



## Collaboration between the University Pre-Service Teacher Education Program and the Local Elementary School on English Remedial Education

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### Abstract:

This study analyzed 24 pre-service elementary school English teachers' design and delivery of remedial education to the fifth and sixth graders in the collaboration between the university pre-service teacher education program and the local elementary school in a city in northwest Taiwan. The pre-service teachers were encouraged by the elementary school fifth and sixth graders' improvement in English and their positive attitude toward learning English. However, these pre-service teachers lacked insufficient competence and skills in classroom management, teaching small groups, carrying out class activities, and using the target language. Scheduling of the remedial education as pre-service teachers' field experience should be taken into consideration for collaboration between elementary school English teachers and language teacher education programs. A model on the effective collaboration between elementary school English teachers and the language teacher education program is recommended.

Keywords: collaboration, field experience, language teacher education, pre-service teachers, remedial education

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Teaching English to fifth and sixth graders in Taiwan elementary schools became compulsory in the fall semester of 2001 (Ministry of Education, 2001). In the fall of 2005, English education was extended to the third grade (Ministry of Education, 2005). The resulting “two-peak phenomenon” in elementary school English education has become a burning issue in Taiwan (Chang, 2006) because, in any given elementary school class, while about one third of students have never learned English before, another third of students can already read *Harry Potter* in English. English remedial education seems to be the solution to this “two-peak English phenomenon.”

Through the remedial education, elementary school students who fall behind the regular standard must master at least 108 words for production, sixty percent of the required words of production mandated for regular students by the Ministry of Education (2001, 2006, 2012). Of all

these 108 words, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders should be able to spell and say 24 (i.e. a, an, apple), 26 (i.e. am, are), and 38 (i.e. bedroom, bathroom) words for production respectively. Moreover, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders should be able to ask and answer three (i.e. What's this?), four (i.e. How old are you?), and five (i.e. Are you a student?) wh- and yes-no questions respectively. Fifth and sixth graders must be able to use phonics rules to sound out CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words (i.e. c-a-t) and words with simple rules (i.e. smart). Moreover, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders must be able to understand nine (i.e. Good morning), nine (i.e. How are you?), nine (i.e. May I go to the restroom?), and six (i.e. Excuse me?) basic English expressions respectively.

With the required teaching hours and other responsibilities, elementary school English teachers are not able to fully devote themselves to English remedial education for students at the low proficiency level (Tseng, 2008; Wu, 2007). Only half of the 206 elementary schools in Taipei County have a school-wide remedial instructional program (Chang, 2006), whilst in the city of Keelung few teachers in 51 elementary schools provide remedial instruction (Yang, 2006).

A total of 2244 elementary school pre-service teachers were enrolled in teacher education programs in Taiwan in 2010 (Ministry of Education, 2011a). Pre-service teachers in teacher education programs in universities in Taiwan who receive scholarships are required to provide educational services, such as remedial education for those elementary school students who fall behind their peers in their studies. However, these pre-service teachers are found to lack English teaching competence, particularly in classroom management and instructional strategies (Ministry of Education, 2011b). Therefore, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan highly recommends that training on remedial education should be provided for these pre-service teachers.

Pre-service teachers' field experiences are regarded as a way to enhance pre-service teachers' teaching practice (Catapano, 2006; Farrell, 2003; Goodfellow & Sumsion, 2000; Hudson, Nguen, & Hudson, 2007; Mule, 2006). Pre-service teachers who take Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) method courses often complain that they lack field experience. They cannot say whether their lesson and activity designs are practical in real classrooms. An instructor in a language teacher education program (LTEP) in a city in northwest Taiwan collaborated with a local elementary school English teacher in the spring semester of 2013. The pre-service elementary school English teachers in the instructor's LTEP learned how to design activities for remedial English education. Then they delivered in the form of the remedial English lessons to the fifth and sixth graders in a cooperating teacher's local elementary school. This study focuses on the collaboration between the university pre-service teacher education program and the local elementary school on the designs and delivery of remedial education. A model on effective establishment and implementation of collaboration between elementary schools and language teacher education programs on remedial English education is provided.

### **Literature Review**

It takes time and an increase in a teacher trainer's workload to establish a collaborative relationship and develop mutual trust between language teacher education programs and another institution or agency (Fisler & Firestone, 2006; Guo, 2013). In order to make a field experience effective and meaningful for pre-service teachers, Bower, Klecka, and Silva (2010) suggested that facilitating a partnership during the field experiences must be the intention and collaboration between local school- and university-based teacher education educators should be established. Lemieux and Allen (2007) indicated that criteria should be provided to guide the practice and assure the effectiveness of the successful collaboration. In keeping with the need for criteria, three characteristics of a successful partnership are identified as teachers' involvement in the

development, clear and agreed-upon goals, and benefits for all parties (Guo, 2013; Williams, 2009).

Practicum and integration of service learning into teacher education program can provide field experience and facilitate pre-service teachers' professional learning and development (Chiang, 2008; Cooper, 2002; Cleary, 2005; Guo, 2013). College students in Guo's (2013) study performed their field experience by providing a one-hour English program to local elementary school children in a nearby library in Taiwan. College students gained experience beyond the university classroom and made a connection between the second language teaching theories and practice. Thirteen participants in the TEFL method course in Chiang's (2008) study claimed that field-based learning in two nearby high schools constituted valuable learning experiences for them; in particular, field based learning advanced their instructional strategies and professional knowledge. Chiang (2008) concluded that integrating fieldwork components into TEFL method courses increased their understanding of the field, enhanced the efficacy of teaching English, and affirmed the chosen career paths of the student teachers (p. 1283).

Pre-service language teachers in Tomas, Rai, and Haslam's (2008) study did their practicum in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context in the Czech Republic. Having many opportunities to teach allowed these pre-service teachers to discover their own teaching styles. Cleary (2005) examined the integration of field experiences into two literacy courses taken by twelve second year pre-service teachers at a regional Australian university. This study highlights the positive impact that partnerships between regional university campuses and local schools can have on pre-service teachers, particularly their teaching skills.

Roberts (2006) proposes the model of interactions in the student teaching experience as in Figure 1. Student teachers' learning is constructed through the interactions between student teacher, the students, the cooperating teacher, and the university supervisor.

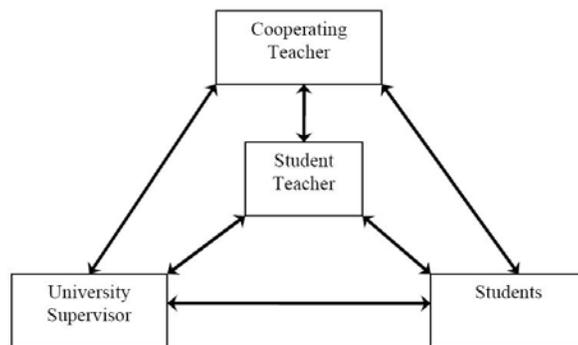


Figure 1. Model of interactions in the student teaching experience (Roberts, 2006, p. 2).

Russell, McPherson, and Martin (2001) suggest that theory and practice should be tied into the collaboration between student teachers, local schools, and university-level teacher education programs. University supervisors can model the lessons in the cooperating teacher's classroom. Pre-service teachers should be taught strategies and rationales before observing modeling teaching. The cooperating teachers along with the university supervisors lead these pre-service teachers to observe, debrief, and put these strategies into practice.

The cooperating teachers' characteristics influence their relationship with pre-service teachers and the effectiveness of collaboration (Killian & Wilkins, 2009). Roberts (2006) study concludes that cooperating teachers must demonstrate four characteristics including teaching and instruction (i.e. has a good subject matter knowledge, good classroom management),

professionalism (i.e. a role model, effective communicator), relationship (i.e. provide clear expectations, share resources), and characteristics (i.e. responsible, cooperative). Moreover, cooperating teachers should play four important roles as good communicators between student teachers and practicum supervisors, demystifiers for making invisible teaching procedure visible, catalysts for identify shifts for helping student teachers from classroom observers to classroom teachers, and mentors who guide and advise student teachers (Payant & Murphy, 2012). Cooperating teachers should receive systematic preparation for communication skills needed for hosting conferences as well as proving student teachers or pre-service teachers with feedback and written evaluation (Killian & Wilkins, 2009).

There are books and studies on the importance of the practicum for TESOL method courses or programs and its implementation (Chiang, 2008; Clearly, 2005; Crookes, 2003; Guo, 2013; Janopoulos, 1991; Mule, 2006; Richards & Crooks, 1988; Tomas et al., 2008). No empirical studies in Taiwan have focused on the collaboration between local elementary schools and language teacher education programs for providing pre-service language teachers with field experience in remedial English education. This study identifies and analyzes challenges and posits implications of pre-service elementary school English teachers' design and delivery of remedial English education to elementary school students as their field experience.

### **Method**

This is a qualitative case study. This study focuses on the collaboration between a university language teacher education program and the local elementary school in terms of pre-service teachers' design and delivery of remedial education. This study discusses the following issues. First, what was pre-service elementary school English teachers' and the collaborating teacher's attitude toward this collaboration program? Second, what were the benefits and shortfalls of such collaboration program?

### **Setting and Participants**

Case study research is effective in providing intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system such as an individual, program, or group, because a case study focuses on developing an in-depth analysis of a single case and it requires researchers to set boundaries and prove that they have engaged in a purposeful sampling strategy in meeting those boundaries (Creswell, 2009).

The case was the collaboration program established by a university instructor and elementary school English teacher. The instructor in a TESOL Methods and Materials course in a teacher education program collaborated with an English teacher (Jessie, pseudonym) in Gate Elementary School (pseudonym), an urban elementary school in a city in northwest Taiwan.

The participants included 24 pre-service English teachers enrolled in the TESOL Methods and Materials course. The participants included 23 females and 1 male with an average of 21.1 years old. Two participants were from the Department of Education and three participants from Department of Music Instruction. The rest of the participants were three seniors and 17 juniors with major in English Instruction. The class met for one hundred minutes each week.

Of Jessie's students, three male fifth graders and three male sixth graders needed to have English remedial education. These six elementary school students were chosen for receiving this remedial education program because they were on the lowest 5% of their class in terms of their English proficiency. These 24 pre-service English teachers signed up to and took turns in teaching these six students every Tuesday at noon for eleven weeks.

## **Data Collection**

The data collection lasted for eleven weeks during one semester from March to May 2013. Data in this study included (1) pre-service teachers' reflections and beliefs about designs and delivery of remedial education, (2) the cooperating teacher's feedback on pre-service teachers' instruction and this collaboration program, and (3) videos and teaching aids of the classroom practice. The first two types of the data were used to answer the first research question "What was pre-service elementary school English teachers' and the collaborating teacher's attitude toward this collaboration program?" The first and the third data were used to answer the second research question, "What were the benefits and shortfalls of such collaboration program?"

At the beginning of the semester, the instructor in this Teaching Methods and Materials of English in the Elementary School class gave a lecture on theoretical concepts of remedial education and English remedial education provided at a summer school program in the United States. Two pre-service teachers signed up as a team and one taught three fifth and the other taught three sixth graders. Two teams consisted of three pre-service teachers, so one taught three fifth and the other two taught three sixth graders. Each pre-service teacher designed a 40-minute lesson plan on the given language focus (words, sentence patterns, dialogue) of the assigned unit. One of the limitations of this study was that each pre-service teacher was given only one session of giving remedial education among elementary school students. Twenty-two videos were recorded. Eleven videos were the delivery of English remedial instruction among three fifth graders and the other eleven videos were the recording of the remedial instruction taught among the three sixth graders. Each video lasted for forty minutes.

Each pre-service teacher taught these elementary school students and videotaped the instruction from twelve-thirty to one o'clock on Tuesdays. During that period of time, Jessie was grading homework, preparing her lessons, or giving remedial education to other fifth and sixth graders with lower English proficiency in the same room. Pre-service teachers shared their teaching practice with Jessie right after the instruction. They were required to hand in one or two pages of reflection, including how well they did in the lesson and how they would improve the lesson. A total of 24 reflections and 114 artifacts including 24 worksheets and 70 teaching aids were collected.

## **Data Analysis**

Names in this study are pseudonyms. Qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, rather than rely on a single data source (Creswell, 2009). Data in this study included pre-service teachers' lesson plans, worksheets, pictures or videos, and reflections.

The data was coded in the following stages as in Figure 2. First, the researcher read through all the data and marked the data by a code (e.g. improvement, activity designs, classroom managements). Secondly, while reading through these codes, the researcher assigned tentative categories (e.g. attitude, lessons learned, problems). The data were sorted on the basis of its fit into topics that reflected the research questions. A set of codes for thematic analysis was constructed that captures the meaning expressed by the data (Flick, 1998).

To increase the validity and credibility of the study, triangulation using multiple sources of data is to compare and cross-check data collected through videos, teaching aids, as well as the feedback given by pre-service teachers and the cooperating teacher. Member check is another strategy for ensuring the validity and credibility (Merriam, 2009). Following the data collection, member checking was conducted by reporting the preliminary findings to pre-service teachers and

the cooperating teacher, inviting a critical commentary on the findings, and potentially incorporating the critiques into the findings.

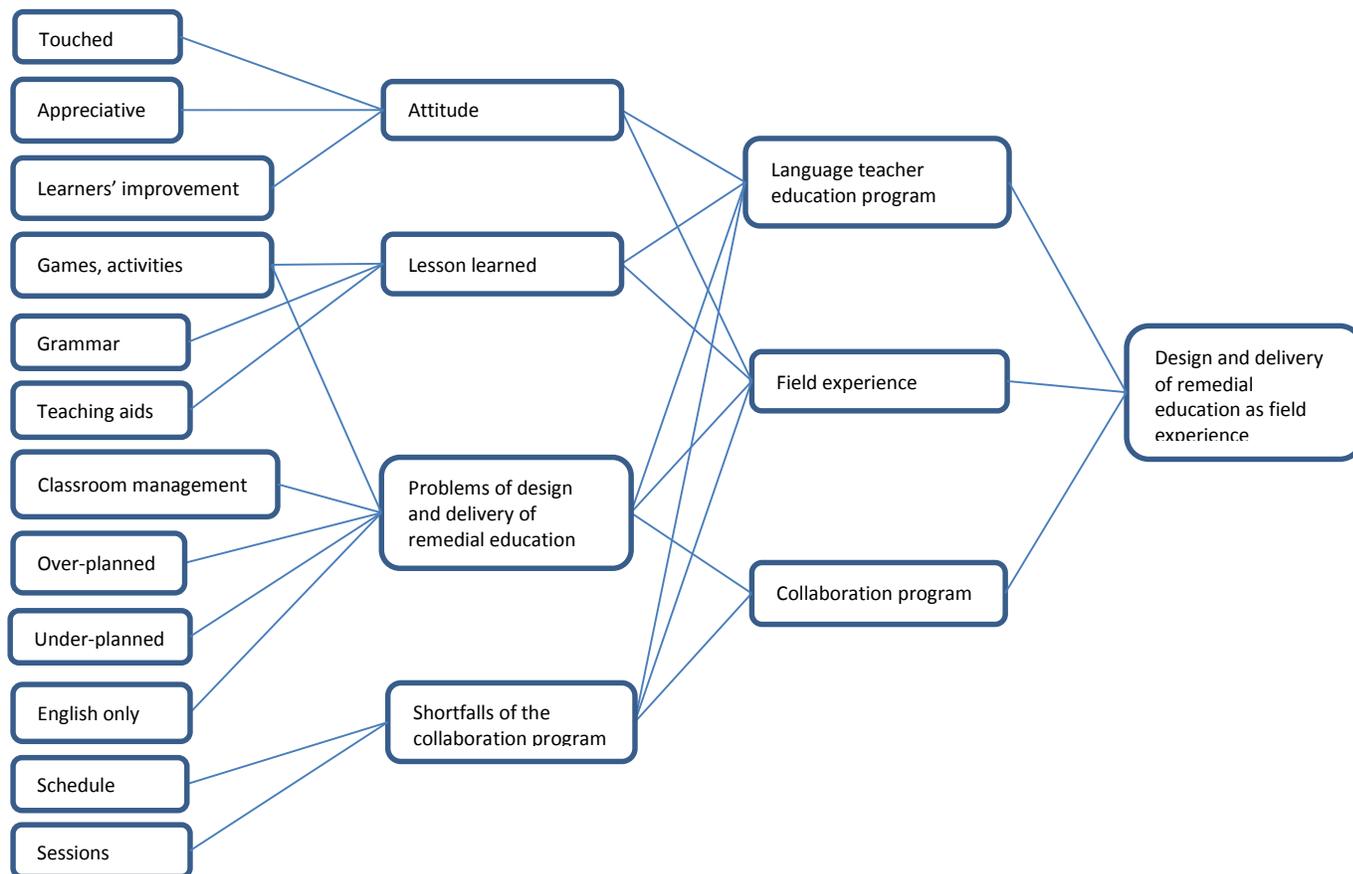


Figure 2. Data analysis.

### Findings

The analysis focused on pre-service English teachers' and cooperating teacher's attitude toward collaboration program, lessons pre-service teachers learned from their involvement in the remedial education, problems of the designs and delivery of the remedial education, and the shortfalls of this collaboration program.

#### Attitude toward Collaboration Program

All pre-service English teachers and Jessie in this study had positive attitudes toward designs and delivery of the remedial education collaborated with an elementary school English teacher and language teacher education program. Jessie wrote,

I was touched by these pre-service teachers' passion and enthusiasm about teaching English. Their teaching aids and worksheets were well-designed. These fifth and sixth graders enjoyed the lessons taught by these pre-service teachers and they looked forward for the lessons. Each time after the lesson, they ask me, "Will these big brothers and sisters come and teach me next week?"

Sharon particularly identified her reflection: "English teachers have to provide opportunities for students to succeed in learning English in class, so these elementary school

students know that they could make it and make progress.” All pre-service teachers felt happy when they saw the small improvement and progress these elementary school students made in English. While Zoe wrote, “I was touched when I saw these students working so hard. All my efforts paid off, Yvonne also wrote, “I was glad that I could help these students to develop their English abilities and self-confidence in thirty minutes. I examined myself. I want to be a competent English teacher, so I can help students in need.

Like college students in Guo’s (2013) study, pre-service teachers in this study felt that serving and helping these children was rewarding. Teacher attitude has been identified as a critical variable in teaching (Krashen, 1981). Teachers’ attitude is a stance toward the self, activity, and others that links interpersonal dynamics with external performance and behavior (Freeman, 1989). According to Smith (1971),

There is little doubt that the attitudes a teacher has towards himself influence his behavior in the classroom. And there are strong reasons for believing that the teacher’s attitudes towards his pupils—e.g., his expectations of them—will influence their achievement. (p. 8)

### **Lessons Learned from Designs and Delivery of Remedial Education**

These pre-service teachers reflected on their designs and delivery of remedial education in terms of the areas where they did well and what they could do better for the future. Tina identified the importance of games and activities in elementary school English instruction as she wrote in her reflection as “Elementary school students enjoyed learning English through different games and activities, such as board games, Bingo, or I-pad online games. I was so touched when those who are reluctant to speak English uttered a few English words. Having everything ready before the class was important for teachers as Sarah wrote, “Next time I will try to be in class earlier, so I can settle down and get my teaching materials ready. I will wait in class and welcome these students.”

All pre-service teachers appreciated for having the chance to teach remedial education in Gate Elementary School. They were thankful for Jessie for sharing her experience and her observations after the teaching practice. Rita wrote in her reflection as follows:

These elementary school students did not have the grammatical concept about third person singular. After two drill practices, one seemed to be able to identify the differences between “do” and “does,” but the other one still made mistakes. I asked Jessie why these students had difficulties with the third person singular. Jessie said that the concept “third person singular” is new to these students and third person singular is not used in Mandarin Chinese. More activities should be designed for elementary school EFL learners to practice this grammatical concept.

Pre-service teachers like Rita should know their learners’ proficiency levels before design and delivery of remedial education. They should explore learners’ existing understands and seek strategies of bringing new understanding (Clarke & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005). Issues that cooperating teachers usually share with the student teachers and pre-service teachers are classroom management, relationship with learners, and learners’ profiles (Clarke, 2001).

Cooperating teachers are encouraged to praise student teachers or pre-service teachers when appropriate (Roberts, 2006). Olivia was excited because the cooperating teacher complimented her well-designed teaching aids revealed in Figure 3 as she wrote in her reflection “Jessie identified the strengths (i.e. well-designed flashcards, worksheets, and teaching aids) and

weaknesses of my teaching practice (i.e. teach words insolated). She also provided me some suggestions (i.e. teach words in context).



Figure 3. Teaching aids on clothing.

The pre-service teachers' responses and attitudes to cooperating teaching are in accord with Akcan and Tatar's (2010) study. Constructive and adequate feedback is always desired by pre-service teachers (Akcan & Tatar, 2010; Roberts, 2006). In this study, feedback provided by elementary school cooperating teachers during pre-service English language teachers' teaching practice helped these pre-service teachers evaluate their lessons more critically. Therefore, effective and experienced cooperating teachers are adept at providing student teachers with corrective objective feedback before problems occurred (Killian & Wilkins, 2009; Riesky, 2013).

Moreover, the cooperating teacher's feedback tended to be more situational, focusing on certain instances that occurred in the classroom. Crandall (2000) suggested that language teacher education should shift from the mere application of pedagogical knowledge to encouraging teachers to reflect on classroom practice and make adjustments accordingly. Therefore, pre-service English teachers should be equipped with competence and skills in remedial English teaching and education in terms of instructional strategies, models, content, programs, material design, and so on. Cooperating teachers can also help pre-service teachers shape their reflective skills and prepositions about receiving constructive criticism for improving their teaching effectiveness (Killian & Wilkins, 2009).

### **Problems on the Design and Delivery of Remedial Education**

When the pre-service teachers taught English remedial education, they faced some problems in terms of the lesson design for the remedial education, classroom management, and use of English as the media of instruction. First, with regard to the activity design, they included too many activities in the 40 minutes and they ran out of time before they finished them as in Ginny's reflection "I designed activities for reviewing words and sentence patterns. I couldn't finish all the activities. Next time, I should focus on words only."

On the other hand, some of the pre-service teachers did not have sufficient activities to carry out in forty minutes. Betty said, "I finished teaching the lesson in thirty minutes. I did not know what to do in the last ten minutes, so I had to review the words again." Below was the conversation between Betty, a pre-service teacher, and two fifth graders, Jerry and Joseph:

Betty: We finished all the activities today. Let's review these phrases. Repeat after me "Do you have any old lamps on sale?"

Jerry and Joseph: (They looked bored.) Do you have any old lamps on sale?

Betty: Yes, we do. Let me show you.

Jerry and Joseph (Fifth graders): Yes, we do. Let me show you.

The conversation from the videotape showed that John, the elementary school student, complained about playing the same activity designed by the pre-service teacher, Tim as below:

Tim: Let's review these phrases "cleaned the table, cooked the dinner, played a game, climbed a tree, watered the flowers, painted the fence."

Tim: I will point to the flashcard. John, look at the picture, do the action and say "Did you\_\_\_?" Mark, watch John's action and answer "Yes, I did" or "I didn't."

John: you shi zhe ge. shang zhou wan guo (Again? I played this game last week.)

The above-mentioned dialogue revealed that John got bored by doing the same activity all the time. Maintaining a drill for half an hour definitely exhausts both learners and teachers. Therefore, language teachers should always prepare extra activities and vary activities over a period of time. Teachers have to ensure that learner roles are not always the same (Harmer, 2007). Harmer (2007) gave an example of varying the reading comprehension, "Sometimes students might compare answers in pairs; sometimes they might interview each other about the texts; sometimes they might do all the work on their own" (p. 29).

With regard to classroom management, the pre-service teachers reflected that they only taught in a large class of 30 students, but they had not taught children individually or in small groups of two to three. Children sometimes became too excited when playing games or they could not concentrate on learning after the physical education classes as in the following reflections written by Helen, Cindy, and Amy: "I used to teach the whole class. I did not know how to teach one or two students, so I was afraid that these students were not motivated to play games," "When playing games, the students were too excited. The class became chaos," and "Students had a hard time concentrating in class after the physical education class. I had to remind them to pay attention in class."

The pre-service teachers in this study also mentioned that these elementary school students could not understand the instruction when explanations and teaching were completely in English as in Betty's reflection "I spoke English and talked very fast. The students looked at me puzzled." With regard the media of instruction, English teachers are encouraged to use English as often and much as possible in their English classrooms, but not to spend too much time talking in the learners' first language (L1) (Harmer, 2007, 2012). Harmer (2007) made the following suggestions for giving instructions in the target language or learners' first language:

Once we have given instructions for an activity, for example, we can ask students to repeat the instructions back to us in the L1—and this will tell us whether they have understood what they have to do. When we have complicated instructions to explain, we may want to do this in the L1, and where students need individual help or encouragement, the use of the L1 may have very beneficial effects (p. 39)

### **Shortfalls of the Collaboration Program**

Two major shortfalls of the collaboration program occurred. The first was related to the limited chance that pre-service teachers could teach these fifth and sixth graders as in Daisy and Jim's reflections "I only had one chance to teach these students for a 40-minute lesson this semester. I wish I could teach these students twice or three times. I want to see more about their improvement in English" and "I only had one chance to do the remedial education. I gained some new instructional strategies from my experience and suggested by Jessie. I want to put them into practice and see if these strategies work well or not." Based on the above-mentioned examples, more opportunities for delivery of English remedial education should be provided for pre-service English teachers during the language teacher education program.

Local elementary schools and university teacher education programs should develop collaborative partnerships, so pre-service teachers will be given more highly structured opportunities to work in a classroom setting, to prepare and deliver high quality lessons, and teach these lessons to diverse groups of students. These opportunities can support pre-service teachers' preparation as teachers, so they may be likely to become highly qualified to teach (Heath, 2011). Clifford and Jardine (2003) recommend online environment as an alternative for cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers to design activities for the classroom practice and work out the difficulties of practice together.

The second shortfall was related to the delivery time of the remedial education as pre-service teachers' field experience as written by Lily "I really wanted to have a deep discussion about my classroom practice with Jessie. I had afternoon classes and I did not feel like skipping the classes." The remedial education was scheduled from twelve thirty to one o'clock on Tuesdays. Pre-service teachers had other classes scheduled at one-ten. It was the fifteen-minute walking distance from Gate Elementary School to the university. Pre-service teachers had to skip the first period and even the second period of their Tuesday afternoon classes if they had the discussion with Jessie about their teaching practice. Tina also wrote,

When these pre-service teachers and I discussed their classroom practice, we had long discussion. We talked about classroom management, lesson plan, activity designs, English teacher's competence and recruitment, etc. We could keep on talking. It was pity that we had to stop the conversation because these pre-service teachers had to leave for their afternoon classes.

Pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers encounter a huge degree of constraint on their time and have so many other demands on their plates (Heath, 2011). Therefore, scheduling is an important issue that needs to be taken into consideration when the teacher educators plan the collaborative program between elementary school English teachers and language teacher education program.

### **Discussion and Implications**

The pre-service teachers and cooperating teacher in this study had positive attitudes toward remedial teaching during the collaboration program between elementary school English teachers and the language teacher education program. The pre-service teachers were excited to see elementary school children improve their English skills and English learning attitudes. Such collaboration arouses pre-service English teachers' passion and love for English education. Through the involvement in the elementary school English remedial education, these pre-service teachers in this study learned from their own experience, the instructor, and the cooperating teacher in terms of instructional strategies and activity designs for remedial English education. However,

the problems of the designs and delivery of remedial education was the pre-service teachers' insufficient competence and skills in classroom management, teaching small groups, the smooth flow of carrying out class activities, and use of the target language. The limited time of delivering remedial education and the scheduling issue of the collaborative program were the issues that needed to be solved for effective collaborative program between elementary school English teachers and language teacher education programs.

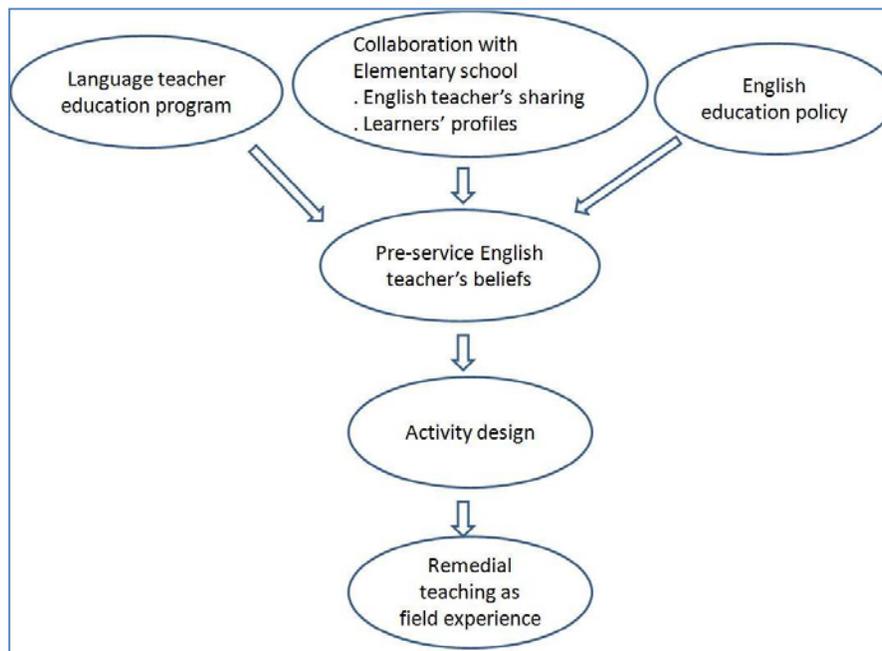


Figure 4. Collaboration on English remedial education between elementary school English teachers and language teacher education program.

Based on the above findings, Figure 4 depicts the model on the effective collaboration between elementary school English teachers and the language teacher education program on remedial education. Through the training on models and instructional strategies for English remedial education in language teacher education program, pre-service teachers are equipped with some English teaching competences and skills. Moreover, the collaborating teacher's provision of clear and complete profiles of learners' English proficiency and goals to be achieved in the remedial English education guide these pre-service English teachers to design activities and instructional strategies, particularly for these learners. Three issues are discussed in terms of knowledge base and instructional strategies for remedial education to be covered in language teacher education, importance of field experience, as well as collaboration between elementary school and teacher education programs.

### **Knowledge Base and Instructional Strategies for Remedial Education**

Freeman (1989) proposed that the knowledge base for teaching includes both knowledge and skills. Knowledge includes what is being taught (the subject matter), to whom it is being taught (the students: their backgrounds, learning styles, language levels, and so on), and where it is being taught (the sociocultural, institutional, and situational contexts). Moreover, teachers need skills such as in presenting material, giving clear instructions, correcting errors in various ways, managing classroom interaction and discipline, and so on. Pre-service teachers in this study encountered difficulties in managing students' behavior and maintaining a classroom environment

conducive to effective teaching and learning. This finding supports the claim made in the previous research that classroom management is most challenging for pre-service teachers during their practicum or field experience (Bromfield, 2006; Gan, 2013; Reupert & Woodcock, 2010; Riesky, 2013).

Richards (2011) proposed ten core dimensions for competence in language teacher education comprising developing appropriate linguistic competence, acquiring relevant content knowledge, developing a repertoire of teaching skills, acquiring contextual knowledge, developing a sense of identity as a language teacher, developing learner-focused teaching, acquiring specialized cognitive skills, learning how to theorize from practice, developing a community of practice, and becoming a language teaching teacher professional. Therefore, these ten dimensions of competence, with their integration into remedial teaching, should be included in the training of pre-service English teachers for developing their competence and skills in remedial education.

With pedagogical content knowledge, Richards (2011) claimed that language teachers should be able to do things such as understand the learners' needs, diagnose learners' problems, plan suitable instructional goals for lessons, select and design learning tasks, evaluate students' learning, design and adapt tasks, evaluate and choose published materials, or evaluate their own lessons (p. 6). Therefore, these pre-service teachers need to be trained to acquire pedagogical reasoning skills in terms of identifying specific linguistic goals in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, or writing that can be developed from the chosen content.

### **Importance of Field Experience into Language Teacher Education**

Through teaching elementary school fifth and sixth graders remedial education as the field experience, while some pre-service teachers over planned, others under planned lessons. They also faced problems in terms of classroom management, teaching small groups, the smooth flow of carrying out class activities, and use of the target language. Such field experience helped them bridge the gap between the theories and classroom practice. Therefore, Chiang (2008) claimed that incorporating field experience into traditional training courses is an empowering pedagogy for language teacher education (p. 1271). In addition to practicum, language teacher educators endeavor to search for new ways of providing pre-service English teachers with field experience for their professional learning (Chiang, 2008; Cooper, 2002; Fang & Ashley, 2004).

### **Collaboration between Elementary Schools and Teacher Education Programs**

It is crucial for teacher educators to build collaboration between elementary schools and language teacher education programs. According to Richards (2011),

While experience is crucial in developing pedagogical reasoning skills, working with more experienced teachers through shared planning, team teaching, observation, and other forms of collaboration can also play an important role in helping less experienced teachers understand the thinking processes employed by other more experienced teachers. (p. 21)

Pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers can do some activities together, such as share philosophy of teaching and classroom management, plan and teach a unit together, share mini-activities, observe classroom instruction, or keep journals for reflection (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2009). Therefore, pre-service English teachers can make observations of remedial education provided by the cooperating English teachers, so the pre-service English teachers will get acquainted with elementary school children and obtain a clear picture of the design and delivery of current English remedial education. The cooperating teacher should provide profiles of elementary school students' English proficiency levels and clear goals on the remedial education.

Followed by the delivery of the remedial education, the cooperating teacher should provide these pre-service English teachers with constructive feedback for better improving their classroom practice.

Cooperative teachers are considered as important elements in the collaboration between university-level teacher education programs and local schools (Killian & Wilkins, 2009). In addition to teaching experience and professionalism, cooperative teachers must have right personality and attitude toward working with pre-service teachers. They must be prepared to work hard as cooperating teachers (Clarke, 2001). Cooperative teachers should work closely with the university supervisor and receive formal preparation for mentoring pre-service teachers (Killian & Wilkins, 2009).

### Conclusion

This study focuses on twenty-four pre-service elementary school English teachers' design and delivery of remedial education to the fifth and sixth graders in a local elementary school collaborated with a university language teacher education program in the northwest part of Taiwan. The pre-service teachers' involvement in the remedial education aroused their passion toward teaching English, because they were encouraged by the elementary school fifth and sixth graders' improvement in English and the positive attitude to learning English. However, due to their incompetence in remedial education, they found that they either over or under planned for the remedial education. The findings and suggestions from this empirical study could provide the instructors and educators of language teacher education programs with a framework for integrating collaborative elementary school English remedial education programs as field experience into language teacher education courses.

As the number of the participants in this study was very small (only 24 participants), the findings of this case study cannot be generalized to a bigger pre-service teacher population. The rich data collection can be used to explain the pre-service elementary school English teachers' design and delivery of remedial English education to the fifth and sixth graders in their field experience in terms of their teaching competence and attitude.

This study focused only on the collaboration with one elementary school English teacher. A further study could focus on the establishment of collaboration with more English teachers in different schools. A further study could also examine whether the elementary school learners' different English proficiency levels, English teachers' different teaching styles, and elementary schools' different cultures influence the effectiveness of the collaboration.

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