation programs. Overall, the factors that complete the exosystem reflect the factors of the macrosystem while communicating with and guiding factors of the mesosystem.

This study asks for information about teacher preparation program characteristics, such as the department or school that they belong to, the scale of the teacher preparation program (by asking for the number of graduates), and their own criteria for field settings and cooperating teachers, that are related to the exosystem. Teacher preparation programs can specify criteria for cooperating teachers or field experience settings, and in turn, preservice teachers can have distinct field experiences that reflect their teacher preparation programs' goals and philosophies. For example, preservice teachers may not experience all the early childhood education settings, but they can experience the settings that meet the criteria that the university set. Teacher preparation programs can consider diverse factors when they select appropriate settings such as child age range, agency and philosophy of the program, or the characteristics of children and their families. This study includes questions about acceptable settings for practicum, criteria for the setting, and additional considerations when recruiting placements.

Also, the cooperating teachers that preservice teachers meet and interact with reflect the criteria in each teacher preparation program. Teacher preparation programs may not want to have cooperating teachers who do not have enough working experience or have no license if they offer a license for the graduates. This study asks about quality requirements for cooperating teachers such as minimum education level, working experience, and license types. In addition to

that, this study asks about any support for cooperating teachers, as a type of indirect assistance to support the development of preservice teachers that can be considered as part of the exosystem.

Macrosystem

Factors that are included in the macrosystem are the cultures, policies, and organizational and legislative systems around early childhood teacher preparation processes. State teacher licensure and NAEYC standards for teacher preparation are examples of organizational and legislative systems at the macrosystem level. For example, each state sets requirements for teacher preparation, such as the hours preservice teachers should complete through both courses and field experiences to qualify for a teacher license. However, there are variations in these requirements and license options across states, and these variations may yield a great range of teacher license options from the perspective of the larger American society.

Preservice teachers are not necessarily involved in the decision making surrounding early childhood education policy or efforts to improve working conditions in the early childhood education area. For example, individual preservice teachers do not decide the requirements for licensure but follow the regulation or type that the state determines. Preservice teachers are not directly influenced by state teacher licensure and NAEYC standards but through more specified criteria and regulations in exo- and meso-system level.

The macrosystem also includes the beliefs and societal ideologies that run deep regarding the value of early childhood education and the early childhood workforce. These are long-term factors that contemporary people understand and share regarding the topic of early childhood education and teacher preparation. Through repeating big and small practices, the culture of early childhood education has been evolving and solidifying the perspectives of people in our culture, such as teachers, teacher educators, parents, administrators, and policy makers.

This study includes information regarding state teacher licensure as a variable from the macrosystem. The state licensure options that are reflected in individual teacher preparation program's license options may lead to differences in curricula and field placement experiences in teacher preparation programs. To examine the variation of license options, this study asks about the range of early childhood teacher licensure options within their program if they have a state teacher license option.

Chronosystem

Lastly, there have been important historical events, federal legislation, and policies that impact state regulations, policies, and standards around early childhood education. These important changes have sometimes established supporting systems and sometimes eliminated existing systems. As examples of chronosystem, Head Start, IDEA, and NCLB will be introduced. Though these examples seem far from the preservice teachers' experiences and learning in practica, preservice teachers often have experiences in the settings and through their curricula that reflect and apply the philosophies or standards of these important legislations, acts, and policies.

For one example of a chronosystem, the Head Start program has changed the social support system for disadvantaged preschool children while changing the education and lives of children and their families through ensuring comprehensive educational opportunities. Since its beginning (1965), Head Start has served over 30 million children and their families across the country. Head Start has been one of the most successful and representative examples of ecological system models that incorporates diverse systems and services for supporting children and their low-income families. The effect of Head Start has been studied across diverse dimensions of systems such as individual and social levels. The Head Start program has

contributed to the improvement of outcomes of preschool children beyond preschool, including high school completion and health outcomes, increased earnings, employment, and family stability and decreased welfare dependency, and grade repetition, and the cost of special education and crime costs. These impacts spread in individual and societal levels and affect long term.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is another important piece of legislation that has impacted great numbers of children with disabilities and their families, as well as educational systems in the United States, since 1975. The IDEA is the nation's special education law providing rights and protections to children with disabilities (age 0-21) and to their families. Under the guidance and protection of IDEA, children with disabilities can have qualified education at no cost to families, and schools must provide them with special education and related intervention services (e.g., speech therapy, counseling) to meet their own needs. In 2017-2018, around 7 million students ages 3 to 21 received special education services under IDEA, which covers 14% of the public-school student population (National Center for Education Statistics).

Moreover, as an effect of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2002, curricula for students in public school classrooms and teacher training were intensified and unified by requiring standardized test results to prove students' outcomes. This emphasis on student achievement has cascaded down to education for young children and curricula in teacher preparation programs. These changes and expectations can impact teacher preparation processes by emphasizing standardized outcomes for children at younger ages. Early childhood teachers in the field express that they have less discretion in choosing curricula for young children and have

increased concerns about heightened expectation and focus on academic achievement during younger childhood (Haslip & Gullo, 2018).

These legislative and historical examples in chronosystem have impacted in the field of early childhood education as well as teacher preparation programs. These historical events and legislation have established new systems that support the development of children and their families and have been applied to other related systems such as early childhood teacher preparation programs. For example, many early childhood teacher preparation programs teach the philosophy and goals of Head Start program in courses, accept Head Start programs as practicum placement settings and provide a learning opportunity to preservice teachers so that they can learn the philosophy, goals, and system of Head Start program, and experience Head Start programs' distinctive contextual features. So, as Head Start programs experience changes associated with the chronosystem, higher education programs change and the experiences that their students have in their teacher preparation programs change.

Research has been used to evaluate the effects of these changes in the chronosystems and to make further decisions on these changes. However, this current study does not include variables that are related to the chronosystem due to lack of required features of and for the chronosystem, such as long-term study.

CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs and Field Experience

Teacher preparation programs provide learning experiences for preservice teachers to obtain knowledge, skills, and dispositions they can apply in their future teaching (NAEYC, 2020; Phillips, Austin, & Whitebook, 2016; Ritblatt, Garrity, Longstreth, Hokoda, & Potter, 2013; Saracho, 2013; Sumrall et al., 2017). Among various learning experiences that teacher preparation programs provide for preservice teachers, field experiences are an essential component (AACTE, 2010; Jensen, 2015; Saracho, 2013; Vartuli, Snider, & Holley, 2016).

Preservice teachers can apply the understanding and knowledge gained in the university through their field experiences. According to a policy brief from AACTE (2010) and professional standards from NAEYC (2020), integration between courses and field experiences, providing diverse and intensive field experiences and supervision, and building supportive relationships with diverse programs serving diverse learners should be the goals and features of teacher preparation programs. Through field experiences, preservice teachers increase their competence and capability to teach young children (Saracho, 2013; Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014). Especially for preservice teachers who have not worked with young children before, field experiences are an opportunity to improve their competencies and develop effective teaching strategies and have positive and responsive interactions with children (Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014).

Dunst, Hamby, Howse, Wilkie, and Annas (2020) explored the most influential experiences of preservice teachers in their preparation processes by synthesizing 118 meta-analyses studies and 12 other research studies. Since this study is a meta-analysis study of meta-analyses, findings from more than 5000 studies and more than 2.5 million participants were

included. Dunst and colleagues (2020) found that clinically rich field experiences, chances to apply their understanding to teaching, coaching from faculty and cooperating teachers, clinical supervision with constructive feedback, and diverse experiences of teaching and learning were the most effective in preservice teachers' preparation as well as for the growth of beginning teachers.

Though early childhood teacher preparation programs generally prepare field experiences and share certain practices during field experiences, such as preservice learning experiences or expected roles of cooperating teachers, there is significant diversity in students' field experiences. Because the field lacks a common definition of the term and does not have common expectations for the experiences, multiple terms are used to describe field experiences and may be referencing different types of experiences. The terms that are used throughout this section reflect the terms used by the authors of studies. Thus, diverse terms such as "field experiences", "classroom experiences", "practicum", or "student teaching" will be used to describe field experiences.

In the section above, the importance of field experiences in teacher preparation and issues related to field experiences, such as the lack of definition of the term for field experiences and diversity of field experiences, were introduced. More topics related to preparation for quality practicum experiences will be discussed in the following section.

Program Criteria to Set the Stage for Field Experiences

AACTE (2010) affirms the importance of field placements and recommends that all teacher preparation programs include a field experience for at least 450 hours over the course of a semester to better prepare teachers to lead classrooms. Teacher preparation programs use a variety of methods to prepare and ensure quality field experiences for preservice teachers

(NAEYC, 2020). First, teacher preparation programs recruit qualified placement sites and cooperating teachers. In this process, universities often set criteria or qualification requirements to ensure the quality of preservice teachers' field experiences. Ideally, as extended curriculum and practice components of the teacher preparation program, field experiences should be aligned with universities in many ways. When goals and philosophies of child development and education from universities and field experience sites are aligned, preservice teachers experience less confusion, and their preparation is more effective. In this sense, maintaining qualified placement settings and cooperating teachers is a high priority for teacher preparation programs (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009).

However, teacher preparation programs differ in the criteria used for field experiences and cooperating teachers, and there has been limited research to explore teacher preparation programs' criteria. Sumrall and colleagues (2017) examined the current practice of early childhood education teacher preparation programs in terms of preparation for student teaching. One hundred three 2- (49%) and 4-year (51%) early childhood education teacher preparation programs across 7 states participated in this study. Both 2- and 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs reported requirements and qualifications their program enacted to ensure and improve preservice teachers' learning (Sumrall et al., 2017). Most of the programs had more than one requirement for selecting placement settings such as inclusive setting or QRIS rating, and more than one requirement for the cooperating teacher, such as length of working experiences, completed degree, or license (Sumrall et al., 2017).

In terms of placements, both 2- and 4-year teacher preparation programs indicated that they considered the type of program and age of children enrolled as criteria more than accreditation and QRIS ratings of program as required criteria (Sumrall et al., 2017). More 4-

year programs considered inclusiveness and location of the program than 2-year programs, while more 2-year programs considered QRIS rating of the program than 4-year programs. In terms of placement site characteristics, both 2- and 4-year institutions selected public school pre-kindergarten and Head Start more than family childcare home or early intervention programs. Two-year programs selected Head Start, community-based childcare, and family childcare home more than 4-year programs as their placement sites, and 4-year programs selected public school kindergarten more than 2-year programs (Sumrall et al., 2017).

Regarding criteria for cooperating teachers, most 4-year institutions required a bachelor's degree (82%) and most 2-year institutions required an associate degree (82%). Ninety six percent of 4-year programs required a teaching license while only 27% of 2-year programs required a teaching license for cooperating teachers' role (Sumrall et al., 2017). More 4-year programs considered years of experience as criteria for cooperating teachers than 2-year programs (88% vs. 61%) (Sumrall et al., 2017).

Except for this one study, there has been little research regarding the topic of field experiences in early childhood education, though the variations by program or state are huge when compared to elementary education programs or middle school education programs (NAEYC, 2020; Phillips, Austine, & Whitebook, 2016). Though it would not be possible to examine the rationale behind each program's criteria, there is a need to explore the criteria, variation in the criteria, and associations between criteria and practices. Research on criteria for field placements can help the field better understand the reality of current practicum practices of early childhood teacher preparation programs and better prepare the future field experiences. This current study will provide updated and more accurate findings in terms of practicum experiences by including more 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs across a

variety of states. Moreover, this study will support teacher preparation programs by providing information to promote a better understanding of the complexity of early childhood education preparation and providing ideas for how to improve practicum experiences.

In addition to the criteria for placement setting and cooperating teachers, teacher preparation programs provide diverse experiences in the field setting. Preservice teachers typically learn during their practicum by observing experienced teachers and interacting with children who are in diverse developmental stages and have individual differences (NAEYC, 2020). Preservice teachers also practice teaching by starting with interactions with a single child and then expanding to group meetings, and by planning and applying diverse course content such as language, mathematics, or social-emotional areas through their practicum experiences.

Limited research has been conducted on the intensity and diversity of practicum experiences, particularly in early childhood teacher preparation programs. Though the target was not early childhood education but K-12, previous research shows that there is great variation in hours of practicum and diversity in practicum experiences depending on states and programs (Quality counts, 2010). Compared with K-12, field placements in early childhood teacher preparation programs are likely to be even more complicated because in early childhood preservice teachers must learn to teach content from a variety of disciplines. For example, the roles and expectations of teachers in early childhood education cover diverse learning areas such as literacy, mathematics, science, or outdoor activities. Not only is the coverage of learning content diverse, the application also should be developmentally appropriate and individualized while reflecting each child's interests and needs. The involvement of families and communities can be more direct, active, and influential than children in older age range groups. These unique features of early childhood education should be reflected in preservice teachers' preparation

(Buettner, Hur, Jeon & Andrews, 2016); however, the features and variations of preservice teachers' experiences during practicum have not been studied.

Lastly, limited research is available on supervision of early childhood preservice teachers' practicum experiences. Typically, early childhood teacher preparation programs have different combinations of faculty and are housed in a variety of colleges or departments (Early & Winton, 2001; Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009; Sumrall et al., 2017). These different combinations and contextual differences may contribute to a unique system of supervision. In addition, in many cases, early childhood teacher preparation programs are quite small. According to Early and Winton (2001), on average, early childhood programs have 3.4 full-time faculty members with varying educational degrees (Early & Winton, 2001). Among the programs studied, 6.7% reported that they have none and 26.7% programs have only one full-time faculty. Though part-time faculty still can greatly contribute and demonstrate their dedication to preservice teachers' learning and growth, there can be certain limitations in their roles and responsibilities with limited status and authority. According to Buchanan (2020) and Zeichner (2010), the role of supervision of field experience often falls into graduate students or part-time instructors who cannot take their responsibilities long term, and because of their short-term dedication in their role, it is so hard to seek improvement of field experience quality.

Research on supervision should be multidimensional, not only focusing on roles and responsibilities of supervisors in the field experience but also on tools used in supervision. For optimal supervision, AACTE (2010) recommends using diverse assessment tools to understand preservice teachers' capabilities and preparedness. According to La Paro et al.'s (2014) study, among 103 2- and 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs, the majority of the participating programs (75%) utilized non-published tools when evaluating student teaching,

suggesting that the tools might have reliability and validation issues. Even for the other 25% of institutions who use published tools, there were great variations in the types of tools, depending on child age levels (La Paro et al., 2014). This current study will explore early childhood 4-year institutions' supervision, in terms of the frequency of on-site supervision visits, method of supervision, tools for evaluation, and the roles and responsibilities of cooperating teachers in supervising preservice teachers during their practicum experiences.

Cooperating Teachers

Cooperating teachers are defined as classroom teachers who work with preservice teachers in their classroom as part of field-based training and play the most influential role in preservice teachers' learning (Baum & Korth, 2013; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020). AACTE (2010) proposes that cooperating teachers should be selected not only for their extensive teaching experiences but also for their deep expertise in child development, educational theories, and teaching and learning. Cooperating teachers also should be trained as mentors who fully understand the philosophies and goals of their roles and responsibilities, and how to support the growth of preservice teachers (AACTE, 2010). These qualifications and training are emphasized because the role of cooperating teachers is important for preservice teachers' development during their field-based experiences (Stanulis et al., 2019; Sumrall et al., 2017; Vartuli, Snider, & Holley, 2016; Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014).

By nature, most preservice teachers feel great pressure and are anxious as the field placement is a new environment where they must form new relationships with the cooperating teacher and children, and they must take on new responsibilities and meet new expectations (Caires & Almeida, 2007; Simons, Baeten, & Vanhees, 2020; Wexler, 2020; Yoon & Larkin, 2018). In this important process, the cooperating teacher plays many roles that are important for

the preservice teachers' success. Preservice teachers indicate that the success of field experience depends on the quality of cooperating teachers (Akyar, 2020; Anderson, 2007; Baum & Korth 2013; Danyluk, Burns, Crawford, & Hill, 2020; O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020; Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014; Yoon & Larkin, 2018).

Cooperating teachers perform various roles in preservice teachers' authentic experiences (Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Roegman & Kolman, 2020). First of all, cooperating teachers are the hosts and guides in their schools and classrooms (Anderson, 2007; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Roegman & Kolman, 2020). They introduce preservice teachers to the physical and social atmosphere of the school. Preservice teachers are able to understand or experience as much as cooperating teachers introduce and allow, especially in the beginning of the placement. Moreover, cooperating teachers play a significant role in determining how preservice teachers set the tone in their practicum experiences. For example, if cooperating teachers are open and approachable, preservice teachers can be more honest and ask any questions or share their concerns with them. On the other hand, if cooperating teachers are more conservative and have a more perfunctory style, preservice teachers may be withdrawn and wary during their practicum experiences.

Second, cooperating teachers are role models in teaching, interacting with children and families, organizing the schedule, planning and implementing activities, and managing the classroom (Baum & Korth, 2013; Buchanan, 2020; Ellis, Alonzo, & Nguyen, 2020; O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007; Roegman & Kolman, 2020). Generally, early childhood teachers are flexible and responsive in teaching young children. This is largely due to early childhood education pursuing developmentally appropriate and responsive teaching while reflecting a child's individual differences and needs. In some sense, the ways in which cooperating teachers'

respond to children and the teaching strategies they use in the classroom can become a new learning for preservice teachers (Hart, 2020; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020). Butler and Cuenca (2012) referred to this role as socializing agents. Preservice teachers are naturally exposed to and often acquire diverse teaching strategies from cooperating teachers through observation and spending time with them in the classroom.

Third, cooperating teachers supervise preservice teachers (Hobbs & Stovall, 2015; O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007). By observing preservice teachers' interactions with children, cooperating teachers offer strategies for improvement, so that preservice teachers can refine their teaching (Butler & Cuenca, 2012). Cooperating teachers provide pedagogical, technical, and organizational advice to preservice teachers, and their advice is expected to assist preservice teachers to grow and be competent (Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Dunst, Hamby, Howse, Wilkie, & Annas, 2020; O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007; Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014).

Ellis, Alonzo, and Nguyen (2020) point out that there has been a conceptual change in the relationships between preservice teachers and cooperating teachers from a top-down approach with one-way guidance to one that is collaborative, collegial, and includes a reciprocal exchange of ideas. Though there have been conceptual changes in the position and expectations of cooperating teachers, they are still considered a stimulus for the growth of preservice teachers by providing opportunities for reflection, exchange of ideas, and encouragement.

A qualitative study of O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, and House (2007) supports the Ellis et al. 's (2020) claim of conceptual change in cooperating teachers' roles. O'Brian and colleagues (2007) examined what works for the growth of preservice teachers in the relationships with cooperating teachers by observing and interviewing nine pairs of preservice teachers and cooperating teachers over one semester. Preservice teachers agreed that open, frequent, honest, and positive

communications with cooperating teachers were the keys to their growth during their first field experiences (O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007).

Sumrall and colleagues (2017) examined the roles of cooperating teachers in terms of supervision during student teaching. This study is interesting in that it tried to take a look at the content of supervision as well as the scope of cooperating teachers' roles in their supervision. Most 2- and 4-year programs reported that cooperating teachers provided informal feedback to preservice teachers in the classroom, completed published or program developed assessment tools, and had meetings with preservice teachers. Programs also indicated that cooperating teachers met with preservice teachers and their university supervisors (Sumrall et al., 2017).

In the supervising process, cooperating teachers' perspectives and philosophy on teaching can be incorporated into their interactions and feedback (Ellis, Alonzo, & Nguyen, 2020; Roegman & Kolman, 2020; Stanulis et al., 2019; Yoon & Larkin, 2018). The perspectives and philosophies of cooperating teachers may be incongruent with the learning of preservice teachers and the philosophies of universities if training or goal-sharing was not implemented. If this happens, preservice teachers may become confused and need some support in reconciling the differences. Checking if the philosophies and perspectives of cooperating teachers align with teacher preparation programs is an important step, however existing studies have less often explored this process.

One method of assuring shared goals between the teacher preparation program and cooperating teachers would be to provide training for cooperating teachers. According to Baum and Korth (2013) study, some teacher preparation programs use training as a goal-sharing strategy but make exceptions for the graduates of their teacher preparation programs, based on the assumption that they already share the goals and philosophies. Nevertheless, little is known

about how early childhood teacher preparation programs prepare cooperating teachers as mentors (Butler & Cuenca, 2012). Cooperating teachers' quality, their expected roles, and support for their roles vary depending on their state's licensing requirements, the goals, and philosophies of their teacher preparation program, and the cooperating teachers' working contexts (Roegman & Kolman, 2020). Preservice teachers may meet cooperating teachers who have not had the same experience as them. For example, they can meet cooperating teachers who do not have licensure though they pursue the licensure process. They can meet cooperating teachers who have less education. These factors, such as teaching licensure or education level may promote or limit their effectiveness in working as cooperating teachers.

Challenges Cooperating Teachers Experience in their Roles

The extent to which early childhood teacher preparation programs support cooperating teachers through training or mentoring has rarely been examined (Baum & Korth, 2013; Hobbs & Stovall, 2015). This support is important because research suggests that cooperating teachers face several challenges as they support preservice teachers. Greater understanding of the challenges that cooperating teachers experience in their roles will help teacher preparation programs better understand the current practicum practices and seek ways to improve quality. Following are the findings related to cooperating teachers' roles and challenges they may face in supporting preservice teachers. Some of the issues are related to and measured for this current study.

Lack of Training. Cooperating teachers' roles and responsibilities are diverse and profound. Without training it would be hard for cooperating teachers to understand the goals, philosophies, and expectations that the early childhood teacher preparation programs pursue (Baum & Korth, 2013; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Hobbs & Stovall, 2015; Roegman & Kolman,

2020). Cooperating teachers expect to take varying roles in supporting preservice teachers, however, many of them are unclear about their roles and are confused about what qualities are expected of them (Baum & Korth, 2013; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Ellis, Alonzo, & Nguyen, 2020; Hart, 2020). Due to this ambiguity and confusion, many cooperating teachers report that they are not prepared to take on the rigorous and complex demands of mentoring preservice teachers (Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Clarke & Mena, 2020; Hobbs & Stovall, 2015; Yoon & Larkin, 2018).

Generally, cooperating teachers are not included in any decision-making process, even though they are involved in preservice teachers' supervision or evaluation, and they report that often they do not know the goals and expectations of the field experience (Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Nickens et al., 2018; Wexler, 2020). Many teacher preparation programs neither require nor provide any special training for the role of cooperating teachers (Baum & Korth, 2013; Lawley, Moore, & Smajic, 2014). The lack of training and clarity of roles has a lasting impact on teacher preparation programs, as preserve teachers who are supervised by cooperating teachers with limited understanding of their roles may have less effective field placement experiences (Baum & King, 2006; Beers, 2018; Clarke & Mena, 2020; Hart, 2020).

Baum and Korth (2013) examined teacher preparation programs' current efforts, beliefs, and difficulties related to supporting cooperating teachers and received responses from 62 associate, bachelor, and master's degree programs offering early childhood education training. According to their findings, only 17 programs among 60 indicated that their programs have some form of professional development opportunities for cooperating teachers, though 95% of them acknowledged the importance of training for cooperating teachers (Baum & Korth, 2013).

Years of teaching experience, prior experience as a cooperating teacher, and self-identification as a high-quality early childhood teacher were used by teacher preparation programs as important factors to determine if teachers need to have additional professional development as they are taking on cooperating teachers' roles (Baum and Korth, 2013). This finding implies that professional development for the preparation of cooperating teachers relies heavily on limited information about the teacher's background or teachers' personal judgements rather than objective standards.

Wexler (2020) examined how cooperating teachers' mentoring influences preservice teachers' development and their continuing teaching by following two preservice teachers for 2 years. Cooperating teachers had mentor training and used the strategies they learned when they interacted with their preservice teachers. Mentoring contents included watching mentoring videos (representation), practicing analysis of each mentoring moment (decomposition), applying the mentoring strategy in their contexts (approximation), and rehearsal. These clear expectations for their roles and practices helped cooperating teachers better fulfill their roles and effectively support preservice teachers. For example, cooperating teachers helped preservice teachers by explaining their actions, decisions (what they were doing), and their reasoning (why they were doing it), so preservice teachers could better understand the context and decision-making process. Preservice teachers then used the same strategies during both field experiences and when they became classroom teachers (novice teacher). Consequently, these strategies supported their professional growth and prevented mistakes as less experienced teachers.

Considering these findings, it is important to understand how early childhood teacher preparation programs provide support such as training for cooperating teachers. For instance, there is a need to understand if the support is on-going, bidirectional, and/or mandatory or

optional from a broader and updated perspective. This information can eventually lead to a better understanding and basis for improvement for supporting cooperating teachers' roles.

Lack of Communication. Due to the lack of understanding of cooperating teachers' roles and lack of communication with the university, cooperating teachers and preservice teachers can experience conflicts (Danyluk, Burns, Crawford, & Hill, 2020; Hart, 2020; Yoon & Larkin, 2018). In this process, preservice teachers are confused and disappointed by observing and experiencing the gap between theory and reality and the differences of philosophy they have learned from the university (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020). However, from cooperating teachers' perspectives, because they do not have clear guidance about their roles and responsibilities, they feel unsupported and may not perceive or understand preservice teachers' struggles (Hobbs & Stovall, 2015). In fact, cooperating teachers tread the tricky path between the school system (early childhood education program) where they work and the university they serve (Roegman & Kolman, 2020; Zeichner, 2010).

Research indicates that most cooperating teachers have neither professional training for supervision and mentoring nor a clear sense of expectations regarding their roles and responsibilities (Buchanan, 2020; Sumrall et al., 2017; Zeichner, 2010). Teacher preparation programs reported that they provided information such as program policies, basic requirements for hosting a preservice teacher, course syllabi, or evaluation forms as tools for supporting cooperating teachers (Baum & Korth, 2013). These are great resources for cooperating teachers to understand general information, however, they are one-way and unilateral notices and deliver only the university's information or needs (Zeichner, 2010). They are not a foundation for on-going and bidirectional communication.

Lack of communication with cooperating teachers limits opportunities to listen to their experiences or difficulties and opportunities to monitor and improve the quality of field experiences. Five and colleagues (2016) examined teacher preparation programs' communication practices with cooperating teachers during field experiences. Among 18 teacher preparation programs, only 3 programs asked for cooperating teachers' thoughts on feedback for student teaching (Five et al., 2016).

In her qualitative meta-synthesis study, reviewing literature related to preservice teachers' relationships with cooperating teachers and university supervisors during field experiences that had been published between 2002 and 2017, Hart (2020) found undefined and unarticulated roles and responsibilities of cooperating teachers and university supervisors. This made the triad relationships (preservice teachers-cooperating teacher-university supervisor) complicated because each individual interpreted the others' roles in their own way and might bring conflict and tensions in the relationships.

While pointing out the problems of the traditional field experience and hierarchical partnerships between university and field experience programs, Nickens et al. (2018) explained the existing power imbalance between them. Generally, universities have dictated most of the final decisions regarding preservice teachers' placements and assessments. Hence, the field experience program and cooperating teachers have been expected to serve preservice teachers as the university requested. Nickens et al. (2018) also pointed out other challenges, such as a high cooperating teacher to preservice teacher ratio and lack of diverse preservice teachers' field experiences. Preservice teachers tended to be reluctant to accept placements that are not familiar to them or hard-to-staff schools, and universities placed preservice teachers by preservice teachers' own decisions. To address challenges, improve the imbalance of power between

university and field experience programs, and encourage preservice teachers' involvement in the community, Nickens et al. (2018) proposed a "third place." A third place is where new ideas can be exchanged, tested, and applied without hierarchy while including all levels of participants such as preservice teachers, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors, and even district leadership (Nickens et al., 2018). By incorporating community and preservice teachers in the placement process, this initiative helped preservice teachers be motivated in their field experiences and contributed to increased partnership with community schools, and eventually helped preservice teachers feel more satisfied with their experiences in diverse school contexts before they graduate.

Power Imbalance. Another important issue to be considered is the power imbalance between cooperating teachers and preservice teachers (Anderson, 2007; Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020; Hart, 2020; Winter, Bressman, & Efron, 2019; Yoon & Larkin, 2018). Anderson (2007) found that among 56 preservice teachers, most of them acknowledged the powerful influence of cooperating teachers in their student teaching experiences. Interestingly, only one preservice teacher mentioned the influence of a university supervisor. Cooperating teachers demonstrated their power by interjecting and correcting preservice teachers' behaviors during their teaching (Anderson, 2007). This interfering behavior showed cooperating teachers' authority and power in front of students and caused hierarchical relationships between cooperating teachers and preservice teachers. Preservice teachers seek knowledge and learning through field experiences and from cooperating teachers. However, this does not mean that preservice teachers always have less knowledge and learning, though they may have less understanding about the children and the classroom context because of their inexperience (Butler & Cuenca, 2012).

According to Yoon and Larkin's (2018) case study, when preservice teachers struggled with conflicts with their cooperating teachers due to the incongruity of cognitive, pedagogical, ideological, or personal perspectives. However, most preservice teachers did not challenge the practice of the school or cooperating teachers but relied on university supervisors for emotional support to alleviate their conflict or difficulties with cooperating teachers. Preservice teachers chose the alternative way while accepting the hierarchy with their cooperating teachers and burying their difficulties and distress (Yoon & Larkin, 2018).

Some researchers argue that cooperating teachers' involvement in evaluation is one of the reasons for the power imbalance between cooperating teachers and preservice teachers. Orland-Barak and Wang (2020) argue that responsibility for evaluation is in conflict with a mentoring role. According to these authors, when cooperating teachers are supposed to evaluate preservice teachers' performance, it is hard for cooperating teachers to support them emotionally and at the same time to evaluate them objectively (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020). However, university supervisors generally both evaluate and provide emotional support to preservice teachers as well. Therefore, cooperating teachers' involvement in evaluation should not be avoided but rather discussed and addressed. Anderson's (2007) qualitative study looks at cooperating teachers' confused feelings about evaluation from a different angle. In this study, one cooperating teacher questioned whether her preservice teacher's improvement was authentic. The cooperating teacher doubted preservice teachers still did their best without cooperating teachers' evaluation (Anderson, 2007).

Supervision of Practicum Experiences

Supervision is important for preservice teachers' learning and development. Supervision can be done in any context or situation, for the development of both inservice teachers and

preservice teachers. However, especially during practicum, while preservice teachers are in the classroom and are applying their understanding to their teaching, the effect of supervision can be particularly important because it is situated and direct learning (NAEYC, 2020). Moreover, observation and supervision from experts such as university supervisors or experienced cooperating teachers are valuable opportunities to promote the growth of preservice teachers (Butler & Cuenca, 2012).

One goal of supervision, in general, is to provide feedback and mentoring to improve the quality of teaching and ultimately promote the development of children (Mette et al., 2017). Supervision helps all teachers find their strengths and weaknesses, provides ideas to address their weaknesses, and helps them improve their teaching. Supervision should be an ongoing support for teachers at all levels to promote professional growth (Mette et al., 2017). Teachers can think about their own teaching goals, philosophies, and strategies, compare them to others, and enhance their professionalism through supervision.

From the perspectives of preservice teachers, supervision provides the opportunity to develop their professionalism. From the teacher preparation program perspective, supervision is the chance to monitor and improve preservice teachers' teaching quality (Mette et al., 2017). Early childhood teacher preparation programs can better understand preservice teachers' field experience in the practicum and find better ways to support preservice teachers through their supervision of the practicum. It is widely understood that university supervisors or course instructors visit and observe preservice teachers during their practicum and provide helpful feedback for them. However, practicum supervision has rarely been examined through research, thus there is limited understanding of how supervision works in early childhood education. Examining the frequency and mode of supervision, who is involved, what their roles are, what

tools are used, and the roles of cooperating teachers would be important to understand supervision processes and to promote further quality improvement.

Latiana, Samsudi, Sugiyo, and Slameto (2018) sought to improve early childhood supervision quality by analyzing the current model of supervision used in their institution in Indonesia and envisioning a developmental model of supervision. Supervisors, principals, and teachers participated in this study by providing their thoughts on their current model and suggestions for improvement through individual interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions. In their findings, the authors pointed out that the fragmented, unreciprocated, and one-off supervision process was not helpful for maintaining and improving quality. In a proposed collaborative supervision model, Latiana et al. (2018) emphasized that all involved individuals, such as mentor, mentee, and supervisor, should have equal opportunity to raise issues and suggest new ideas in a democratic and cooperative environment.

Very little research exists to examine current supervision practices in early childhood teacher education. There are limited studies that focus on practicum experiences and few studies that look at supervision of field experiences generally. La Paro and colleagues (2014) examined student teaching supervision and evaluation processes of 128 2- and 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs. Respondents indicated that language and literacy were the primary content area of supervision feedback during student teaching. In terms of feedback on teaching strategy, both 2- and 4-year institutions reported that they also frequently provide feedback regarding child development, adult-child interactions, and planning, but they indicated providing feedback least often on behavior management, environmental set-up, routines, and inclusion. Within 4-year institutions, planning was the most frequently cited topic for supervision feedback. Both types of programs indicated that feedback to preservice teachers on inclusion of children

with disabilities was the least emphasized area of supervision. Moreover, respondents indicated their program infrequently provided supervision regarding the topic of children of color, second language learners, or immigrants. This finding demonstrates that current early childhood teacher preparation programs do not do enough to reflect the demographic and contextual change and needs to embrace inclusion and diversity.

Understanding what teacher preparation programs focus on for preservice teachers' supervision during field experience is important because it allows teacher preparation programs to examine and monitor if they are on the right track while aligning with national standards and reflecting social contexts and needs.

Taken together, research suggests that supervision during field experiences places less emphasis on social-emotional development and behavior guidance than other areas such as child development or planning (La Paro et al., 2014), though the social-emotional development is the area both inservice and preservice teachers cite as a topic about which they would like to learn more (Hemmeter, Santos, & Ostrosky, 2008). Therefore, it would be meaningful to examine what content areas 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs include during preservice teachers' practicum supervision because that can indicate their content priorities in preparing their future teachers.

Present Study

Though practicum experiences are one of the most crucial aspects of teacher preparation programs (Saracho, 2013; Zeichner, 2010), early childhood teacher preparation programs do not have shared criteria or standards for classroom settings or cooperating teacher quality, types of student experiences, quality of supervision, and expectations for the roles and responsibilities of each individual who is involved in practicum experiences. Moreover, practicum experiences are

inconsistent and notably diverse in the United States, and this variation in field experiences has rarely been studied at a national level. Research is needed to understand these diverse characteristics and features of practicum experiences to help early childhood teacher preparation programs define and implement their practicum experiences. This exploratory study will describe practicum experiences in 4-year early childhood teacher preparat ion programs across multiple states in the U.S. To achieve this goal, the following research questions will be addressed.

1. What criteria do early childhood teacher preparation programs have for practicum experiences?
    1. What are the required and additional criteria for placements?
    2. What are the number and types of settings for practicum experiences?
    3. What is the intensity (number and times/ hours) of practicum experiences?
2. What learning experiences do programs provide in the practicum experiences?
3. For a typical practicum, what qualifications do programs require for cooperating teachers?
4. What support do programs provide for cooperating teachers?
5. What supervision do programs use for practicum experiences?

CHAPTER IV: METHOD

Sampling Procedure

The potential sample of programs for the current study was identified through a cross reference between the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) from the National Center for Educational Statistics and the early childhood higher education directory of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). As a principal agency of the U.S. Federal Statistical System, NCES collects, analyzes, and provides data related education in the U.S. other nations. IPEDS provides demographic and useful information about all higher education institutions. By selecting the categories of "Early Childhood Education and Teaching" and/or "Kindergarten/Preschool Education and Teaching", the eligible institution list was created from IPEDS. In addition, NAEYC higher education directory provides information of Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs by the degree offered and by the regions. The primary investigator of this study cross-referenced the two lists and included every institution listed on either list.

With the information about 4-year Early Childhood Education Teacher Preparation Programs from IPEDS and NAEYC, the official website of each institution was reviewed to determine if the institution should be included in the sample. The criteria for inclusion in the current study were that the program: 1) offered a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a program which at the completion graduates are eligible to apply for licensure to teach young children (0-8 years old) or 2) offered a bachelor's degree with a broader focus on children development and included preparation for teaching young children.

According to the NAEYC standards (2020), early childhood is defined as birth to year 8. However, the scope of early childhood education in teacher preparation programs can vary by

the age groups included in state licensures. Within the initial recruitment list, there were a large number of elementary teacher preparation programs that focus on school-aged children only. Programs identified as only elementary education teacher preparation programs were excluded. Two-year programs were also excluded for the following reasons: 1. The sample size for the study is more manageable, 2. Most of the literature reviewed is from 4-year institutions, and 3. Expectation that 2-year programs might have limited capacity respond to the survey (according to the literature).

After the inclusion and exclusion review process, institution websites were checked to verify program features and a sample of 695 4-year institutions that offer early childhood education-related bachelor's degrees was identified. The primary investigator searched the internet to confirm the primary contact persons for early childhood at each institution. Among 695 institutions, 77 teacher preparation programs were excluded from this current study due to the following reasons: 17 institutions did not provide any information and any email addresses related to the program in a public source (online search) and 60 institutions were not eligible to participate in the current study due to diverse reasons (e.g., the institution no longer had an early childhood program, university was closed, early childhood degree offered only at master's level). The information (reasons) to exclude a program were collected from response emails to the initial inquiry regarding participation in the study. The faculty respondents informed the primary investigator that their institutions had made these changes in their program.

After eliminating the potential programs described above, 618 institutions were included on the final list for survey distribution. Because the official websites do not often include information about the responsibilities each faculty member has, it was decided to collect the email addresses of department chairs or early childhood program directors and add wording to

the survey to indicate that they should share the survey with the person most appropriate/knowledgeable in their program. Therefore, the survey was emailed to department chairs or program directors identified through institution website searches first, and they were invited to forward the survey to another person. Using this approach, 227 4-year early childhood education teacher preparation programs responded to the survey. Among these participants, 214 institutions completed the full survey, and 13 institutions provided partially completed surveys that were included in data analyses when possible. Programs in 48 states participated.

Measure

The survey in the current study was developed using the foundation of Sumrall et al.'s study (2017) and Hyson et al.'s study (2009). Sumrall et al.'s (2017) focused on student teaching requirements for placement sites and cooperating teachers, types of experiences, and assignments. The Hyson et al.'s (2009) study survey was developed by the NAEYC research team and included questions related to sources of guidance for program improvement, program's priorities for enhancing students' competence, and programs' support and needs. Both studies were large scale surveys including both 2- and 4- year early childhood education institutions and had sample sizes of more than one hundred institutions (103 institutions for Sumrall et al. study and 231 institutions for Hyson et al. study each).

Because Sumrall et al.'s (2017) study was focused on student teaching, items were revised to validate the questions about practicum placements with permission from the authors. Survey items and available options were added, deleted, and modified to examine practicum practice. The last section of the survey was developed based on Hyson et al.'s (2009) study findings. This data collected from the last section was not used for the current study.

A pilot survey was distributed to three faculty members working in the early childhood education field in three different institutions in three different states. Based on their feedback, the survey was further revised. Examples of feedback included suggestions for the flow of the questionnaire (including skip patterns for the programs that are not eligible or do not have related practices, adding open-ended text boxes asking for further ideas), the contents of questions and potential responses (such as adding response options to certain questions), and the need for revisions in the description of questions (seeking clarity and reducing any confusion). After reflecting the feedback, the survey was further revised and finalized for distribution to the full sample.

The final survey includes questions across five areas related to practicum (classroom-based experiences prior to student teaching), including questions regarding the general institution and program information. The areas of questions included on the survey are: 1. General information about respondents and institutions; 2. Practicum Settings; 3. Practicum Supervision; and 4. Students' Learning Opportunities through Practica; and 5. Improvement of practicum experiences.

General information about respondents and institutions includes questions about the participants and their institutions, states where the institutions are located, types of licensure options the program provides, and the size of the program (i.e., the number of graduates in the previous academic year (2018-2019)). **Practicum Settings** includes questions to determine if programs have roles such as a Placement Coordinator and/or a University Supervisor in their program and, if they have these roles, what are the roles and responsibilities when interacting with Cooperating Teachers or supporting students' practicum experience, what types of practicum settings they recruit, any criteria or considerations for practicum settings and

Cooperating Teachers, the number of practica and how many total hours are required, and any departmental support for Cooperating Teachers.

Practicum Supervision includes who is involved in the supervision of practicum, Cooperating Teachers' role in supervision, number of on-site supervision visits if programs conduct on-site supervision visits, the method of supervision, number/mode/topic of interactions between program (University Supervisors and/or Placement Coordinators) and practicum sites (Cooperating Teachers), and types of tools used when evaluating practicum students during practica. **Students' Learning Opportunities through Practica** includes types of learning opportunities that teacher preparation programs offer through practicum, such as observation, planning and implementing activities, and designated practica experiences related to specific content areas. Lastly, **Improvement of practicum experiences** examines teacher preparation programs' thoughts on improving practicum experiences in terms of supporting Cooperating Teachers and their programs through rank ordered questions.

Regarding the terms used in the survey, this survey introduces terms and provides the definitions of the terms for respondents to better understand the meaning used in the study. The following terms were defined for respondents: **Cooperating Teacher**: The Cooperating Teacher is typically considered the lead teacher in the classroom in which students are completing their practicum hours. The Cooperating Teacher is the classroom teacher of record who provides guidance and supervision to students in their classroom during the students' field experiences in schools. This teacher could also be called supervising teacher, clinical educator/ supervisor, mentor teacher, intern supervisor, or On-Site Teacher Educator (OSTE). **Practicum Experience:** Practicum experiences are considered classroom-based experiences (field experiences or clinical experiences) prior to student teaching that allow students to practice teaching or apply

knowledge and skills in an early childhood classroom. Classroom-based experiences that are only observation experiences or a part of student teaching should not be considered in the responses for this survey. **Placement Coordinator:** The Placement Coordinator is the person who oversees practica across the courses in a program, department, unit, or licensure. The Placement Coordinator may be or may not be in the department. **University Supervisor:** The University Supervisor is the person who directly supervises the practicum experiences. The University Supervisor could be a course instructor depending on responsibilities and contexts, a team leader who observes and supervises practicum students, or another individual contracts to supervise students in their classroom-based experiences.

The survey consists of a maximum of 50 questions that took participants approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. Among the five areas, this study will focus on only findings related to the previously provided research questions.

The majority of the questions in the survey offer a list of probable responses, and respondents can select the option/options that best describes their practices. When applicable, respondents can select multiple responses. This survey also includes options for "other" and provides a space for describing their "other" option, in case there is not an option that accurately describes their program practice.

There are skip patterns in this survey. For example, there is a question asking if the program has roles such as a Placement Coordinator or a University Supervisor. The questions related to these roles are designed to be asked to the programs who answered that they have this (these) role(s). Thus, questions about a requirement for communication, frequency, mode, and topic of communication between this (these) role(s) and Cooperating Teachers are designed to be skipped by the programs who do not have this (these) role(s). There were no forced response

questions, so respondents were free to respond to only questions that were applicable to their programs.

Data Collection

After IRB approval, the survey was distributed to programs electronically from February 2020 through July 2020 using Qualtrics survey software. From mid-March to mid-April, the survey distribution was paused due to sample institutions' reorganization of their curriculum and migration from face-to-face learning to online learning due to the COVID-19. When the survey distribution was resumed, the request of reflecting "typical practicum" (instead of the COVID context) to answer the survey was added to the recruitment letter.

The first recruitment letter was sent to the department or program chair, director, field placement supervisor, placement coordinator, or program coordinator. via the email addresses that were found through their university or department websites. In the recruitment letter, the purpose of this study was described with a brief description of the survey contents, and the Qualtrics link was included. The email also requested that the recipient forward the email to the person most knowledgeable about the practicum supervision in their program if they were not the best person to complete the survey. They were asked to copy the primary investigator on the email if they forwarded the email, so the investigator could follow up directly with the person to whom the survey was forwarded. A second reminder email was sent when there was no response for more than two weeks after the first recruitment email. Third and fourth reminder emails were sent when there were no responses for a week after the previous reminder email.

For the programs who did not respond to the initial email and reminders, a second recruitment email was sent to a different person in the same department or program. They were identified through the department/ program website and were department or program chair,

director, field placement supervisor, placement coordinator, or program coordinator. A second follow-up reminder email was sent when there were no responses for more than two weeks after the second round of recruitment emails. Third and fourth reminder emails were sent when there were no responses for a week after the previous reminder email.

Data Analyses

Preparation for Data Analysis

The survey for this current study includes multiple choice questions and requires use of quantitative analysis strategies. In some multiple response questions, respondents were permitted to select "other" and then provide descriptions. For example, questions such as "Please check all criteria that your program requires for practicum settings" have predetermined choices as well as an option that respondents can describe their own answers when they do not find appropriate answers among given options. For these cases that include respondents' description, frequency scale coding (Castro et al., 2010) was used. If a respondent described their own criterion, but it overlapped with a provided option, the response is counted as the given option. If a respondent described a different criterion that was not included in the choices, the response is classified as a new option/ case and included with the same or similar response group, then counted. For these multiple response survey items, the primary investigator identified the questions with "Other" as an option, started the frequency scale coding for responses under "Other" by question, then shared the new coding (categorization) with the research team. Research team members independently reviewed the work of frequency scale coding, compared with their own coding, discussed and resolved issues and disagreements, and revised collectively with mutual consensus on the new contents and categorization.

Before beginning data analysis, the data was cleaned. The data was reviewed to ensure that the sample includes only one response per institution. The cases with multiple responses were reviewed to determine if one participant responded more than one time and if more than one participant from the same institution responded. In the cases of repetitive participation from the same institution, the higher overall completeness of the survey responses was left for analysis and the others were excluded from analysis. If respondents did not provide information about program characteristics fully and did not continue answering further survey questions (after the questions about program characteristics which is the first block of questions), these responses were excluded from analysis. Then the surveys were checked for completeness and data entry error. The outliers were checked as well when checking data entry errors.

Because there were no forced response questions in the survey, some responses were not completed fully, even though the respondent completed all the program characteristics questions. For example, some respondents left the survey without completing the full survey, and some respondents did not provide responses to certain questions. These cases had missing data. Nevertheless, a decision was made to include partial survey responses in the analysis if the respondent provided more than the information about the program characteristics. Though there are multiple ways to deal with missing data, because this survey is descriptive and most of the questions include categorical variables instead of continuous variables, replacing missing data was inappropriate.

The next step was to prepare the data for the analyses. For the inferential statistics, there were a couple of steps to confirm if the (independent) variables met the requirements for conducting inferential statistics. The variables for this study are characteristics of programs such as types of the department they are in, types of licensures that programs offer, whether programs

have an intentional focus on preparing students to apply inclusive practices, and number of graduates of programs in the previous academic year (the size of the program). All the variables are categorical except the number of graduates of programs in the previous academic year.

To prepare the size of the program as a variable, there were a couple of steps to follow. The data was converted to numerical variables because the responses were recorded in descriptive text. Responses such as “All” or “Don’t know” were excluded, and all other responses were converted to numerical data.

Regarding the inferential analysis, chi-square “Goodness of Fit” tests and one-way ANOVA tests require that values for the variable are mutually exclusive. However, the question about the types of licenses allowed respondents to choose multiple options if the program offered multiple types of license. Moreover, more than one fifth of respondents (22%) reported Other than the provided options and the type of license description under Other were diverse. Thus, a decision was made to redefine and recode the type of license as variable for inferential statistics. Original available options for types of licenses were 1) Birth through 2nd or 3rd grade, 2) Birth through Kindergarten, 3) Pre-K through 2nd or 3rd grade, and 4) Other. Though it would be great if the original code could be used for each type of license, there were multiple types of licenses with fewer than 10 responses, another reason that it was necessary to recode the options for this variable.

To create values in this license type variable that are independent and mutually exclusive, responses were reviewed and redefined based on newly developed codes. The new categorization for the license type should be simple, result in each group having more than 10 cases, as well as distinct to ensure the characteristics of the licensure type. It was found that most of the reported licensures start at Birth or at Pre-K. The gaps between starting at Birth and starting at Pre-K

could be huge in terms of the types of settings of practicum and the age range of children in the practicum setting.

Based on this understanding, licenses were newly defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond.

For example, if programs select only one license type and the license type was Birth through 2nd or 3rd grade or Birth through Kindergarten, they fall into 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade. If programs select only one license type and the license type was Pre-K through 2nd or 3rd grade, they fall into 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade.

If programs select more than one type of license or select Other and describe their own license type, the responses were reviewed and categorized newly. For example, if programs chose two types of licenses and they were Birth through Kindergarten and Pre-K through 2nd or 3rd grade, they fall into 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond because they have licensure both starting at Birth and Pre-K. If programs chose one type of license and it was Birth through grade 6, they also fall into 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond. If programs chose only one type of license and they were Pre-K through Grade 5, they fall into 2) Licensure starting at PreK/K and extending through any older grade. If programs chose two types of licenses and they were Birth through 2nd or 3rd grade and Birth through Kindergarten, they fall into 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade.

Some cases were excluded from recategorizing. For example, the type of license was described as “early childhood through grade 6”. In this case, it was hard to identify the age range of early childhood for this program, so they were excluded from new categorization.

Another chi-square test requirement is that there should be a minimum expectation of five occurrences in each category. By using descriptive statistics, the frequencies of each category for each variable, such as the Department they are in (School/College of Education or other), Types of licensures that programs offer, and Intentional focus on preparing students to apply inclusive practices, were reviewed and counted. If there were too few occurrences in a category, the variable was excluded from chi-square tests and only used for descriptive analysis. Regarding the question about Intentional focus on preparing students to apply inclusive practice, only nine programs reported “No”, thus the Intentional focus on inclusiveness was excluded from the program characteristics variable (for chi-square tests).

Additional preparation for data analysis was to prepare multiple response survey items. Many items in the survey include multiple response items with the expression, “check all that apply”. In the SPSS data, all these responses are recorded as separate questions. For example, regarding the question “What support does your program provide for cooperating teachers? Please check all that apply.”, the survey provided options such as training, mentoring, orientation, guidelines, no support provided, and other. Because multiple response survey items are recorded separately, one column includes only one piece of information about the option. So for this question, SPSS generates 7 columns, 1 for training, 1 for mentoring, 1 for orientation, 1 for guidelines, 1 for no support provided, 1 for other, and 1 for description box for Other. In this case, if a respondent selected 3 options among 6 options (not selecting “other” in this example), the responses are recorded as “1” for each of the three options selected, while unselected 3

options remain empty. In this case, SPSS will automatically perceive these unselected options as "missing". However, actually these are not missing values, but unselected. The respondent did not select these options because they do not have these types of support in their program. Thus, for handling these cases, these missing data were replaced to "not selected" by using the function data> transform > recode into the same/ different variable function. "System missing" was recoded as "0" for filling unselected options thus allowing them to distinguish from missing data and assign them the meaning of "unselected."

Moreover, multiple response survey items are not easy to analyze and view findings at one time because the responses are scattered throughout multiple columns in SPSS. One column has only information about one option. To address this, all related responses (information) should be combined. This was done by using the "multiple response" function in SPSS (step: analyze > multiple response > set multiple response table > define variable sets: combine items, check variables are coded as dichotomies counted value: 1). This newly created variable was labeled with a description of the new variable, and then was added to multiple response sets. This step helped generate frequency and crosstabs function for further analysis. This procedure generated these results: the frequency and percent of each option and percent of cases of each option. Percent of cases was important and interesting because this shows how many percent of programs selected that option. Followings are the analysis plan for addressing each research question and sub questions.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1. The first research question, "What criteria do early childhood teacher preparation programs have for practicum experiences?" includes three sub questions. The

first sub question focuses on the required and additional criteria for serving as practicum placements.

The question about required criteria for placement setting was asked only to the programs which answered they have required criteria. Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if any association exists between Having required criteria for placement settings and program characteristics variables, such as license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

When chi-square value is larger than the critical chi-square value and the p-value is less than .05, it was reported that there is a statistically significant association between Having required criteria for placement settings and a program characteristic, such as license type or whether the program is in a School of Education or not. Because the chi-square test in this sub question focuses on the relationships between nominal/ categorical variables, the cramer's V coefficient score was used to interpret how strongly they are associated with each other. If the cramer's V is 0, there is no association, 0 to .1 indicates there is little, .1 to .3 indicates there is low level of association, .3 to .5 indicates there is a moderate association, and higher than .5, this indicates high association.

In addition, because the size of the program is a continuous variable and the option of Having required criteria for placement settings is a dichotomous variable, Point-biserial correlation analysis tests were conducted to examine the association between two variables. Point-biserial correlation coefficient r_{pb} was reported with the degrees of freedom, as well as the p-value. When r_{pb} is 0, there is no association, 0 to .3 indicates the association is weak, .3 to .5 indicates there is a moderate level of association, .5 to .7 indicates there is a strong association,

and 1 indicates a perfect relationship. It would be important if the r_{pb} is + or - because it tells the positive or negative relationships between the two variables.

To understand the required criteria, frequencies and percentages of each required criterion reported were calculated by using descriptive statistics. The data included in Other was reviewed. Responses that fit in a listed criterion were added to that criterion; responses that were different were tallied and described separately. Then, the total number of criteria selected by programs was counted. This total number of criteria was used for one-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation tests, to examine any differences of mean number of criteria or associations by program characteristics.

For one-way ANOVA, if the F-value is larger than the critical F-value and the p-value is less than .05, this was reported that there is a statistically significant group difference in terms of mean number of criteria by program characteristics. If the program characteristics were types of license (because there are more than two groups), post hoc tests (including homogeneity of variances test) were conducted, only when there is a statistically significant group difference. In terms of the homogeneity of variance test, when the p-value was non-significant (greater than the .05) to prove the homogeneity of variance, the finding was reported. Bonferroni and Tukey HSD were conducted to find specific group differences. When the p-value of Bonferroni and Tukey HSD shows statistical significance, the finding was reported. Mean plots helped better understand the difference of mean number of total criteria between groups (types of licenses). (Partial) Eta squared was reported as well to show the degree of association. When eta-squared is .01 to .06, this was considered as small, .06 to .14 as medium, and larger than .14 was considered as a strong relationship.

Because the size of the program (the number of graduates) is a continuous variable, Pearson correlation analysis tests were conducted to examine associations with the total number of criteria selected. Pearson correlation coefficient r was reported with the degrees of freedom, as well as the p-value. When correlation coefficient r is 0, there is no association, 0 to .3 indicates the association is weak, .3 to .5 indicates there is a moderate level of association, .5 to .7 indicates there is a strong association, and 1 indicates a perfect relationship. It would be important if the r is + or - because it tells the positive or negative relationships between the two variables.

Based on the information regarding newly tallied required criteria after frequency scale coding, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if any association exists between each required criterion reported and program characteristics variable, such as license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

Then, to understand the additional considerations for practicum placements, the frequencies and percentages of responses were calculated. The data included in Other was reviewed. Responses that fit in a listed consideration were added to that consideration; responses that were different were tallied and described separately. Then, the total number of additional considerations selected by programs was counted. This total number of additional considerations was used for one-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation tests, to examine any differences of mean number of considerations or associations by program characteristics. Chi square tests and point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if associations exist between each type of additional consideration reported and program characteristics of license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

Regarding the second sub question, “What are the types and number of settings for practicum experiences?”, descriptive analysis findings were reported. To do this, the data included in Other was reviewed first. Responses that fit in a listed category of acceptable program types were added to that program type option; responses that are different were tallied and described as Other program types. Then, the frequencies of each type of acceptable placement settings were counted again. Based on this, the total number of acceptable settings were calculated by programs. This total number of types of acceptable settings was used for one-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation tests, to examine any differences or associations by program characteristics. Chi square tests and Point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if associations exist between the specific type of acceptable setting reported and program characteristics of license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

To understand the number of (available) placement sites for each practicum, using descriptive statistics, the range, sum, and mean of the number of practicum sites that programs use for each practicum and across all pratica were calculated. One-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation analyses were used to identify any differences in the mean number of practicum sites (scale variable) depending on program characteristics of school of education, types of licenses, and the size of the program.

Regarding the third sub question “What is the intensity (number of times/ hours) of practicum experiences?” programs reported the number of practicum opportunities and the hours per practicum experiences across all pratica (up to 10 practica).

Participants answered the question (the number and hours of practicum) by the child age range (infant (0-1), toddler (1-2), preschooler (3-5), kindergartener (5-6), early elementary

school age and above, or not restricted to a certain age range) of each practicum. The questionnaire provided spaces for participants to provide data for a maximum of 10 practica in their program. The responses to this question were added across each child age range across all practica reports and reported through frequencies, sum, and mean to identify the total number of pracitica and in which age range preservice teachers experience frequently and/or rarely through their practicum experiences. By using one-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation analyses, any differences or associations by school characteristics (i.e., school of education, types of licenses) were identified.

Respondents also reported the total hours for each practicum. Range, sum, and mean of total hours of practica by child age range were calculated by using descriptive statistics. This finding provided information about the distribution of practicum hours by child age range as well. By using one-way ANOVA tests, any differences of total hours of practica depending on child age range and school characteristics (i.e., school of education, types of license) identified. Pearson correlation analyses identified the association between the total hours of practica and the size of the program, as well.

Research Question 2. To address the second research question, "What learning experiences do programs provide in the practicum experience?" descriptive statistics were used to provide the frequency and percentage of each reported learning experience (i.e., observing individual children, conducting child screenings/ assessments, planning learning opportunities, implementing learning opportunities, IFSP/ IEP planning, IFSP/ IEP meeting, implementing Universal Design for Learning, meeting with resource teachers, parent conference, home visit, other). Responses to the "Other" were reviewed for frequency scale coding. Responses that fit in a listed category were added to that learning experience; responses that were different were

tallied and described. The total number of types of learning experiences were calculated to examine any differences or associations by and with program characteristics. For this analysis, one-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation tests were conducted.

Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if any association exists between any type of learning experience reported and program characteristics, such as license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

The second part of this question asked about the content areas (i.e., language/ literacy/ reading, social-emotional/ behavior guidance, mathematics, science, physical education, outdoor activity, social studies, art/ aesthetics, other) for which the program has designated practica. First, frequencies and percentages were calculated to determine the number of programs which reported Having designated practica related to a specific content area. Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if any association exists between Having designated practica related to a specific content area and program characteristic variables, license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

Then, for the programs which reported having designated practica for content areas, the frequency and percentage of each learning content area were calculated. In this process, the data included in Other was reviewed. Responses that fit in a listed category were added to that content area; responses that were different were tallied separately and described. The total number of these content areas by program were calculated to examine any differences or associations by and with program characteristics. For this analysis, one-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation tests were conducted. Chi square tests and Point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if any association exists between each specific content area reported and

program characteristics of license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

Research Question 3. The third research question is, "For a typical practicum, what qualifications do programs require for cooperating teachers?" The qualifications for cooperating teachers can be specified in terms of minimum education level, types of licenses required, and required minimum working experience. Participating programs provided the qualification answers (minimum education level, types of licenses, and working experience) by child age ranges of the practica such as infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and early elementary age children. The minimum education level required, such as no education requirement, high school degree, CDA, Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, and Master's degree, for teachers of infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and early elementary age children were reported separately through frequencies, percentages, and mode.

To examine any group differences in the Cooperating Teachers' minimum education level required as associated with any program characteristics (e.g., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, types of licensures, and the size of program), Cooperating Teachers' minimum education levels were converted as follows; No education required=1, High school degree=2, CDA=3, Associate's degree=4, Bachelor's degree=5, Master's degree=6. Then, one-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation tests were conducted to identify any statistically significant differences or associations by and with program characteristics.

The types of licenses required for Cooperating Teachers, such as license not required, Birth-Kindergarten licensure, Birth-2 or 3 grade, PreK-2 or 3 grade, dual teaching license (with special education), and must be licensed, but no requirement about type of license were reported

by the child age range through frequencies, percentages, and mode. To examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, and types of licensures) and specific type of license required for Cooperating Teachers in practica by child age range, Chi-square tests were conducted.

In terms of the minimum work experience for Cooperating Teachers, range and mean by child age range were reported. These results indicate any difference of average minimum work experience required for Cooperating Teachers between groups (child age range groups), if there is any difference. To examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, and types of licensures) and the minimum work experience for Cooperating Teachers by child age range, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were conducted.

Research Question 4. The fourth research question is, "What support do programs provide for cooperating teachers?" By using descriptive statistics, the frequency and percentages of each type of support provided by teacher preparation programs listed in the survey (i.e., training, mentoring, orientation, guidelines, no support provided, other) were reported. The data included in Other was reviewed as well. Responses that fit in a listed category were added to that support type; responses that were different for the listed categories were separately tallied and described. Then, there was a question whether the option(s) checked for any support for cooperating teachers is mandatory, optional, or mixed. The responses were reported as frequencies and percentages of each support type and whether it is mandatory, optional, or mixed. Chi square tests were conducted to determine if any association exists between each specific support for cooperating teachers and mandatory/optional support.

The total number of supports for cooperating teachers was calculated to examine any differences or associations with program characteristics. For this analysis, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were conducted. To examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, and types of licensures) and specific type of support for cooperating teachers, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial analyses were conducted.

In addition to the support that teacher preparation programs provide, the survey included questions asking about the communication between university and Cooperating Teachers, such as the method of communication, the frequency and topic of communication, the person (Placement Coordinator/ University Supervisor) who communicates with Cooperating Teachers in the university, and if there is a requirement regarding communication with Cooperating Teachers. These communication questions were provided only to the participants who answered that they had the role of a University Supervisor and/or a Placement Coordinator in their teacher preparation programs.

Frequencies and percentages of programs that have these roles were reported. The modes of communication, the typical topic of communication, and if the communication is a requirement were analyzed by using descriptive analysis and frequencies and percentages were reported separately by the roles. The modes and topic of communication with Cooperating Teachers include Other, thus the responses in Other were reviewed. Responses that fit in a listed category were added to that mode or topic of communication; responses that are different were tallied separately and described. Regarding the number of communications between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher, and between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher, the range, mode, and mean were reported by using descriptive analysis for each role.

Then, by using one-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlations, any differences of mean of total number of communications between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating teacher or between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher depending on school characteristics (i.e., school of education, types of licenses) were tested, and any associations with program characteristics were identified.

Research Question 5. The fifth research question is "What supervision do programs use for practicum experiences?" This question includes information about the frequency of on-site supervision visits if the program conducts on-site supervision visits, the methods of supervision in addition to on-site supervision, the tools for student evaluation, who is involved in supervision, the roles of Cooperating Teachers in supervision, and the frequency of formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and preservice teachers during practicum.

Programs that chose the option that their program conducts on-site supervision visits were asked to indicate the frequency of on-site supervision visits per semester. Descriptive statistics were used for reporting the number of programs that conduct on-site supervision visits. Then, for the programs that have on-site supervision visits, the range, mode, and mean of the typical number of onsite supervision visits per student per semester were reported.

The total number of on-site supervision visits were used to examine any differences or associations with program characteristics. For this analysis, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were conducted. To examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, and types of licensures) and Conducting on-site supervision visits practice, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial analyses were also conducted.

Methods of supervision other than the on-site supervision visits were analyzed using descriptive statistics and frequencies and percentages of methods of supervision were reported. In this process, the data included in Other was reviewed. Responses that fit in a listed category were added to that method of supervision; responses that are different were tallied separately and described. The total number of supervision methods (other than on-site supervision) was calculated to examine any differences or associations with program characteristics. For this analysis, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were conducted. To examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, and types of licensures) and specific mode of supervision, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial analyses were conducted.

Regarding the tool used for evaluating the students, the responses were collected from programs that use a formal tool to evaluate students. The frequencies and percentages of how many programs that use a formal tool and how many programs that do not use a formal tool were reported. Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if any association exists between Using a formal tool to evaluate students and program characteristics variables, such as license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

By using descriptive statistics, the frequency and percentages of each evaluation tool were reported. The data included in Other was reviewed as well. Responses that fit in a listed category were added to the category for that tool; responses that are different were separately tallied and described. Then, the total number of evaluation tools was calculated to examine any differences or associations with program characteristics. For this analysis, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were conducted. To examine any association between program

characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, and types of licensures) and specific tools, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial analyses were also conducted.

Frequencies and percentages of Information about who completed the evaluation tool were reported as well. The data included in Other was reviewed. Responses that fit in a listed category were added to that option; responses that are different were tallied separately and described. There was a question about who is involved in evaluating students as well. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics, and frequencies and percentages of information about who is involved in evaluating students were reported. In this process, the data included in Other was reviewed. Responses that fit in a listed category were added to that option; responses that are different were tallied separately and described.

The total number of completers of evaluation tools and the total number of people who were involved in evaluation were calculated to examine any differences or associations with program characteristics. For this analysis, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were conducted. To examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, and types of licensures) and specific completers and the person who involved in practicum students' evaluation, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial analyses were also conducted.

In terms of Cooperating Teachers' role in supervision, by using descriptive statistics the number of programs that require Cooperating Teachers to provide feedback to preservice teachers was calculated. Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if any association exists between Having a requirement for Cooperating Teachers in providing feedback to preservice teachers and program characteristics variables, such as license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

Then, to understand the specific role of Cooperating Teachers, frequencies and percentages of each role reported were calculated by using descriptive statistics. The data included in Other were reviewed. Responses that fit in a listed category were added to that option; responses that are different were tallied separately and described. The total number of cooperating teachers' roles in supervision were calculated to examine any differences or associations with program characteristics. For this analysis, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were conducted. To examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, and types of licensure) and specific types of cooperating teachers' role in supervision, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial analyses were also conducted.

The question about the minimum number of meetings required between cooperating teachers and preservice teachers was asked to the programs if they have a requirement for formal meetings with cooperating teachers. Frequencies and percentages of programs that require formal meetings were calculated. Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation tests were conducted to determine if any association exists between Having a requirement of formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and preservice teachers and program characteristics variables, such as license type, the size of the program, and whether the program is in a School of Education or not.

The range and mean of the minimum number of formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and preservice teachers per semester were reported for the programs that have a requirement of formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and preservice teachers. Then, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation tests were conducted to examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for

licensure, and types of licensures) and the total number of minimum number of formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and preservice teachers per semester.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

Program Characteristics

Program characteristics that are described include the following: if the program provides the practicum experiences in their teacher training, by the department or school they belong to, by the types of licenses if they offer licensure, if the program has an intentional focus on inclusive practice, and by the scale of the program through the number of graduates of the program.

All participating programs (227 programs) had a requirement for students to complete practica in their early childhood education program. Among them, 177 programs were located in a School of Education (or College of Education). The other 50 programs were located in diverse departments or schools, such as human development and family studies, human development and family science, child development, humanities and social sciences, or arts and science. The majority of participating programs (91.6%) had options for teacher licensure in early childhood education. A list of license options was provided in the survey for these respondents to indicate their license type(s). In case the type of license was not listed, an Other category was provided to describe their license type offered. Also, in case programs offered more than one type of license, respondents could choose multiple types of licenses. The majority of programs (183 programs) offered only one type of license and the remaining programs offered more than one type of teaching license. For example, representatives from 22 programs reported that they offered two types of licenses, representatives from 4 programs reported that they offered three types of licenses, and a representative from one program reported they offered four types of license.

Reported types of licensure options varied. Representatives from 91 programs reported they offered Birth through 2nd or 3rd grade licensure, representatives from 70 programs reported

that they offered Pre-K through 2nd or 3rd grade licensure, representatives from 32 programs reported that they offered Birth through Kindergarten licensure, and 50 respondents reported that they offered different licensure that was not listed. Among the Other types of license, PreK through 4th grade (19 programs), PreK through 5th grade (4 programs), EC through 6th grade (4 programs), and Birth through PreK (3 programs), etc. were described.

The information about the size of the program was collected through the number of graduates in the 2018 through the 2019 academic year. The number of graduates could be recorded separately by licensure option and also an option was provided for programs that offered a degree without licensure. Overall, the range of the total number of graduates varied, from 0 to 1000, and the average number of graduates from programs that included both with licensure option and without licensure option was 35.61 (N=206, SD=76.41). To be more specific, 24.91 was the average number of graduates (N=203, range: 0-280, SD= 34.40) from programs with licensure option, and 11.12 was the average number of graduates (N=205, range: 0-800, SD=59.06) without licensure option.

The final program characteristic examined was whether the program includes an intentional focus on inclusion of children with disabilities. Among 227 programs, representatives from 218 programs indicated that they had an intentional focus on preparing students to apply inclusive practices in early childhood education classrooms.

All these program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, types of licensures, and the scale of program) were used as variables to identify any group differences and/or associations with factors in each research question. Regarding types of licensures, for analysis purposes and due to the complexity of the types of licenses, this study redefined the types of license. Newly defined types of licensures for this study were: 1)

Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond. Regarding new types of licensures were collected from responses of 205 program representatives, 105 programs offered licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 80 programs offered licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and Licenses starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond were reported from 20 program representatives.

Findings of Research Question 1

Research Question 1 explores the criteria for practicum placements, types of acceptable practicum settings, the intensity (numbers and hours) of practica in classrooms by child age range, and how these criteria are related to program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of program). Descriptive statistics will be reported first and statistically significant group differences and/or associations with program characteristics will be followed.

Required Criteria for Practicum Placement Settings

Regarding placement criteria, 208 program representatives (91.6%) reported that they had required criteria for placement settings for practica. Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the variable: Having required criteria for practicum settings. There were no statistically significant associations between the variable of Having placement criteria and other program characteristics, except for the size of the program. The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year.

According to the point biserial test result, there was a statistically significant association between the size of the program and Having required criteria for practicum settings ($r_{pb}(197)=.389$, $p<.001$). Relatively larger size programs were more likely to have criteria for placement settings and relatively smaller size programs were less likely to have criteria for placement settings.

Among these 208 program representatives who indicated their program does have criteria, 202 program representatives provided responses on required placement criteria. A list of seven possible placement criteria was provided in the survey for these respondents to indicate their required criteria. Listed seven criteria included: Types of programs (i.e., public, private, Head Start), QRIS rating of program, Accreditation of program, Inclusive program (Children with special needs and children with typical development), Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the program, Ages of children enrolled, and Location relative to the institution. Respondents could choose all listed criteria for their program. Also, in case required criteria used in their program were not listed, an Other category was provided for program representatives to provide required criteria for their program.

The number of required placement criteria selected from the list provided ranged from 0 to 7. Most respondents reported more than one required criterion for practicum placements; the average number of required criteria selected was over 3 criteria (x = 3.73). One respondent did not select any of the criteria options provided, but selected “Other” and therefore is considered to have reported none of the required criteria options provided. Nine program representatives selected all seven criteria as being required for their programs. Table 1 shows the number of required criteria selected across respondents.

Table 1. Number of Required Criteria for Practicum Placement Selected

Number of required criteria selected	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
One required criterion	15	7.4%
Two required criteria	33	16.3%
Three required criteria	42	20.8%
Four required criteria	49	24.3%
Five required criteria	30	14.9%
Six required criteria	23	11.4%
Seven required criteria	9	4.5%
Select criteria other than the option in the list	1	0.5%

Note. N=202, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to "have placement criteria" question and then, responding to "types of criteria".

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to compare the total number of required criteria depending on programs Having a licensure option. There was a statistically significant difference depending on Having a licensure option ($F(1,198)=4.524$, $p=.035$). The mean number of total criteria of programs Having a licensure option was significantly higher (M =3.80, SD =1.588) than programs Not having a licensure option (M =2.86, SD =1.657). Except for this finding, there were no statistically significant differences or associations between program characteristics and the total number of required criteria.

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of the different types of required criteria listed on the survey for placements reported by program representatives. A large majority of

programs reported the Type of program and Ages of children as required criteria (88.1% and 78.2% respectively). Location of the program was also reported by over half of the respondents (52.5.%) as required criteria for placements. Racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity in the program, Inclusive program, and Accreditation of program were reported as required criteria by just under half of program representatives (48.5%, 47.0%, and 41.6% respectively). QRIS ratings of the program was the required criterion reported by the fewest number of respondents (17.3%). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" required criteria; 19.8% of responses were collected from Other. Under Other, Cooperating teacher qualifications were reported as a required criterion for placements by several respondents (N = 29, 14.4%).

Table 2. Required Criteria for Practicum Placement Settings

Criteria	Frequency	Percent of responses
Type of program (i.e., public, private, Head Start)	178	88.1%
Ages of children enrolled	158	78.2%
Location relative to the institution	106	52.5%
Racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity in the program	98	48.5%
Inclusive program	95	47.0%
Accreditation of program	84	41.6%
QRIS rating of program	35	17.3%

Other-Cooperating teacher qualification	29	14.4%
Other-Varied	11	5.4%

Note. N=202, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to "have placement criteria" question and then, responding to "types of criteria".

Other-Varied: Matching with the program curriculum, philosophy, approach (5), Contract with the settings (1), Contracts that meet CAEP requirements (1), State required criteria (1), Items as specified by risk management (1), No description provided (2).

To examine any association between the program characteristics and types of criteria for placement settings, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation analyses were conducted. Overall, there were statistically significant associations between a specific criterion for placement settings and program characteristics (Having a licensure option, Type of license). The detailed findings are presented below.

According to the Chi-square result, there was a statistically significant association between programs Having a licensure option and the placement criterion: Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the program (p=.027, Cramer's V=.147), Location relative to the institution (p=.043, Cramer's V=.135). Programs Having a licensure option were more likely to choose Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the program and Location relative to the institution as placement criteria than programs Not having a licensure option.

In addition to the option, Having a licensure option, Chi-square tests were conducted to test associations between the Type of licenses and required placement criterion. Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond.

There was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade and the placement criterion: QRIS rating of the

program (p=.032, Cramer's V=.142) and Ages of children enrolled (p=.010, Cramer's V=.171). Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose QRIS ratings of program and Ages of children enrolled than programs offering licensure other than starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade.

Moreover, there was a statistically significant association between offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and the placement criterion: QRIS rating of the program (p=.040, Cramer's V=.136) and the association was between moderate and strong. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose QRIS rating of program than programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade. Except for these findings, there were no statistically significant differences or associations between program characteristics and any types of placement criteria.

To summarize the findings related to required criteria for practicum placement, relatively larger size programs were more likely to have criteria for placement settings than relatively smaller size programs. Among seven listed criteria provided, the average number of required criteria selected was 3.73. Programs Having a licensure option reported more criteria for placement settings than programs Not having a licensure option.

Regarding types of criteria selected, Type of program, Ages of children, and Location of the program were reported by over half of the respondents as required criteria for practicum placements. Racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity in the program, Inclusive program, Accreditation of program, and QRIS ratings of programs were reported by less than half of the respondents as required criteria for practicum placement.

Programs Having a licensure option were more likely to choose Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the program and Location relative to the institution as placement criteria than programs Not having a licensure option. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose QRIS rating of program and Ages of children enrolled as practicum placement criteria than programs offering licensure other than starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose QRIS rating of program as a placement criterion than programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade.

Additional Considerations for Practicum Placement Settings

Respondents were also asked to indicate additional considerations for selecting practicum settings. The survey provided a list of 11 different types of additional considerations. Listed 11 additional considerations included: Types of program (i.e., public, private, Head Start), QRIS rating of program, Accreditation of program, Inclusive program (Children with special needs and children with typical development), Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the program, Ages of children enrolled, School report card or other K-12 accountability system indicators, Ongoing partnerships with schools/ districts, Feedback (from previous teacher candidates or supervisors), Principal recommendations, No specific considerations. Respondents could choose all additional considerations among the given list, and an Other category was provided to describe their own considerations for practicum placements. For this question, respondents were asked to not indicate an additional consideration if they had already indicated it as a required criterion.

Representatives from 197 programs provided responses regarding additional considerations for placement settings. The number of additional considerations selected from the

list provided ranged from 0 to 9. Most respondents indicated between three and four additional considerations for selecting practicum placements (x = 3.76). Among the 197 respondents, three (1.5%) reported that they had no additional specific considerations. One (0.5%) reported an additional consideration under Other and four (2.0%) reported nine additional considerations that were taken into account when selecting sites to serve as practicum settings. Table 3 shows the number of additional considerations selected across respondents.

Table 3. Number of Additional Considerations for Practicum Placement Selected

Number of additional considerations selected	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
One additional consideration	12	6.1%
Two additional considerations	26	13.2%
Three additional considerations	62	31.5%
Four additional considerations	37	18.8%
Five additional considerations	23	11.7%
Six additional considerations	18	9.1%
Seven additional considerations	4	2.0%
Eight additional considerations	7	3.6%
Nine additional considerations	4	2.0%
Select considerations other than the option in the list	1	0.5%
No additional considerations	3	1.5%

Note. N=197, reflects the number of respondents responding to "additional considerations for placement setting".

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of additional considerations for selecting placement settings depending on program characteristics (located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, and types of licensure) and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of additional considerations and the size of the program. However, there was no statistically significant difference or association in the total number of additional considerations depending on any program characteristics.

Table 4 displays the frequency and percentages of additional considerations for selecting placement sites reported by program representatives. Ongoing partnerships with schools or districts and Feedback from previous teacher candidates or supervisors were reported by the vast majority of program representatives (88.3% and 81.2% respectively). Principal recommendations as an additional consideration was reported by more than half of the program representatives (56.3%) as an additional consideration for placement settings. Racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity in the program and Inclusive program were reported as additional considerations by over 30% of respondents (35.0% and 31.5% respectively). Ages of children enrolled, Type of program, and Accreditation of program were also reported as additional considerations for practicum placements by over 20% of respondents (24.4%, 23.4%, and 22.3% respectively). QRIS rating of program, School report card or other K-12 accountability system indicators were reported by less than 10 % of program representatives (7.1% and 6.6% respectively) as additional considerations for practicum placements. In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated “Other” additional considerations for practicum placements. Overall, 5,6% of responses were collected from Other.

Table 4. Additional Considerations for Selecting Practicum Placement Settings

Additional consideration	Frequency	Percent of responses
Ongoing partnerships with schools/ districts	174	88.3%
Feedback (from previous teacher candidates or supervisors)	160	81.2%
Principal recommendations	111	56.3%
Racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity in the program	69	35.0%
Inclusive program	62	31.5%
Ages of children enrolled	48	24.4%
Type of program	46	23.4%
Accreditation of program	44	22.3%
QRIS rating of program	14	7.1%
School report card or other K-12 accountability system indicators	13	6.6%
Other-Varied	11	5.6%
No additional considerations	3	1.5%

Note. N=197, reflects the number of respondents responding to "additional considerations for placement setting".

Other-Varied: Cooperating teacher qualification (4), Matching with the program curriculum, philosophy, approach (3), Distance or location (2), No description provided (2).

Several options were listed as both required criteria and additional considerations. Type of program was reported by 88.1% of the respondents and Ages of children enrolled was reported by 78.2% of the respondents as required criteria. On the other hand, Type of program was reported by 23.4% of the respondents and Ages of children enrolled was reported by 24.4% of the respondents as additional considerations. Inclusive program was reported by 47.0% of the respondents and Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the program was reported by 48.5% of the respondents as required criteria. A relatively similar percentage of respondents also included the Inclusive program and Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity as additional considerations (31.5% and 35.0%, respectively) for selecting practicum settings. Accreditation of programs was reported by 41.6% of the respondents as a required criterion and by 22.3% of the respondents as an additional consideration. QRIS rating of programs was reported by 17.3% of the respondents as a required criterion and by 7.1% of the respondents as an additional consideration.

To examine any association between the program characteristics and the additional consideration for selecting practicum placement settings, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation analyses were conducted. According to the Chi-square result, there was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and the placement criterion: Principal recommendations ($p=.002$, Cramer's $V=.201$). Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose Principal recommendations as an additional consideration for the placement settings than programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade. Except for this finding, there were no statistically significant associations between any program characteristics and any types of additional considerations for placement settings.

To summarize the findings related to additional considerations for practicum placement, among 11 listed additional considerations provided, the average number of additional considerations selected was 3.76. Regarding types of additional considerations for practicum placement, Ongoing partnerships with schools or districts, Feedback from previous teacher candidates or supervisors, and Principal recommendations were reported by more than half of the program representatives as additional considerations for placement settings. Racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity in the program, Inclusive program, Ages of children enrolled, Type of program, Accreditation of program, QRIS ratings of the program, School report card or other K-12 accountability system indicators were reported by less than half of the respondents as additional considerations for placement setting. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose Principal recommendations as an additional consideration for practicum placements than programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade.

Acceptable Program Types for Practicum Placement

Preservice teachers can have practicum experiences in different types of settings. The survey provided a list of 8 different types of settings and respondents could choose multiple types of settings used as settings for practicum experiences in their program. The eight types of settings listed i ncluded: On-campus childcare program, Public school, Private school, Community-based child care, Head Start, Family child care home, Self-contained classroom/ program, and Itinerant early intervention program. The survey also provided the option, Other, to identify types of settings for practica that were not listed.

Regarding acceptable types of placement settings, 220 program representatives provided responses using the eight program types listed. Most of the respondents selected between 3 and 6

(x = 4.42) different types of settings as acceptable settings for preservice teachers' practica. Representatives from 24 programs (10.9%) indicated only one type of setting as acceptable and 11 program representatives (5%) reported eight different types of settings as being acceptable for preservice teachers' practica. Table 5 shows the number of acceptable types of settings across respondents.

Table 5. Number of Acceptable Types of Settings Total for Practicum Placement Selected

Number of acceptable types of setting selected	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
One type of setting	24	10.9%
Two types of setting	13	5.9%
Three types of setting	34	15.5%
Four types of setting	35	15.9%
Five types of setting	44	20.0%
Six types of setting	40	18.2%
Seven types of setting	19	8.6%
Eight types of setting	11	5.0%

Note. N=220, reflects the number of respondents responding to "acceptable program types".

One-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation tests were conducted to compare the total number of acceptable types of settings by program characteristics. Overall, there were statistically significant differences in the total number of types of acceptable settings depending

on the program characteristics: Having a licensure option and Types of licensures. Specific results will be described.

First, there was a statistically significant difference in the means of total number of types of acceptable settings depending on Having a licensure option ($F(1,217)=4.524$, $p=.013$). The mean number of total acceptable types of settings of programs Having a licensure option was lower (N=202, x=4.33) than the programs Not having a licensure option (N=17, x=5.53).

Second, there was a statistically significant difference in the means of total number of types of acceptable settings by types of license ($F(2, 196)=6.390$, $p=.002$). Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond. The mean number of total acceptable types of settings of programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade was significantly lower (N=78, x=3.81) than the programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade (N=101, x=4.80). Except for these two findings, there were no statistically significant differences or associations between program characteristics and the total number of acceptable types of settings for practicum placement.

Table 6 shows the frequency and percentage of types of settings that were acceptable for practica reported by respondents. Public school was reported by 96.8% of program representatives as an acceptable setting for practica. Head Start, Private school, and Community-based childcare were reported by over half of program representatives (71.4%, 67.3%, and 64.5% respectively) as being acceptable for practicum settings. On-campus childcare and Self-contained classroom/ program were reported by about half of program representatives (51.8% and 50.5% respectively) as being acceptable settings. Itinerant early intervention program was

reported by 24.1% of respondents and Family childcare home was reported by 15.9% of respondents as being acceptable practicum settings. In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" acceptable settings. Overall, 6.4% of responses were collected from Other.

Table 6. Acceptable Program Types for Practicum Placement

Types of setting	Frequency	Percent of responses
Public school	213	96.8%
Head Start	157	71.4%
Private school	148	67.3%
Community based childcare	142	64.5%
On-campus childcare program	114	51.8%
Self-contained classroom/ program	111	50.5%
Itinerant early intervention program	53	24.1%
Family childcare home	35	15.9%
Other-varid	14	6.4%

Note. N=220, reflects the number of respondents responding to "acceptable program types".

Other: Non-classroom settings such as online learning and home visiting (8), State approved programs (1), Faith-based early childhood programs (1), No description provided (4).

To examine any association between the program characteristics and types of practicum settings that were reported as acceptable, Chi-square tests were conducted. According to the Chi-square results, there was a statistically significant association between programs Having a

licensure option and the type of placement setting: Community-based childcare, and the association was strong (p=.005, Cramer's V=.186). Programs Having a licensure option were less likely to choose Community-based childcare as a placement setting and programs Not having a licensure option were more likely to choose community-based childcare.

Next two findings are associations between type of license and type of setting. First, there was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade and the type of placement setting: On-campus childcare program (p<.001, Cramer's V=.252), Community-based childcare (p=.022, Cramer's V=.152), and Head Start (p=.007, Cramer's V=.179). Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose On-campus childcare, Community-based childcare, and Head Start than programs offering licensure other than starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade.

Second, there was a statistically significant association between offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and the type of placement setting: On-campus child care program (p<.001, Cramer's V=.225), Community-based child care (p<.001, Cramer's V=.249), Head Start (p=.002, Cramer's V=.206), Family child care home (p=.040, Cramer's V=.136), and Itinerant early intervention program (p=.028, Cramer's V=.146). Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose On-campus child care, Community-based child care, Head Start, Family child care home, and Itinerant early intervention program and programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose On-campus child care programs, Community-based child care, Head Start, Family child care home, and Itinerant early intervention program as placement settings.

Lastly, Point-biserial correlation analyses were performed to examine any association between the size of the program (The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year) and types of settings. There were statistically significant associations between the size of the program and the type of placement setting: Family child care home ($r_{pb}(204)=.197$, $p=.005$). Relatively larger size programs were more likely to choose a Family childcare home as a placement setting than relatively smaller size programs. Except for these findings, there were no statistically significant associations between program characteristics and the type of acceptable practicum settings.

To summarize the findings related to types of acceptable settings for practicum placement, among eight listed types of settings provided, the average number of acceptable types total was 4.42. Programs Having a licensure option had a lower number of acceptable types of settings total than programs Not having a licensure option. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade had a lower number of acceptable types of settings total than programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade.

Regarding types of acceptable settings, Public school, Head Start, Private school, Community-based child care, On-campus child care, and Self-contained classroom/program were reported by over half of the respondents as being acceptable for practicum settings. Itinerant early intervention program and Family childcare home were reported by less than half of the respondents. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose On-campus childcare, Community-based childcare, and Head Start while programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose On-campus childcare, Community-based childcare, Head Start, Family childcare home, and Itinerant early intervention classroom/program. Community-based childcare

was more likely to be selected by programs Not having a licensure option. Relatively larger size programs were more likely to choose a Family childcare home as a placement setting.

Intensity of Practicum Experiences

Representatives from 174 programs (76.7%) reported the number of practica, prior to student teaching, they provided in their program in an open-ended question. The number of practica varied, ranging from 1 to 15. Most programs reported to have three or four practica and the mean number of practica prior to student teaching was 3.88 (SD=2.204).

To learn more about the intensity of each individual practicum and the institution's full complement of practica, a question was provided in table format. Respondents could indicate how many practica were offered, how many hours were allotted in each practicum, how many placement sites were provided for each practicum, and children's age range of each practicum in the table. There were spaces for respondents to describe a maximum of 10 individual practica. On average, respondents completed information for 3 to 4 practica (x=3.61) in this table format.

Regarding the hours of practica (across all the practica provided on the maximum of 10 individual practica), representatives from 189 programs (83.3%) provided responses on how many hours were required for each practicum experience. There was a great variation in the total hours of practicum experience, ranging from 10 to 1352 hours by program. The total hours were calculated by adding the hours reported across each practicum experience. The average total hours of practica across all practica reported was 290.88. The average hours of each practicum was 80.58 (in the calculation of the total hours of practica and average hours of each practicum, outliers were excluded).

Representatives from 152 programs provided responses on the number of sites they used for practica. The range for the total number of sites reported across all practica was 1-130. The

average total sites of practica across all practica reported was 19.59 (SD=26.639) and the average number of sites for each individual practicum was 5.43.

In addition to the number of practica and hours of practica, additional information about the ages of children in the classroom was reported. Representatives from 197 programs provided information of the classroom's age range in each practicum. Available age range options were Infant, Toddler, Preschooler, Kindergartener, Early elementary and above, and Not restricted to a certain age range. Respondents could choose more than one age range for an individual practicum if the practicum included more than one age range. For example, within one practicum, if students had a practicum only in a classroom of preschoolers, they would choose the "Preschooler". However, if students had a practicum in both preschool and kindergarten classrooms within one practicum, the respondent would choose the "Preschooler" and the "Kindergartener" options for the child's age range.

Table 7 displays the children's age ranges of practica across all practica. Practica in the classrooms of infants were reported by the fewest number of program representatives (111 programs, 56.3%) while practica in the classrooms of preschoolers were reported by the most program representatives (169 programs, 85.8%). Practica in the classrooms of toddlers (121 programs, 61.4%) were reported similar to infant classrooms (111 programs, 56.3%). Similar numbers of practica in the classrooms of kindergarteners (145 programs, 73.6%) and early elementary and above (142 programs, 72.1%) were reported as well. A relatively small number of program representatives (N = 51, 25.8%) reported that they had practica that were not restricted to an age range.

Program representatives also reported if pactica in certain age levels were provided more than one time in their program. Practica were available in classrooms of early elementary 2.23

times, in classrooms of kindergarteners 2.15 times, in classrooms of preschoolers 2.06 times, and in classrooms in which the age range was not restricted 2.02 times across all practica. Practica in classrooms of infants (1.41 times) and toddlers (1.55 times) were reported to be offered less than 2 times across all practica.

Table 7. Children's Age Range of the Classroom in Practica

Descriptive	Infant	Toddler	Preschooler	Kindergartener	Early elementary	Not restricted
Frequency	111	121	169	145	142	51
Percent	56.3%	61.4%	85.8%	73.6%	72.1%	25.8%
Sum	157	187	348	312	317	103
Mean	1.41	1.55	2.06	2.15	2.23	2.02

Note. N=197, reflects the number of respondents responding to "classroom's age range" in their practica.

Though one-way ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation were performed to understand the group difference in intensity of practica depending on program characteristics, there was no statistically significant difference in and association with the total number of practica, total hours of practica, total number and hours of practica by child age range, and total number of placement settings, depending on any program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensure, and the size of program).

To summarize the findings related to intensity of practicum experiences, the number of practica varied, ranging from 1 to 15 and the mean number of practica was 3.88. There was a great variation in the total hours of practicum experiences as well, ranging from 10 to 1352 hours by program and the average total hours of practica across all practica was 290.88. The range for

the total number of sites reported across all practica was 1-130 and the average total sites of practica across all practica reported was 19.59.

Practica in the classrooms of infants were reported by the fewest number of program representatives while practica in the classrooms of preschoolers were reported by the most program representatives. Practica were available in classrooms of early elementary, kindergarteners, and preschoolers more than 2 times while practica in classrooms of infants and toddlers were reported to be offered less than 2 times. There was no statistically significant difference in and association with the total number of practica, total hours of practica, total number and hours of practica by child age range, and total number of placement settings, depending on any program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of program).

Findings of Research Question 2

RQ 2 explores the types of learning experiences students have during their practica, content areas that teacher preparation programs have designated, and how these learning areas are related to program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, types of licensures, and the size of program). Descriptive statistics regarding learning experiences overall will be reported first and statistically significant group differences and/or associations with program characteristics will be followed.

Learning Experience during Practica

The survey provided a list of 10 different types of learning experiences and the option for "Other" category was provided for respondents to describe additional learning experiences during practica. Listed 10 types of learning experiences included: Observing individual children, Conducting child screenings/ assessments, Planning learning opportunities, Implementing

learning opportunities, IFSP/IEP planning, IFSP/IEP meeting, Implementing Universal Design for Learning, Meeting with resource teachers, Parent conference, and Home visit. Respondents were asked to select all learning experiences students have in practica in their program.

Two hundred one program representatives (88.5%) provided responses on learning experiences students have during practica. The number of learning experiences program representatives reported in their practica from the list provided ranged from 2 to 10. Most respondents reported 6 learning experiences provided in their program's practica and the mean number of learning experiences selected was 6.69. Among the 201 program representatives who responded to the question about learning experiences using 10 categories, two (1%) reported that they offered two of learning experiences and 17 (8.5%) reported that they offered all 10 of the learning experiences. Table 8 shows the number of learning experiences offered through practica.

Table 8. Number of Learning Experiences Selected Total

Number of learning experiences in practica	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
Two learning experiences	2	1.0%
Three learning experiences	9	4.5%
Four learning experiences	21	10.4%
Five learning experiences	22	10.9%
Six learning experiences	42	20.9%
Seven learning experiences	33	16.4%

Eight learning experiences	28	13.9%
Nine learning experiences	27	13.4%
Ten learning experiences	17	8.5%

Note. N=201, reflects the number of respondents responding to "available learning experiences".

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of learning experiences by program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having an option for licensure, and types of licensures). There was a statistically significant difference in the means of total number of types of learning experiences between the programs Having a licensure option and the programs Not having a licensure option as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(1,198)=5.046$, $p=.026$). Programs Having a licensure option had a higher mean number of total types of learning experience (N=185, x=6.78) than programs Not having a licensure option (N=15, x=5.60).

Pearson correlation analyses were also conducted to examine the association between the total number of learning experiences selected and the size of the program. The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year. There was a statistically significant association in the means of the total learning experiences depending on the size of the program ($r(185)=-.152$, $p=.038$). Relatively larger size programs offered fewer types of learning experiences and relatively smaller size programs offered more types of learning experiences during practica. Not only the number of learning experiences, but the types of learning experiences were also explored as well.

Table 9 shows the frequency and percentage of respondents who selected each learning experience that students have in their practica. Of note, all of the program representatives (100%) who responded to the question about learning experiences reported that students have Planning

learning opportunities. Observing individual children and Implementing learning opportunities also were reported by virtually all programs (99.5% and 99.0% respectively). A large majority of program representatives (82.1%) also reported Conducting child screenings/ assessments as a learning experience students have in the program's practica. Parent conference and Implementing Universal Design for Learning were also reported by over half of program respondents (65.2% and 57.7% respectively). IFSP/IEP meeting, Meeting with resource teachers, and IFSP/IEP planning were reported as learning experiences by almost half of program representatives (48.3%, 46.8%, and 45.8% respectively). Home visit was reported by the fewest number of respondents (22.9%). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" learning experiences. Fourteen programs (7.0%) provided additional learning experiences students have in their practica.

Table 9. Types of Learning Experiences through Practica

Learning Experiences	Frequency	Percent of responses
Planning learning opportunities	201	100%
Observing individual children	200	99.5%
Implementing learning opportunities	199	99.0%
Conducting child screenings/ assessments	165	82.1%
Parent conference	131	65.2%
Universal Design for Learning	120	59.7%
IFSP/IEP meeting	97	48.3%

Meeting with resource teachers	94	46.8%
IFSP/IEP planning	92	45.8%
Home visit	46	22.9%
Other-Participating in special events	5	2.5%
Other-Varied	9	4.5%

Note. N=201, reflects the number of respondents responding to "available learning experiences".

Other-Varied: Planning for DLLs/ ELLs (2), Depending on CTs (2), Depending on circumstances (2), The 6-co-teaching model (1), Not specified activities (2).

To examine any association between program characteristics and types of learning experiences, Chi-square tests were conducted. There was a statistically significant association between programs Having a licensure option and the specific learning experience: IFSP/IEP planning, and the association was strong (p=.011, Cramer's V=.169). Programs Having a licensure option were more likely to choose a IFSP/IEP planning as a learning experience than programs Not having a licensure option. Chi-square analyses were also conducted to test associations between the type of licenses and types of learning experiences. Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond.

There was a statistically significant association between offering licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond and the learning experience: Parent conference (p=.010, Cramer's V=.172) and the association was strong. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond were more likely to choose a Parent conference as a learning experience. Pearson-biserial correlation tests were also conducted, but there was no

statistically significant association between the size of the program and specific learning experiences. Except for the findings mentioned earlier, there were no statistically significant associations between program characteristics and any types of learning experiences.

To summarize the findings related to learning experiences during practica, most respondents reported 6 learning experiences provided in their program's practica among 10 options, and the mean number of learning experiences reported was 6.69. Programs Having a licensure option had a higher mean number of total learning experience than programs Not having a licensure option. Moreover, relatively larger size programs offered fewer types of learning experiences and relatively smaller size programs offered more types of learning experiences during practica.

Regarding types of learning experience, Planning learning opportunities, Observing individual children, and Implementing learning opportunities were reported by virtually all programs as learning experiences during practica. Conducting child screenings/ assessments, Parent conference, Implementing Universal Design for Learning were reported by over half of respondents. IFSP/IEP meeting, Meeting with resource teachers, IFSP/IEP planning, and Home visit were reported by less than half of the respondents. Programs Having a licensure option were more likely to choose a IFSP/IEP planning as a learning experience and programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond were more likely to choose a Parent conference as a learning experience.

Content Areas for Designated Practica

Program representatives were also asked to indicate whether their program has designated practica related to a specific content area. Slightly more than half of program respondents (N=119, 52.4%) reported that their program had designated practica related to a

specific content area. Eighty-four program representatives (37%) responded they did not have designated practica related to a specific content area. Point-biserial correlation analyses were performed to examine association between the size of the program and Having designated practica related to a specific content area and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the variable: Having designated practica related to a specific content area. However, there was no statistically significant association between any program characteristic and the variable: Having designated practica related to a specific content area.

A list of eight different content areas for designated practice was provided to the 119 respondents who indicated that their program had designated practica related to a specific content area. The eight content areas listed as options included: Language/Literacy/Reading, Social-Emotional/Behavior Guidance, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education, Outdoor activity, Social Studies, and Art/Aesthetics. Respondents could choose multiple content areas for designated pratica and describe any content area that was not listed under the Other.

The number of designated practica related to specific content areas selected from the list provided ranged from 0 to 8. Most respondents reported practica focused on four content areas and the mean was 4.21. Five program representatives (4.2%) reported a content area listed under Other. Representatives from 16 programs (13.4%) reported only one practicum focused on a specific content area and representatives from 13 programs (10.9%) reported practica focused on all eight content areas. Table 10 shows the number of content areas that are the focus of a designated practica.

Table 10. Number of Content Areas that are the Focus of a Designated Practicum

Number of content areas	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
One type of content area	16	13.4%
Two types of content area	12	10.1%
Three types of content area	12	10.1%
Four types of content area	23	19.3%
Five types of content area	13	10.9%
Six types of content area	11	9.2%
Seven types of content area	14	11.8%
Eight types of content area	13	10.9%
Select criteria other than the option in the list	5	4.2%

Note. N=119, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to "have a designated practica related to a specific content area" question and then, responding to "types of the content area".

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of content areas by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of content areas and the size of the program. However, there was no significant difference or association between the total number of content areas and program characteristics.

Table 11 shows the frequency and percentage of respondents who selected each of the content areas as reported by the 119 program representatives who indicated that their program does have designated practica for specific content area(s). Language/ Literacy/ Reading and

Mathematics were reported by the vast majority of respondents (90.8% and 78.2% respectively). Science and Social studies were reported by more than half of the program representatives (63.9% and 56.3% respectively) as content areas for practica. Social-Emotional/ Behavior guidance was reported by about half of the respondents (49.6%). Art/ Aesthetics, Physical education, and Outdoor activity were reported by less than 40% of respondents (36.1%, 26.9%, and 19.3% respectively). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" content areas. Overall, 21.9% of responses were collected from Other. Special education was reported from 9 program representatives.

Table 11. Content Areas with Designated Practica

Content Area	Frequency	Percent of responses
Language/ Literacy/Reading	108	90.8%
Mathematics	93	78.2%
Science	76	63.9%
Social Studies	67	56.3%
Social-Emotional/Behavior Guidance	59	49.6%
Art/Aesthetics	43	36.1%
Physical Education	32	26.9%
Outdoor play	23	19.3%
Other- Special education	9	7.6%
Other-Varied	17	14.3%

Note. N=119, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to "have a designated practica related to a specific content area" question and then, responding to "types of the content area".

Other-Varied: ESL (2), Eco literacy (1), Multiculturalism (1), SEI (as verbatim - unknown) (1), Varied or no specific content areas (10), No description provided (2).

To examine any association between the program characteristics (i.e. Types of licenses) and specific content areas, Chi-square tests and Pearson-biserial correlation tests were conducted. Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond.

There was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade and the content area for designated practica: Outdoor activity ($p=.021$, Cramer's $V=.212$) and the association was between strong and very strong. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose an Outdoor activity as a content area for a designated practicum and programs offering licensure other than starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were less likely to choose an Outdoor activity as a content area for a designated practicum.

Moreover, there was a statistically significant association between offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and the content area for designated practica: Art ($p=.009$, Cramer's $V=.238$), Social-Emotional/Behavior guidance ($p=.023$, Cramer's $V=.209$), Physical education ($p=.005$, Cramer's $V=.259$), and Outdoor activity ($p<.001$, Cramer's $V=.324$). Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose Art, Social-Emotional/Behavior guidance, Physical education, and Outdoor activity and programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose Art, Social-Emotional/Behavior guidance, Physical education, and Outdoor activity as content areas. Except

for these two findings, there were no statistically significant associations between any program characteristics and any content areas for designated practica.

To summarize the findings related to content areas for designated practica, more than half of the respondents reported that their program had designated practica related to a specific content area. Among eight content areas provided, most respondents selected four content areas as having specific practica in their program and the mean was 4.21.

Regarding types of content areas, Language/ Literacy/ Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social studies were selected by more than half of the program representatives as content areas for designated practica while Social-Emotional/ Behavior guidance, Art/ Aesthetics, Physical education, and Outdoor activity were selected by less than half of the respondents. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose an Outdoor activity as a content area for designated practica. On the other hand, programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose Art, Social-Emotional/Behavior guidance, Physical education, and Outdoor activity as content area for designated practica.

Findings of Research Question 3

The qualifications required for cooperating teachers vary. Research Question 3 explores cooperating teachers' qualifications such as required minimum education level, required minimum work experience, required types of license, and how these qualifications are related to program characteristics (e.g., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensure, and the size of program). Descriptive statistics will be reported first and statistically significant group differences and/or associations with program characteristics will be followed.

Cooperating Teachers' Required Minimum Education Level

Table 12 displays the frequency and percentage of minimum education qualification for cooperating teachers reported by program representatives. Respondents could choose the minimum education qualification requirements for cooperating teachers among six options ranging from no education requirement to Master's degree requirement.

Cooperating Teachers' minimum education requirement was reported for each child age range group, Infants and toddlers, Preschoolers, and Early elementary age ranges of children included in practica.

Across practica for all ages, more than half of the programs (58.2%) required a minimum of Bachelor's degree for cooperating teachers and the mode of the minimum education level required was Bachelor's degree. However, there was variation across the age ranges in the percentage of programs for each level of minimum education requirement. For example, 41.6% of program representatives reported that they required a minimum of Bachelor's degree for cooperating teachers in classrooms of infants and toddlers while 69.1% of program representatives reported that they required a minimum of Bachelor's degree for cooperating teachers in classrooms of early elementary aged children. On the other hand, 23.3% of respondents reported that they did not have any education requirement for cooperating teachers in classrooms of infants and toddlers while only 2.3% of respondents reported that they did not have any education requirement for cooperating teachers in classrooms of early elementary aged children (See Table 12 for descriptive data regarding required minimum education level for cooperating teachers across the child age ranges).

Table 12. Cooperating Teachers' Required Minimum Education Level by Child Age Range

Level	Infants and toddlers (0-2) (N=120)	Preschoolers (3-5) (N=181)	Early elementary age (5-7) (N=175)
No education requirement	28 (23.3%)	20 (11%)	4 (2.3%)
High school	3 (2.5%)	12 (6.6%)	4 (2.3%)
CDA	12 (10%)	11 (6.1%)	8 (4.6%)
Associate's degree	13 (10.8%)	15 (8.3%)	16 (9.1%)
Bachelor's degree	50 (41.6%)	106 (58.6%)	121 (69.1%)
Master's degree	14 (11.6%)	17 (9.4%)	22 (12.6%)

To examine any group differences in the Cooperating Teachers' minimum education level required depending on any program characteristics (e.g., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of program), Cooperating Teachers' minimum education levels were converted as follows; No education required=1, High school degree=2, CDA=3, Associate's degree=4, Bachelor's degree=5, Master's degree=6.

There was a statistically significant difference in the means of required minimum education level of cooperating teachers in practica in preschool classrooms depending on Having a licensure option as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(1,223)=7.288$, $p=.007$). Programs Having a licensure option required a higher minimum education level for cooperating teachers in the preschool classrooms (N=208, x=3.51) than programs Not having a licensure option (N=17, x=2.06). Except for these findings, there were no statistically significant differences by program characteristics in the means of required minimum education level of cooperating teachers in any child age range.

To examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, and types of licensures) and specific education level required for cooperating teachers in practica by child age range, Chi-square tests were conducted.

First, there was a statistically significant association between types of licensure and Cooperating Teachers' minimum required education level. Licenses were defined by three types; 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond. According to the Chi-square test results, there were statistically significant associations between programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade and Cooperating Teachers' minimum education level required in practica in infant and toddler classrooms: Associate's degree ($p=.022$, Cramer's $V=.152$) and Master's degree ($p=.012$, Cramer's $V=.166$). Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose the Associate's degree and Master's degree and programs offering licensure other than starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were less likely to choose the Associate's degree and Master's degree as requirements of minimum cooperating teachers' education level in infants and toddlers classrooms.

Second, there was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade and cooperating teachers' minimum education level required in practica in preschool classrooms: CDA ($p=.015$, Cramer's $V=.161$) and Master's degree ($p=.036$, Cramer's $V=.139$). Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose the CDA and Master's degree and programs offering licensure other than starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were

less likely to choose the CDA and Master's degree as requirements of minimum cooperating teachers' education level in preschool classrooms.

Third, there was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and cooperating teachers' minimum education level required in practica in infant and toddler classrooms: Bachelor's degree (p=.004, Cramer's V=.192) and the association was strong. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose the Bachelor's degree and programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose the Bachelor's degree as a requirement of minimum cooperating teachers' education level in infant and toddler classrooms.

Lastly, there was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and cooperating teachers' minimum education level required in practica in preschool classrooms: the Bachelor's degree (p=.020, Cramer's V=.154) and Master's degree (p=.035, Cramer's V=.140). Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose the Bachelor's degree and programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose the Bachelor's degree as a requirement of minimum cooperating teachers' education level in preschool classrooms. On the other hand, programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose the Master's degree and programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose the Master's degree as a requirement of minimum cooperating teachers' education level in preschool classrooms. Except for these findings, there were no statistically significant associations between

program characteristics and any specific education level required for cooperating teachers in practica by child age range.

To summarize the findings related to required minimum education level for Cooperating Teachers in practica by child age range, across practica for all ages, more than half of the programs required a minimum of Bachelor's degree for cooperating teachers and the mode of the minimum education level required was Bachelor's degree, too. However, more than two thirds of practica in classrooms of early elementary aged children required a minimum of Bachelor's degree for cooperating teachers while only 40% of the practica in classrooms of infants and toddlers required a minimum of Bachelor's degree for cooperating teachers. Programs Having a licensure option required a higher minimum education level for cooperating teachers than programs Not having a licensure option in preschool classrooms.

Regarding statistically significant associations between program characteristics (types of license) and any cooperating teachers' minimum education level, programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose the Associate's degree and Master's degree as requirements of minimum cooperating teachers' education level in practica in infants and toddlers classrooms and the CDA and Master's degree as requirements of minimum cooperating teachers' education level in practica in preschool classrooms. On the other hand, programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose the Bachelor's degree in infants and toddlers classrooms, and more likely to choose the Bachelor's degree and less likely to choose the Master's degree as requirements of minimum cooperating teachers' education level in practica in preschool classrooms.

Cooperating Teachers' Required Minimum Work Experience

Responses regarding the minimum work experience required for cooperating teachers were also collected. Overall, cooperating teachers' required minimum work experience varied, ranging from 0 to 9 years. A minimum of three years of work experience was recorded most frequently across all age ranges and by each age range. On average, 2.91 years of work experience was required for cooperating teachers across practica.

To be more specific, representatives from 69 programs reported the minimum work experience of cooperating teachers in infant and toddler classrooms, and the average was 2.77 years. Representatives from 114 programs reported the minimum years of work experience of cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms, and the average was 2.86 years. Representatives from 112 programs reported the minimum years of work experience of cooperating teachers in the early elementary classrooms, and the average was 3.06 years.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the means of minimum working experience required for cooperating teachers by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the minimum working experience required for cooperating teachers and the size of the program. However, there were no significant differences and/or associations between program characteristics and required years of work experience for cooperating teachers across practica.

Required Types of Licenses for Cooperating Teachers

Respondents also reported the types of licenses required for cooperating teachers in practica. Respondents could choose the required license option from the list, and the available options were classified by child age range. Listed types of licenses included: License not required, Birth-Kindergarten, Birth-2 or 3 grade, PreK-2 or 3 grade, Dual teaching license (with

special education), and Must be licensed, but no requirement about type of license. Table 13 shows the frequency and percentage of required types of licenses for cooperating teachers reported in practica by child age range of the classroom.

The required license types varied across practica for different ages of children. Regarding the license qualification of cooperating teachers in practica in the classroom of infants and toddlers, less than half of respondents reported that some type of teaching license was required for cooperating teachers in infant and toddler classrooms. Of these, the B-K license was reported to be required by 9.8% of respondents and a Birth through 2 or 3 grade was reported by 14.8% of respondents. A Pre-K through 2 or 3rd grade license was required by 5.7% of respondents and just over 1% of programs required a Dual teaching license (with special education) for cooperating teachers in infant and toddler classrooms. Around one fifth (17.2%) of the respondents reported that a license was required but did not require a specific type of license for cooperating teachers in practica in classrooms of infants and toddlers. Over half of respondents (50.8%) reported that they did not require any type of license for cooperating teachers in practica in classrooms of infants and toddlers.

Regarding the license qualification of cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms, three fourths of respondents (74.4%) reported that some type of teaching license was required for cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms. The B-K license was reported to be required by 13.4% of respondents and a Birth through 2 or 3 grade was reported by 17.1% of respondents as cooperating teachers' license requirements in practica in preschool classrooms. A Pre-K through 2 or 3rd grade license was required by 22.0% of respondents and 5.5% of respondents required a Dual teaching license (special education and early childhood education) for cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms. Respondents from 16.5% of programs reported that a license was

required but did not require a specific type of license in practica for cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms. One fourth of the respondents (25.6%) reported that they did not require any type of license in practica for cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms.

Regarding the license qualification of cooperating teachers in early elementary classrooms, the majority of respondents (88.0%) reported that some type of teaching license was required and only 12.0% of respondents reported that they did not require a specific type of license in practica. The B-K license was reported to be required by 4.8% of respondents and a Birth through 2 or 3 grade was reported by 19.2% of respondents. A Pre-K through 2 or 3rd grade license was required by 32.9% of respondents and 10.8% of programs required a Dual teaching license (special education and early childhood education) in practica for cooperating teachers in early elementary classrooms. One fifth of respondents (20.4%) reported that a license was required but did not require a specific type of license in practica for cooperating teachers in early elementary aged classrooms.

With regard to licenses required for cooperating teachers, more than half of the responses (50.8%) indicated that they did not require any type of license as a license qualification of cooperating teachers in practica in infant and toddler classrooms, while 25.6% of respondents indicated that they did not require any types of licenses in practica for cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms and only 12% of respondents indicated that they did not require any types of license in practica for cooperating teachers in early elementary classrooms.

Table 13. Cooperating Teachers' Required Teaching Licensure by Child Age Range of Practica

Level	Infants and toddlers (0-2) (N=122)	Preschoolers (3-5) (N=164)	Early elementary age (5-7) (N=167)	Total (N=453)
Birth-Kindergarten	12 (9.8%)	22 (13.4%)	8 (4.8%)	42 (9.3%)

Birth-2 or 3 grades	18 (14.8%)	28 (17.1%)	32 (19.2%)	78 (17.2%)
PreK-2 or 3 grades	7 (5.7%)	36 (22.0%)	55 (32.9%)	98 (21.6%)
Dual teaching license	2 (1.6%)	9 (5.5%)	18 (10.8%)	29 (6.4%)
Must be licensed regardless the type	21 (17.2%)	27 (16.5%)	34 (20.4%)	82 (18.1%)
License not required	62 (50.8%)	42 (25.6%)	20 (12.0%)	124 (27.4%)

To examine any association between the program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, and types of licensures) and types of required license for Cooperating Teachers, Chi-square tests were conducted. Point-biserial correlation analyses were conducted to examine any association between the size of the program and the types of required license for Cooperating Teachers. The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year.

First, there was a statistically significant association between the Birth through Kindergarten licensure and the size of the program ($r_{pb}(204)=.191$, $p=.006$) in practica in preschool classrooms (3-5). Relatively larger size programs were more likely to require the Birth through Kindergarten licensure for cooperating teachers and relatively smaller size programs were less likely to require the Birth through Kindergarten licensure in practica for cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms (3-5).

Moreover, there was a statistically significant association between Must be licensed, but no requirement about the type of license and the size of the program ($r_{pb}(204)=.147$, $p=.035$) in the preschool classrooms (3-5). Relatively larger size programs were more likely to choose Must be licensed, but no requirement about the type of license in practica for cooperating teachers and relatively smaller size programs were less likely to choose Must be licensed, but no requirement

about the type of license in practica for cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms (3-5). Except for these two findings, there were no statistically significant associations between any program characteristics and the types of required license for cooperating teachers.

To summarize the findings related to types of required license for cooperating teachers, more than half of the respondents reported that they did not require any type of license for cooperating teachers and around one fifth of the respondents reported that a license was required but did not require a specific type of license for cooperating teachers in practica in classrooms of infants and toddlers. In practica in preschool classrooms, one fourth of the respondents reported that they did not require any type of license in practica for cooperating teachers and one fifth of respondents reported that Pre-K through 2 or 3rd grade license was required in practica for cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms. In practica in early elementary aged classrooms, one third of respondents reported that Pre-K through 2 or 3rd grade license was required in practica for cooperating teachers and one fifth of respondents reported that a license was required but did not require a specific type of license for cooperating teachers.

Regarding statistically significant associations between program characteristics and any cooperating teachers' required types of licenses, relatively larger size programs were more likely to require the Birth through Kindergarten licensure and more likely to choose Must be licensed, but no requirement about the type of license in practica for cooperating teachers in preschool classrooms.

Findings of Research Question 4

Research Question 4 explores the types of support for cooperating teachers during practica, the frequency, mode, and topic of communication between cooperating teachers and a University Supervisor and/or a Placement Coordinator in supporting cooperating teachers, and

how these supports are related to program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of the program). Descriptive statistics will be reported first and statistically significant group differences and/or associations with program characteristics follow.

Support for Cooperating Teachers

To understand types of support for cooperating teachers, respondents were asked to indicate what support was offered for cooperating teachers. Four different options were provided as well as an option of Other to describe their own type of support provided to cooperating teachers. Listed four options included: Training, Mentoring, Orientation, and Guidelines. Respondents could choose all types of support listed in the survey for their program or could also indicate no support provided.

Regarding types of support for Cooperating Teachers, 210 program representatives provided responses using the four types of support provided. The total number of supports for cooperating teachers selected from the list provided ranged from 0 to 4. Most respondents reported two types of support for Cooperating Teachers and the mean was 2.40. Among the 210 program representatives who responded to the types of support for cooperating teachers by using the provided list, seven respondents (3.3%) reported they did not provided any support for cooperating teachers, one respondent (0.5%) reported a type of support that listed only under Other; 37 (17.7%) selected one type of support for cooperating teachers; 77 (36.8%) selected two types of support; 41 (19.6%) selected three types of support; and 47 (22.5%) selected all four types of support for Cooperating Teachers.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of supports for cooperating teachers by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted

to understand the association between the total number of support for cooperating teachers and the size of the program. However, there was not a statistically significant group difference or association between the total number of supports for cooperating teachers and any program characteristics.

Table 14 shows the frequency and percentage of types of support for cooperating teachers reported by program representatives. Representatives from 210 programs provided responses regarding types of support for cooperating teachers. Guidelines was the type of support selected by the vast majority of program representatives (90%), and Orientation was selected by more than three fourths of the respondents (76.2%) as a type of support provided for cooperating teachers. Training and Mentoring were also selected by more than one third of respondents (39% and 33.8% respectively). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" types of support. Overall, 9.5% of responses were collected from Other.

Table 14. Types of Support for Cooperating Teachers

Type of support	Frequency	Percent of responses
Guidelines	189	90.0%
Orientation	160	76.2%
Training	82	39.0%
Mentoring	71	33.8%
Other-Varied	20	9.5%
No support provided	7	3.3%

Note. N=210, reflects the number of respondents responding to "types of support for cooperating teachers".

Other-Varied: Individualized (9), Continuing education credit (6), Compensation (2), Indirect resources (2), Does not provide information (1).

Regarding the type of support provided for cooperating teachers, 43.2% of respondents reported their support was required, 15.4% of respondents reported their support was optional and 29.1% of respondents reported that supports provided for cooperating teachers were a mix of both required and optional.

To examine any association between the types of support for cooperating teachers and if support required/ optional/ mixed, Chi-square tests were conducted. However, there was not a statistically significant association between them.

To examine any association between the program characteristics and types of support for cooperating teachers, Chi-square tests were conducted. Point-biserial correlation analyses were conducted to examine any association between the size of the program and the types of support for cooperating teachers. The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year.

There was a statistically significant association between the size of the program and the type of support: Orientation ($r_{pb}(204)=-.187$, $p=.007$). Relatively larger size programs were less likely to choose an Orientation as a type of support for cooperating teachers and relatively smaller size programs were more likely to choose an Orientation as a type of support for cooperating teachers. Except for this finding, there were no statistically significant associations between program characteristics and the types of support for Cooperating Teachers.

To summarize the findings related to support for Cooperating Teachers, most respondents selected two types of support for Cooperating Teachers among four options provided and the mean was 2.40. Regarding types of support for Cooperating Teachers, Guidelines and Orientation were reported by more than half of the respondents as types of support for

cooperating teachers. Training and Mentoring were also reported by less than half of the respondents as types of support provided for cooperating teachers. Relatively smaller size programs were more likely to choose an Orientation as a type of support for cooperating teachers.

Requirement and Frequency of Communication between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers

To understand the roles and responsibilities of a University Supervisor and a Placement Coordinator in supporting Cooperating Teachers and practicum experiences, the respondents were asked if their programs had these roles. If the respondents reported that they had the role(s), the following questions were provided: if there was a requirement regarding communication, the modes of communication, the frequency of communication, and typical topic of communication between a University Supervisor/ a Placement Coordinator and Cooperating Teachers.

Regarding the question about a University Supervisor, 203 program representatives reported that they had a University Supervisor in their program. Among these 203 respondents, 182 reported that they had a requirement regarding communication between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers.

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the variable: Having a requirement of communication between a University Supervisor and the Cooperating Teachers. However, there was not a statistically significant association between the variable of Having a requirement of communication between a University Supervisor and the Cooperating Teachers and any program characteristics.

The 203 programs who had a University Supervisor were asked about the frequency of communication between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher. Table 15 shows the frequency and percentage of communication between a university supervisor and a cooperating teacher. This frequency question was open-ended. For analysis purposes, only numerical responses were included in analyses; responses such as "varies", "multiple", "as needed" and mode of communication (i.e., face-to-face meeting) were excluded from analyses. Two outliers with the response of "everyday" were also excluded from analyses because they were not quantifiable.

Most respondents reported that a University Supervisor communicates with a Cooperating Teacher 6 times in a semester and the mean number of communications between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher was 6.02. The range in the number of communications varied from 0 to 30 times per semester. Representatives from two programs (1.1%) reported no communication, representatives from five programs (2.7%) reported only one time of communication per semester, and one respondent reported 30 times of communication between a University Supervision and a Cooperating Teacher per semester. Representatives from 101 programs (55.5%) reported below the mode (6, N=32, 17.6%) and representatives from 49 programs (26.9%) reported above the mode as the number of communications between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher per semester.

Table 15. Number of Communication between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher Per Semester

Number of communications per semester	Frequency	Percent of responses
0	2	1.1%

1-5	99	54.4%
6-10	52	28.6%
11-15	25	13.7%
Over 15	4	2.2%

Note. *N*=182, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to the "have a role of university supervisor" question and then, responding to "Number of communications between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher".

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of communications between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher by program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, and types of licensure) and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of communication between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher and the size of the program. However, there were no statistically significant differences or associations in the total number of communications between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher depending on any program characteristic.

To summarize the findings related to requirement and the frequency of communication between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher, 203 program representatives reported that they had a University Supervisor in their program and 182 program representatives reported that they had a requirement regarding communication between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers. Most respondents reported that a University Supervisor communicates with a Cooperating Teacher 6 times in a semester and the mean number of communications between a University Supervisor and a Cooperating Teacher was 6.02.

Modes of Communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers

A list of five different modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers was provided in the survey for those respondents who indicated that they had a University Supervisor in their program. Listed modes of communication included: Face-to-face meeting, Email, Phone-call, Text message, and Student forms or feedback on assignments. Respondents could choose any and all modes used for communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. Also, in case the modes of communication used in their program were not listed, an Other category was provided to describe their own modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

Regarding modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers, 199 program representatives responded. Most respondents reported four modes of communication used in their program and the mean was 3.75. Among the 199 respondents, one (0.5%) respondent did not select any of the mode options provided but selected "Other" and therefore is considered to have reported none of the mode of communication options provided. Nine respondents (4.5%) reported only one mode; 14 (7.1%) reported two modes; 52 (26.3%) reported three modes; 65 (32.8%) reported four modes; and representatives from 58 programs (29.3%) reported using all five modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of communication modes between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of communication modes between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers

and the size of the program. The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year.

There was a statistically significant association between the total number of communication modes between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers and the size of the program ($r(178)=-.182$, $p=.015$). Relatively larger size programs used fewer modes of communication when the University Supervisor communicates with Cooperating Teachers and relatively smaller size programs used more modes of communication when the University Supervisor communicates with Cooperating Teachers.

Except for this finding, there were no statistically significant differences or associations between program characteristics and the total number of modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

Table 16 shows the frequency and percentage of communication modes between a university supervisor and cooperating teachers reported by program representatives from 199 programs who provided responses. Most of the respondents reported Email (95.0%) and Face-to-face meetings (90.5%) as modes of communication when university supervisors communicate with cooperating teachers. Communication via student forms or feedback on assignments and Phone-call were also widely used as a mode of communication (81.9% and 71.9% respectively). Text messages were reported by the fewest number of respondents (34.2%). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents (6%) reported “Other” modes of communication, including video conferences, such as on Zoom or Google hangout, and mail.

Table 16. Modes of Communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers

Mode	Frequency	Percent of responses
Email	189	95.0%
Face-to-face meeting	180	90.5%
Student forms or feedback on assignments	163	81.9%
Phone-call	143	71.9%
Text message	68	34.2%
Other-Varied	12	6.0%

Note. N=199, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to the "have a role of university supervisor" question and then, responding to "modes of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers".

Other-Varied: Video conference (6), Individual preference (1), Mail (1), Not specified (4).

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the mode of communication between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers. Overall, there were statistically significant associations between a specific mode of communication between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers and program characteristics (types of licenses and the size of the program). Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond. The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year. The detailed findings are presented below.

There was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade and the mode of communication between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers: Face-to-face meeting (p=.018, Cramer's V=.167) and the association was strong. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were less likely to choose Face-to-face meeting and programs offering licensure other than starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose Face-to-face meetings as a mode of communication between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers.

Moreover, there was a statistically significant association between the size of the program and the mode of communication between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers: Face-to-face meeting ($r_{pb}(182)=-.235$, $p=.001$) and Email ($r_{pb}(182)=-.311$, $p<.001$). Relatively larger size programs were less likely to choose the Face-to-face meeting and Email as modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers and relatively smaller size programs were more likely to choose the Face-to-face meeting and Email as modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. Except for these findings, there were no statistically significant associations between program characteristics and any mode of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

To summarize the findings related to modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers, five modes of communication were provided, and most respondents reported four modes of communication used in their program and the mean was 3.75. Relatively larger size programs used fewer modes of communication when University Supervisors communicate with Cooperating Teachers.

Regarding modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers, Email, Face-to-face meetings, Communication via student forms or feedback on assignments, and Phone-call were selected by more than half of respondents. Text messages were reported by less than half of respondents. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were less likely to choose Face-to-face meetings as a mode of communication between a University Supervisor and Cooperating Teachers. Relatively larger size programs were less likely to choose the Face-to-face meeting and Email as modes of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

Topics of Communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers

Regarding topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers, the survey provided a list of seven different topics/options of communication and the option for "Other" to describe their own topics of communication. Listed seven topics/options of communication included: Introducing/requesting student placement, Providing course information (i.e., syllabus, expectations, etc.), Providing assignment and deadline information, Improvement of practicum experiences (i.e., evaluation forms, surveys, etc.), Additional resources as requested by Cooperating Teachers, Compensation, We don't communicate. Respondents could select any and all topics that applied to their program. Of the 203 programs who reported they had University Supervisors, representatives from 195 programs provided responses regarding topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

The number of topics of communication selected from the list provided ranged from 1 to 6 ("We don't communicate" option was excluded from counting). Most of the program representatives reported between 4 and 5 topics and the mean number of topics was 4.01. Among

195 program representatives who responded to the topic of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers, five (2.6%) reported only one topic; 21 (10.8%) reported two topics; 39 (20%) reported three topics; 50 (25.6%) reported four topics; 63 (32.3%) reported five topics; and 17 (8.7%) reported six different topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of communication topics between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of communication topics between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers and the size of the program.

However, there was not a statistically significant difference or association between the total number of communication topics between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers and program characteristics.

Table 17 displays the frequency and percentage of communication topics reported by program representatives. Providing course information, such as syllabus or course expectations, and Improvement of practicum experiences, such as evaluation forms or surveys, were reported by the vast majority of program representatives (88.2% and 84.6% respectively) as topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. Additional resources as requested by cooperating teachers, Providing assignment and deadline information, and Introducing or requesting student placement were reported by more than two thirds of the respondents (73.3%, 69.2%, and 67.2% respectively) as topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. Compensation was reported by the fewest number of respondents (17.9 %). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey,

respondents indicated “Other” topics of communication and 21.5% of responses were collected from Other. Though “practicum student progress and support” was not listed, representatives from 31 programs (15.9%) reported student progress and support as topics of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers under Other. One respondent (0.5%) reported that they did not communicate with Cooperating Teachers.

Table 17. Topics of Communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers

Topic	Frequency	Percent of responses
Providing course information (i.e., syllabus, expectations)	172	88.2%
Improvement of practicum experiences (i.e., evaluation forms, surveys)	165	84.6%
Additional resources as requested by cooperating teachers	143	73.3%
Providing assignment and deadline information	135	69.2%
Introducing/ Requesting student placement	131	67.2%
Compensation	35	17.9%
Other-Student progress and support	31	15.9%
Other-Varied	11	5.6%
We don’t communicate	1	0.5%

Note. N=195, reflects the number of respondents answering “yes” to the “have a role of university supervisor” question and then, responding to “topics of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers”.

Other-Varied: Open to any topic (5), Communication is not directly with cooperating teachers (3), Appreciation (2), Not specified (1).

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of the program) and the topic of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond. The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year.

First, there was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and the topic of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers: Introducing/requesting student placement (p=.009, Cramer's V=.184) and the association was strong. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose Introducing/requesting student placement and programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose Introducing/requesting student placement as a topic of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

Second, there was a statistically significant association between the size of the program and the topic of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers: Introducing/ requesting student placement ($r_{pb}(182)=-.155$, $p=.036$) and Providing course information (i.e., syllabus, expectations) ($r_{pb}(182)=-.162$, $p=.028$). Relatively larger size programs were less likely to choose Introducing/ requesting student placement and Providing course information (i.e., syllabus, expectations) as topics of communication between University

Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers and relatively smaller size programs were more likely to choose Introducing/ requesting student placement and Providing course information (i.e., syllabus, expectations) as topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. Except for these findings, there were no statistically significant associations between program characteristics and the topic of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

To summarize the findings related to topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers, among six communication topics provided (excluding the "we don't communicate" option), most of the program representatives reported between 4 and 5 topics and the mean number of topics was 4.01.

Regarding topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers, Providing course information, Improvement of practicum experiences, Additional resources as requested by cooperating teachers, Providing assignment and deadline information, and Introducing or requesting student placement were reported by more than two thirds of the respondents as topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. Compensation was reported by less than one fifth of respondents. In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, 15.9% of respondents reported "practicum student progress and support" under Other. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose Introducing/requesting student placement as a topic of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. Relatively larger size programs were less likely to choose Introducing/ requesting student placement and Providing course information as topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers.

Requirement and Frequency of Communication between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher

In addition to the roles of University Supervisors in supporting Cooperating Teachers, this study examined the roles of Placement Coordinators in supporting Cooperating Teachers as well during practica. Regarding roles and responsibilities of a Placement Coordinator in practicum, 182 program representatives reported that they had a Placement Coordinator in their programs. Among 182 respondents, 108 program representatives reported that they had a requirement regarding communication between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher.

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the variable: Having a requirement of communication between a Placement Coordinator and Cooperating Teachers. However, there was not a statistically significant association between the variable of Having a requirement of communication between a Placement Coordinator and Cooperating Teachers and any program characteristics.

Representatives from 145 programs responded regarding the frequency of communication between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher. Table 18 shows the frequency and percentage of communication between a placement coordinator and a cooperating teacher reported by program representatives from 199 programs who provided responses. The range of frequency of communication between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher per semester varied, from 0 to 12 times. Most of the respondents reported that a Placement Coordinator had typically communicated with a Cooperating Teacher twice in a semester and the mean number of communications between a Placement Coordinator and a

Cooperating Teacher was 2.66. Representatives from 16 programs (11.0%) reported no communication between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher while representatives from six programs (4.1%) reported 12 times of communication between their Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher per semester.

Table 18. Number of Communication between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher Per Semester

Number of communications per semester	Frequency	Percent of responses
0	16	11.0%
1-3	99	68.3%
4-6	21	14.5%
7-9	1	0.7%
Over 9	8	5.5%

Note. *N*=145, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to the "have a role of placement coordinator" question and then, responding to "number of communications between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers".

Excluded hard to count responses such as "varies", "multiple", "as needed" and mode of communication (i.e. face-to-face meeting).

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of communications between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of communication between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher and the size of the program. However, there was not a statistically significant difference or association in

the total number of communications between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher depending on any program characteristic.

To summarize the findings related to requirement and the frequency of communication between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher, 182 program representatives reported that they had a Placement Coordinator in their programs and 108 program representatives reported that they had a requirement regarding communication between a Placement Coordinator and a Cooperating Teacher. Most of the respondents reported that a Placement Coordinator had typically communicated with a Cooperating Teacher twice in a semester and the mean number of communications was 2.66.

Modes of Communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers

A list of five different modes of communication was provided in the survey for the 182 respondents who indicated they had a Placement Coordinator in their programs. Listed modes of communication included: Face-to-face meeting, Email, Phone-call, Text message, and Student forms or feedback on assignments. Respondents could choose any and all modes used for communication for their program between a Placement Coordinator and Cooperating Teachers. Also, in case the modes of communication used in their program were not listed, an Other category was provided to describe their own modes of communication.

Most respondents reported two modes of communication (mode=2), and the mean was 2.53. Among 163 program representatives who reported the modes of communication using the five types of mode that the survey provided; 30 program representatives (18.4%) reported using only one mode; 57 program representatives (35%) reported two modes; 45 program representatives (27.6%) reported three modes; 21 program representatives (12.9%) reported four modes; and representatives from 10 programs (6.1%) reported all five modes of communication.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of communication modes between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers depending on program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of communication modes between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers and the size of the program. However, there was not a statistically significant difference or association in the total number of communication modes between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers depending on any program characteristic.

Table 19 displays the frequency and percentage of communication modes reported by program representatives. Most of the respondents (97.5%) selected Email as a mode of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers. Phone-call and Communication via student forms or feedback on assignments were selected as modes of communication by about half of the respondents (54.6% and 48.5% respectively). Face-to- face meetings were selected as a mode of communication by 41.7% of respondents. Text messages were selected by the fewest number of respondents (11%). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" modes of communication. Overall, 10.4% of responses were collected from Other.

Table 19. Modes of Communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers

Mode	Frequency	Percent of responses
Email	159	97.5%
Phone-call	89	54.6%
Student forms or feedback on assignments	79	48.5%

Face-to-face meeting	68	41.7%
Text message	18	11.0%
Other-Varied	17	10.4%

Note. N=163, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to the "have a role of placement coordinator" question and then, responding to "modes of communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers".

Other-Varied: Communication is not directly with cooperating teachers (6), Video conference (5), Mail (2), Training (1), Webinar (1), Not specified (2).

Point-biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the mode of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers.

There was a statistically significant association between the size of the program and the mode of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers: Email ($r_{pb}(162)=-.222$, $p=.004$). The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year. Relatively larger size programs were less likely to choose an Email as a mode of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers and relatively smaller size programs were more likely to choose an Email as a mode of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers. Except for this finding, there were no statistically significant associations between any program characteristics and any mode of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers.

To summarize the findings related to modes of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers, five modes of communication were provided, and most respondents reported two modes of communication, and the mean was 2.53.

Regarding modes of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers, Email and Phone-call were reported as modes of communication between placement

coordinators and cooperating teachers by more than half of respondents. Communication via student forms or feedback on assignments, Face-to- face meetings, and Text messages were reported by less than half of respondents as modes of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers. Relatively larger size programs were less likely to choose an Email as a mode of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers.

Topics of Communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers

Programs who had a Placement Coordinator (182 programs) were asked to identify what topics of communication were discussed between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers. The survey provided a list of seven different topics/options of communication and the option for "Other" to describe their own topic of communication. Listed seven topics/options of communication included: Introducing/requesting student placement, Providing course information (i.e., syllabus, expectations), Providing assignment and deadline information, Improvement of practicum experiences (i.e., evaluation forms, surveys), Additional resources as requested by Cooperating Teachers, Compensation, We don't communicate. Respondents could select any and all topics applied for their program.

Representatives from 156 programs provided responses regarding topics of communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers. The number of topics selected from the list ranged from 1 to 6 ("We don't communicate" option was excluded from counting). Most respondents reported three topics of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers and the mean was 3.38. Among 156 program representatives who responded to the topics of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers, 16 (10.3%) reported only one topic; 30 (19.2%) reported two topics;

43 (27.6%) reported three topics; 23 (14.7%) reported four topics; 34 (21.8%) reported five topics; and 10 (6.4%) reported all six topics.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of communication topics between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of communication topics between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers and the size of the program.

There was a statistically significant difference in the means of total number of communication topics between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers by types of license as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 145)=4.273$, $p=.016$). Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade had more total types of communication topics (N=64, x=3.67) between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers than the programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond (N=15, x=2.53). Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade (N-69, x=3.25) were in the middle but closed with programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade. Except for this finding, there were no statistically significant differences or associations between any program characteristics and the total number of communication topics between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers.

Table 20 shows the frequency and percentage of communication topics reported by program representatives. Introducing or requesting student placement was reported by the vast

majority of program representatives (87.8%) as a topic of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers. Improvement of practicum experiences such as evaluation forms or surveys and Providing course information such as syllabus or expectations were reported by more than half of the respondents (65.4% and 60.3% respectively). Additional resources as requested by Cooperating Teachers, Providing assignment and deadline information, and Compensation were reported by less than half of the respondents (45.5%, 41.0%, and 37.8% respectively) as topics of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers. In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" topics of communication. Overall, 10.3% of responses were collected from Other. Representatives from seven programs (4.5%) reported that their Placement Coordinator did not communicate with Cooperating Teachers.

Table 20. Topics of Communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers

Topic	Frequency	Percent of responses
Introducing/ Requesting student placement	137	87.8%
Improvement of practicum experiences (i.e., evaluation forms, surveys)	102	65.4%
Providing course information (i.e., syllabus, expectations)	94	60.3%
Additional resources as requested by cooperating teachers	71	45.5%
Providing assignment and deadline information	64	41.0%
Compensation	59	37.8%

Other-Varied	16	10.3%
We don't communicate	7	4.5%

Note. N=156, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to the "have a role of placement coordinator" question and then, responding to "topics of communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers".

Other-Varied: Student progress and support (12), Appreciation (3), Accreditation expectations (1).

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of the program) and the topic of communication between Placement Coordinators and cooperating teachers. Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond.

There was a statistically significant association between Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and the type of communication topic between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers: Introducing/requesting student placement ($p=.050$, Cramer's $V=.145$) and Compensation ($p=.010$, Cramer's $V=.192$). Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose Introducing/requesting student placement and Compensation and programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose Introducing/requesting student placement and Compensation as topics of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers. Except for these findings, there were no statistically significant associations between any program characteristics and the topic of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers.

To summarize the findings related to topics of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers, among six communication topics provided (excluding the "we don't communicate" option), most respondents reported three topics of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers and the mean was 3.38. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade had more total types of communication topics between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers than the programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond.

Regarding topics of communication between University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers, Introducing or requesting student placement, Improvement of practicum experiences, and Providing course information were reported by more than half of the respondents as topics of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers. Additional resources as requested by Cooperating Teachers, Providing assignment and deadline information, and Compensation were reported by less than half of the respondents as topics of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose Introducing/requesting student placement and Compensation as topics of communication between Placement Coordinators and Cooperating Teachers.

Same questions, such as the requirement of communication with cooperating teachers, modes and topics of communication with cooperating teachers, were asked by the roles of placement coordinators and university supervisors. Though the number of programs reported to have these roles (placement coordinator N=182, university supervisor N=203) in their program was different, the findings may be compared by the roles. Regarding a requirement of communication with cooperating teachers, 89.7% of respondents indicated that they have a

requirement of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers while 59.0% of respondents indicated that they have a requirement of communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers.

In terms of the number of communications per semester, the average communication between a university supervisor and a cooperating teacher was 6.02 while the average communication between a placement coordinator and a cooperating teacher was 2.66. Representatives from two programs reported no communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers in their program while representatives from 16 programs reported no communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers in their program.

The average number of communication modes between university supervisors and cooperating teachers was 3.75 and the average number of communication modes between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers was 2.53. Email and Face-to-face meeting were selected by the vast majority of respondents as modes of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers and Email and Phone-call were selected by the vast majority of respondents as modes of communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers by using five options provided.

The average number of communication topics between university supervisors and cooperating teachers was 4.01 and the average number of communication topics between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers was 3.38 among six topics provided. Providing course information and improvement of practicum experiences were selected by the vast majority of respondents as topics of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers and Introducing/requesting student placement and Improvement of

practicum experiences were selected by the vast majority of respondents as topics of communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers.

Findings of Research Question 5

Research Question 5 explores practicum supervision practices, such as if the program conducted the on-site supervision visits, and if so, how often; modes of supervision programs used other than on-site supervision; if formal meetings were required between cooperating teachers and practicum students, and if so, the minimum number of formal meetings required per semester; if cooperating teachers' feedback was required to practicum students, cooperating teachers' roles in supervision; who was involved in evaluation of practicum students; if the program used a formal tool to evaluate students, and if so, what types of tools were used, and who completed the evaluation tool, and how these supervision practices are related to program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensure, and the size of the program). Descriptive statistics will be reported first and statistically significant group differences and/or associations with program characteristics follow.

Conducting On-site Supervision Visits

To understand practicum supervision practices, the survey included several questions focused on supervision. Regarding the topic of on-site supervision visits, 188 program representatives (82.8%) reported that they conducted on-site supervision visits during practica and 21 program representatives (9.3%) reported that they did not conduct on-site supervision visits.

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a

licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of the program) and the variable: Conducting on-site supervision visits.

There was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and Conducting on-site supervision visits (p=.010, Cramer's V=.178). Licenses were defined by three types; 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose Conducting on-site supervision visits option and programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose Conducting on-site supervision visits option. Except for this finding, there were no statistically significant associations between any program characteristics and Conducting on-site supervision visits.

Programs who conducted on-site supervision visits were asked to identify the typical number of on-site supervision visits per practicum student per semester. Representatives from 174 programs provided responses regarding the typical number of on-site supervision visits. Table 21 shows the frequency and percentage of on-site supervision visits. An outlier response, "everyday", and responses that could not be quantified such as "varies", "know about only student teaching", and person who supervise (i.e., university supervisor), were excluded from analyses.

Most of the respondents reported that they conducted on-site supervision visits two to four times per practicum student during a semester and the mean number of on-site supervision visits was 3.86 (SD=2.75). The range of the number of on-site supervision visits varied from 1 to

16 in a semester. Representatives from 26 programs (14.9%) reported one supervision visit per semester while one representative from one program reported that they conducted 16 on-site visits per practicum student per semester.

Table 21. Number of On-site Supervision Visits per Student per Semester

Number of on-site supervision visits	Frequency	Percent of responses
1-3	94	54.0%
4-6	60	34.5%
7-9	10	5.8%
10-12	7	4.0%
Over 12	3	1.7%

Note. N=174, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to the "conduct on-site supervision visits" question and then, responding to "Number of on-site supervision visits per practicum student per semester".

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of on-site supervision visits by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of on-site supervision visits and the size of the program. However, there was not a statistically significant difference or association in the total number of on-site supervision visits depending on any program characteristic.

To summarize the findings related to Conducting on-site supervision, 82.8% of respondents reported that they conducted on-site supervision visits during practica. Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose Conducting on-site supervision visits option than programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade. Regarding the frequency of on-site

supervision visits, most of the respondents reported that they conducted on-site supervision visits two to four times per practicum student per semester and the mean number of on-site supervision visits was 3.86.

Modes of Supervision Other than On-site Supervision Visits

Regarding the mode of supervision, a list of four possible modes of supervision was provided in the survey to indicate the modes of supervision of practicum students other than the on-site supervision visits as well as a response option for "No other modes except direct supervision through on-site visits". The four modes of supervision provided included: Video-taped activities, Live-streaming video, Student journals/written reflections, and Cooperating teacher reports and evaluation. Respondents could select any and all modes of supervision provided for their program. An Other category was also provided to describe other modes of supervision that were not listed.

Regarding modes of supervision other than on-site supervision, 205 program representatives provided responses using the four categories. Most respondents reported three different modes of supervision and the mean number of modes of supervision was 2.68. Among these respondents who responded to this question, seven (3.4%) reported one mode of supervision other than on-site supervision; 72 (35.1%) reported two modes; 105 (51.2%) reported three modes; and 21 (10.2%) reported four modes of supervision other than on-site supervision visits.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of supervision modes other than on-site supervision by program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, and types of licensures) and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of supervision modes

other than on-site supervision and the size of the program. However, there was not a statistically significant difference or association in the total number of supervision modes other than on-site supervision depending on any program characteristics.

Table 22 displays the frequency and percentage of modes of supervision other than on-site supervision visits reported by program representatives. Respondents from 209 programs provided responses focused on modes of supervision other than on-site supervision visits. Cooperating teacher reports and evaluation and Student journals and written reflections were reported by the vast majority of program representatives (95.7% and 92.3% respectively). Video-taped activities was another type of supervision reported by around two thirds of the respondents (61.2%). Live-streaming video as a mode of supervision was reported by the fewest respondents (13.9%). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" modes of supervision other than on-site supervision. Overall, 2.9% of responses were noted under "Other". Representatives from 4 programs (1.9%) reported that they did not have other modes of supervision other than direct supervision through on-site visits.

Table 22. Modes of Supervision Other than On-site Supervision Visits

Mode	Frequency	Percent of responses
Cooperating teacher reports and evaluation	200	95.7%
Student journals/written reflections	193	92.3%
Video-taped activities	128	61.2%
Live-streaming video	29	13.9%
Other-Varied	6	2.9%

No other modes except direct supervision through on-site visits	4	1.9%

Note. N=209, reflects the number of respondents responding to the "other modes of supervision other than on-site supervision".

Other-Varied: Assignments (2), Course discussion (2), Other communicative methods (2)

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the modes of supervision other than on-site supervision visits. However, there was not a statistically significant association between any mode of supervision and any program characteristics.

To summarize the findings related to modes of supervision other than on-site supervision visits, four modes of communication were provided in the list, and most respondents reported three different modes of supervision and the mean number of responses was 2.68.

Regarding modes of supervision other than on-site supervision visits, Cooperating teacher reports and evaluation, Student journals and written reflections, Video-taped activities were reported by more than half of respondents as modes of supervision other than on-site supervision visits. Live-streaming video was reported by less than half of respondents as a mode of supervision other than on-site supervision visits.

Formal Meeting between Cooperating Teachers and Students during Practica

To understand the roles of Cooperating Teachers in supervision, a question was provided to ask if formal meetings were required between Cooperating Teachers and Practicum Students during practica. More than two thirds of respondents (67.4%) reported that they had a requirement of formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and Practicum Students during practica.

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the variable: Having a requirement of a formal

meeting between Cooperating Teachers and Practicum Students during practica. However, there was not a statistically significant association between the variable of Having a requirement of a formal meeting between Cooperating Teachers and Practicum Students during practica and any program characteristics.

Once respondents reported they required formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and Practicum Students, the following question asked respondents to report the minimum number of meetings required. Regarding the minimum number of required meetings between a Cooperating Teacher and a Practicum Student per semester, 142 programs provided responses. Table 23 shows the frequency and percentage of the minimum number of required meetings between a Cooperating Teacher and a Practicum Student per semester. Outliers, "everyday", and responses, such as "No minimum", "on-going", "as needed" and "60 hours", were excluded from analyses.

Most respondents reported that their programs required a minimum of 2 to 4 times of formal meetings between a cooperating teacher and a practicum student per semester ($x=4.13$, $SD=3.86$). The range of minimum number of meetings was varied, from 1 to 24. Representatives from 18 programs (12.7%) reported only one meeting while one representative from one program reported 24 meetings required between a cooperating teacher and a practicum student per semester.

Table 23. Number of Minimum Required Formal Meetings between a Practicum Student and a Cooperating Teacher Per Semester

Number of formal meetings	Frequency	Percent of responses
1-2	63	44.4%

3-4	48	33.8%
5-8	13	9.2%
9-12	10	7.0%
Over 12	8	5.6%

Note. N=142, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to the "have a requirement of formal meetings between practicum students and cooperating teachers" question and then, responding to "Number of required minimum meetings between a practicum student and a cooperating teacher".

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the minimum number of formal meetings required between a Cooperating Teacher and a Practicum Student by program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, the types of licensures) and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the minimum number of formal meetings required between a Cooperating Teacher and a Practicum Student and the size of the program. However, there was not a statistically significant difference or association in the minimum number of formal meetings required between a Cooperating Teacher and a Practicum Student depending on any program characteristics.

To summarize the findings related to formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and Students during practica, more than two thirds of respondents reported that they had a requirement of formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and Practicum Students during practica. Regarding the minimum number of required meetings between a Cooperating Teacher and a Practicum Student per semester, most of the respondents reported that their programs required a minimum of 2 to 4 times of formal meetings between a Cooperating Teacher and a Practicum Student per semester and the mean number of required meetings was 4.13.

Cooperating Teachers' Role in Providing Feedback to Students

The survey also included questions which asked if cooperating teachers' feedback to students is required during practica and the roles of cooperating teachers in providing feedback. Regarding the requirement of cooperating teachers' feedback, 188 respondents (82.8%) reported that their program required cooperating teachers' feedback to students during practica and 21 respondents reported that they did not have such requirement for cooperating teacher feedback (18 responses were missing).

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the variable: Requirement of Cooperating Teachers' feedback to Practicum Students. However, there was not a statistically significant association between the variable of Requirement of Cooperating Teachers' feedback to Practicum Students and any program characteristics.

A list of four different roles was provided in the survey to indicate Cooperating Teachers' roles in providing feedback. Listed four roles included: Providing informal feedback to practicum students in the classroom, Completing published (or developed) assessment/ evaluation tools, Having required meetings with practicum students, and Having required meetings with the student and University Supervisor or Placement Coordinator. Respondents could choose any and all applicable cooperating teachers' roles for their program. Also, in case the roles of Cooperating Teachers were not listed, an Other category was available to describe the program's roles of Cooperating Teachers providing feedback.

Representatives from 208 programs provided responses and most respondents reported four roles of Cooperating Teachers in providing feedback to students during practica, with a mean of 3.0 roles. Among these 208 program representatives; 16 (7.7%) reported only one role;

48 (23.1%) reported two roles; 64 (30.8%) reported three roles; and representatives from 80 programs (38.5%) reported all four roles of cooperating teachers in providing feedback.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of Cooperating Teachers' roles in providing feedback by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of Cooperating Teachers' roles in providing feedback and the size of the program. However, there were no statistically significant differences or associations in the total number of Cooperating Teachers' roles in providing feedback by program characteristics.

Table 24 displays the frequency and percentage of cooperating teachers' roles in providing feedback reported by program representatives. Most of the respondents (96.6%) selected Providing informal feedback to practicum students in the classroom as a cooperating teachers' role in providing feedback. Completing published (or developed) assessment/ evaluation tools was selected by more than three fourths of respondents (78.4%). Having required meetings with practicum students was reported by around two thirds of respondents (65.4%). Having required meetings with the student and university supervisor or placement coordinator was reported by the fewest number of respondents, though it was more than half (59.6%). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" cooperating teachers' roles in providing feedback. Overall, 1.0% of responses were collected from Other.

Table 24. Roles of Cooperating Teachers in Providing Feedback to Students during Practica

Role	Frequency	Percent of responses
Providing informal feedback to practicum students in the classroom	201	96.6%
Completing published (or developed) assessment or evaluation tools	163	78.4%
Having required meetings with practicum students	136	65.4%
Having required meetings with the students and university supervisor or placement coordinator	124	59.6%
Other-Varied	2	1.0%

Note. N=208, reflects the number of respondents responding to the "roles of cooperating teachers in providing feedback to students".

Other-Varied: Cooperating teachers do not have specific roles (1), Did not provide description (1).

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the types of Cooperating Teachers' roles in providing feedback to students during practica. However, there was not a statistically significant association between any types of Cooperating Teachers' role and any program characteristics.

To summarize the findings related to Cooperating Teachers' roles in providing feedback to students during practica, 82.8% of respondents reported that their program required Cooperating Teachers' feedback to students during practica. Among four roles provided, most respondents reported four roles of Cooperating Teachers in providing feedback to students during practica, and the mean was 3.0.

Regarding Cooperating Teachers' roles in providing feedback to students, Providing informal feedback to practicum students in the classroom, Completing published (or developed)

assessment/ evaluation tools, Having required meetings with practicum students, and Having required meetings with the student and university supervisor or placement coordinator were selected by more than half of respondents.

People Who Are Involved in Evaluating Students during Practica

A survey question was provided to understand who were involved in evaluating students in their practicum placement. The survey provided a list of four different people who could be involved in students' evaluation in practica and an Other option to indicate a person who was not included in the provided list. Provided four options included: Placement Coordinator, University Supervisor, Cooperating Teacher, and Student. Respondents could choose any and all people included in evaluation on the list provided.

Representatives from 208 programs provided responses regarding this question by using the list. The number of people who could be involved in students' evaluation selected from the list ranged from 0 to 4 and most of the program representatives reported three people were involved in students' evaluation, with a mean of 2.57. Among these 208 program representatives who responded to the question, two respondents did not select any of the options provided, but selected "Other" and therefore are considered to have reported none of the options provided. A small number of respondents (N=15, 7.3%) were reported to have only one person involved in evaluating practicum students; 69 (33.5%) reported two people involved in evaluation; Most respondents (N=112, 54.4%) reported three people involved in evaluation. Relatively few programs (N=10, 4.9%) were reported to have four people involved in students' evaluation.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of people involved in students' evaluation by program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, and types of licensures) and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to

understand the association between the total number of people involved in students' evaluation and the size of the program. However, there was no statistically significant difference or association in the total number of people involved in students' evaluation depending on any program characteristics.

Table 25 displays the frequency and percentage of people who were involved in evaluating students in their practicum placement reported by program representatives. Most of the respondents reported the Cooperating Teachers and the University Supervisor were involved in practicum students' evaluation (92.3% and 87.5% respectively). More than half of the respondents (57.7%) reported that the Student was involved in evaluating their evaluation and the Placement Coordinator was selected by the fewest number of respondents (16.8%). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, 7.7% of respondents indicated "Other" person who was involved in practicum students' evaluation.

Table 25. The People who are Involved in Evaluating Students in Practica

Person	Frequency	Percent of responses
Cooperating teacher	192	92.3%
University supervisor	182	87.5%
Student	120	57.7%
Placement coordinator	35	16.8%
Other-varied	16	7.7%

Note. N=208, reflects the number of respondents responding to the "who is involved in evaluating students in their practicum placement".

Other: Course instructor (11), School staff (2), Campus administrator (2), Non-teaching faculty and faculty (1).

To examine any association between the program characteristics and the person involved in evaluating practicum students, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation analyses were conducted. However, there was no statistically significant association between the person involved in evaluating practicum students and any program characteristics.

To summarize the findings related to the people who are involved in evaluating students, among four people, most of the program representatives reported three people were involved in students' evaluation, with a mean of 2.57. Cooperating Teachers, University Supervisors, and Students were reported by more than half of respondents as they were involved in practicum students' evaluation. Placement Coordinators were selected by less than half respondents as they were involved in practicum students' evaluation.

Use of a Tool for Evaluation during Practica

To understand tools used for evaluating students in their practica, a question asked if programs used a formal tool, and if so, what tool they used, who completed the tool, and if using the tool was a requirement in their programs. Regarding the question of using a formal tool to evaluate practicum students, representatives from 209 programs (92.1%) responded. Among these 209, respondents from 172 programs (82.3%) reported that they used a formal tool to evaluate practicum students.

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of the program) and the variable: Using a formal tool for evaluating students. Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond. The

size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year.

There was a statistically significant association between offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade and the Use of a formal tool to evaluate students (p=.012, Cramer's V=.194), and the association was between strong and very strong. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were less likely to Use a formal tool to evaluate students and programs offering licensure other than starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to to Use a formal tool to evaluate students in any of their practicum placements.

There was a statistically significant association between the size of the program and the Use of a formal tool to evaluate students ($r_{pb}(191)=.143$, $p=.048$). Relatively larger size programs were more likely to Use a formal tool to evaluate students and relatively smaller size programs were less likely to Use a formal tool to evaluate students in any of their practicum placements. Except for these two findings, there were no statistically significant associations between program characteristics and the Use of a formal tool to evaluate students.

Among these 172 who indicated that they used a formal tool to evaluate practicum students, 146 program representatives reported that their program Required the use of formal tools for evaluating practicum students while 21 respondents reported that it was Not required.

Point biserial correlation analyses and Chi-square tests were performed to examine any association between program characteristics and the variable: Requirement of using formal tools for students' evaluation. However, there was not a statistically significant association between the Requirement of using a formal tool and any program characteristics.

A list of 11 possible evaluation tools was provided in the survey for these respondents to indicate the tool they used. Listed 11 tools included: Environment Rating size (ERS), Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT), Child-Caregiver Observation System (C-COS), Child Development Program Evaluation size, Caregiver Interaction size (CIS), Classroom Practices Inventory (CPI), Early Childhood Classroom Observation Measure (ECCOM), Observational Record of the Caregiving Environment (ORCE), Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA), and State Required Tool/Evaluation.

Respondents could choose any and all eligible tools for their program. Also in case the tool used in their program was not listed, an Other category was provided to indicate their own tool. Among 172 program representatives who indicated that using a formal tool to evaluate students, 162 program representatives provided responses on types of evaluation tools that they used and 91 program representatives provided responses using the 11 categories. The range of total tools used varied from 1 to 3. Most respondents reported using one tool for evaluation, with a mean of 1.14. Among these 91 respondents who reported the evaluation tool by using the listed evaluation tool, 82 respondents (90.1%) reported only one tool. Relatively few program respondents reported using two or three tools; five respondents (5.5%) reported two tools, and four respondents (4.4%) reported three tools used in evaluation in their programs.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of tools used in students' evaluation by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of tools used in students' evaluation and the size of the program. The size of the program was defined based on the number of graduates in the 2018-2019 academic year.

There was a statistically significant association between the total number of tools used to evaluate students and the size of the program ($r(81)=.277$, $p=.011$). Relatively larger size programs were more likely to use more tools to evaluate students and relatively smaller size programs were less likely to use more tools to evaluate students during practica.

Table 26 displays the frequency and percentage of evaluation tools reported by program representatives. Around half of respondents (45.7%) reported the State required tool. CLASS (7.4%), ERS (6.2%), Child Development Program Evaluation Scale (1.9%), CPI (1.2%), ECCOM (1.2%), and ORCE (0.6%) were reported by less than 10% of respondents that they were used in evaluation of practicum students. In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" tools they used. Overall, 61.7% of responses were collected from Other. Program created tools were reported by around one third of respondents (30.9%). The tools that the program developed based on other tools and Danielson Framework were reported by less than 10% of respondents (8.6% and 6.8% respectively).

Table 26. Evaluation Tool used in Practica

Tool	Frequency	Percent of responses
State Required Tool/ Evaluation	74	45.7%
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)	12	7.4%
Environment Rating Scale (ERS)	10	6.2%
Child Development Program Evaluation Scale	3	1.9%
Classroom Practices Inventory (CPI)	2	1.2%
Early Childhood Classroom Observation Measure (ECOOM)	2	1.2%

Observational Record of the Caregiving Environment (ORCE)	1	0.6%
Other- Program's own tool (created)	50	30.9%
Other- Program's developed tool based on other tools	14	8.6%
Other- Danielson Framework	11	6.8%
Other- Dispositions Assessment	7	4.3%
Other- Candidate Preservice Assessment of Student Teaching related	5	3.1%
Other- Aligned to CAEP	2	1.2%
Other-Varied	11	6.8%

Note. N=162, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to "use a formal tool to evaluate students in their practicum placement" question and then, responding to "types of tool used".

Other: Capstone project (1), No description provided (10).

To examine any association between the program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensure, and the size of the program) and types of tool used in evaluating students during practica, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation analyses were conducted. However, there was no statistically significant association between any specific evaluation tool and any program characteristics.

To summarize the findings related to the evaluation tool, 82.3% of respondents (N=172) reported that they used a formal tool to evaluate practicum students and 146 program representatives reported that their program required the use of formal tools for evaluating practicum students. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were less likely to use a formal tool to evaluate students and relatively larger size programs

were more likely to use a formal tool to evaluate students. Most respondents reported using one tool for evaluation, with a mean of 1.14. Relatively larger size programs were more likely to use more tools to evaluate students during practica.

Regarding the type of evaluation tool used, around half of respondents reported they used the State required tool in their programs. CLASS, ERS, Child development program evaluation scale, CPI, ECCOM, and ORCE were reported by less than 10% of respondents as they were used in evaluation of practicum students. In addition to the tools in the provided list, Program created tools were reported by around one third of respondents. The tools that the program developed based on other tools and Danielson Framework were reported by less than 10% of respondents.

Completers of a Tool for Evaluation

A list of five possible people who could evaluate students using the tools was provided in the survey for the respondents to indicate the program's practice. Listed five people included: Placement Coordinator, University Supervisor, Course Instructor, Cooperating Teacher, and Student. Respondents could choose all eligible people for their program. Also, in case the person who completed the tool in their program was not listed, an Other category was provided to describe the person.

The range of the number of people who completed the evaluation tool varied from 0 to 4. The majority of respondents reported two or three people who completed the tools, and the mean was 2.43. Among 164 respondents who reported the people who completed the tool, one respondent did not select any of the options provided, but selected "Other" and therefore is considered to have reported none of the required options provided; 26 respondents (15.9%) reported only one person; 54 respondents (32.9%) reported two people; 68 respondents (41.5%)

reported three people; and a representative from 15 programs (9.1%) reported four people completed the evaluation tool in their program.

One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the total number of completers of the evaluation tool by program characteristics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to understand the association between the total number of completers of the evaluation tool and the size of the program. However, there was not a statistically significant difference or association in the total number of completers of a tool depending on any program characteristics.

Table 27 displays the frequency and percentage for each option of the person who completed the evaluation tool reported by program representatives. A large majority of respondents reported that the Cooperating Teacher and the University Supervisor completed the evaluation tool (82.9% and 79.3% respectively). Around half of respondents (46.8%) reported that the Student completed the tool. The Course Instructor was reported as the person who completed the evaluation tool by around one third of respondents (29.3%). Placement Coordinator was reported as the person who completed the evaluation tool by the fewest respondents (4.3%). In addition to the options that were provided in the survey, respondents indicated "Other" people who completed the evaluation tool. Overall, 1.2% of responses were collected from Other.

Table 27. The People who Complete the Evaluation Tool

Person	Frequency	Percent of responses
Cooperating teacher	136	82.9%
University supervisor	130	79.3%
Student	76	46.8%

Course instructor	48	29.3%
Placement coordinator	7	4.3%
Other-Varied	2	1.2%

Note. N=164, reflects the number of respondents answering "yes" to "use a formal tool to evaluate students in their practicum placement" question and then, responding to "who completes the tool".

Other-Varied: NTA (1), Campus administrator (1).

To examine any association between the program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of the program) and the completers of the evaluation tool, Chi-square tests and Point-biserial correlation analyses were conducted. Licenses were defined by three types: 1) Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 2) Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and 3) Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond.

There was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade and the evaluation tool completer: University Supervisor (p=.013, Cramer's V=.189), and the association was between strong and very strong. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were less likely to choose the University Supervisor and programs offering licensure other than starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were more likely to choose the University Supervisor as a completer of evaluation tool.

There was a statistically significant association between programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade and the evaluation tool completer: University Supervisor (p=.002, Cramer's V=.242) and Course Instructor (p=.039, Cramer's V=.157). Programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose the University Supervisor and programs offering licensure other than

starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose the University Supervisor as a completer of evaluation tool. One the other hand, programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were less likely to choose the Course Instructor and programs offering licensure other than starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose the Course Instructor as a completer of evaluation tool. Except for these findings, there were no statistically significant associations between any program characteristics and any evaluation tool completer.

To summarize the findings related to evaluation tool completers, most of the respondents reported two or three people who completed the evaluation tools, and the mean was 2.43. The Cooperating Teacher and the University Supervisor were reported by more than half of respondents to complete the evaluation tool. The Student, the Course Instructor, and the Placement Coordinator were reported by less than half of respondents as people who completed the evaluation tool. Programs offering licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade were less likely to choose the University Supervisor as a completer of the evaluation tool. One the other hand, programs offering licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade were more likely to choose the University Supervisor and less likely to choose the Course Instructor as completers of the evaluation tool.

Figure 2. Statistically Significant Group Difference/Association/Correlation with Program Characteristics

Program Characteristics		RQ1. Practicum Setting & Intensity				RQ2. Learning Experience		RQ3. CT Qualification			RQ4. Support and Communication with CT			RQ5. Supervision Practice				
		Criteria for Setting	Consideration for Setting	Types of Setting	Intensity of Practica	Learning Opportunity	Content Area	Education Level	Work Experience	Type of License	Support for CT	Modes of Communication	Topics of Communication	Conduct On-site Supervision	Modes of Supervision	CT Role in Supervision	Evaluation Tool	Evaluator/Complete
SOE																		
Program Size		H		A		N				A	A	N, A	A				H, P	
Licensure option		G, A		G, A		G, A												
License Type	0-8	A		A			A	A				A					NH	A
	PreK+	A	A	G, A			A	A					G, A	H				A
	0+					A												

Note. **0-8**: Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, **PreK+**: Licensure starting at PreK/K and extending through any older grade, **0+:** Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond

Note. **G**: Group difference in total, **A**: Association with sub option, **P**: Positive correlation with total, **N**: Negative correlation with total, **H**: Association with Have criteria/requirement, **NH**: Association with Not have criteria/requirement,

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

Practicum is an important part of the teacher preparation process. Preservice teachers have the opportunity to experience in authentic context, interact with children, link their understanding to child development, apply diverse teaching strategies, synthesize educational theory with practice, and grow as effective teachers through practicum experiences. These are general and expected outcomes practicum experiences. However, there have been limited efforts to examine 4-year early childhood teacher practicum practices at a national level. This study provides deeper understanding on 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs practicum practices across the US.

This study examined practicum practices in 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs with five research questions: 1. Criteria for practicum placement (criteria, considerations, types of acceptable settings, intensity of practicum experiences, classroom experiences by child age range), 2. Preservice teachers' learning opportunities (learning experiences, content area), 3. Cooperating teacher's qualifications (minimum education level, working experience, types of licensure required), 4. Support for and communication with cooperating teachers, 5. Practicum supervision (on-site supervision, mode of supervision, cooperating teachers' role in supervision, types of tool for evaluation). Below are summaries of findings for each research question.

Research Question 1 explores the criteria for practicum placements, types of acceptable practicum settings, the intensity of practica in classrooms by child age range. Regarding criteria for placement settings, most respondents reported that they had criteria for placement settings for practica and selected more than three criteria and additional considerations. Type of program, Ages of children, and Location of the program were selected more often than Racial, ethnic,

cultural, and economic diversity in the program, Inclusive program, Accreditation of program, and QRIS ratings of programs as required criteria for practicum placement.

Regarding additional considerations for placement setting, Ongoing partnerships with schools or districts, Feedback from previous teacher candidates or supervisors, and Principal recommendations were selected more often than Racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity in the program, Inclusive program, Ages of children enrolled, Type of program, Accreditation of program, QRIS ratings of the program, School report card or other K-12 accountability system indicators as additional considerations for placement setting.

In addition, a majority of respondents selected more than three types of settings as acceptable placement settings. Public school, Head Start, Private school, Community-based childcare, On-campus childcare, and Self-contained classroom/program were selected more often than Itinerant early intervention program and Family childcare home as acceptable types of settings.

Regarding number of practica provided, a majority of respondents reported that they provide three or four practica and the average total hours across all practica were slightly less than 300 hours. Programs reported practica in classrooms of early elementary, kindergarteners, and preschoolers were offered more often than in classrooms of infants and toddlers.

Research Question 2 explores learning experiences and content areas that teacher preparation programs have designated during practica. Planning learning opportunities, Observing individual children, and Implementing learning opportunities were reported by virtually all programs. Regarding content areas for designated practica, slightly more than half of the respondents reported that their program had designated practica related to a specific content area. Language/ Literacy/ Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social studies were selected more

often than Social-Emotional/ Behavior guidance, Art/ Aesthetics, Physical education, Outdoor activity as content areas.

Research Question 3 explores cooperating teachers' qualifications such as required minimum education level, required minimum work experience, and required types of licenses. Regarding cooperating teachers' required education qualification, more than half of the programs required a minimum of a Bachelor's degree for cooperating teachers. However, there was a difference in cooperating teachers' education qualification by practica. For example, more than two thirds of practica in classrooms of early elementary aged children required a minimum of Bachelor's degree for cooperating teachers while only 40% of the practica in classrooms of infants and toddlers required a minimum of Bachelor's degree for cooperating teachers.

Regarding the minimum work experience required for cooperating teachers, on average, around three years of work experience was required for cooperating teachers across practica. However, the average of the minimum years of work experience of cooperating teachers in infant and toddler classrooms as well as preschool classrooms was less than three years while the average of minimum years of work experience of cooperating teachers in early elementary classrooms was over three years.

Regarding types of required license for cooperating teachers, more than half of the respondents reported that their program did not require any type of license for cooperating teachers in practica in classrooms of infants and toddlers. On the other hand, in practica in preschool classrooms, one fourth of the respondents reported that their program did not require any type of license in practica for cooperating teachers and in practica in early elementary aged classrooms, one tenth of respondents reported that their program did not require any type of license in practica for cooperating teachers.

Research Question 4 explores the types of support for cooperating teachers and communication between cooperating teachers and University. Guidelines and Orientation were reported more often than Training and Mentoring as support for cooperating teachers. Regarding communication with cooperating teachers, most respondents reported a requirement of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers while around half of respondents indicated a requirement of communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers. Communications with a university supervisor were reported more frequently than communications with placement coordinator. Number of communications between a university supervisor and a cooperating teacher was twice as many as the number of communications between a placement coordinator and a cooperating teacher. More topics of communication were selected in the communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers than in the communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers. Providing course information and Improvement of practicum were selected often as topics of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers while Introducing/requesting student placement was selected often as a topic of communication between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers. Compensation was selected least as a communication topic when universities communicate with cooperating teachers.

Research Question 5 explores practicum supervision practices, such as on-site supervision visits, modes of supervision, cooperating teachers' roles in supervision, and evaluation tools. Regarding the on-site supervision visits, the majority of respondents reported their program conducts on-site supervision, and the frequency of visits was between three and four. Cooperating teacher reports and evaluation, Student journals and written reflections, and Video-taped activities were used as modes of supervision frequently.

Regarding cooperating teachers' roles in supervision, more than two thirds of respondents reported that their program had a requirement of formal meetings between Cooperating Teachers and Practicum Students and the average number of meetings was around four. As cooperating teachers' roles, Providing informal feedback to practicum students in the classroom, Completing evaluation tools, Having required meetings with practicum students, and Having required meetings with the student and university supervisor or placement coordinator were selected.

Regarding evaluation tools, a majority of the respondents indicated that their program used a formal tool to evaluate practicum students and many of them were required to use a formal tool. Most respondents reported using one type of tool for evaluation. Regarding the type of evaluation tool used, around half of respondents reported they used the State required tool in their programs and the others used diverse evaluation tools. Most respondents reported that Cooperating Teachers, University Supervisors and Students completed the evaluation tool.

In addition to the findings of each research question, this study explores how these findings related to program characteristics (i.e., located in a School of Education, having a licensure option, types of licensures, and the size of program). Followings are the findings from the comparisons by and association with program characteristics. After the short report of findings from the comparisons/ associations with program characteristics, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory will be used to explore and interpret the findings by linking with expectations of factors in each system level (See pp. 13-19).

Findings from Program Characteristics

Having a Licensure Option

The majority of participating programs (91.6%) reported that they have options for teacher licensure in early childhood education. Programs Having a licensure option reported

more criteria for placement settings than programs Not having a licensure option and were more likely to choose Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the program and Location relative to the institution as placement criteria. Programs Having a licensure option had a lower number of acceptable types of settings totals than programs Not having a licensure option.

Programs Having a licensure option had a higher mean number of total learning experiences than programs Not having a licensure option and more often choose a IFSP/IEP planning as a learning experience. Lastly, programs Having a licensure option required a higher minimum education level for cooperating teachers in practica in preschool classrooms than programs Not having a licensure option.

Types of Licenses

Regarding types of licensures, 105 programs offered licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade, 80 programs offered licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade, and Licenses starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond were reported from 20 program representatives. Programs may have different practicum characteristics by types of licensure offered. These are the findings related to each type of license.

Licensure Starting at Birth and Extending as far as 3rd Grade. Licensure starting at Birth and extending as far as 3rd grade includes the youngest age range of children among three types of licenses. These programs were more likely to choose QRIS rating of program and Ages of children enrolled as practicum placement criteria and more likely to choose On-campus childcare, Community-based childcare, and Head Start as acceptable settings. Moreover, these programs were more likely to choose an Outdoor activity as a content area for designated practica. In terms of communication mode between a University Supervisor and Cooperating

Teachers, they were less likely to choose Face-to-face meetings as a mode of communication and less likely to use a formal tool to evaluate students.

Licensure Starting at Pre-K/K and Extending through Any Older Grade. Licensure starting at Pre-K/K and extending through any older grade includes the oldest age range of children among three types of licenses. These programs were less likely to choose QRIS rating of program as a placement criterion and more likely to choose Principal recommendations as an additional consideration for practicum placements. These programs had a lower number of acceptable types of settings than other programs and were less likely to choose On-campus childcare, Community-based childcare, Head Start, Family childcare home, and Itinerant early intervention classroom/program as acceptable practicum settings. Moreover, these programs were less likely to choose Art, Social-Emotional/Behavior guidance, Physical education, and Outdoor activity as content areas for designated practica.

Licensure Starting at Birth and Extending to 4th Grade or Beyond. Licensure starting at Birth and extending to 4th grade or beyond includes the broadest age range of children among three types of licenses. With regard to learning opportunities for practicum students, these programs were more likely to choose a Parent conference as a learning experience.

Program Size

The information about the size of the program was collected through the number of graduates in the 2018 through the 2019 academic year. The range of the total number of graduates varied, from 0 to 1000, and the average number of graduates was 35, including both with licensure option and without licensure option within a program.

Relatively larger size programs were more likely to have criteria for placement settings and offered fewer types of learning experiences during practica. Relatively larger size programs

used fewer modes of communication when University Supervisors communicate with Cooperating Teachers and were more likely to use a formal tool and more likely to use more tools to evaluate students during practica.

No Association

Though where the teacher programs are housed (i.e., School of Education) was used as one of program characteristics variables, there were no significant differences or associations between where programs are housed and other variables examined. There was no statistically significant difference in or association with the total number of practica, total hours of practica, total number and hours of practica by child age range, and total number of placement settings, required years of work experience for cooperating teachers across practica, depending on any program characteristics.

Based on study findings, this study can be discussed by two aspects, 1. how early childhood teacher preparation programs are ready for practicum experiences by using criteria or standards and 2. how they maintain the quality of practicum experiences to better support preservice teachers. To be more specific, the first aspect is about advanced work that is eligible and in accord with teacher preparation programs' goals, before practicum students start their practicum. The second aspect is about ongoing effort for practicum students' experiences during practicum. Both can be considered important aspects of practicum experiences.

Preparation for Practicum Experiences

Preparation for practicum experiences is usually done within the exo- and macrosystem level. Teacher preparation programs set certain standards and criteria for placement settings to ensure the quality of preservice teachers' practicum experiences. These criteria play roles within the exosystem level in teacher preparation process. Moreover, these criteria are aligned with state

policy, regulation, and NAEYC standards which are the factors within the macrosystem level. In this sense, the following discussions can be directly related to teacher preparation programs' discretion or not be under their control if topics are within the upper system level, such as macrosystem level. Findings related to preparation for practicum experience can be discussed in three major themes: the variation of practicum experiences, the common features of practicum experiences, and the imbalances of practicum experiences.

The Variation of Practicum Experiences

The variation of practicum experiences can be attributed to factors within the macrosystem level, such as state legislation and policies for teacher licensure or standards for early childhood education. Though they were not examined in the current study, the findings of study show how vary the practicum experiences.

For example, practicum experience is considered essential and necessary for preparing students to be effective teachers. However, there was a great variation in practicum experiences in terms of the number and total hours of practica required by teacher preparation programs. Findings of this study show that early childhood practicum students have 1 to 15 different practica and the range of total hours of practica were 10 to over 1300. This means that in some programs, practicum students have only one practicum throughout their teacher preparation process while students in other programs have 15 practica. Moreover, practicum student in some programs can have a total 10 hours throughout their practicum experiences while students in other programs can have more than a total of 1300 hours in their practica. This finding is aligned with the report from Quality counts (2010), which found that early childhood teacher preparation programs demonstrate great variation in hours of practicum and diversity in practicum experiences. In addition, the current study findings show what the variation looks like.

Both early childhood teacher preparation programs and national associations related to early childhood education prioritize the importance of practicum experience for practicum students' growth. For example, AACTE (2010) recommends at least 450 hours of field experience, but the findings of this study show that there are many programs whose practicum hours are less than that. Though the AACTE's recommendation might be the number of hours included the student teaching, if practicum and student teaching have different goals, the number of practicum and hours of practicum, distinct from students teaching, should be examined in terms of alignment of factors within the macrosystem level (i.e., age range and hours).

In addition, this study found the diversity of types of licenses related to early childhood education. According to the NAEYC, the age range covered in the early childhood period is 0-8 years. Though early childhood education focuses on young children, different types of licensures were available within teacher preparation programs and the types of licenses varied. The reason behind this diversity is that the type of licensure must be tied to the state policy and requirement.

However, it is unclear why states provide different types of licenses and the pros and cons by licensure type. Type of licensure is not a micro- and meso-system level issue. In a macrosystem level, type of licensure impacts the underlying systems and experiences of individual preservice teachers, and eventually children's experiences as well. To be more specific, type of license will determine the curricula offered to preservice teachers, available practicum settings, and age range of children who students will meet through their practicum. This is a great concern of many early childhood teachers or preservice teachers who move across states, too. They have fears that their learning and experiences might be useless when they move to different programs or states (Phillips, Austin, & Whitebook, 2016). Ideally there would be more consistency in the licenses offered across states, but this is a policy decision made by

entities outside of teacher preparation programs. However, early childhood education teacher preparation programs should consider the challenges students face when licenses vary so much from state to state if they value preservice teachers' learning experiences in their programs. Actually, the targeted children (0-8) are not different by states or by teacher preparation programs' boundaries, but their experiences are highly up to the type of licenses that teacher preparation programs offer.

The Common Features of Practicum Experience

The common features of practicum experience are related to elements within the exosystem level, such as teacher preparation programs' criteria and consideration for the placement settings. Teacher preparation programs can reflect on the findings of this study and reorient their criteria of practicum placement settings considering their own philosophies and goals.

According to the findings of this study, the Location relative to the institution was selected by more programs than the Racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity in the program and Inclusiveness of the program as criteria for practicum placement settings. Though NAEYC (2020) and AACTE (2020) emphasize "building positive relationships with diverse programs serving diverse learners" through their standards and policy, the philosophical criteria such as diversity and inclusion were considered less than the issue of distance, which is practical. This finding is partially supported by Early and Winton's (2001) study. Students have less than 10 semester hours of coursework related to inclusion and diversity (separately) throughout their 4-year early childhood teacher preparation and only 31% of 4-year teacher preparation programs require practica related to these contents (Early & Winton; 2001). In addition, according to Ray,

Bowman, and Robbins (2006), only 7 % of 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs require a student internship in a setting described as “diverse” or “multicultural”.

It would be important to understand whether the lower priority of inclusion and diversity is due to the lack of the early childhood programs that pursue diversity and inclusion or whether diversity and inclusion (selected by less than half of the respondents) are prioritized less by teacher preparation programs. Based on this understanding, higher early childhood standards and policy should reflect reality, and propose viable and applicable recommendations.

The other finding of this study is that qualitative and/or objective standards, such as Accreditation and QRIS ratings were selected less as criteria and considerations for the placement settings compared to other criteria or considerations that are simple or could be subjective. For example, Types of setting or children’s Age enrolled are simple and require less effort compared to Accreditation or QRIS ratings. Ongoing partnerships with practicum settings, Feedback from previous practicum students or supervisor, and Principal recommendations were selected by the majority of respondents as additional considerations for practicum placement settings while Accreditation and QRIS ratings were rarely selected as additional considerations by respondents. This finding is aligned with Sumrall et al.’s (2017) study in that accreditation and QRIS ratings of the program were selected less than type of program and age of children enrolled as criteria for student teaching placement. Like the earlier mentioned topic “diversity and inclusion”, the application of Accreditation and QRIS ratings should be considered in terms of applicability and practicality by teacher preparation program level and higher early childhood standards and policy level.

The Imbalance of Practicum Experience

The imbalance of practicum experience is related to issues within the exosystem level and eventually influences practicum students' experiences in the microsystem level. For example, teacher preparation programs recruit practicum settings and cooperating teachers based on their criteria/qualification requirement in the exosystem level. Then, preservice teachers experience these settings and meet and interact with cooperating teachers within the microsystem level.

According to the findings of this study, practica were available in classrooms of early elementary, kindergarteners, and preschoolers more than two times more often than classrooms of infants and toddlers. Considering early childhood education emphasizes both continuity and diversity of development, practicum experiences should embrace children across diverse age ranges and provide practicum students equal opportunities to experience diverse developmental features and needs.

An additional interesting finding is that programs having a licensure option were more likely to have more criteria than programs not having a licensure option and as they have more criteria, the acceptable types of settings were limited. In those programs having a licensure option, there may be more requirements and regulations regarding practicum sites, and more requirements and regulations affect the types of acceptable settings. However, teacher preparation programs should also consider that offering a licensure and having more and strict criteria might hinder practicum students from experiencing diverse types of settings. This might conflict with NAEYC (2020) standards in terms of experiencing diverse contexts and learners in diverse contexts. Teacher preparation programs can review acceptable/unacceptable settings and

consider if their criteria hinder students' experience in diverse settings and interaction with diverse children.

The qualification of cooperating teachers is interesting an criterion/consideration to ensure practicum students' successful practicum experiences. Compared to other criteria such as children's Age or Types of settings, cooperating teachers' qualifications could be more influential as many graduates and the literature related to practicum emphasized the importance of cooperating teachers' role in their practica (Akyar, 2020; Anderson, 2007; Baum & Korth 2013; Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014; Yoon & Larkin, 2018). The findings related to cooperating teachers can be discussed in two aspects, the imbalance of qualification of cooperating teachers across children's age range in the classroom and the lack of specified qualifications for cooperating teachers in practicum.

In terms of the imbalance of cooperating teachers' qualifications across the age group served in the classroom, previous research found that most 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs (82%) required a bachelor's degree while most 2-year institutions (82%) an associate degree for cooperating teachers in student teaching (Sumrall et al., 2017). With a larger sample, this study examined how cooperating teachers' qualifications differ by child age range. It was found that compared to practica in the classrooms of preschoolers and early elementary aged children, qualification requirements for cooperating teachers in practica in the classrooms with infants and toddlers were lower, including the minimum education level, required work experience, and requirement for having a license, regardless of its type.

This finding is important because cooperating teachers' lower or lack of qualifications might influence practicum students' experiences in the classroom. It is possible that the lower qualification requirements for cooperating teachers in practica in infant and toddler classrooms

are the reflection of the reality (simply because it is hard to find the eligible cooperating teachers). However in the microsystem level, cooperating teachers' lower qualification (minimum education level, work experience, and license) may influence practicum students' practicum experiences and their relationships with cooperating teachers in the classrooms if the teachers have less understanding practicum students' expectations and goals. This topic has not been studied yet, and even studies for teachers in infant and toddler classrooms have rarely been studied compared to studies for teachers in preschool or kindergarten classrooms.

The second issue related to qualification of cooperating teachers across the child age range is the limited number and types of criteria used by programs. Cooperating teachers' qualification can be proved in diverse ways, such as their professionalism, teaching efficacy, satisfaction from practicum students and university supervisors, training experience of mentoring. However, the criteria typically used for qualification are limited. Through this study, it was found that many early childhood teacher preparation programs have specified criteria for the qualifications of cooperating teachers, though cooperating teachers' qualification in practica in infants and toddlers was lower or lack of qualifications than in practica in classrooms of preschoolers or kindergarteners. Types of qualifications for cooperating teachers in practica were still limited. AACTE (2010) emphasized the importance of not only cooperating teachers' extensive teaching experiences, but also cooperating teachers' deep understanding and expertise in child development, educational theories, teaching and learning, and training experiences as mentors. Nevertheless, teacher preparation programs utilized cooperating teachers' qualification in very limited ways, focusing primarily on minimum education level, working experience, and license.

The findings of this study also show that cooperating teachers play an important role in practicum students' supervision by having formal meetings with practicum students, providing informal feedback to preservice teachers, and completing assessment tools for practicum students. These findings are aligned with the findings of Sumrall et al.'s (2017) study showing cooperating teachers' great influence in preservice students' supervision and evaluation during student teaching. It would be interesting to understand how much cooperating teachers are supported for their roles by teacher preparation programs. This issue will be discussed further in the next section.

The Procedures during Practicum Experiences

In addition to the criteria that set the stage for students' practicum experience, this study also examined what and how early childhood teacher preparation programs support the practicum students' experience throughout the practicum period. Teacher preparation programs do not just prepare practicum contexts and settings "before" practicum, but also try to provide diverse learning opportunities and work for practicum students' growth "during" practicum. In addition, teacher preparation programs try to interact with cooperating teachers so that cooperating teachers can play expected roles and responsibilities for the growth of practicum students.

Offering practicum students learning experiences and providing supervision can be more direct influences on students' experiences than setting certain criteria for placement settings and occur within relationships (microsystem level). Supporting and interacting with cooperating teachers are additional and indirect ways of supporting practicum students within the mesosystem level. When teacher preparation programs' preliminary efforts and the supports they provide during practicum experience, as well as their direct and indirect efforts, work together

harmoniously, they can meet the goal of supporting preservice teachers' preparation and development. Continuing effort during practicum can be discussed by the targets of program supports, practicum students and cooperating teachers.

Practicum Students

Teacher preparation programs' support for practicum students during practicum can be diverse. This study explored types of learning opportunities during practicum, if teacher preparation programs have a designated practica related to certain content areas, and if they do, what content areas they have. Among various learning opportunities, Planning learning opportunities, Observing individual children, and Implementing learning opportunities were selected by (almost) all respondents. La Paro et al. (2014) study found that planning was selected the most frequently as a topic for supervision feedback during student teaching among 4-year institutions. Taken together with this current study findings, most teacher preparation programs provide Planning learning opportunities, and teacher preparation programs provide supervision feedback on practicum students' planning.

On the other hand, IFSP/IEP planning, IFSP/IEP meeting, Implementing Universal Design for Learning, Meeting with resource teachers, and Parent conference were selected around half or less than half of the respondents. These learning experiences need to be experienced by preservice teachers as they are becoming teachers because they may meet diverse children in their own classroom. The study findings show that some practicum students have little experience with these types of learning opportunities in their practica. In other words, around half of practicum students might not have a practical opportunity to practice IFSP/IEP planning, IFSP/IEP meetings, Implementing Universal Design for Learning, Meeting with resource teachers, and/or Parent conference through their practica or until they actually meet

diverse children in their classroom. This might not be aligned with standards of NAEYC (2020), in terms of “learning by interacting with children who are in diverse developmental stages and have individual differences". Teacher preparation programs should review and reflect whether their learning opportunities are sufficient and diverse enough for practicum students to prepare effective teachers in diverse settings and for diverse children.

This study also examined if teacher preparation programs have designated practica related to specific content areas and the types of content area selected. It is interesting that only around half of the respondents selected the Having designated practica related to a specific content area. Early childhood education uniquely embraces all content areas and diverse topics. Young children’s curiosity and interest are open and early childhood education does not limit their interest but tries to encourage their interest in diverse ways. Thus, early childhood teachers should be prepared and practiced with diverse content areas. However, around half of the respondents reported that they did not have designated practica to address a specific content area. According to Dunst et al.’s (2020) meta-analyses study finding, preservice teachers prioritized opportunities to apply their understanding to teaching, have clinical supervision with constructive feedback, and take diverse experiences of teaching and learning during field experiences. However, if preservice teachers do not have experiences with planning and implementing specific content areas, they might not have an opportunity to learn from their teaching experiences during practicum.

This current study also examined the specific content areas identified by the respondents as areas where their program has a designated practica. Content areas related to cognitive development, such as Language/Literacy/Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social studies were selected by more than half of respondents while Social-Emotional/Behavior guidance,

Art/Aesthetics, Physical Education, and Outdoor activity were selected by less than half of respondents. This finding is partially supported by La Paro et al. 's (2014) study. According to La Paro et al. 's (2014) study, Language and Literacy were the primary content areas of supervision feedback during student teaching, though there might be differences between practicum and student teaching. However, according to Hemmeter, Santos, and Ostrosky (2008) study, both in-service and preservice early childhood education teachers wanted to learn more about children's Social-Emotional development and guidance when they selected among various topic options. Early childhood teacher preparation programs need to review the study findings related to content areas and compare with their practices to determine if they emphasize cognitive areas too much, if the emphasis on content areas is balanced, if their emphasis is child centered and reflect child development, and if they reflect enough practicum students' needs on content areas.

Cooperating Teachers

This study examined types of support for cooperating teachers provided by teacher preparation programs during practicum. Though support for cooperating teachers is one of indirect ways of supporting practicum students, the influence of support could be highly powerful considering cooperating teachers' significant roles in practicum experience (Wexler, 2020). According to the findings of this study, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they provide Guidelines and Orientation for supporting cooperating teachers. On the other hand, Training and Mentoring were selected by less than 40% of respondents. Training and Mentoring, which could be a great learning opportunity for cooperating teachers to understand teacher preparation programs' goals and their roles as cooperating teachers, were not offered to cooperating teachers by the majority of program respondents. This finding is aligned with the findings of Baum and Korth (2013). According to Baum and Korth (2013) study, though the

majority of teacher preparation programs participating in their study acknowledged the importance of cooperating teachers' role in field experiences, in practice, less than 30% of respondents indicated that they offered some form of professional development opportunities for cooperating teachers such as providing program policies, course syllabi, or evaluation forms.

Five et al. (2016) study shows changes in types of support provided for cooperating teachers over time. According to Five et al. (2016), more realistic and wanted support such as compensation or learning vouchers were dramatically reduced within contemporary teacher preparation programs compared to 60 years ago. The role of cooperating teachers has been considered free voluntary work for many teacher preparation programs (Baum & Korth, 2013), though their roles are quite heavy and require a lot of responsibility.

Previous research findings show that lack of communication between cooperating teachers and the university can cause practicum students to experience conflict with their expectation during practicum and cooperating teachers' lack of understanding of their roles during practicum (Danyluk, Burns, Crawford, & Hill, 2020; Hart, 2020; Yoon & Larkin, 2018). This study also examined the interaction between cooperating teachers and teacher preparation programs. To be more specific, the findings of this study provide the frequency, mode, and topic of communication between cooperating teachers and university representatives. On average, the number of communications between a cooperating teacher and a university supervisor per semester was more than five times.

Moreover, the mode of communication selected by the majority of respondents were Emails and Face-to-face meetings. In terms of the topic of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers, many selected topics were administrative and procedural for practicum, such as Providing course information, Providing assignment and deadline

information, or Introducing/Requesting student placement. Nevertheless, the topics such as Surveys for practicum improvement or Additional resources requested by cooperating teachers were also selected by many program representatives, which can mean that still the majority of early childhood teacher preparation programs are open to these topics by trying to listen to cooperating teachers' needs and support cooperating teachers through frequent communication.

Nevertheless, this finding is from the responses of teacher preparation programs and does not represent the perspectives of their cooperating teachers. In addition, the topics of communication reported in the existing study related to cooperating teachers are still limited and highly focused on relationships between cooperating teachers and practicum students. The study of cooperating teachers needs to be diversified, including more in-depth study on topics that are related to the experiences students have in the practicum such as relationship between cooperating teachers and university supervisors. Research should be broadened to include topics such as early childhood education cooperating teachers' support for their roles and should include long-term study, such as cooperating teachers' growth and development, or be experimental, such as examining the effect of training of mentoring. Lack of attempt to broaden the topics of study related to cooperating teachers might be challenge for teacher preparation programs to seek better ways of support for cooperating teachers.

Implications

Early childhood teacher preparation programs can better understand practicum practice through the findings of this study. The proposed implications will be introduced in two broad topics, teacher preparation programs and cooperating teachers.

Teacher Preparation Programs

The role of teacher preparation programs in supporting the growth of preservice teachers will be diverse and countless. Though there are multiple things for teacher preparation programs to consider, based on the findings from this study, three implications for teacher preparation programs are proposed. 1. Recruitment of diverse placement settings, 2. Process evaluation and post practicum evaluation, and 3. Fostering open communication.

Recruitment of Diverse Placement Settings. The US population is becoming more diversified, and the diversity is reflected in young children's classrooms (NAEYC, 2020; Early & Winton, 2001; Phillips, Austin, & Whitebook, 2016). In the classroom, the number of children with special needs, children of color, children who are from low-income families, immigrants, second language learners, and children from many other cultures and ethnicities have been increasing (Ray, Bowman, & Robbins, 2006). Along with the cultural and linguistic diversity, children's social experiences have diversified as well. Children have diverse social experiences due to parents' philosophy, working conditions, family composition, and economic capacities (Early & Winton, 2001; Phillips, Austin, & Whitebook, 2016).

It is important for preservice teachers to experience diverse contexts through practica. According to Nickens and colleagues (2018), preservice teachers tend to have field experience in more familiar settings, such as ones with the majority composition of the race, ethnicity, or cultures being the same as them, having similar SES with them, or safe and stable neighborhood, rather than poor, multicultural, multiracial, and dangerous communities. Teacher preparation programs should make a special effort for preservice teachers to be better prepared for diverse contexts by exposing them to diverse communities and meeting diverse children and their

families. There will be practical conditions to consider, such as physical distance, previous partnerships, or preservice teachers' preferences.

Nevertheless, it is important to recruit diverse settings that preservice teachers can experience diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, culture, language, special needs, diverse SES, family structure), inclusion, and equity. Teacher preparation programs can examine their criteria for practicum placement and evaluate if their criteria embrace diversity, inclusion, and equity, how those criteria are applied to types of settings, and try to expand to the settings they have not had partnerships with if the new settings reflect diversity, inclusion, and equity in different ways. Recruiting diverse settings may not be enough. There will be further work for preservice teachers to experience and embrace diversity, inclusion, and equity in the settings. Nevertheless, recruiting and preparing diverse settings could be the first or foundational step to experience diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Process Evaluation and Post Practicum Evaluation. Regular formative and summative evaluation should be conducted and recorded so that teacher preparation programs reflect robust feedback for quality improvement. University supervisors should be aware of and keep monitoring the communication and relationship between preservice teachers and cooperating teachers, so university supervisors can continue to develop cooperative relationships or take care of any barriers which may weaken their relationships (O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007; Yoon & Larkin, 2018).

According to the findings of this study, Improvement of practicum experiences (i.e., evaluation forms, survey) is one of the frequent topics of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers and between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers. In addition, Feedback from previous teacher candidates or supervisors was selected as

one of the prioritized options as an additional consideration for placement settings. Teacher preparation programs need to review and examine how these evaluations and feedback are collected, reflected, and applied to their evaluation and planning systematically.

Previous preservice teachers' as well as cooperating teachers' feedback and evaluation can be recorded and reviewed periodically. Feedback and evaluation can include field experience satisfaction, communication, relationships, fit, and any objective or subjective comments.

Fostering Open Communication. Teacher preparation programs should promote open opportunities to share diverse perspectives (with preservice teachers, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors) regularly. Preservice teachers can share their priorities for their practicum and what worries them most before they start practicum. For example, preservice teachers might have difficulties and anxiety about forming a relationship in a new setting, want to explore diverse settings and diverse children, or want to have more experiences in certain content areas during their practicum. Teacher preparation programs can record and consider preservice teachers' difficulties and priorities and reflect them when matching with cooperating teachers or share with cooperating teachers, so preservice teachers will be less anxious and have more experiences related to their priorities through their practicum.

According to the findings of this study, Email was a predominant mode of communication between university supervisors and cooperating teachers and between placement coordinators and cooperating teachers. In addition, Orientation and Guidelines were selected more frequently than Training and Mentoring as types of support for cooperating teachers. If teacher preparation programs value open communication with cooperating teachers, they need to reflect upon whether their modes of communication and support for cooperating teachers are truly open and bidirectional.

Moreover, according to the findings of this study, Providing course information and Providing assignment and deadline information were frequently selected as topics of communication with cooperating teachers. Just providing course information or information for course assignment would not be enough for cooperating teachers to learn the program philosophy, goals, and expected responsibilities. Continuous and bidirectional interactions and training need to be planned and implemented (Buchanan, 2020; Early & Winton, 2001). For collaborative efforts, cooperating teachers can be invited to meetings with teacher preparation programs and discuss together ways to improve students' field experiences (Buchanan, 2020; Kennedy & Heineke, 2014; Sumrall et al., 2017).

Mcintyre and McIntyre (2020) proposed a virtual communication method in cases with issues related to distance, lack of time for face-to-face communication, or in circumstances like today (COVID 19). It is important for all participants (preservice teachers, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors) to understand that they are one team and work for the success of preservice teachers' and cooperating teachers' development.

Cooperating Teachers

The role of cooperating teachers is considerable and influential in the success of practicum experiences during practicum. Cooperating teachers play diverse roles for supporting preservice teachers within the microsystem level. Moreover, cooperating teachers mediate practicum settings and teacher preparation programs within the mesosystem level. For supporting the role of cooperating teachers in practica, there are three ways of implication that teacher preparation programs may consider: 1. Diversifying qualifications of cooperating teachers, 2. Training for cooperating teachers, and 3. Supporting cooperating teachers.

Diversifying Qualifications of Cooperating Teachers. First, teacher preparation programs acknowledge the importance of cooperating teachers' role, so recruiting and maintaining qualified cooperating teachers is one of the serious concerns and high priorities of teacher preparation programs (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009). Many teacher preparation programs have used the qualification of minimum education level, work experience, and requirement of a certain type of license to ensure the quality of cooperating teachers as this study finding suggests.

On the other hand, according to Baum and Korth (2013), qualifications of cooperating teacher can include other characteristics such as prior experience as a cooperating teacher and self-identification as a high-quality early childhood educator. However, having these qualifications or self-identification as a high-quality teacher do not necessarily mean these qualifications guarantee the quality of cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers' quality can be sought in other ways. Objective, diverse, and reliable measures to recruit and assess cooperating teachers should be studied in teacher preparation programs. The measures may include constructs that are important for high quality teaching such as teaching efficacy, professionalism, teaching satisfaction, and mentoring strategies. Teacher preparation programs need to consider, embrace, and apply cooperating teachers' diverse qualities, abilities, and competencies required for the role of mentoring when recruiting cooperating teachers.

Training for and Communication with Cooperating Teachers. Once teacher preparation programs recruit qualified cooperating teachers, they should share their goals and philosophies with cooperating teachers through communication and training. The purpose of training for cooperating teachers would be to understand their roles and responsibilities during the field experiences and to better understand and support preservice teachers' experiences. The

contents of training can include the cooperating teachers' role as an observer of the preservice teachers, their expected role as cooperating teachers, mentoring strategies such as instructional and emotional coaching, the practice of inquiry, and communication styles (Lawley, Moore, & Smajic, 2014; Quinones, Rivalland, & Monk, 2019; Wexler, 2020). It is also important for cooperating teachers to understand and adjust, using diverse mentoring approaches that are suitable for various situations encountered by preservice teachers (Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020; Yoon & Larkin, 2018).

Teacher preparation programs' effort to train cooperating teachers should precede the teacher taking on the cooperating teacher role so that cooperating teachers can understand teacher preparation programs', practicum experiences', and practicum students' goals and priorities throughout the practicum.

In terms of communication, the finding of this study shows that most of the support provided for cooperating teachers are in the form of Orientation and Guidelines, which could be unidirectional. For example, providing syllabus or evaluation forms and guidelines are typical modes of communication which are likely to be unidirectional, rather than bidirectional communication. Lack of bidirectional communication with cooperating teachers might limit teacher preparation programs' opportunities to listen to cooperating teachers' reflections or difficulties and might limit the opportunities to monitor and improve the quality of field experiences. Teacher preparation programs should try to keep listening to cooperating teachers' difficulties and needs so they can provide necessary support and improve practicum experiences. Having meetings with cooperating teachers pre- and post-practicum would be great for teacher preparation programs so that they can listen to and reflect cooperating teachers' diverse thoughts.

Supporting Cooperating Teachers. Supporting cooperating teachers include establishing collaborative relationships with cooperating teachers, practicing open and continuous communication with them, providing rewards or compensation for cooperating teachers' work, and implementing process evaluation and quality improvement efforts.

Universities and schools are organized differently, have different goals, and often do not share philosophy (Buchanan, 2020). Preservice teachers can feel confused due to discrepancy between learning from university and experience in the practicum (Roegman & Kolman, 2020). The discrepancy and discord can tarnish the relationships between preservice teachers and cooperating teachers, or teacher preparation programs' partnership with practicum settings. Without the effort of mutual communication, the issues from discrepancy and discord may not be improved naturally. In addition, teacher preparation programs should understand that cooperating teachers are situated in and working for two different contexts (Buchanan, 2020; Roegman & Kolman, 2020). Thus, universities should be thoughtful in planning and preparing field-based experiences with cooperating teachers.

Teacher preparation programs should acknowledge that cooperating teachers are colleagues and collaborators who share the goal of supporting preservice teachers to grow as effective teachers (Baum & Korth, 2013; Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Latiana, Samsudi, Sugiyo, & Slameto, 2018). Universities need to invite cooperating teachers to their programs and communicate with them, so they can better understand the goals and contents (Buchanan, 2020; Hobbs & Stovall, 2015; Roegman & Kolman, 2020; Yoon & Larkin, 2018). In addition to visiting for preservice teachers' observations, universities need to keep communicating with cooperating teachers during and after the semester so both of them can better prepare for the next semester or year (Baum & Korth, 2013; Latiana, Samsudi, Sugiyo, & Slameto, 2018). To do this,

teacher preparation programs need to maintain the relationship with existing cooperating teachers and may develop systems to organize.

To support cooperating teachers and their work, teacher preparation programs should provide professional development opportunities and continue to provide them (Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020; Latiana, Samsudi, Sugiyo, & Slameto, 2018; Mcintyre & McIntyre, 2020; O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007). If it is difficult to afford the administrative and financial support for cooperating teachers, teacher preparation programs can work together and seek to offer or secure professional development that can be coordinated with requirements teachers may have from federal or state organizations, so that all teacher preparation programs and cooperating teachers can benefit from it.

Cooperating teachers are assumed to do their best to teach and support children as well as to support preservice teachers by modeling and mentoring. While pointing out the lack of appreciation for the work of cooperating teachers, Zeichner (2010) asserts that teacher preparation programs should redefine cooperating teachers' roles and provide proper rewards for their work. Their time, effort, and commitment should be rewarded in concrete and beneficial ways (Baum & Korth, 2013; Hobbs & Stovall, 2015). It would be great if teacher preparation programs can provide compensation, however, if it is difficult due to the lack of funding, teacher preparation programs can find creative ways to show appreciation such as providing service awards, incentive for course taking, or official appreciation messages (Buchanan, 2020).

Limitations

There are a few of limitations in this study. First, though more than one third of 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs that were surveyed participated in and responded to the survey, the findings of this study do not represent all the 4-year early childhood teacher

preparation programs' practicum practices. The programs that did not participate in this study may have different practicum practices from the findings of this study.

Second, there was limited research focusing on early childhood practicum practices. Therefore, the literature search to inform this study was expanded to K-12 and included field experience, student teaching, and classroom experiences. Thus, the scope of referenced literature was broad. Because survey questions were prepared based on the understanding of the related literature, the questions and provided options may have been limited and not as relevant for some teacher preparation programs that responded. For example, the option for type of license, and type of learning experience during practica could be limited for some respondents, though most of the questions provided Other, so they can describe their own responses for questions.

Third is the limitation of questionnaire research, which is bound by participants' understanding of the questions and responses. This study tried to provide common definitions for respondents to understand the concepts addressed and spaces for respondents to add descriptions other than available options. Nevertheless, respondents may have been confused about the terms in the survey, and this can influence their responses. Moreover, because in most of the cases respondents were asked to choose among given options (though there were spaces for descriptions), their responses may not provide a full understanding of the characteristics and contexts of each teacher preparation programs.

Lastly, the findings of this study are based on the responses of teacher preparation programs. To better understand practicum practices, it would be idealistic to include preservice teachers and cooperating teachers because they can provide responses from different perspectives. Though teacher preparation programs plan and prepare diverse settings and experiences during practica, students may not understand or experience them all. Including

students' and cooperating teachers' perspectives would provide a more comprehensive understanding of practicum experiences.

Future Research

Through this current study, what teacher preparation programs do before and during practicum were examined and identified. As a next step, more qualitative and deeper understanding should be sought from the perspective of faculty in teacher preparation programs. For example, research should examine how teacher preparation faculty think about their practicum practices, how satisfied they are with students' practicum experiences, which area they feel most struggles and need help, how they picture the improvement of practicum experience and ideal practicum, and strategies related to practicum practices (i.e., mentoring strategy for cooperating teachers, ways of support for cooperating teachers, training ideas for cooperating teachers). Because they are deeply involved in and dedicated in supporting practicum experiences, they can represent the voices of the field.

Moreover, future study can embrace perspectives of preservice teachers as well as cooperating teachers for seeking ultimate ideal practicum experiences. For preservice teachers, research can be conducted to explore their expectations about practicum before they begin their practicum and to study what they learned during the practicum. Limitations of practicum and ideas for the improvement of practicum experiences can be also asked. As noted above, research can also be conducted with cooperating teachers to better understand their perspectives and support them.

In addition to examining perspectives of each (preservice teachers', cooperating teachers', and university supervisors') separately, it would be important to understand how the interactions among them influence their (preservice teachers', cooperating teachers', and

university supervisors') development. Expanding theory from the ecological systems theory to the bioecological theory (Process-Person-Context-Time) will allow to further examine the dynamics of practicum.

Conclusion

This study provides deeper understanding on 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs' practicum practices across the US. Practicum experiences are distinguished from student teaching or other types of field experiences such as classroom observation. Practica provide preservice teachers unique and diverse experiences through diverse learning opportunities to connect their learning and practices and set separate goals and expectations that are different from student teaching or classroom observation. Though practicum is important and required in most teacher preparation programs, few studies have been conducted to examine the practicum. There are no single or common criteria for the practicum in terms of qualified settings, types of settings, or cooperating teachers' qualifications, learning opportunities, and the process of supervision. This study identifies characteristics of 4-year early childhood teacher preparation programs, the variation of criteria for the practicum placement settings and cooperating teacher qualifications, and diversity of learning experiences and supervision in practicum practices. Through the findings of this study, teacher preparation programs can have chances to evaluate their practices by comparing practices and reviewing their practices and eventually this understanding can be the foundation of improving the quality of practicum.

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