# Developing a Teaching Practicum Model for 'Krurakthin' Scholarship Recipients in the Bachelor of Education Program, Kalasin University

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## Article info

## Abstract

This research aims to 1) investigate the current issues and challenges in the teaching practicum of early childhood education teachers and, 2) examine the components of the teaching practicum model for student teachers under the Teachers Return Home (henceforth Krurakthin) project at Kalasin University. The study targeted a group of 21 participants, including mentor teachers, school administrators, educational supervisors, representatives from destinations where schools were located, and faculty members specializing in early childhood education in the university network through purposive sampling. This research utilized focus group interview recording forms and an evaluation form to assess the appropriateness and feasibility of the training model. Data analysis involved calculating means, standard deviations, and content analysis. The research findings reveal challenges in the teaching practicum of early childhood education teachers within the Teachers Return Home (Krurakthin) project. Specifically, among student teachers, there are issues related to planning instructional activities, organizing experiences, classroom management, conducting classroom research, creating appropriate instructional materials, and assessing student outcomes. Mentor teachers exhibit a lack of understanding of their roles and inadequately demonstrate their responsibilities, coupled with a deficiency in collaborative efforts with instructional supervisors and educational institutions. School administrators lack a comprehensive understanding of their roles in guiding student teachers during their professional experience. In addition, instructional supervisors face challenges due to a lack of experience and skills in mentorship, and the execution of mentorship activities deviates from the planned guidelines. Some practicum schools chosen by students lack quality and fail to serve as exemplary institutions for student teachers. Furthermore, the teacher education institutions involved in the project exhibit inadequacies in their systems for supervising student teachers, with unclear assessment tools and criteria, and a deficiency in establishing understanding with the practicum schools. These identified challenges underscore the need for improvements in the overall structure and implementation of the teaching practicum model under the Krurakthin project. Additionally, the components of the training model for student teachers under the

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Teachers Return Home (Krurakthin) project at Kalasin University consist of five components: principles, objectives, operations, outcome assessment, and guidelines for successful implementation. The evaluation results indicated a high level of appropriateness ($\overline{X}$ = 4.03, SD = 0.68) and feasibility ($\overline{X}$ = 4.02, SD = 0.71) of the model.

### Introduction

The Equitable Education Fund (EEF) Thailand was established under the Equitable Education Act 2018, with the objectives to provide financial support for children and youth who are in the greatest need, to reduce educational inequality by forming partnership with different groups, and conducting systematic research to support and develop teachers' effectiveness. EEF is under the supervision of the Prime Minister and is governed by a Board of Governance which is appointed by the cabinet and has a multi-sectoral structure. The board members include five ministries (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Public Health) and six independent experts from various disciplines (academic, private sector, civil society) reported by Equitable Education Fund, (2018).

The Equitable Education Fund (EEF) has undertaken a project to create educational opportunities for students in remote areas to become new teachers and to enhance the quality of community schools through the Teachers Return Home project (hereafter Krurakthin) in the academic year 2023. This initiative aligns with the objectives outlined in Article 5(3) and Article 5(6) of the Equitable Education Fund Act 2018, which mandates the fund to strengthen and develop the quality and effectiveness of teachers, enabling them to manage teaching and learning effectively, and to develop children and youth based on their diverse backgrounds and potentials. The project involves educational research to explore strategies for cultivating a teacher's spirit, morality, knowledge, and teaching and and learning capabilities. The overarching goal is to reduce educational disparities by fostering appropriate motivation and support.

Additionally, the project promotes the establishment of model institutions for teacher production and development based on three key principles: 1) promoting quality education for economically disadvantaged students with teaching potential to pursue and complete a bachelor's degree and to return as teachers in their local schools, 2) supporting the development of small schools in remote areas from the project's inception to enhance the collaborative learning quality of teachers and students, and 3) endorsing the adaptation of teaching and learning processes in teacher production and development institutions (Equitable Education Fund, 2022).

Kalasin University, as an institution for teacher production and development in the Krurakthin project, comprises three cohorts of student teachers funded by the Krurakthin initiative. The first cohort, in the academic year 2020, consists of 32 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program in Early Childhood Education (four-year program, revised version 2019). The second cohort, in the academic year 2021, comprises 26 students, and the third cohort, in the academic year 2022, includes 25 students, all enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program in Innovative Learning Management (four-year program, revised version 2021). The details of both programs adhere to the standards of undergraduate curriculum level 2019, the qualification standards for undergraduate degrees in Education and Educational Science 2015, the teacher professional standards of the Teachers' Council of Thailand 2018 (fourth edition 2019), the Teachers' Council regulations on professional licenses 2016, and the Teachers' Council announcement on the certification of degrees according to professional standards 2020. Furthermore, the revised curriculum in 2021 was updated to be contemporary, aligning with competency-based or outcome-based education principles (Faculty of Education and Educational Innovation, 2021).

In 2019, the Faculty of Education and Educational Innovations at Kalasin University outlined that both versions of the Bachelor of Education program have incorporated courses related to professional experience standards, in accordance with the four-year curriculum professional standards. These courses, totaling 12 credit units, encompass four subjects: Teaching Practice in Educational Institutions 1, 2, 3, and 4. Teaching Practice in Educational Institutions 1, 2, and 3 involves experiential learning of the teaching profession during studies in educational institutions, scheduled in the early stages of the second semester for first, second, and third-year students. Conversely, Teaching Practice in Educational Institution 4 involves a full-format teaching practicum in educational institutions throughout one semester for both programs (Faculty of Education and Educational Innovation, 2019). These arrangements align

with the Teachers' Council regulations on professional standards (fourth edition, 2019) and the Teachers' Council announcement on the certification of degrees according to professional standards for four-year programs in 2020 (Teachers' Council, 2019; Teachers' Council, 2020).

Over the course of past initiatives, educators and researchers have studied methods to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching practicum process sequentially. The identified problems in the teaching practicum process are summarized as follows: 1) In terms of the teaching practicum system, issues include the lack of continuity across academic years, misalignment between the objectives of teaching practicum courses and practical implementation, inadequate student guidance systems, and unclear performance assessment systems. 2) Concerning schools as teaching practicum units, issues encompass the lack of quality and readiness, particularly among non-practicum schools, along with misalignment between school policies and the Faculty of Education and Educational Innovations. 3) Regarding students, challenges include insufficient skills in designing teaching based on progressive learning processes, outdated preparation for teaching, inappropriate selection or production of teaching materials, and a lack of self-confidence. 4) In relation to mentoring teachers, challenges involve their lack of mentoring experience, irresponsibility, and deviations from prescribed mentoring plans. 5) Regarding mentor teachers, challenges include a lack of collaboration with faculty and mentoring teachers and a failure to assume responsibilities adequately, not demonstrating sufficiently effective mentorship. Given all these challenges in the teaching practicum process, Rochanasmita Arnold and Roadrangka (2004) recommend that teacher education programs should undertake research to develop an appropriate model for teacher teaching practicum, exploring how it should be structured.

However, the formats or processes of teaching practicum that universities, including Kalasin University, have designed, strictly adhere to the professional standards set by the Teachers' Council of Thailand. While these may be suitable for students pursuing a general teaching profession, they may not be aligned with the objectives of the Krurakthin project, which aims to educate a new generation of teachers for remote areas, contributing to the development of community school quality (Krurakthin) under the Equitable Education Fund (EEF). The Krurakthin project has a distinct goal of

producing and developing teachers in a context that differs from the general population. The teaching practicum model specified in the Bachelor of Education program (four-year curriculum) of the Faculty of Education and Educational Innovation at Kalasin University is intended for students in the Krurakthin project. The development of students in the Krurakthin project must align and be suitable for the context of the Krurakthin project to produce highly competent teachers who are innovators and community development educators. Therefore, the Faculty of Education and Educational Innovations at Kalasin University seeks to conduct research in order to enhance the teaching practicum model according to the Bachelor of Education curriculum, ensuring alignment with the context of students funded by the Krurakthin project.

**Objectives**

1. To investigate the current issues and challenges in the teaching practicum of early childhood education teachers.

2. To examine the components and evaluation of the teaching practicum model for student teachers under the Teachers Return Home (henceforth Krurakthin) project at Kalasin University's Faculty of Education and Educational Innovation.

**Conceptual framework**

This research and development project aims to create a teaching practicum model for 'Krurakthin' scholarship recipient's project. The research team followed a conceptual framework with four main steps and related information is as follows Figure 1.

1. Input: This involves the concepts, theories, formats, and various related standards.

2. Process: The steps in developing the teaching practicum model for 'Krurakthin' scholarship recipients in the Bachelor of Education Program, Kalasin University using the SPIEA Model. This model consists of five steps:

2.1 Survey: Assessing the current state and issues of teaching practicum model in early childhood education by studying relevant documents, concepts, theories, and research and conducting group discussions with stakeholders.

2.2 Product: Drafting the teaching practicum model for 'Krurakthin' project recipients, followed by an evaluation by qualified experts.

2.3 Implementation: Piloting the teaching practicum model for 'Krurakthin' scholarship.

2.4 Evaluation: Implementing user feedback to determine the model's viability, appropriateness, usefulness, and correctness.

2.5 Action: Improving and fine-tuning the teaching practicum model to guarantee that it satisfies predetermined requirements for effectiveness and quality.

3. Product: The model of teaching practicum for students awarded scholarships by the Krurakthin project.

4. Outcomes: Producing high-performing teachers, innovative teachers, community-developing teachers.

1.2 Target Group for evaluating the teaching practicum model for students funded by the Krurakthin project, Kalasin University, consisted of 7 participants selected through purposive sampling. This group included one qualified member from the Teachers' Council, five qualified members from The Equitable Education Fund, two qualified members from higher education institutions, and one qualified member from the Educational Area Office.

**2. Research instruments**

2.1 The instrument used in investigating the issues in teaching practicum in early childhood education
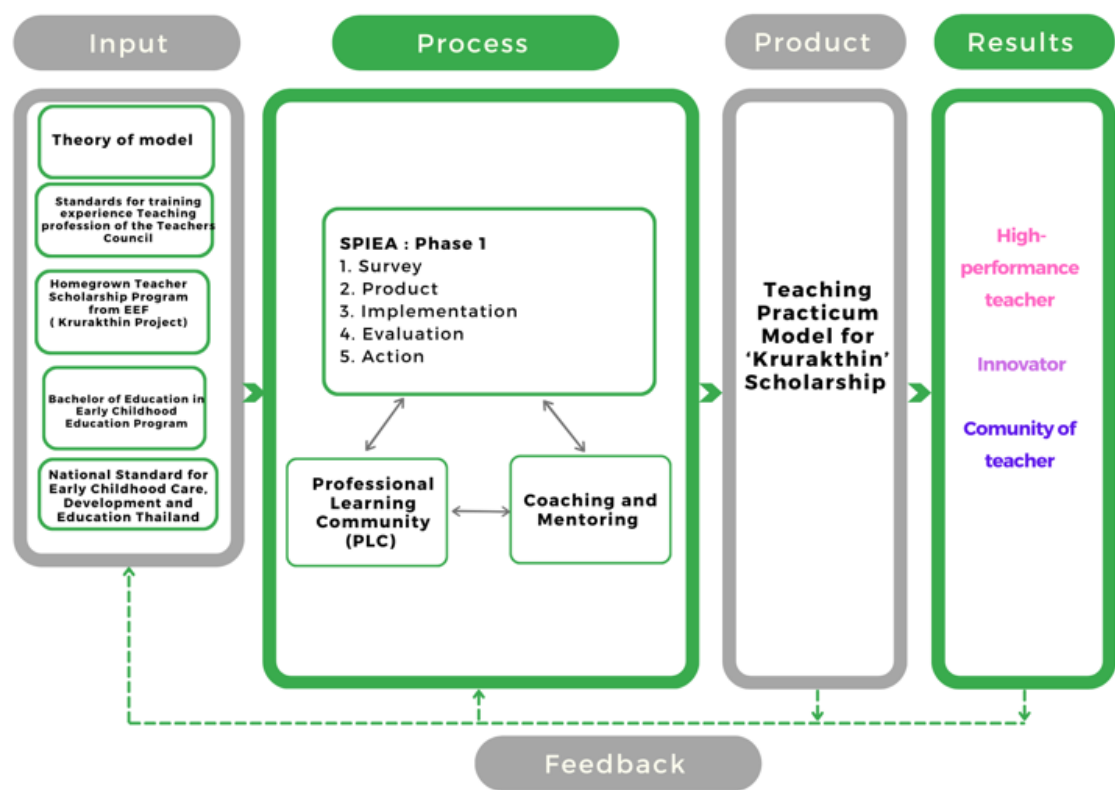


**Figure 1** Conceptual framework

## Research methodology

**1. Target groups**

1.1 Target group for the study of the issues in teaching practicum in early childhood education comprised 21 participants selected through purposive sampling. This group included two mentor teachers, two school administrators, one educational supervisor, one representative from the school's destination area, 10 education instructors from various institutions, and five educational supervisors.

included focus group interview recording forms and conducting group discussions with stakeholders.

2.2 The instruments used in evaluating the teaching practicum model for students funded by the Krurakthin project at Kalasin University included the assessment forms assessing the appropriateness and feasibility of the teaching practicum model on a 5-level rating scale.

### 3. Collection of data

The researchers collected qualitive data through online meetings using focus group interview forms, which included assessment forms assessing the appropriateness and feasibility of the teaching practicum model.

### 4. Data analysis

4.1 The current issues and challenges of teaching practicum used all the data for statistical analysis with content analysis.

4.2 The appropriateness and feasibility of the teaching practicum model were calculated using the mean and standard deviation. Table 1 shows the mean value level (Srisaart, 1992).

**Table 1** The mean value scale and mean descriptive equivalent.

| Numerical scale | Weighted mean value scale | Mean descriptive equivalent |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4.51-5.00 | Very High |
| 4 | 3.51-4.50 | High |
| 3 | 2.51-3.50 | Moderate |
| 2 | 1.51-2.50 | Low |
| 1 | 1.00-1.50 | Very Low |

## Results

The results of this study were in phase 1, where current issues and challenges of teacher teaching practicum were carried out and the quality of the model was determined to be appropriateness and feasibility of the teaching practicum model. Phase 2 involved the implementation of the teaching practicum model with the student teachers under the Teachers Return Home (henceforth Krurakthin) project. However, 150 hours of teaching practicum for first- to third-year students and 450 hours of teaching practicum for fourth-year students or one semester in school. The results are divided into two main parts: 1) The current issues and challenges in the teaching practicum of early childhood education teachers; and 2) components of the model.

### 1. The current issues and challenges in the teaching practicum

In this issue, the study revealed key findings from six stakeholders through focus group interviews, as follows: 1) on the student aspect, students faced some challenges in lesson planning, preparing diverse, contemporary, and integrated teaching experiences, classroom management, conducting classroom research, creating appropriate teaching and learning materials, selecting suitable materials for content, and assessing and evaluating student outcomes. Additionally, they needed to adapt to the professional environment of the practicum schools, 2) concerning mentor teachers, they often lacked a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, occasionally assigning teaching tasks to students without proper readiness for providing diverse learning experiences. Some mentor teachers in certain schools deviated from the university's agreements and assigned teaching duties to students without proper preparation. Coordination with supervising teachers and institutions was often lacking, 3) regarding school administrators, they still struggled to comprehend their roles and responsibilities concerning the supervision and support of student teachers during their teaching practicum, 4) concerning supervising teachers, many of them lacked experience and skills in mentoring. They often lacked responsibility in guiding students and failed to follow the planned supervision due to teaching workload and the physical distance between students' localities. Some supervising teachers did not grasp the criteria and principles of effective supervision well enough, 5) in terms of practicum schools, some chosen schools lacked quality or readiness to serve as exemplary institutions for students. For example, incomplete teaching staff forced students to teach across different grade levels to address the shortage of teachers in schools. Various environmental factors contributed to some students' reluctance to continue their practicum in the following years, and 6) regarding teacher education institutions, the curriculum still lacked alignment between the objectives of the professional experience courses and the actual teaching practices. The system for supervising students was not adequate, and the assessment tools and criteria were unclear. Teacher education institutions needed to improve their understanding and collaboration with schools where students underwent their professional experience, ensuring effective cooperation.

### 2. Components of the Model

#### 2.1 Results from studying the components of the model

Through an examination of research related to the professional experience of teachers, specifically in the field of early childhood education, and research on the development of models and expert group discussions in the field of early childhood education, it was found that there are five components in the model. These components include 1) the principles of the model, 2) the objectives of the model, 3) the operations of the model, 4) the evaluation of the model, and 5) the guidelines for successful implementation.

### 2.1.1 Principles of the Model

The teaching practicum model for students supported by the Krurakthin project aims to develop local Krurakthin teachers at Kalasin University into highly competent teachers, innovators, and community developers who align with the context of the Krurakthin project. This is achieved through practical teaching experiences in schools 1-4, facilitated by close collaboration between the producing institution and the destination network schools, communities, and responsible agencies, as follows

a. Establishing mutual understanding between the producing institution and destination network schools, communities, and responsible agencies.

b. Developing mentoring abilities of supervising teachers, school administrators, mentor teachers, and educational supervisors.

c. Collaborative development of students involving supervising teachers, school administrators, mentor teachers, and educational supervisors, supported by teaching, mentoring, and peer support.

d. Reflecting on development outcomes through the creation of a professional learning community.

### 2.1.2 Objectives of the Model

The model aims to develop the competencies of students in the Krurakthin project who are pursuing a Bachelor of Education in early childhood education at Kalasin University, aligning with the context of Krurakthin students. This aims to produce teachers with high competency, innovators, and community developers, achieved through the following objectives: 1) developing the professional competency of Krurakthin students in practical teaching experiences, and 2) fostering innovation and community development skills among Krurakthin students.

### 2.1.3 Model Implementation

This phase involves the operational steps of the teaching practicum model, consisting of five steps:

a. Preparation phase for teaching practicum: This step focuses on developing students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, personal characteristics, and the spirit of being a local Krurakthin teacher. It ensures that students are ready to embark on their teaching practicum.

b. Teaching practicum phase: This step entails practical training in accordance with the curriculum, including:

1) Teaching practicum in school 1 (Student Teacher, Self-Sustaining): This involves studying theoretical concepts, knowledge related to the teaching profession, teaching tasks, and the teacher's role. Students practice teaching, observe students, teachers, administrators, and staff, analyze knowledge gained from real situations, connect it to theoretical concepts, synthesize, write summaries, and report the results. Teaching practice is conducted in the first semester of the second year, lasting three weeks, and includes 11 activity logs. Additional activities include studying community contexts and the school's relationship with the community.

2) Teaching practicum in school 2 (Assistant Teacher, Shared Responsibilities): This involves acting as an assistant teacher in a school, assisting class teachers, imparting knowledge, training students, assisting in teaching, developing teaching aids, assessing and evaluating learning outcomes. This practice is conducted in the second semester of the second year, lasting three weeks, and includes 12 activity logs. Additional activities include studying community issues.

3) Teaching practicum in school 3 (Co-Teaching, Curriculum Development): This involves teaching and developing the curriculum, planning, designing learning activities, creating a learning environment, utilizing technology and innovative learning management, assessing and synthesizing knowledge. Students write reflections, exchange learning, and report on their teaching practice. This practice is conducted in the second semester of the third year, lasting three weeks, and includes 11 activity logs. Additional activities include problem-solving in the community.

4) Teaching practicum in school 4 (Practice Teacher, Innovation Integration): This involves working as a teacher in a school, developing the curriculum, designing learning plans, managing learning to develop students' knowledge and critical thinking, applying digital technology, creating innovations to enhance learning or solve student problems, conducting collaborative research, engaging in creative work with others, exchanging learning, completing projects, academic projects, lesson planning, and reporting lesson reflections. This practice is conducted in the first semester of the fourth year, lasting 15 weeks, and includes 12 activity logs. Additional activities include community problem-solving.

c. Teaching practicum guidance phase: This stage involves guiding students in their teaching practicum. Students, beneficiaries of the Krurakthin

project under the supervision of mentor teachers, teacher mentors, school administrators, and educational innovators, undergo instructional methods and guidance (coaching and mentoring). This aims to facilitate learning and professional development by observing teaching practices, providing feedback, encouragement, fostering learning exchanges, and collaborating within the authentic context of schools and communities.

d. Seminar phase for teaching practicum: This stage includes activities conducted during the teaching practicum, divided into:

1) Seminar on teaching practicum in schools 1-3: Conducted after students complete their practical experience in schools, this one-day event comprises two activities: a student exhibition and a seminar. It takes place during weeks 7-8 of the semester to facilitate a discussion between students and educators. Additionally, a post-experience seminar is held after students complete their teaching practicum, lasting one day, to assess outcomes and extract lessons. Sub-events include a student exhibition and seminar activities.

2) Seminar on teaching practicum in school 4: Two activities are organized, including a seminar during weeks 7-8 of the semester and a post-experience seminar after students complete their professional Teaching Practicum. The latter lasts one day and involves outcome assessment and lesson extraction. Sub-events include a student exhibition and seminar activities.

e. Teaching practicum evaluation phase: This phase involves evaluating the outcomes of the teaching practicum of students benefiting from the Krurakthin project. The assessment is conducted to summarize the results of their teaching practicum.

2.1.4 Evaluation of the Model

Quality assessment of the teaching practicum model for the Krurakthin project under the Bachelor of Education Program in Early Childhood education at Kalasin University is conducted as follows:

a. Expert Evaluation: This involves scrutinizing the quality of the teaching practicum model by experts. It assesses the appropriateness and feasibility of the teaching practicum model

b. User Evaluation: This entails evaluating user satisfaction with the teaching practicum model for the Krurakthin project under the Bachelor of Education Program at Kalasin University. Users include

mentor teachers, school administrators, educational innovators, mentor professors, students, and group discussions.

2.1.5 Implementation Guidelines for Successful Model Application

a. Management System for Teaching Practicum: The Faculty of Education and Educational Innovations in Early Childhood education at Kalasin University should establish a systematic management system to support and facilitate the teaching practicum process for students benefiting from the Krurakthin project.

b. Collaboration and Understanding: The Faculty of Education and Educational Innovations should foster mutual understanding and collaboration through memoranda of understanding (MOUs) among mentor professors, mentor teachers, school administrators, educational innovators, and the community for the teaching practicum in the Krurakthin project.

c. Monitoring and Support System: The Faculty of Education and Educational Innovations should create a monitoring and support system to assist mentor teachers, school administrators, and educational innovators in the teaching practicum of students in the Krurakthin project, with continuous reflection on operational outcomes.

d. Professional Learning Community (PLC): Establish a Professional Learning Community (PLC) among mentor professors, mentor teachers, school administrators, educational innovators, and the community. This aims to exchange and learn from significant experiences in the teaching practicum of students in the Krurakthin project.

Summary (Draft) of the Professional Teaching Practicum Model for Students under the Krurakthin Project, Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education Program, Kalasin University, is illustrated in Figure 2.

## 2.2 Evaluation of components

The results of the assessment of the appropriateness and feasibility of the model for the teaching practicum for students under the Krurakthin project, Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education Program, Kalasin University, conducted by qualified experts, are presented in Table 2.
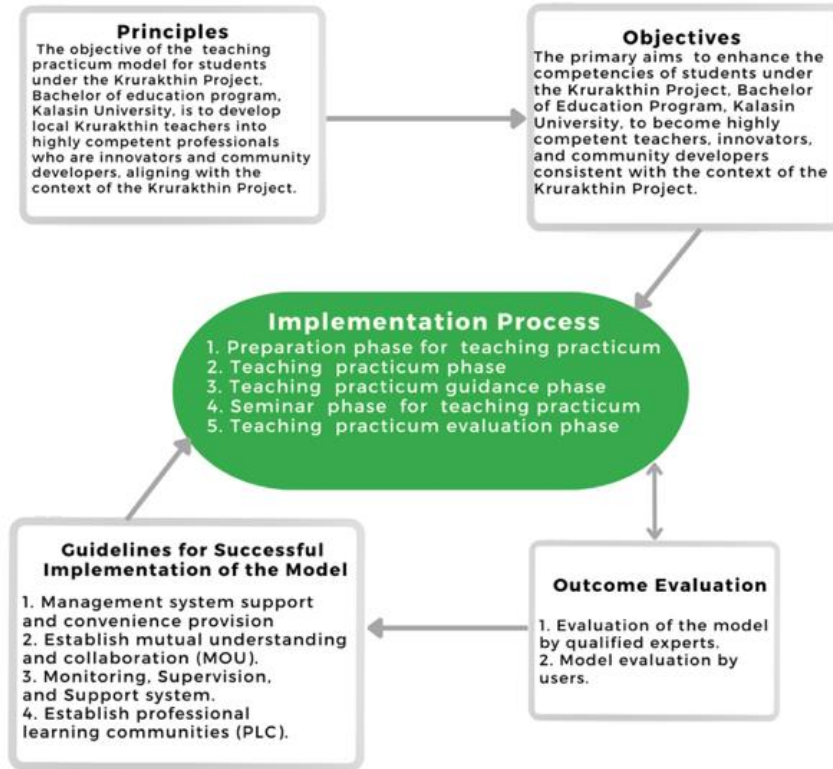
**Figure 2** Component of the Model of Teaching Practicum

**Table 2** The results of the assessment of the appropriateness and feasibility of the model.

| No. | Evaluated Issues | Appropriateness | | | Feasibility | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | $\bar{X}$ | SD | Meaning | $\bar{X}$ | SD | Meaning |
| 1 | Five Components of the Model | 4.00 | 0.89 | High | 4.00 | 0.89 | High |
| 2 | Model Principles | 4.17 | 0.75 | High | 4.00 | 0.89 | High |
| 3 | Model Objectives | 3.83 | 0.75 | High | 3.83 | 0.75 | High |
| 4 | Operational Procedures of the Model | 4.17 | 0.41 | High | 4.00 | 0.63 | High |
| 4.1 | Preparation for Teaching Practicum | 3.83 | 0.98 | High | 3.83 | 0.98 | High |
| 4.2 | Teaching Practicum | 3.83 | 0.75 | High | 3.83 | 0.75 | High |
| 4.3 | Guidance during Teaching Practicum | 3.83 | 0.75 | High | 4.00 | 0.63 | High |
| 4.4 | Seminar on Teaching Practicum | 4.33 | 0.52 | High | 4.33 | 0.52 | High |
| 4.5 | Evaluation of Teaching Practicum | 4.00 | 0.63 | High | 4.17 | 0.75 | High |
| 5 | Model Evaluation | 4.00 | 0.63 | High | 4.00 | 0.89 | High |
| 6 | Implementation Guidelines | 4.33 | 0.52 | High | 4.17 | 0.41 | High |
| | **Total** | **4.03** | **0.68** | **High** | **4.02** | **0.71** | **High** |

From Table 2 it is evident that the overall appropriateness of the model components is high ($\bar{X}$ = 4.03, SD = 0.68). The components with the highest average scores are the seminar on teaching practicum ($\bar{X}$ = 4.33, SD = 0.52) and the implementation guidelines ($\bar{X}$ = 4.33, SD = 0.52). On the other hand, the components with the lowest average scores are the model objectives ($\bar{X}$ = 3.83, SD = 0.75), preparation for teaching practicum ($\bar{X}$ = 3.83, SD = 0.98), teaching practicum ($\bar{X}$ = 3.83, SD = 0.75), and guidance during teaching practicum ($\bar{X}$ = 3.83, SD = 0.75), respectively.

The overall feasibility of the model is high ($\bar{X}$ = 4.02, SD = 0.71). The component with the highest average score is the seminar on teaching practicum ($\bar{X}$ = 4.33, SD = 0.52), while the components with the lowest average scores are the model objectives ($\bar{X}$ = 3.83, SD = 0.75), preparation for teaching practicum ($\bar{X}$ = 3.83, SD = 0.98), and teaching practicum ($\bar{X}$ = 3.83, SD = 0.75), respectively.

**Discussion**

In light of the research findings, the research team would like to present a critical discussion of the noteworthy results as follows:

1. Analysis of the Issues in the Teaching Practicum of Education Students: The investigation into the problems associated with the teaching practicum of students majoring in early childhood education reveals six overarching dimensions. These include issues pertaining to a) students, b) mentor teachers, c) associate teachers, d) supervising teachers, e) school-based professional practicum, and f) issues related to the teacher education institutions. An in-depth examination of each dimension is detailed below:

a. Student-related Issues: Students will probably face challenges in lesson planning, organizing diverse and contemporary experiences, managing classrooms, conducting research in classrooms, creating instructional media suitable for content assessment, and adapting to the professional experience environment. This may stem from students' deficiencies in both knowledge and skills related to systematic lesson planning and teaching management. This aligns with Cretu's (2021) study, which investigated the perceptions of final-year teacher students in Romania regarding internship experiences in kindergarten schools. The study may identify difficulties in teaching practice, the implementation of teaching methods, classroom management, and personal anxiety issues.

b. Mentor Teacher-related Issues: The central aspect of practical training in developing the professional skills of early childhood teachers is the creation of knowledge in the profession, considered crucial in practical training. Another form of support is the students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in both theoretical knowledge and practical application. This resonates with Friães, Lino, Parente, Craveiro, and Silva (2018) study, which aimed to understand the practical training in early childhood teacher education. The study found that the focal point of practical training lies in the development of professional knowledge, considering it as a crucial component of practical training. Another form of support is students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in both theoretical knowledge and practical application.

c. Associate Teachers (Ats): The role and responsibilities of associate teachers (Ats) remain inadequately understood, and their effective enactment varies. In some instances, Ats shift the teaching burden to students, even when students are not adequately prepared to facilitate learning experiences. In certain schools, Ats deviate from the university-agreed teaching guidelines, teaching students without adhering to the agreed-upon terms. Furthermore, collaboration between Ats and supervising teachers, as well as with educational institutions, lacks earnestness. Although Thai law stipulates the qualifications for associate teachers in professional experience schools, the Krurakthin project, designed to address school shortages, compromises the qualifications of associate teachers. Research affirms that Ats play a crucial role in supporting new teachers, acting as mentors, providing advice, and serving as a pathway to leadership in early childhood education. Essential components include offering guidance, effective communication, relationship building, and intrinsic motivation or internal drive for teaching management (Woolston & Dayman, 2022).

d. Supervising Teachers (STs): Supervising teachers face challenges, including a lack of experience and skills in supervision, insufficient responsibility in guiding students, and deviations from planned supervision due to the geographical separation of teaching locations for each student. The study aligns with global trends, revealing that smaller schools in Thailand encounter financial challenges and struggle to provide high-quality education. The decrease in primary school student enrollment since 1982 is attributed to a declining birth rate, further compounded by the inadequate number of teachers and physical infrastructure, impeding quality education (Sondergaard, 2015). In the context of teacher education and professional development, the study conducted by Jacob and Olajumoke (2021) in Nigeria sheds light on various challenges faced in early childhood education. The findings reveal issues related to the supervision and guidance of teachers within the system. Notably, challenges such as financial constraints in providing adequate support for teachers, inadequacy of professionally experienced supervisors for teachers, and insufficient materials and equipment for effective supervision were identified. The study also identifies additional factors contributing to these challenges, including social funding deficits, inadequate development of supervisory skills among mentors, lack of stability, and considerable geographical distances affecting the promotion, supervision, and care of teachers.

e. School-based teaching practicum: Certain schools chosen by students still lack quality or readiness, preventing them from serving as exemplary institutions

for student teachers. For instance, a shortage of qualified teachers requires students to teach across various grade levels, addressing the problem of teacher scarcity in schools. Additionally, diverse environmental conditions contribute to some students' reluctance to engage in subsequent internship placements. This resonates with the World Bank report, which reveals that small-sized schools in Thailand face significant challenges. These schools must allocate substantial budgets for operations, yet they often fail to provide high-quality education. The decline in primary school enrollment from 7.45 million in 1982 to 5 million in 2012 is attributed not only to a decreasing birth rate but also to the severe shortage of teachers and deficient physical infrastructure (Sondergaard, 2015).

f. Teacher Education Institutions: There remains a misalignment between the objectives of the teaching practicum courses and the actual practices. The student mentoring system is inadequate, and the assessment mechanisms, both tools and criteria, lack clarity. Teacher education institutions also fall short in fostering a strong understanding and collaboration with schools where students undergo their professional experience. This misalignment is evident in the collaborative assessment inquiry conducted by mentor teachers and academic heads in early childhood classrooms. The research findings indicate that the current mentoring process, especially regarding classroom management strategies, lacks effectiveness. Moreover, there is a discrepancy in the requests made by student teachers during the internship application process. It is recommended that mentor teachers and academic heads actively participate in teaching practicum programs for providing guidance, and academic heads may conduct preparatory meetings before students embark on their internships to ensure aligned expectations (Akyar, 2020).

The deficiencies identified underscore the need for comprehensive reforms addressing not only teacher shortages and inadequate infrastructure but also the misalignment between educational objectives and actual practices. These challenges require collaborative efforts from educational authorities, schools, and teacher education institutions to ensure a conducive environment for student teachers' professional growth and development. This project aims to educate a new generation of teachers in remote areas, contributing to the development of community school quality (Krurakthin) under the Equitable Education Fund (Equitable Education Fund, 2019). The selection of this scholarship was reported by

Hemtasin, Payoungkiattikun, Pimsak, and Hongsa (2023) about the development of the extremely poor student's selection process for receiving the teacher production project scholarship for protected schools in Thailand. The World Bank reveals that teacher shortages are a much more severe issue for primary schools in Thailand, most of which are small in size. The study estimates that around 64% of Thai elementary schools are facing critical teacher shortfalls, defined as having fewer than one teacher per classroom on average. Consequently, the teachers at these understaffed schools must teach across a wider range of subjects and/or grade levels compared to their counterparts at larger schools. Further compounding the problem, these small rural schools often receive teachers with lower qualifications and less teaching experience. The lack of adequate instructional staffing poses significant challenges to providing quality primary education in many areas of Thailand (Lathapipatlars & Sondergaard, 2016). This issue is particularly acute in small schools, where the teacher shortage is a critical and urgent problem. A potential solution involves a collaborative process among student teachers, mentor teachers, university supervisors, and the community. Encouraging student teachers to complete their practicum in their hometown schools could also help address this shortage. According to Mykkänen, Kupila, and Pekkarinen (2022) research on early childhood education (ECE) pre-service practicums has provided insights into students' practicum experiences. The results show that experienced students have different expectations than novice students about the roles and responsibilities of supervising teachers and education teachers . Whereas experienced students viewed teacher supervisors as a primary source for guidance and support on pedagogical issues, they viewed university teachers as facilitators with responsibility for practicum quality assurance.

2. The study identified five components of the model, namely principles, operational objectives, evaluation methods, guidelines for successful implementation, and an overall assessment of appropriateness and feasibility. Both the overall and component-specific evaluations were rated highly, possibly stemming from the comprehensive research and synthesis conducted by the research team. This encompassed a thorough review and synthesis of relevant documents and research on model development, early childhood education studies, research on model development, and teacher professional experience in

early childhood education. Additionally, the research team conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGD) involving various stakeholders in early childhood education, including educators from different teacher education institutions, mentor teachers, school administrators, educational supervisors, and education teachers. These FGDs aimed to gather diverse perspectives and ensure the comprehensiveness and completeness of the model's components. Consequently, the evaluations from qualified experts were consistently high, aligning with the findings of Chamnisard's (2013) research on the development of academic management models in managing early childhood education in schools affiliated with the Educational Area Office in Phetchaburi was found that the overall appropriateness of the academic management model for early childhood education was rated highly, indicating a high level of feasibility in practical applications.

## Conclusions

This research constitutes a pivotal part of the project on developing the production process and enhancing the capabilities of teachers within the "Krurakthin" initiative, employing a novel perspective in the context of the northeastern region of Thailand, led by Kalasin University. The study is categorized as research and development, aligning with the project's objectives. The primary aim was to enhance the model for teaching practicum for scholarship recipients under the "Krurakthin" initiative at Kalasin University. The study delved into the challenges of teaching practicum for pre-service teachers in early childhood education, drawing insights from relevant literature and interviews with stakeholders. The collected data underwent thorough analysis, resulting in the identification of five components comprising principles, objectives, operations, evaluation, and guidelines for successful model implementation. The overall and component-specific evaluations indicated a high level of appropriateness and feasibility.

Within the operational component, the research team developed training manuals and experience recording forms (1, 2, 3, and 4) tailored to the needs of scholarship recipients under the "Krurakthin" initiative. These materials underwent expert assessment, with the highest level of appropriateness determined. These resources are slated for implementation in the second semester of the academic year 2022, where scholarship recipients will undertake their teaching practicum.

## Recommendations

1. Recommendations for use of the teaching practicum model.

1.1 From the study of the challenges in teaching practicum for 'Krurakthin' scholarship recipients project, it was found that students faced issues with teaching practicum, experience organization, classroom management, classroom research, and student assessment and evaluation. Therefore, educational institutions should adequately prepare students before they begin their professional teaching practice.

1.2 Regarding the problems faced by mentor teachers, school administrators, and supervising teachers, there were issues with understanding roles, responsibilities, and collaboration. Thus, educational institutions should foster understanding and cooperation among supervising teachers, mentor teachers, and school administrators concerning teaching practicum. This includes clarifying roles and responsibilities, supervision methods, assessment tools, and evaluation criteria to ensure the highest quality and efficiency in teaching practicum.

2. Recommendations for future research.

2.1 Subsequent research should focus on the next phases: the practical application of the model, its evaluation, and reflection on its effectiveness.

2.2 There should also be a study and development of a supervision model for teaching practicum for scholarship students of the 'Krurakthin' project in the hybrid learning.

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